



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Corporate Services and Finance

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE PLAN - 2024 / 2025

Date

Consulted within staff team

/ /2024

Discussed & signed off by Director

/ /2024

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1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE DEPARTMENT

1.1. Purpose and Scope of the Department

The Corporate Services and Finance Directorate is responsible for the following Corporate Services: finance, procurement, IT, internal audit, legal services, governance and transformation within the Council and across all corporate functions.

Finance

The Finance department includes the following service areas:-

- Budget setting and facilitating/supporting the striking of the district Rate
- Financial reporting
- Management reporting
- Cash and bank management
- Supplier processing
- Payroll processing
- Income collection
- Treasury management
- Procurement
- Insurance

Legal

The Legal Services department is responsible for the management and the provision of a comprehensive legal advice and support service to the Council across the Council's wide range of functions and responsibilities.

The service seeks to provide high quality, proactive and timely advice, together with support in the development of where practicable innovative initiatives/solutions for the Council to assist it operate effectively and legally within the wider legal landscape.

IT

The IT service is responsible for the development and management of secure, robust, resilient, effective high-performance and where applicable, legally compliant, Council systems, applications and network infrastructure for data and voice (including provision for remote and wireless access).

It seeks to provide a set of affordable core appropriately licenced (where applicable) ICT services which are secure, up-to-date, easy to use and meet the needs of service users.

Transformation

The Transformation team is responsible for leading on and support of the Council's transformation and information management activities. It is a newly constituted team, consisting of two staff members who report to the Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Finance.

1.2 Responsibilities

The directorate is specifically responsible for the following services:

Finance

- Budget setting and facilitating/supporting the Striking of the district Rate

Budget setting and ensuring that the Council has access to sufficient funds to deliver its services and achieve its objectives.

- Financial reporting

This includes preparation and submission of annual financial statements and all other legislative reporting requirements.

- Management reporting

Facilitating effective budgetary control by delivering meaningful, accurate and timely reporting of financial performance against budget.

- Cash and bank management

Operation of an efficient and effective banking service and associated treasury management.

- Supplier processing

Operation of an efficient, effective and timely supplier processing service, which is compliant with the Council's policies, procedures and other relevant standards, whether set by the Council or other legitimate authority.

- Payroll processing

Operation of an efficient, effective and timely payroll service, which is compliant with all statutory requirements and relevant Council policies.

- Income collection

Securing all major sources of income, e.g. rate income, rate support grant, de-rating grant. Assisting other departments, where applicable, to promptly collect amounts due to the Council.

- Procurement

Facilitating efficient, effective and compliant procurement of goods and services. The service provides strategic and operational advice in relation to quotation and tendering exercises. It leads on tender exercises which are estimated/anticipated to have estimated contract values in excess of £30,000

- Insurance

Ensuring that Council is adequately insured against all reasonable and foreseeable risks in accordance with statutory requirements and the Council's risk appetite. The service is responsible for insurance renewals and administration.

- Treasury management

Managing the Council's cash balances to ensure that funds are available to settle liabilities when due and otherwise distributed between appropriate financial institutions to mitigate the risk of loss while retaining sufficient access to funds and where practicable earn a reasonable rate of return.

Internal Audit

Although Internal Audit is necessarily independent of direct organisational control, it forms part of the Corporate Services and Finance directorate. The service supports the Audit Committee and forms an important part of the Council's internal control system. It provides an independent assurance function and leads on risk management throughout the Council.

IT

The department is responsible for the provision, development and management of a secure, resilient, and high-performance information services and systems across the Council network infrastructure.

It provides a set of core ICT services which are secure, up-to-date, easy to use and meet the needs of service users.

The section is specifically responsible for the following functions:

- Authentication and authorisation (user account provisioning)
- Email
- Management information and administrative systems
- Web (institutional websites, intranets and web content management system)
- General purpose application software for line of business
- Cyber security , Data storage and backup
- Network Services & general Multi-function device support & printing

- Anti-spam and virus protection
- Workstation support
- Support virtual learning environment.
- Communications hardware support
- Data Protection

Legal Services

- The provision of proactive, high quality, timely professional legal advice on matters relating to the functions and the exercise of the powers and duties of the Council.
- The drafting and settling of legal documentation.
- The provision of training and information on legal and quasi legal matters to officers and Elected Members, as required.
- The instigation and defence of claims, actions, applications and other legal proceedings, including representation, as required on behalf of the Council.
- Where relevant, support in the development of practicable innovative initiatives/solutions for the Council.
- Liaison with other legal professionals, the courts, government departments, statutory bodies and other organisations in relation to legal matters pertaining to the Council.

Governance

This is an evolving area which seeks to ensure that the Council has proportionate, robust and effective governance arrangements across the Council and in its relationships with stakeholders and third parties. It works closely with internal audit and legal services and derives cross departmental knowledge from the finance department and procurement service in particular. As an emerging area, it will seek to ensure that Council directorates and departments have adequately considered, documented, and implemented appropriate governance arrangements and sufficient evidence is retained on an ongoing basis to demonstrate that the relevant governance arrangements are operating effectively as intended. It will also seek to ensure that governance arrangements throughout the Council are consistent and reflect insofar as practicable with best practice in the relevant areas.

Transformation

This is an evolving area which seeks, in collaboration with relevant officers throughout the Council to lead and support the Council and its directorates, departments and services in their efforts to continuously improve and transform service delivery mechanisms and models to better meet the needs of the Council's stakeholders. It is also leading on the implementation of the Digital Transformation Strategy.

1.3 Customers and Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees, Councillors, Senior Management Team, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service, officers etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Central government departments and agencies including LG Audit, DfC, LPS, HMRC, NILGOSC, LPS, funding bodies, public sector agencies (DfI, NI Water, other statutory Planning consultees)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• External Service ICT solution providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suppliers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recipients of financial support from Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other district councils
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members of the legal profession, including solicitors and barristers, judiciary and court officials
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Banking institutions, treasury management advisors, consultants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Departments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals residing in and businesses and organisations operating within the district
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• External Public facing customers

1.4 Performance Overview in 2023/24 (Retrospective Review)

2023/2024 Performance Response/ Overview (What we achieved- Measured Activities)	End of Year Progress Status: Activity was - Completed /Commenced/ Other
FINANCE, PROCUREMENT, LEGAL, GOVERNANCE & TRANSFORMATION	
Comprehensively reviewed the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officers and brought amendments through Council	Ongoing
Held a series of training sessions (x3) on Conveyancing Land and Property for officers throughout the Council	Completed
Provision of timely high quality legal advice and support	Ongoing and in development
Identification of areas where an increase in staff and Member awareness and knowledge of relevant legal issues would be of benefit. Provision/commissioning of appropriately tailored guidance, training, workshops in response to areas/issues identified.	Ongoing
Procurement exercises – 51 procurement exercises carried out during 2023/24	Completed
Engagement with budget holders in relation to the financial information they receive to help with their understanding and reporting of same as evidenced in excellent feedback from FM Audit Report	Ongoing
Financial statements for year end 31 March 2023 and financial audit in preparation	Ongoing
2024/25 District Rates struck and budgets agreed by prescribed date	Completed
Financial reports to Council via P&R committee	Completed
Creditor and payroll payments runs – prompt payment target for 30 and 10 days exceeded	Completed
Contract and DAC register maintained and reported to Council via P&R Committee	Completed
2024/25 Insurance covers renewed	Completed
Co-delivery partner engaged for the implementation of the Council's Digital Transformation Strategy	Completed

Customer Experience Programme has been agreed as the First Programme of Works under the Digital Transformation Strategy	Ongoing
Governance framework for transformation activities agreed to include the establishment of a Transformation Board	Completed (and kept under review)

IT	
2023/2024 Performance Response/ Overview (What we achieved- Measured Activities)	End of Year Progress Status: Activity was - Completed /Commenced/ Other
Conduct Disaster recovery Test Maintain resilient and tested system recovery procedures,	<i>Complete</i>
Implement DMarc Email compliance	<i>30% complete ongoing</i>
Revise Internet across the organisation (Digital Strategy and IT strategies)	<i>Third party support required, In procurement</i>
Migrate Citrix access stakeholders to new version	<i>Complete</i>
End user device Security Hardening & Management Implement local Account administrator Solution	<i>20% In progress</i>
Planning: Maintain and Support Online property certificate deployment.	<i>80% Complete, Awaiting Idox Issue resolution</i>
Planning: Standalone Staff Fee calculator	<i>complete</i>
Planning: iPad deployment & App deployment	<i>complete</i>
Telephony Review , Upgrade and integration with voice & video platforms	<i>Cookstown Leisure Centre and Maghera leisure and 3 smaller sites complete</i>
Scope and Migrate copper to digital lines	<i>Ongoing</i>
Replace personal Computing arrangement	<i>Complete</i>
Provide/ maintain a Council wide Geographical Information Service (NIMA and Council Datasets)	<i>Complete</i>
Exchange management console : Migration/Update	<i>Complete</i>
Maintain up to date Active Directory	<i>Complete</i>
Manage and monitor Network SD wan services implemented	<i>Complete & Ongoing</i>
Network Segmentation:: VRF for Chip & Pin and @dirty VRF for CCTV and completion of WAN deployment with New subnets. Failover design implemented	<i>50% complete</i>
Network Infrastructure and configuration review	<i>Carried forward</i>
IT Strategy	<i>70% complete</i>

2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICES AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2024/25

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

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

2.1 Budget 2024/25

Finance, Procurement, Legal, Governance and Transformation

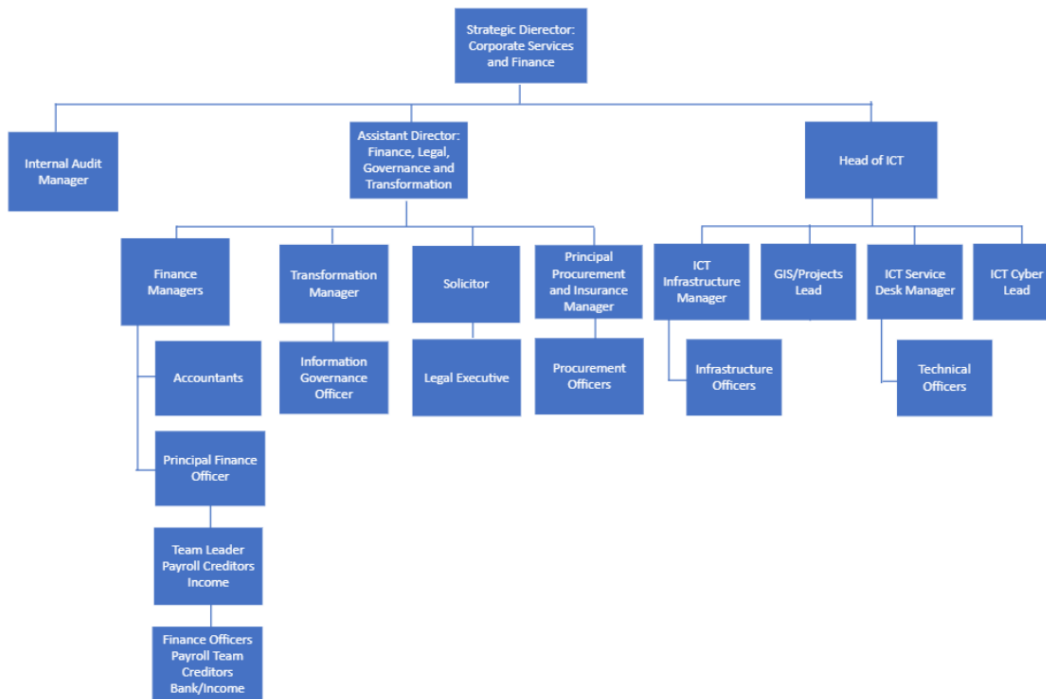
Budget Headings	£
Staffing costs	2,279,154
Insurance	1,233,572
Other	5,364,190
Interest payable	206,833
Minimum Revenue Provision and Capital Financing	1,813,326
Legal Fees & Subscriptions	274,947
Gross Budget	11,172,022
Income	(3,000)
Net Budget for 2024/25	11,169,022

IT Service 24/25

Budget Headings	
Computer - Equipment	23,000
Computer - Maintenance / Support/Software	756,231
Computer - Supplies	15,800
Internet & Data Connections	166,821
Mobile Communications	32,679
Photocopying Expenditure	50,000
Printing - Cartridges	12,000
Software Licences	189,089
Telephone	109,690
Consultancy Fees	60,000
Fees	40,500
Subscriptions	250
Stationery Supplies	73
Hospitality	100
Other Income	(3,000)
Bus Train Transport	100

Mileage Allowance	2,435
Mileage Lump Sum	2,500
Salaries	436,516
Subsistence	200
	1,894,984

2.2 Departmental Services - Council Structure - 2024/25



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Staffing	No. of Staff
Strategic Director	1
Assistant Director	1
Head of Service	1
Managers	7
Officers	29
Total	39

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2024/25

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

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

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

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

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

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

SERVICES WORK PLAN 2024/25

Service Name: Finance						
Link to Community Plan Theme:			Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 4.2 Health & Wellbeing - We have better availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time.</i>			<i>Theme 2: Leadership and Partnership for Local Growth</i>			
Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):		What are the key activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Service Name /Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes)	How Will we Know? (Measures) clear measurement e.g. %, #, £, date etc.
1	Sound financial management and reporting of financial information.	FINANCIAL STATEMENTS Draft Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023/24 filed with the Department for Communities (DfC).		Assistant Director	All statutory deadlines have been adhered to	Signed accounts with the DfC by agreed timeline.
2		FINANCIAL AUDIT Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 approved by Council and published. Audited Financial Statements for year ended 31 March 2024 certified.	NIAO to determine.	Assistant Director Assistant Director	All statutory deadlines have been adhered to All statutory deadlines have been adhered to	Approved accounts published by timeline. All statutory deadlines have been adhered to

3	Sound financial management and reporting of financial information.	MANAGEMENT REPORTING Monthly Financial Report to SMT and budget holders Monthly Financial Report to P&R Committee Monthly Over-time and payroll reports to SMT	Monthly	Assistant Director	Timely presentation and evaluation of financial information will support service delivery and adherence to the Council's budget	12 reports 11 reports 12 reports
4		STATUTORY RETURNS Whole of government accounts, Treasury return, VAT, CIS and all other statutory returns completed and submitted.	15 th of the month financial reports to directors. VAT returns quarterly by 7 th of the month	Finance Managers	All statutory deadlines have been adhered to	Completed and submitted by timelines
5	Budget setting and ensuring that the Council has access to sufficient funds to deliver its services and achieve its objectives	RATE SETTING Process and timetable agreed for 2025/26. Accurate and prompt adjustment of draft budget to incorporate additional information and potential alternative delivery methods and timely reporting to same to SMT and members. Budget struck by 15/02/25.	June 2024	Strategic Director & Assistant Director	Early presentation of accurate budgetary information Improved engagement with stakeholders Statutory deadline has been adhered to	District Rates struck by prescribed date - 15 February 2025 and budgets agreed thereafter

6	<p>Operation of an efficient, effective, and timely payroll service, which is compliant with all statutory requirements and relevant Council policies.</p>	<p>PAYROLL PROCESSING</p> <p>Work rotas and timetables agreed for weekly and monthly payrolls.</p> <p>Weekly, monthly and councillors' payrolls processed.</p> <p>Payroll and pension returns All Rotas and timetables agreed.</p> <p>Agreed timetables adhered to and contractual commitments met.</p> <p>Completed and submitted by timelines.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Per agreed timetable</p> <p>Various</p>	<p>Assistant Director supported by:</p> <p>Team leader / Principal Finance Officer</p> <p>Team leader / Team member / Principal Finance Officer</p> <p>Team leader / Team member / Principal Finance Officer</p>	<p>Work properly planned.</p> <p>Employees, councillors and deductions paid when due</p> <p>All statutory deadlines have been adhered to</p>	<p>Payroll and pension timetables agreed by</p> <p>Number of weekly payrolls processed (52) p.a.</p> <p>Number of monthly payrolls processed (12) p.a.</p>
7	<p>Operation of an efficient, effective and timely supplier processing service, which is compliant with the Council's policies, procedures and other relevant standards, whether set by the Council or other legitimate authority.</p>	<p>CREDITOR PROCESSING</p> <p>Work rotas and timetables agreed. Weekly creditor payment runs processed. Creditor control account reconciled.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Per agreed timetable</p> <p>Monthly</p>	<p>Assistant Director supported by:</p> <p>Team leader</p> <p>Team leader / Team member / Accountant</p>	<p>Work properly planned.</p> <p>Creditors paid when due.</p> <p>Governance measure</p>	<p>Rotas and timetables agreed.</p> <p>Agreed timetables adhered to and prompt payment statistics.</p>

				Team leader / Team member / Accountant		Reconciliation completed and approved.
8	Securing and reconciling all major sources of income, e.g. rate income, rate support grant, de-rating grant. Assisting other departments, where applicable, to promptly collect amounts due to the Council.	INCOME PROCESSING Work rota and timetables agreed. Receipting of income and monthly invoice runs Debtor account reconciled. Bank accounts reconciled.	Ongoing Per monthly cut off schedule. Monthly 10 working days	Assistant Director supported by: Team leader Team members Team Leader / Accountant Team Leader / Accountant / Principal Finance Officer	Work properly planned. Essential for delivery of finance services Governance measure Governance measure	Cut off schedule adhered to Completed and approved by team leaders. All bank accounts reconciled and approved by finance managers.
9	Successful implementation of Phase 2 of Financial Management Information System, Tech1.	Auto bank reconciliation/back-office receipting General health check and optimise what we have. Review (and replace?) mapping tool. Contracts/Sourcing Module	Proposed: - Q2 2024/25 Q3 2024/25 Q3 2024/25 Q4 2024/25	Assistant Director of Corporate Services & Finance	Phase 2 will introduce functionality and benefits not previously available to the Council. It will greatly improve, e.g., Financial controls at remote facilities, such as leisure centres. Timeliness, integration and accuracy of	Phase 2 modules agreed, implemented and functional as planned. Feedback from staff and users positive. Staff and users will be upskilled

		<p>Consider SSUF online</p> <p>ECR</p> <p>Fundschecker</p> <p>Training videos for staff and user group set up.</p>	<p>Q4 2024/25</p> <p>Q4 2024/25</p> <p>Q4 2024/25</p> <p>Q4 2024/25</p> <p>(Subject to SMT and other workload corporate service priorities)</p>		<p>reporting of financial information from remote facilities. governance associated with financial matters, including procurement of quotations.</p> <p>Efficiencies in processes. improved visibility for revenue management.</p> <p>Improved budgeting and forecasting functionality. Contract management.</p>	<p>and in becoming more self sufficient and take ownership.</p>
10	<p>Improve our financial reporting and information for budget holders and members</p>	<p>Engage with SLT/SMT on strengths and weaknesses of current process, timetabling and reporting to Committee.</p> <p>Agree next steps and improvements.</p> <p>Implement same</p>	<p>May 2024</p> <p>June 2024</p> <p>September 2024</p>	<p>Assistant Director Corporate Services & Finance</p>	<p>Budget holders able to provide timely and meaningful feedback.</p> <p>Users and members able to easily pick out key matters immediately.</p> <p>Better understanding of budget holders' needs of financial reporting.</p> <p>More scope for challenge by members</p>	<p>New agreed timetable for reporting.</p> <p>Agreed report format for P&R Committee.</p>

					on the financial information provided.	
11	Improve guidance for stakeholders on preparation of financial management info and their responsibilities within it	Review info and guidance currently provided and prepare short summary procedure note. Test it with staff and seek feedback. Amend and make available.	June 2024 Summer 2024 Q2 2024/25	Finance Manager	Reduce the risk of misunderstanding or delays in reporting if staff changes at budget holder level. Clarity among staff of roles and responsibilities regarding financial management information	Short summary procedure note prepared. Staff understand the note/guidance.
12	Increase awareness re online invoice payments	Work with Marketing & Comms team and Customer Service to see how we can best or better promote awareness of online facility to pay invoices	Sept 2024	Finance Manager and Team Lead	Customers and suppliers get better online service to pay bills. Less calls for customer service team. [Less administration for finance staff.] [Reduction in banking fees/charges.]	Decrease in payments received over the phone, in person. Increase in number of invoices paid online.
13	Ensure that staff who are recruited (new staff or new role) are	Work with L&D to design a process as part of onboarding for new staff and/or staff changing roles;	December 2024	Finance Manager, Accountant	More streamlined and consistent approach to training staff from the	Process in place to signpost staff to finance staff,

	trained and confident in TechOne	<p>Work with IT to get a process for identifying staff that need onboarded on TechOne.</p> <p>Design short tutorial videos on basics to allow staff to self help.</p> <p>Consider what ongoing support/check-in points might be needed for staff.</p>	<p>As part of the training and handover project of TechOne System Administrator ongoing until approx. Dec 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>June 2024</p>	Principal Procurement and Insurance Manager	<p>point of entry in to the organisation.</p> <p>Ensure that anyone that will have access to TechOne is fully trained and confident in the system from the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Finance and Procurement Staff will hopefully notice over time that there are less queries coming in around TechOne basics.</p>	<p>or finance staff to users.</p> <p>Consistency in training on TechOne to everyone that has access.</p> <p>Video tutorials prepared, tested and circulated/made available.</p>
14	Leadership awareness on Environmental, Social and Governance ("ESG") principles and Community Wealth Building in the context of the Council's Procurement Policy.	<p>Initial workshop/training for leadership</p> <p>Workshop/training for members</p> <p>Engagement with suppliers</p> <p>Members' decision</p>	<p>Q2 2024/25</p> <p>September 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>March 2025</p>	AD CS&F With Principal Procurement and Insurance Manager	<p>Community Wealth Building (CWB) and ESG Values align with the Council's corporate priorities and values within the Corporate Plan, Community Plan and Performance Improvement Objectives.</p> <p>Therefore, this work will improve:-</p>	<p>Research and awareness will have been carried out and we will have a Council decision on the inclusion or otherwise of ESG values and Community Wealth Building when procuring.</p>

					<p>(1) Awareness and Training for relevant staff on ESG Values and CWB;</p> <p>(2) Understanding within the organisation how ESG could impact on the lifecycle of projects/goods/services - from design, planning, procuring, contract management and exit;</p> <p>(3) Better inform the Council in its decision making on whether and when to include CWB/ESG values and scoring within our Procurement Policy.</p>	
15	Reduction in time taken to award contracts post evaluation of a value of £30k and over	<p>Review the Council's Procurement Policy so that we recommend that contract is able to be awarded post evaluation (rather than having to wait for next available Council meeting);</p> <p>Bring proposal to SMT</p> <p>Bring change through Council</p>	<p>May 2024</p> <p>September 2024</p>	<p>Assistant Director of Corporate Services & Finance</p> <p>With Principal Procurement and Insurance Manager</p>	<p>Bring efficiencies and more flexibility on Council's contract award on spend above £30k, rather than having to wait/delay contract award by approx. 4-8weeks post evaluation.</p>	Policy amended.

					Particularly important and of benefit on funded projects	
16	Provide ongoing procurement training	<p>Quotation Engagement – follow up from that</p> <p>General Policy with new templates</p> <p>Specification writing</p> <p>Frameworks</p> <p>Procurement Act</p>	<p>Summer 2024</p> <p>From May 2024</p> <p>Q3 24/25</p> <p>Q3 24/25</p> <p>From June 2024</p>	Principal Procurement and Insurance Manager	<p>Anticipate staff will become more confident in their procurement exercises.</p> <p>Ensure the Council is being compliant in its procurement activities and gaining the most flexible approaches to procurement that best suits the organisation’s needs.</p> <p>Upskill staff to “self help” more.</p>	All relevant staff fully trained in the key changes to the Procurement legislation, how it impacts them and what/how they do, fully equipped to comply with procurement act.
17	<p>We will offer a series of training/workshops /masterclasses to the relevant internal staff covering a range of topics such as; Conveyancing Process; Planning Law update.</p> <p>Updates on legislation and caselaw relevant to servicing</p>		Ongoing over 24/25	<p>Assistant Director of Corporate Services & Finance</p> <p>With Solicitor</p>	Improvements to staff’s understanding and learning of various topical issues within the Council, so that we see improvements to how we better collaborate to achieve improved outcomes for our customers.	Programme of tailored learning on the various relevant issues rolled out by March 2025. Feedback that sessions are informative, practical and learning being put in to practice.

	departments. Eg. Planning updates, overview of LDP. Regulatory updates- re licencing process etc.		Ongoing	Solicitor and external expert resource when required.	Updates and improvement	Improved collaboration between corporate services and our customers.
18	We will support the implementation of the Customer Experience Platform	Assist where needed in the procurement exercise for the platform. Assist where needed and appropriate in the implementation of the platform.	2024/25 TBC 2024/25	Assistant Director of Corporate Services & Finance (to support relevant Lead Officers) and Transformation Manager Principal Procurement and Insurance Manage	We'll be able to start gathering rich customer data to help inform future decisions. We'll be able to commence putting some of our processes online for customers.	Platform will be fully implemented and working. Staff trained and confident in its use. Management insights and reporting will be available.

Service Name: Procurement						
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.			Theme 2: Leadership and Partnership for Local Growth			
Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):		What are the key activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Service Name /Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes)	How Will we Know? (Measures) clear measurement e.g. %, #, £, date etc.
19	Facilitating efficient, effective and compliant procurement of goods and services. The service provides strategic and operational advice in relation to quotation and tendering exercises.	<p>PROCUREMENT EXERCISES</p> <p>Tender opportunity returns from department to be collated for Strategic Director to report to SMT</p> <p>To progress compliant procurement exercises in accordance with SMT prioritisation</p>	<p>Periodically</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Assistant Director</p> <p>Assistant Director/Principal procurement and insurance officer</p>	<p>Procurement exercises carried out within agreed timescales.</p> <p>Provision of an effective and efficient procurement function for all Councils stakeholders</p>	<p>Agreed schedule of tenders with SMT prioritisation</p> <p>Procurement exercises carried out in accordance with SMT prioritisation</p>
20		<p>CONTRACT AND DAC REGISTER</p> <p>Contract register updated to Director / Head of Service shared folder monthly.</p>	Monthly	Principal procurement and insurance officer	The contact and DAC register are part of the governance arrangements in relation to the Council's Procurement policies.	Monthly update provided.

		Contracts register reported monthly to P & R committee. DAC register reported monthly to P & R committee	Per committee meeting schedule Per committee meeting schedule	Assistant Director Corporate Service/Finance Assistant Director Corporate Service/Finance	The contact and DAC register are part of the governance arrangements in relation to the Council's Procurement policies. The contact and DAC register are part of the governance arrangements in relation to the Council's Procurement policies.	Agreed timetable adhered to Agreed timetable adhered to
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Service Name: Legal

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.

Theme 2: Leadership and Partnership for Local Growth

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	What are the key activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Service Name /Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes)	How Will we Know? (Measures)	
21	The provision of proactive, high quality, timely professional legal advice on matters relating to the functions and the exercise of the powers and duties of the Council	Ongoing and regular engagement with stakeholders; further refinement and utilisation of legal instruction format/template; and further development and utilisation of case management system. Reminders/follow-ups to be issued to relevant staff regarding process of instruction and ongoing case management	Ongoing	Assistant Director supported by Council Solicitor	More efficient and effective briefing of Legal Services team and relevant stakeholders. Better understanding of key issues to ensure timely and tailored advice.	Baseline figure for usage of request for legal support (instructions) form – together with measure of increased usage during 2023/24. Reminder information/brief (regarding usage of legal instruction format/template) forwarded to staff by end of Q2
22		The continued provision of strategic legal advice and operational legal support across all Council functions and priorities (including: Local Development Plan, identification and development of key	Ongoing	Assistant Director supported by: Council Solicitor	Identification and consideration of issues and options and development of relevant effective solutions will be accelerated and implemented/discounted at an earlier stage thereby enhancing strategic	Increased stakeholder satisfaction with Legal Services contributions notably in relation to timelines associated with operational legal transactions.

		strategic sites, MSW Region Growth Deal, effective delivery of Capital programme, etc.)			perspective and service delivery within an effective and efficient governance framework.	Increased corporate assurance in relation to the elimination and/or mitigation of potential challenges against the Council's strategic and operational aspirations/plans/actions
23		To continue to assist in the development and implementation of an effective Estates Strategy and Asset Management Plan to provide strategic direction and operational support in relation to on the management, maintenance, acquisition and disposal of Council property and assets.	Ongoing	Assistant Director supported by: Council Solicitor	Reliable central and easily accessible (to authorised individuals) database of Council's property and assets. Documented procedure for dealing with Council's property and assets (to include consideration of potential acquisitions and disposals) to ensure consistency.	Formalisation of Estates Strategy and Asset Management Plan.
24		Increase staff and member awareness and knowledge in areas prone to legal challenge as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning (Councillors); - Prosecutions (Officers) 	Ongoing	Assistant Director supported by: Council Solicitor	Reduce risk and financial or other impact of (successful) challenges against the Council. Improve and increase staff and member knowledge.	Number and cost of successful challenges will remain low, or potentially reduce. Increased efficacy in securing successful prosecutions, stemming from improved enforcement action, and leading to more robust statistics in this regard.

					<p>Increased transparency and accountability in decision making.</p> <p>Increased public confidence in the Council's decisions and enforcement actions.</p>	<p>Provision of internal and external advice as identified</p>
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Service Name: IT						
Link to Community Plan Theme:			Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
CMP 2.1 Infrastructure - We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure			Theme 1 : Our Service Delivery			
Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):		What are the key activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Service Name /Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes)	How Will we Know? (Measures) clear measurement e.g. %, #, £, date etc.
25	Provide and Maintain Resilient and available Systems	Conduct Disaster recovery Test Maintain resilient and tested systems recovery procedures,	31/03/2025	Cyber Lead	Complete monthly DR recovery on systems Carry out and update recovery procedures	12 Completed DR tests 12 Internal Vulnerability Scans, Monthly Security Updates to HOS/Director 12 x Tier 1 Recovery procedures reviewed. 12 x Tier 2 Recovery Procedures reviewed
		Implement DMarc Email compliance	31/03/2024	Infrastructure Manager	Greater assurance to security of Council Email	DMarc set to Reject :
		Network monitoring	31/12/2024	Infrastructure team	Network monitoring and enhanced infrastructure configuration,	Report on Review of network estate, Operational Monitoring network tools, Backup and configuration automation through tools implemented
26	Cyber maturity Assessment	Commission an independent Maturity Assessment on agreed framework	30/09/2024	Cyber lead	Identify Accreditation actions and recommendation and agreed action plan	Maturity Assessment report with agreed action plan for compliance and

						accreditation with 18 months
		Implement and manage Siem & SOC procured services	01/09/2024	Cyber Lead	Ingestion of events from endpoints, server and network devices	Operational dashboard and Siem and Soc c/w vitals, reports, alerts playbooks and ingestion of all events scoped. Regular review meeting with provider
		Conduct internal vulnerability of Endpoint, servers and network	31/12/2024	Cyber Lead	Externally commissioned internal vulnerability assessment/Health check	Health check report with correct action and recommendations
27	Vulnerability Monitoring * management	Conduct Pen testing of external IP estate	31/03/2024	Cyber Lead ,Infrastructure manager & team	Monthly pen test on external IP estate	12 x Report (CL) and corrective action (IM) logs/trail/rescans monthly
		Intune deployment	01/09/2024	Infrastructure team, Cyber Lead, Service Deak Team	Auto Intune to manage and deploy updates , software patching and packages, policy review and implementation	All endpoint windows machines are registered and managed using Intune

SERVICES WORK PLAN 2024/25

Service Name: IT						
Link to Community Plan Theme:			Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 2.1 Infrastructure - We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure</i>			<i>Theme 1 : Our Service Delivery</i>			
Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):		What are the key activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Service Name /Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes)	How Will we Know? (Measures) clear measurement e.g. %, #, £, date etc.
28	Upgrade and maintain current services to reflect the current demands and latest secure and stable version software for Tier 1 & 2 Applications	Revise Internet across the organisation (Digital Strategy and IT strategies)	30/06/2024	Infrastructure Manager, HOS,Cyber Lead, Service Manager	Safe unhindered User Internet Access from Work & Home Reduction in Helpdesk support ticket ref Internet access.	Internet access reviewed, Firewall rules reviewed to match, Firewall policies distributed to hybrid working Staff
		End user device Security Hardening & Management Implement local Account administrator Solution	30/05/2024	Infrastructure Support Officers, Cyber lead	More secure Administrative accounts, increase endpoint security control in configuration	LAPS deployed. Review of GPO's and security configuration deployed to End point
		Planning : Maintain and Support Online property certificate deployment.	01/09/2023	Head Of Service, GIS Officer	Modern mapping information Online property cert service Modern up to date mapping on Planning System	Operational Online Property certificate system. Up to date layer on portal

SERVICES WORK PLAN 2024/25

Service Name: IT						
Link to Community Plan Theme:			Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 2.1 Infrastructure - We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure</i>			<i>Theme 1 : Our Service Delivery</i>			
Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):		What are the key activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Service Name /Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes)	How Will we Know? (Measures) clear measurement e.g. %, #, £, date etc.
29	Provide corporate wide services to integrate Communication and collaboration across our sites	Telephony Review, Upgrade and integration with voice & video platforms	31/12/2024	GIS projects Officer	Reduction of voice and video platforms and consolidate voice and Video IPT at recycling site and other leisure facilities	Telephony with Microsoft Teams integration as proof of concept, sites on Cisco
		Maintain Wireless Infrastructure and replace as required	31/03/2025	Infrastructure lead	Next generation wi-fi provision, public safety, Lone worker mobile assistance, Improve visitor experience Improved Wi-Fi speed across visitor facilities	20: Wireless Access points deployed across estate
			31/03/2025	GIS projects Officer, Infrastructure Team		5 recycling sites: Tier 1&2 recycling centres visitor Wi-Fi enabled
30			30/08/2024	Infrastructure Manager, HOS		Provide hi density wi-fi across entire Meadowbank interior

	Maintain Modern computing infrastructure and Communications systems	Replace personal Computing arrangement	31/03/2024	Head of IT & Team	Fast responsive and modern hardware services the needs of users,	Replaced 60 laptops & 60 smart docks. Deploy 60 Double on premise screen arrangements
		Maintain a Council wide Geographical Information Service (NIMA and Council Datasets)	30/10/2024	GIS projects Officer	Single point of reference for Council Property GIS layers	Maintain web app internally accessible to all staff to access property information centrally.
		Telephony copper line migration	31.03.2025	GIS Projects Officer	Migrate alarm and lift lines as required.	Copper lines will be replaced by digital or mobile circuits.
		Teams and ipt voice integration	31.10.2024	GIS Projects Officer	Implement teams Voice integration for CLC and ICT staff as Proof of concept.	POC complete for CLC AND ICT team, Review carried out.
		Magherafelt Chamber	31.09.2024	GIS Projects Officer	Implement a new delegate discussion and AV suite	Chamber will host hybrid committee meeting
31	Provide secure network services	Manage and monitor Network SD wan services and network performance	31/10/2024	Cyber Lead	Network events ingested into SIEM, Performance Dashboard Accessible to support teams. Additional network intelligence tools deployed across estate	Appropriate access deployed to all Teams, SIEM ingested events and analysis.

		Network Infrastructure and configuration review	31/01/2025	Infrastructure team and lead officers	Clear picture of the physical network internal of network access and core switches	Report outlining the Network Switch estate and recommendations
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2.5 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.

GUIDANCE FOR DEPARTMENTS/SERVICES

As you will be aware the below tables show the tolerance level of the “risk appetite” of the organisation. Any risks that have a rating of 10 or above (red) are outside of the range of acceptable exposure and mitigations must be put in place to reduce the exposure or be referred to a higher managerial level for discussion and decision when they arise. Risks falling in the amber zone (7 - 9) are also likely to require some measure of mitigation in order to be acceptable whilst all those in the green zone are considered tolerable and unlikely to require further action or mitigation unless circumstances alter.

This table illustrates the risks identified to deliver the Department's/Services business as outlined in service plan for 2023-24.

(These should be extracted from the Service's Risk Register DO NOT COPY AND PASTE YOUR COMPLETE RISK REGISTER HERE - THIS AREA IS FOR A SUMMARY NARRATIVE ONLY AND RELATES TO THE OBJECTIVES /ACTIVITY OUTLINED ABOVE

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1	Risk : IT01 - Fail to secure systems & data	12	<i>Backup, New infrastructure, testing , recovery procedures</i>
2	Risk : IT04 - Failure for ICT service & systems to meet the requirements of the Council	6	<i>Ongoing monthly meeting SMT reviews, internal & External audits</i>
3	Risk : IT03 - Loss / Breach of Personal Data	12	<i>Policies , Guidance, Awareness</i>
4	Risk : IT02 - Lack of funds, skills and knowledge of new systems development	12	<i>Budgets, virements , Monthly review, Training</i>
5	IT06 - Fail to prevent Fraud, bribery, theft within ICT services	12	<i>Technical controls, policies ,awareness</i>
6	Risk : IT05 - Loss of systems availability / inability to restore system within timeframe.	8	<i>Testing , documentation,</i>

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

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.