



06 June 2024

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee to be held in The Chamber, Cookstown at Mid Ulster District Council, Council Offices, Burn Road, COOKSTOWN, BT80 8DT on Thursday, 06 June 2024 at 19:00 to transact the business noted below.

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
5. Deputation: Armagh & Dungannon Early Years

Matters for Decision

- | | | |
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| 6. | Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan) 2024 to 2025 | 3 - 60 |
| 7. | ICT Strategy | 61 - 80 |
| 8. | July Committee Schedule | 81 - 82 |
| 9. | Member Services | |

Matters for Information

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| 10. | Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 9 May 2024 | 83 - 90 |
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11. Corporate Services and Finance Directorate Service Plan 2024-25 91 - 132
12. Annual Contribution: Somme Association 133 - 136

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

13. Magherafelt Chamber Upgrade
14. Staff Updates – Organisational Restructure and Other
15. Staff Matters for Decision

Matters for Information

16. Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 9 May 2024
17. Staff Matters for Information
18. Contracts and DAC Registers - Update

Report on	Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan) 2024 to 2025
Date of Meeting	Thursday 6 th June 2024
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 2024-2025.
2.0	Background
2.1	The 2014 Local Government Act places a general duty on the Council to " <i>....make arrangements to secure continuous improvement....</i> " 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 (corporate plan measures).
3.0	Main Report
3.1	There is no statutory duty to consult on the improvement plan, but rather the improvement objectives. The four new improvement objectives proposed for 2024 to 2025 went out for public consultation from Monday 26 th February to Friday 19 th April 2024 at 12 noon. 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 May Policy and Resources committee meeting.
3.2	<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 2024/25. 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
3.3	Senior management, were content with the review of the proposed improvement objectives. The rationale for each improvement objective, associated links to the Community and Draft Corporate Plan (2024 – 2028) were considered and approved by elected members as a focus for continuous improvement at their Policy and Resources committee meeting of Thursday the 8 th of February 2024 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 2024/25 – (refer to table 1 below).

Table One - Proposed Improvement Objectives 2024-2025

Proposed Improvement Objectives 2024/2025	
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

3.4 Together with additional commentary provided from the public consultation, the Council has developed its 2024-2025 Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) around the four objectives (refer to Appendix One Performance Improvement Plan 2024 to 2025). This is the fourth year that the four improvement objectives appear in Council’s performance Improvement Plan, having been reviewed in December 2023 into January 2024, and having been refreshed and updated from April 2024 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 draft corporate plan (2024 to 2028) 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 2024-2025.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix One: Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan) 2024-2025 .

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

May 2024

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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 PIP 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.

The continued cost of living crisis, increased interest rates and inflation remains uppermost in many of our citizen's minds. The eventual length and depth of these challenges are unknown, but our future aspiration remain undiminished. Providing support, direction and guidance to the residents and businesses of our district is fundamental to what the Council does.

The PIP Plan builds on the work that the Council and its partners undertook in April 2021 to March 2024. During this time we have made good progress, as confirmed in our Annual Reports, published in September each year. We have been able to push forward with many of our corporate ambitions – taking decisions to improve services for residents and deliver efficiencies at the same time. Something that will continue to be a key theme as we move forward.

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, guard against an increased risk of exclusion within our most vulnerable communities, positively transform service delivery and the customer journey.

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.

Our relationship with local communities is one where we move forward by working together and where the Council can play a vital role in marshalling energy and resources to improve people's lives and give families and communities reasons to be optimistic about the future. I invite you to work with Council and use your voices, your energy and your influence to help us unlock important and lasting improvements for everyone who live and work in Mid Ulster.



Councillor **Dominic Molloy**
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 current plan forms part of the second year of a two year plan which spans from 2023/24 to 2024/25.

Council at the time of writing the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025 is completing its consultation exercise regarding its development of the new Corporate Plan for 2024 to 2028. The corporate plan is a central component of the local council business architecture, acting as Council's strategic framework for action during the lifetime of the Council, linking key elements such as policy, organisation, operational activity, governance, and performance management. This new plan will contribute to the continuing delivery of Council priorities and has a range of aims, ambitions, objectives and measures, some of which are short-term, that can be delivered relatively quickly, while others are longer term, i.e. will take time to develop and implement.

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 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 Priorities were considered and approved by elected members as a focus for continuous improvement at their Policy and Resources committee meeting of Thursday 8th of February 2024 and thereafter were ratified at the February Council meeting. The proposed improvement objectives will form the basis of Council’s second year of its 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
Year Two:**

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 late February through to mid-April 2024, produced a report on the final improvement objectives, which were considered by Senior Management, and subsequently considered by elected members for approval at their May 2024 Policy & Resources Committee before being considered by Council.

The review of the improvement projects for 2024 to 2025, along with other statutory and corporate indicators (i.e. contained within the Council's PIP plan) will be reported by the 30th of September 2025 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 26th February to Friday 19th April 2024 at 12 noon. 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, mailing lists, internal staff meetings, and the council's website.

2.3 What the Consultation told us

- **89.29% 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.*

- **92.59% 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.*
- **100% of respondents agreed with objective three:** - *To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and the environment.*
- **92.31% 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 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 under finalisation for 2024 to 2028 post public consultation) is a four-year plan. Corporate plans within Councils are in general 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. During the past 12 months Council has rolled out a phased approach with the introduction of a new appraisal scheme, entitled Personal Contribution and Support Process (PCSP).

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:

- **Customer first** – we will engage and listen to our customers to better understand what you want and need to offer excellent access to good quality services.
- **Respect** – we will celebrate diversity and treat everyone equitably and with respect
- **Excellence** – we will continuously improve our services and work towards the best Mid Ulster there can be
- **Honest and Trustworthy** – we will be open and accountable in developing our plans and delivering services.
- **Innovative** – we will seek to make maximum use of technology and other opportunities to improve services in our district

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 eight 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 "Health" Indicators, which have to date been measured across the Council. This suite of corporate level indicators were linked to 8 key areas; Economy, Waste management, Council facilities, Better Responses, Resident satisfaction, Staffing, Engaged workforce and Finance.

These measures were re-evaluated and revised and a new set of corporate performance measures ; aligned to Council's new Corporate Plan for 2024 to 2028 (draft), appear in Appendix Two. The new corporate (set by us) performance measures will be monitored and reported regarding their performance status. The performance updates will continue to be reported to Senior Management and Council on a regular basis. Progress made against the corporate performance indicators will also be 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 2024) 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 (set for us), as well as progress against corporate measures (set by us) will be presented to Council's Policy & Resources committee.

By 30th September 2025, the council will publish a self-assessment report setting out how we have performed against the Improvement Plan for 2024- 2025 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.

“Good primary objective providing it is realistically promulgated and all impacts considered and balanced.” –

(Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey Consultee Excerpt; April 2024)

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 1,000 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 6,375 tonnes per year of Carbon equivalent per annum. £60,000 of income from the sale of electricity. Feasibility of solar panels at Tullyvar & Magheraglass assessed and report to committee.
3. Increase participation in the Eco-Schools programme, which	All schools in Mid Ulster engaged in programme and pupils well informed on the

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
encourages and directs young people to think about climate action including litter, recycling, energy saving, and water conservation etc.	environmental impacts of their activities, percentage of schools with Green Flag Status.
4. Monitor and review air quality across the District to determine whether national air quality objectives are being met.	Air Quality statistics 2023 - to be compiled, produced as an annual Report and engagement with the community through stakeholder meetings.
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 76 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. 250 homes annually across Mid Ulster helped to improve energy efficiency of their homes.
7. Seek to bring recycling and biodiversity themes into creative art project targeting schools,	Continuation of the creative arts programme while promoting greater awareness among participants of the

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
disability groups and older people programmes.	benefits of recycling and how the arts can contribute to the recycling agenda.
8. Review and revise Council's pilot habitat assessment tool, include biodiversity enhanced recommendations into schedules of work 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.	Creating healthy council managed habitats
9. Introduce and pilot the Sustainable NI Sustainability Assessment Tool for capital projects	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.
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	Submission of Plan Strategy** for IE, which includes policy that will guide, enhance and protect the local environment while encouraging sustainability.

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
Clogher Valley and; policy, which encourages more sustainable forms of transport, and reduces the need to travel by private vehicles.	
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	Production of a Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan - Strategic and operational approach to sustainable

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
	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 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. Support the appointed Net Zero Delivery Officer who will co-ordinate the regional development of both Council net zero action plan and industry led, sector specific Net Zero opportunity assessments and action plans that will support the Mid-South West	Increased business awareness of the practical steps and opportunities available to realise carbon, energy and cost savings in order to future proof their business.

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
(MSW) region in the transition to Net Zero.	
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. Scope and develop a Master Active Travel Plan by March 2025	The potential for Active Travel projects within the district will have been scoped out, developed into a strategic document (Master Plan) which will aid in the application for external funding.
21. Co-ordinate the development of an indoor leisure energy user group action plan across 5 indoor leisure centres: Greenvale Leisure Centre (LC), Cookstown LC, Dungannon LC, Maghera LC and Money more 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 continue to be 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.

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 & percentage of schools with Green Flag Status.
- Air Quality within District determined within annual Air Quality Report.
- Number of community stakeholder engagements held regarding Air Quality across District.
- % 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 into creative art activities/programmes.
- Number of Council owned assets/land which have schedules of work that include biodiversity enhancements recommendations.
- Number sustainability assessment guidelines, tools developed.
- Number of officers trained in utilising sustainability screening tool
- Department forwards MUDC Draft Plan Strategy.
- Numbers of vehicles replaced in Low /Zero carbon -Replacement Fossil Fuel Capital Fleet Programme.
- Electric charging capacity scoping exercise report produced
- Number of annual fuel usage reports produced.
- Carbon Management Plan in place
- Annual building heating / electricity usage reports produced
- Number of facility carbon management plans developed
- Number of Display Energy Certificate (DEC's) assessments completed.
- Flexible Working Arrangements Guidance "Hybrid/Agile working" in place and baseline figures established for Miles travelled by staff commuting to work
- Stage 4 of the "NI Adapts" Planning Toolkit completed
- Council approval for Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan.
- 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.

- Number of senior business leaders engaged in seminars on Net Zero Transition (across Mid-South West region - MSW)
- Number of industry led Net Zero Opportunity Assessment Plans created (MSW)
- Baseline data established for potential urban /green spaces
- Develop and Seek Council approval for Mid Ulster Active Travel Master Plan.
- Indoor leisure energy user group create action plan

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:

Our Service Delivery- Achieve a 20% reduction in carbon emissions by March 2028 through implementation of our Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan.

Our Service Delivery - Complete a Climate Change Adaptation Plan

Our Service Delivery - Achieve the Circular Economy Target to recycle 60% of municipal waste by March 2028

Our Service Delivery - Advance our vision to meet the strategic planning and wellbeing needs of our citizens by progressing the Local Development Plan 2030 Draft Plan Strategy to Public Inquiry Stage by March 2028

Leadership and Partnership in Local Growth- Visibly progress the Mid-South West Growth Deal initiatives.

Being the Best Council Possible: Increase staff engagement and wellbeing by 2028

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.

“The ways of working need to involve non-techie people being able to access services and in a way that suits how we are in Mid Ulster”.

(Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey Consultee Excerpt, April 2024)

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 2024, 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 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.

Whilst 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.
2. Research, develop and deliver a new staff intranet that is fit for purpose and suitable for integration within other online tools currently taking place	"SharePoint" intranet act as a hub where team members can access everything they need. Our staff can find the information they need about the Council quickly and easily on a new intranet. Improved internal communications that will contribute to a connected and engaged employee group that feels informed and involved.

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make?- (Outcomes)
3. Implement Digital Infrastructure Actions from Digital Transformation Strategy (e.g. invest in roll out, uptake and usage of cloud based integral collaboration, communication and hybrid working tools).	Staff have the connectivity and equipment to work from wherever they need and where their communication is seamless and simplified
4. 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
5. 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
6. Procurement and initial implementation of Customer Experience solution for deployment across council services.	Customer facing services designed and configured within a system environment reducing the need over processing of customer queries and service requests across and around the Council

How will we know?

- Phase Two of Financial module in place – Contracts module, Electronic Cash receipting, Back Office receipting/ Auto Bank reconciliation
- New staff intranet in place.
- Wider integration of telephony and collaboration tools implemented.
- Number of Mid Ulster micro/small businesses supported to adopt new digital technologies to transform their business operations by March 2026.
- Direct User Group “Accessibility” questionnaire completed
- Number of accessibility audits/checks by digital design for accessibility.
- Customer Service system procured and awarded.

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. Enhanced customer services “right first time”.

Partnerships: Who do we need to work with?

Northern Ireland Executive and Departments, Members of Council, Staff from various service areas across Council, Implementation Partner, 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:

Our Service Delivery: Support delivery of a strong business economy by fostering start-ups; creating growth and scalability opportunities; promoting jobs; and developing Mid Ulster as a vibrant tourist destination.

Our Service Delivery: Implement a Customer Experience Platform by 2026 and have it fully operational for two customer facing services by March 2028

Being the Best Council Possible: Increase staff engagement and wellbeing by 2028

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

“Target roadside litter throughout the Council area. Our roadsides are a disgrace and the litter must be a negative impact to selling the area for any and all purposes. Collecting litter is fine but education on ‘taking it home’ and ‘binning it’ has to be the crucial message. Pride in the area!”

(Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey Consultee Excerpt, April 2024)

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 than 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 of “Don’t Mess Up Mid Ulster” scheme in dog fouling ‘hot spots’).	Effective and visible way of responding to anti-social behaviour, resulting in raising 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, businesses,	Sixty supported “Clean-ups” carried out across Mid Ulster district electoral areas (DEA) involving a range of stakeholders involved including schools, community

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
community groups and sports clubs.	groups, sports clubs, businesses etc. Increase "Adopt a Spot" registrations and GIS mapping of litter bins throughout District completed.
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 2024/25 (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 Carnogher, 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.
6. Continue to raise Parks and Open Green Spaces management standards across Council Properties by attaining	Enhancing horticultural, cleanliness, biodiversity, community involvement, and environmental management standards across the Districts recreational spaces.

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
one additional Green Flag/Blue Standard award by 2024/25.	
7. Produce a work plan to support the need to address dereliction and vacancy across the district (subject to commitment with key government departments such as DfC, DAERA etc.) and apply to DfC for capital funding for Phase 2 of Town Centre “Spruce Up Scheme	Injecting new life into vacant / derelict properties. Creating new jobs across the district. Encouraging shoppers to physically come into towns and villages.
8. To research, develop and embed a Council-wide volunteer framework which includes a policy, procedures and guidance documentation to support the implementation of a policy by 2024/25	Create an enabling and facilitating environment for volunteering within council by providing quality volunteering experiences where the Council will be better placed to attract, involve and retain volunteers.

How will we know?

- 85% of reported straying dog service requests are responded to within three working days
- 85% of unwanted dog service requests are responded to within five working days.
- Number of Council dog fouling ‘hotspots’ where “Don’t Mess Up Mid Ulster” scheme introduced
- Number of community clean ups supported throughout District
- Number of “Adopt a Spot” registrations completed within year
- Litre Bin GIS mapping exercise completed

- 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 delivered.
- Number of Forest Schools Projects identified and delivered by end of March 2025
- Number of attendees each Forest school project
- Number of blue and green flag management standards attained
- Securing funding from Department for Communities for Town Spruce up Scheme Phase 2.
- Council wide volunteer framework developed

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, and dog-fouling etc. Improved quality and cleanliness of the public areas citizens, tourists, and businesses encounter across the District. Widen opportunities for volunteering across a range of Council wide services

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 and volunteers.

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

Links to Corporate Plan Themes:

Our Service Delivery: Increase customer satisfaction and participation in our leisure, outdoor recreation and arts, culture and literary facilities by March 2028

Our Service Delivery: Co-design and deliver accessible community-based leisure and outdoor recreation facilities and programmes that meet our citizens' needs

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

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

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.

“Delivering a capital investment programme, enhancing facilities and opportunities for local people provides the opportunities for the Council to enhance the accessibility of facilities through the District, thus future proofing for an ageing population and expanding the footfall to facilities that can increase their level of appeal via implementing accessible practices within the built environment.”

(Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey Consultee Excerpt, April 2024).

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 regeneration. 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:

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.
2. Develop a versatility matrix and an associated learning and development plan for Capital Service delivery team by April 2025.	Streamline processes for efficiency compromises within the capital projects delivery team through staff development.
3. Ensure members of the public are kept informed of the progression of Council's Capital Projects rolling programme, via updates across communication channels.	Members of Public better informed regarding up-to-date information reference Council's Capital Programmes Projects across District
4. Review and revise the Standardised accessibility and inclusivity guidance materials for councils 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** - Contractor appointed for construction of Maghera Public realm scheme, Magherafelt Public Realm scheme under consideration with funders.
 - **13 Major Projects - (over £250K):** Thomas Clarkes GAC, Connecting Pomeroy , Gortgonis Health & Well Being Hub enabling Works, Dgn Railway Park completed RIBA stage 2 , MUSA Sports 3G & Running Track to be on site , Maghera Wetland Park, Active Travel Projects (Clogher), Small Settlement Programme(Moneymore, Bellaghy (Hunters Park), Castledawson, Clady, Coalisland to be designed and constructed and works to Castlecaulfield and Moy to be developed) , Civic Offices remedial works, Forest Improvements at Drumcairn and Derrynoyd, Design works for Cookstown, Dungannon depot replacements.
5 Minor Projects - (under £250k): Ballsaggart Lough/ Dgn Park Lake Reservoirs, Murley Road Footpath, Greenvale LC Repairs, Burnavon Theatre Upgrades, Aughnacloy Changing Room repairs
- Capital Programme Delivery training learning development plan in place.
- Revised Standardised Accessibility and Inclusivity for Capital Programmes guidance in place.

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, other local regional councils, 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:

Our Service Delivery: Build on our place-shaping capital investment programme to develop new, and enhance our existing, physical assets

Being the Best Council Possible: - Increase staff engagement and wellbeing by 2028

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

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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>	153
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>	Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 30 weeks
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 by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)</p>
W2		<p>Set 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 by DAERA

* On the 13 November 2023, 'Go Succeed' launched across all Councils replacing all other Economic Development programmes including 'Go For It' which ceased implementation on the 30 September 2023. 'Go Succeed' is the new go-to source for free expert business advice focusing on the three pillars of starting, growing and scaling your business.

Appendix Two:

Draft Corporate Plan: Objectives, Measures and Rationale – Our Focus for 2024 to 2028

Corporate Plan Theme One: Our Service Delivery

Objective 1.1: Achieve a 20% reduction in Council’s carbon emissions by March 2028 through implementation of our Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan.

Measure: Percentage (%) reduction in operational emissions by March 2028

Objective 1.2: Complete a Climate Change Adaptation Plan by 2025.

Measure: Climate Change Adaptation Plan completed by 2025.

Rationale/Why: The impact of climate change on water availability, food production, the environment and the livelihoods of the global population is growing. We know the risks around Climate Change will continue to increase if we do not take steps to cut our carbon emissions. We must act now as what we do today will affect the lives of our children tomorrow and our future generations. Our Climate Change Adaptation Plan sets out how we will assess and adapt to the risks and opportunities from climate change.

Objective 1.3: Achieve the Circular Economy Target to recycle 60% of municipal waste by March 2028.

Measure: Percentage (%) of municipal waste recycled by March 2028

Measure: Statutory Waste Performance Standards and Indicators met.

Rationale/Why: Recycling waste protects the environment and saves on, or reduces, the costs of disposal. Recycling and/or reusing waste benefits the environment by lessening

the need to extract resources or source new materials, lowers the potential for contamination and saves energy.

Objective 1.4: Build on our place-shaping capital investment programme to develop new, and enhance our existing, physical assets.

Measure: Number of capital investment projects committed between 2024 and March 2028

Measure: Number and Amount in £ capital investment spent over the period

Measure: Percentage (%) improvement in life satisfaction in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

Rationale/ Why: Our Capital Investment Programme helps us build a better future for our citizens. It includes a programme of works to extend, refurbish, upgrade, redevelop and revitalise our existing and new assets, all set within our budgetary constraints. Our programme seeks to benefit the environment and promotes opportunities for our citizens to access and enjoy our facilities and outdoor spaces.

Objective 1.5: Implement a Customer Experience Platform by 2026 and have it fully operational for two customer facing services by March 2028

Measure: Customer Experience Platform (CEP) implemented by 2026

Measure: CEP fully operational for two customer facing services by March 2028

Measure: % increase in customer satisfaction for service accessibility and response.

Rationale/Why: We want to put our citizens and customers first and to do so we need to understand what people want, need and value. Embedding a positive customer experience journey into our service delivery will ensure that we put our customers first and serve their needs. It is critical to the sustained growth of our Council.

Objective 1.6: Support delivery of a strong business economy by fostering start-ups; creating growth and scalability opportunities; promoting jobs; and developing Mid Ulster as a vibrant tourist destination.

Measure: Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity

Measure: Number of businesses supported through growth orientated scaling programmes and events (including tourism)

Measure: Number of visitors (footfall) to Council visitor attractions.

Rationale/Why: Mid Ulster district has a strong economy, especially in the fields of agriculture, construction, engineering and manufacturing. Growth in the production of goods and services means that their quality and quantity increase. Our economy contributes to the standard of living enjoyed by our citizens.

Objective 1.7: Work collaboratively with central government to align existing community development and support programmes and implement our Community Development Strategy and Action Plan by March 2028

Measure: Community Development Strategy and Action Plan implemented by 2028

Measure: Number of programmes integrated

Measure: Percentage (%) of CVS consultee participants satisfied with the Co-design process

Measure: Percentage (%) improvement in life satisfaction in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

Measure: Percentage of improvement in locus of control for people in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

Rationale/Why: Mid Ulster has a vibrant community and voluntary sector. We want to shape new ways of working across central and local government by aligning programme delivery and funding, exploring how things could be done differently to reflect local need. The motivation to work towards achieving improved processes is driven by the desire to ensure that people in communities are ultimately better off.

Objective 1.8: Redirect wealth and public spending into communities by promoting a Community Wealth Building approach to local economic development

Measure: Community Wealth Building Framework and Action Plan implemented by 2028

Measure: Amount of social value generated per £ invested

Measure: % improvement in locus of control for people in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

Measure: % improvement in self efficacy for people in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

Rationale/Why: Community Wealth Building seeks to contribute to a more stable and equitable economy by capturing the power of public organisations to better address poverty, marginalisation and economic injustice. CWB supports collective community ownership of, and democratic control over, the local economy. It does this through community land and property trusts, community development financial institutions, anchor institution procurement strategies, fair employment and just labour markets, local social enterprise, and public and community banking.

Objective 1.9: Increase customer satisfaction and participation in our leisure, outdoor recreation and arts, culture and literary facilities by March 2028

Measure: Percentage (%) increase in participation across each service area

Measure: Percentage (%) increase in customer satisfaction across each service area

Measure: Percentage (%) improvement in life satisfaction in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

Objective 1.10: Co-design and deliver accessible community-based leisure and outdoor recreation facilities and programmes that meet our citizens' needs

Measure: Percentage (%) increase in customer satisfaction with community-based leisure and outdoor recreation

Measure: Percentage (%) increase in participation in leisure and outdoor recreation

Measure: Percentage (%) of citizens satisfied with their involvement in the co-design process

Measure: Percentage (%) improvement in life satisfaction in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

Rationale/Why: Council has a substantial offering of leisure, outdoor recreation and arts, cultural and literary provision including our leisure centres, parks, green spaces, play areas, theatres and cultural sites. These services are at the core of Council's direct service delivery to our citizens. We also want to hear from our citizens and listen to what they tell us so that our community-based leisure and outdoor recreation facilities and programmes meet their needs

Objective 1.11: Advance our vision to meet the strategic planning and wellbeing needs of our citizens by progressing the Local Development Plan 2030 Draft Plan Strategy to Public Inquiry Stage by March 2028

Measure: LDP Draft Plan Strategy progressed to Public Inquiry Stage by March 2028

Objective 1.12: Listen to and reflect the needs of our citizens in shaping the Planning Service

Measure: Percentage (%) of improvements identified by Planning Service users implemented by March 2028

Objective 1.13: Meet statutory planning targets during the life of the Corporate Plan

Measure: Number of Statutory planning targets met

Rationale/Why: The Council's Local Development Plan is made up of the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan. Its purpose is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will implement the strategic objectives of the Regional Development Strategy and guide development decisions within Mid Ulster District Council up to 2030. Our Planning system is about getting the right things built in the right places, about spaces around buildings and other issues such as job creation, regeneration and climate change. We want to meet the statutory targets that have been set for our Planning Service and we want to improve our service delivery by listening to and reflecting the needs of our citizens in shaping our Planning Service.

Corporate Plan Theme Two: Leadership and Partnership in Local Growth.

Objective 2.1: Visibly progress the Mid-South West Growth Deal initiatives

Measure: Number of Mid-South West Growth Deal projects approved by March 2028

Measure: Number of Full Growth Deal Business Cases progressed by March 2028

Rationale/Why: Growth Deals are packages of investment provided by the NI Executive and UK Government, complemented by other sources of funding. They are drivers for innovation and growth helping to raise productivity and driving competitiveness across Northern Ireland. The Mid South West Growth Deal is a collaboration between Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon; Fermanagh and Omagh and Mid Ulster District Councils. Our region is fortunate to have many strengths however, there are a challenges around productivity levels, an infrastructure deficit, a need to attract new workers, migration issues and a weaker outlook for population growth. We have developed a number of Growth Deal projects designed to supercharge the growth of our economy including for example, a new A29 Cookstown Bypass which will relieve traffic congestion in the town centre, reduce journey travel times, improve road safety and enhance the town centre environment.

Objective 2.2: Actively participate with other partners to substantially progress the co-ordinated management of Lough Neagh

Measure: Number of engagements with other bodies responsible for the co-ordinated management of Lough Neagh.

Rationale/Why: Lough Neagh is the biggest freshwater lake in Britain or Ireland. It supplies 40% of Northern Ireland's drinking water and is a haven for wildlife. It is a globally important Ramsar site, a European Special Protection Area and a NI Area of Special Scientific Interest. However, there are problems around falling fish populations, deteriorating water quality and reduced bird life. Council will actively participate with the many other partners who have a vested interest in and responsibility for the protection and conservation of this unique natural environment.

Objective 2.3.: Collaborate with local and regional governments and jurisdictions to improve the services we deliver to our citizens and advocate on their behalf

Measure: Number of advocacy engagements with local and regional government ministers and officials

Measure: Number of cross-cutting strategic collaborative working opportunities developed

Objective 2.4: Continue to engage and work alongside our Community Planning (CP) partners to deliver Mid Ulster Community Plan outcomes and have a new Plan in place by 2028

Measure: Number of Community Planning Partnership meetings facilitated

Measure: Number of CP actions progressed where Council has the lead role

Measure: New Community Plan in place by 2028

Measure: Percentage (%) improvement in life satisfaction in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

Rationale/Why: We are an outward looking, progressive Council. We will collaborate across local and regional governments and jurisdictions to deliver better results, seek out opportunities to identify where best practice exists and work with others on similar projects to bring about greater gains for our citizens. In our leadership capacity, we will identify and raise key issues that impact on our citizens, supporting them to have their say and identifying solutions that meet their needs.

Corporate Plan Theme Three: Being the Best Council Possible.

Objective 3.1: Increase staff engagement and wellbeing by 2028

Measure: Percentage (%) days lost to sickness

Measure: Percentage (%) staff satisfied with their job

Measure: Percentage (%) of staff who feel their wellbeing has improved

Measure: Percentage (%) staff turnover

Measure: Percentage (%) of staff completing mandatory learning and development training

Objective 3.2: Implement a Workforce Plan to attract and retain the top talent we need to deliver our services

Measure: Workforce Plan implemented in 2026

Measure: Percentage (%) staff progression across the organisation

Measure: Number of apprenticeships successfully completed by March 2028

Measure: Number of external awards achieved by March 2028

Rationale/Why: Investing in our employees' wellbeing brings about many benefits including increased resilience and employee engagement, reduced sickness absence, higher performance and productivity, better work-life balance and ultimately improved service delivery for our citizens. We want to foster a workplace culture of loyalty and high morale with staff who feel their wellbeing needs are being met. Workforce planning help us strategically align our business goals with our people strategy. Workforce planning helps us to respond to changing customer needs by developing a more skilled pool of staff. It helps reduce the cost of labour by promoting efficiency within the workforce and eliminating unproductive practices. It helps us retain our employees, develop our people and deliver best value for money through our talent.

Objective 3.3: Remain a financially sustainable and viable Council that takes a prudent approach to spending public money.

Measure: Pounds (£) cash balance maintained within the Council's pre-established cash limits

Measure: Pounds (£) loans outstanding – remain within Council's operational & authorised borrowing limits

Measure: Medium Term Financial Plan & associated prudential indicators developed and reviewed

Rationale/Why: The services delivered by Council impact on many aspects of our lives and the communities we are part of. We face bigger pressures and challenges including cost of living increases, higher inflation, reduced income streams and heightened demand for services. The financial challenges which lie ahead mean that we must focus on ensuring that our financial position is resilient, affordable, responsible and sustainable

Objective 3.4: Ensure our Governance Framework is appropriately integrated within our service delivery models.

Measure: Annual unqualified independent audit certificate

Measure: Number of reportable data breaches

Measure: 80% of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 working days

Measure: Number of successful (above threshold) legal challenges to Council's

Procurement exercises.

Rationale/Why: Our corporate governance framework centres around decision-making and accountability. It is an essential support structure setting out our rules, procedures, practices and organisational roles that ensure accountability, fairness and transparency. It helps us build trust amongst our ratepayers and citizens. It includes processes for identifying, assessing and managing risks and helps us to avoid regulatory violations or litigation, thereby increasing our performance and long-term sustainability.

May 2024

Report on	ICT Strategy
Date of Meeting	6 th June 2024
Reporting Officer	Barry O'Hagan, Head of IT
Contact Officer	Barry O'Hagan, Head of IT

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 seek the approval of the adoption of The New ICT Strategy for Mid Ulster District Council
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council has developed a Draft ICT strategy for the period 2024-2027 attached in Appendix 1. The Strategy has been presented to Council, Senior Management & Leadership Teams for review. Following on from that engagement the final strategy is presented for formal adoption.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The ICT Strategy includes: The vision "We envision a Mid Ulster District Council where technology seamlessly enhances the lives of our citizens, Councillors and staff and underpins the success of our organisation."
3.2	Five Principles <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitators and enablers 2. Cyber Security 3. Needs Based 4. Harness Our Data 5. Collaborative Cloud Based Systems Aims The aims of the ICT strategy are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved customer experience by enabling the delivery of services via digital channels, offering self-service options, and modern communication channels.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Improved governance and decision making to ensure that ICT's investments, resources, and energy are being used to support the Council's goals. 3. Enhanced operational efficiency by streamlining workflows, automating manual processes, leverage emerging technologies to enhance the staff and customer experience, and reduce costs. 4. Continue to protect information systems, data and privacy by maintaining and enhancing cybersecurity measures, ensuring compliance with regulations, and best practice. 5. Drive innovation by empowering our teams with the digital tools, skills and infrastructure to transform their services. <p>The strategy attached as appendix 1 to the report details more actions and outcomes around the aims of the strategy in detail.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations: None
4.1	Financial: None
4.2	Human Resources:
4.2	<p><u>Risk Management Implications</u> The ICT strategy seeks to address the Cyber Security risks presented to the Council directly and highlights Cyber Security as a key principle within the strategy.</p>
4.3	Screening & Impact Assessments:
4.4	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: The Head of IT has screened the proposed plans and confirms that the screening exercise has not identified any significant adverse equality or good relations implications</p>
4.5	<p>Rural Needs Implications: The Head of IT has screened the proposed recommendation and confirms that the screening exercise has not identified any significant adverse rural need implications.</p>
5.0	<p>Recommendation(s) That Members note the contents of the ICT Strategy and adopt the strategy for Council.</p>
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix 1: ICT Strategy 2024-2027

ICT strategy

2024 - 2027



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

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Introduction

Smartphones, tablets, home broadband, social media, and mobile apps have all changed the way customers and staff go about their daily lives and request, track and receive services.

There are also huge opportunities to use the advances in technology to deliver services in more effective ways and move away from manual paper-based processes.

Making the most of what technology has to offer will be key to becoming a dynamic, forward-thinking council that meets the changing needs of our customers, communities, Councillors and staff.

As an organisation we hold valuable data and insight about our customers, services and communities, which we need to harness in order to make smarter decisions about resources, direction and delivery of our services.

Our continued success depends on our ability to embrace technology and make it work for us. This strategy aligns with the Council's Digital Transformation Strategy and outlines our approach to using technology within Mid Ulster District Council.

We must maximise the value we get from technology through greater collaboration, increased efficiency, and a shared corporate vision.



We must maximise the value we get from technology through greater collaboration, increased efficiency, and a shared corporate vision.



Approach

We took a collaborative, data driven approach to developing the strategy...

Review of related strategies



We reviewed the current strategies that were relevant to producing our ICT Strategy. Annex provided at the end of this document.

Workshops



We ran workshops with eight teams to find out how they were using their IT systems to support service delivery.

Systems audit



We have reviewed 74 systems and apps with teams to find out what works and what needs improvement.

Best Practice



We have undertaken research and taken professional advice to ensure that we are adopting best practice for our sector.

Vision

We envision a Mid Ulster District Council where technology seamlessly enhances the lives of our citizens, Councillors and staff and underpins the success of our organisation.

Mission

Our mission is to harness the power of technology to bridge the gaps created by our modest team size.

We commit to crafting and executing a technology strategy that not only acknowledges our limitations but transforms them into opportunities for organisational improvement.

Through innovation, empowering colleagues in their own digital literacy, and strategic planning, we aim to streamline processes, optimise resources, and enhance the overall digital infrastructure of Mid Ulster District Council.

Principles

The core principles that will guide our work and decision making are...

1. Facilitators and enablers

Facilitators and enablers: we will provide the organisation with strategic, technical expertise and advice to get the most out of technology.

2. Cyber security

Cyber security: robust, up-to-date cyber security will be core to our operations.

3. Needs based

Needs based: technology will be driven by what our customers, communities, Councillors and staff need - not led by technology trends.

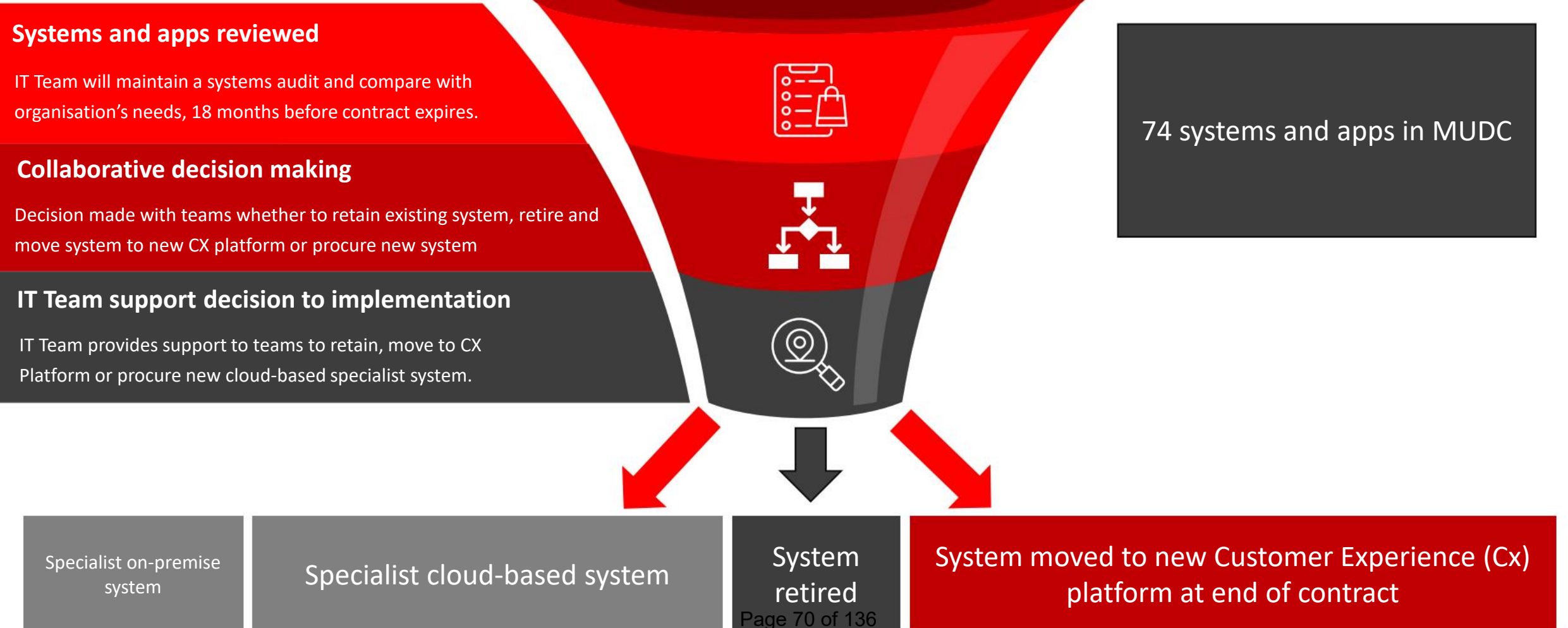
4. Harness our data

Harness our data: we will support the organisation to capture and make the best use of its data for reporting, monitoring and decision making.

5. Collaborative, cloud-based systems

Collaborative, cloud-based systems: we will move our operations to become cloud-based rather than on-premise and progress out-of-date systems to a single customer experience platform, where feasible, or support teams to find the right specialist solution for them.

Systems and apps review



Benefits of consolidating systems



Retain specialist systems where they provides significant additional value



Identify opportunities for specialist systems to communicate with CX platform.



Business aligned



Shared functionality and improvements



Cross cutting business data



More integrated



Systems communicate - integrations, API's, automation.

Aims

The aims of the ICT strategy are:

1. **Improved customer experience** by enabling the delivery of services via digital channels, offering self-service options, and modern communication channels.
2. **Improved governance and decision making** to ensure that ICT's investments, resources, and energy are being used to support the Council's goals.
3. **Enhanced operational efficiency** by streamlining workflows, automating manual processes, leverage emerging technologies to enhance the staff and customer experience, and reduce costs.
4. **Continue to protect information systems, data and privacy** by maintaining and enhancing cybersecurity measures, ensuring compliance with regulations, and best practice.
5. **Drive innovation** by empowering our teams with the digital tools, skills and infrastructure to transform their services.

1. Improved customer experience

Digital technology, underpinned by robust processes and well-trained staff, offers Mid Ulster District Council a fantastic opportunity to improve services whilst meeting the challenges of public sector budgets. To deliver improved customer experience, we will:

Citizens

- Support the procurement and implementation of a new Customer Experience (CX) platform to deliver a seamless customer journey by phone, in person and online.
- Support the automation and integration of our services and systems to deliver services to citizens more effectively

Colleagues

- Ensure all colleagues can use cloud-based technology to be able to work anywhere.
- Standardise our laptop offer and ensure we always have a bank of 'Ready to Go' laptops for new starters or replacement devices from 2024.
- Replace the corporate intranet with intuitive M365 solution.

Councillors

- Ensure Councillors have access to up-to-date data and information on services to support citizens, in an easily accessible format.

ICT Help Desk

- Improve our help desk model to promote self-service, and automatic, intelligent resolution, to better meets the needs of our staff and IT colleagues.



2. Improved governance and decision making

With the technology now at our disposal, we can take a one platform approach across the Council, while still meeting the business process and reporting needs of individual services. To ensure that we maximise any opportunities to coordinate our technology across the council, we will provide improved governance and structure for decisions in relation to technology and systems. We will:

Develop a holistic view of our technology

- Adopt a whole council, cloud-based customer experience platform, where possible (specialist systems where needed will be retained).

Technology procurement

- Provide technical expertise and input to procurement involving technology.

Systems management support

- ICT will maintain an overview of systems, systems managers and a contract management system to ensure that opportunities for improvements are realised with our stakeholders and suppliers.



3. Enhanced operational efficiency

Changes in technology now mean staff can work from flexible locations and still able to securely access the devices, systems, and services they need to be effective in their roles. We will:

Make the most of Microsoft 365

- Maximise the use of Microsoft 365, integrate telephony with Teams and support staff to use collaboration tools available to them to improve efficiencies.
- Managed modern workplace programme, adopting information governance principles to migrate away from our file servers onto Teams/Sharepoint

Improve inter-department new starters/leavers processes

- Ensure that new starters and leavers are notified via HR to the IT Team and system owners to ensure new accounts are created or deleted in a timely fashion and improve cyber security.

Rolling programme to upgrade devices

- Develop a rolling programme of staff device upgrades so that all staff get a device refresh every 5 years.

Data collection, management and analytics

- Ensure our data principles, part of the digital transformation strategy, are fully embraced and supported.
- Power BI dashboards are created iteratively across the organisation depending on the needs of services, using links to live data held within Line of Business systems to auto refresh information.



4. Continue to protect information systems, data and privacy

We will protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of our information and systems by embedding the safety and security into all our technology decisions, this will enable modern service delivery without compromising our infrastructure or our citizens' data. We will:

Align our cyber security approach

- Align our cyber security approach, policies and assessments with national and industry standards such as National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), GovAssure, and Cyber Essentials, and respond to the needs of new legislation.

Monitor activity

- Monitor activity on our systems using automated intelligent tools that can alert us to unusual behaviour, spot vulnerabilities early and help us to manage emerging threats.

Secure by design

- Design security into our networks, by implementing intelligent network monitoring, policies and controls.

Empowered to act

- Support our colleagues to understand and identify security risks to the business and be empowered to act appropriately.



5. Drive innovation

The council aims to adopt a responsible and ethical approach to the use of new and emerging technology in-line with the principles of fairness, transparency, accountability and privacy. Technology is fast moving and capabilities will certainly change during the lifetime of this strategy. We will:

Grow our digital skills

- Set clear expectations for the minimum level of digital capabilities for all our staff and support teams to exceed those expectations to accelerate the delivery of the Digital Transformation Strategy in their business area.

Create an online training portal

- Provide a range of online training in a single location to all staff so they can develop and maintain their digital and data skills.

Embrace new technology that works for us

- Monitor developments in technology such as Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence and other future advances to provide leadership and guidance for the organisation.
- Adopt new technology that works for us as an organisation to meet the needs of our staff, residents and communities.



Resources

This strategy is owned and supported by the senior leadership team of Mid Ulster District Council. Though the council’s IT team have key responsibilities in delivering this strategy, all staff and leaders have a role to play in ensuring its success.

IT Team Resources

Compared with many similar sized UK and NI local authorities, Mid Ulster District Council has a small IT function. To maximise the impact that the IT Team have, it is vital that the team is focused on high value technical work.

Proactive v reactive

The IT Team is a service team that spends approximately 75% of its time responding to service requests from teams for support, leaving 25% of their time available for high value strategic projects that support service delivery as outlined in this strategy.

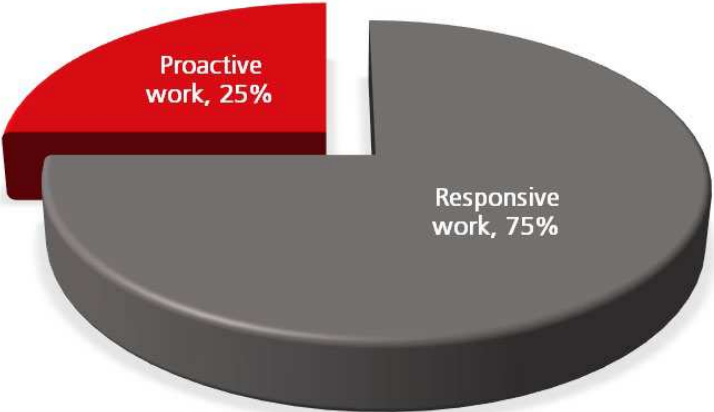
With the strategic use of automation and standardisation of our service desk and hardware processes, and supporting colleagues to become more self sufficient the aim is to change the proactive to reactive ratio of the team to at least 60% proactive – 40% reactive.

Budget

The strategy will be contingent on budget being available for its delivery.

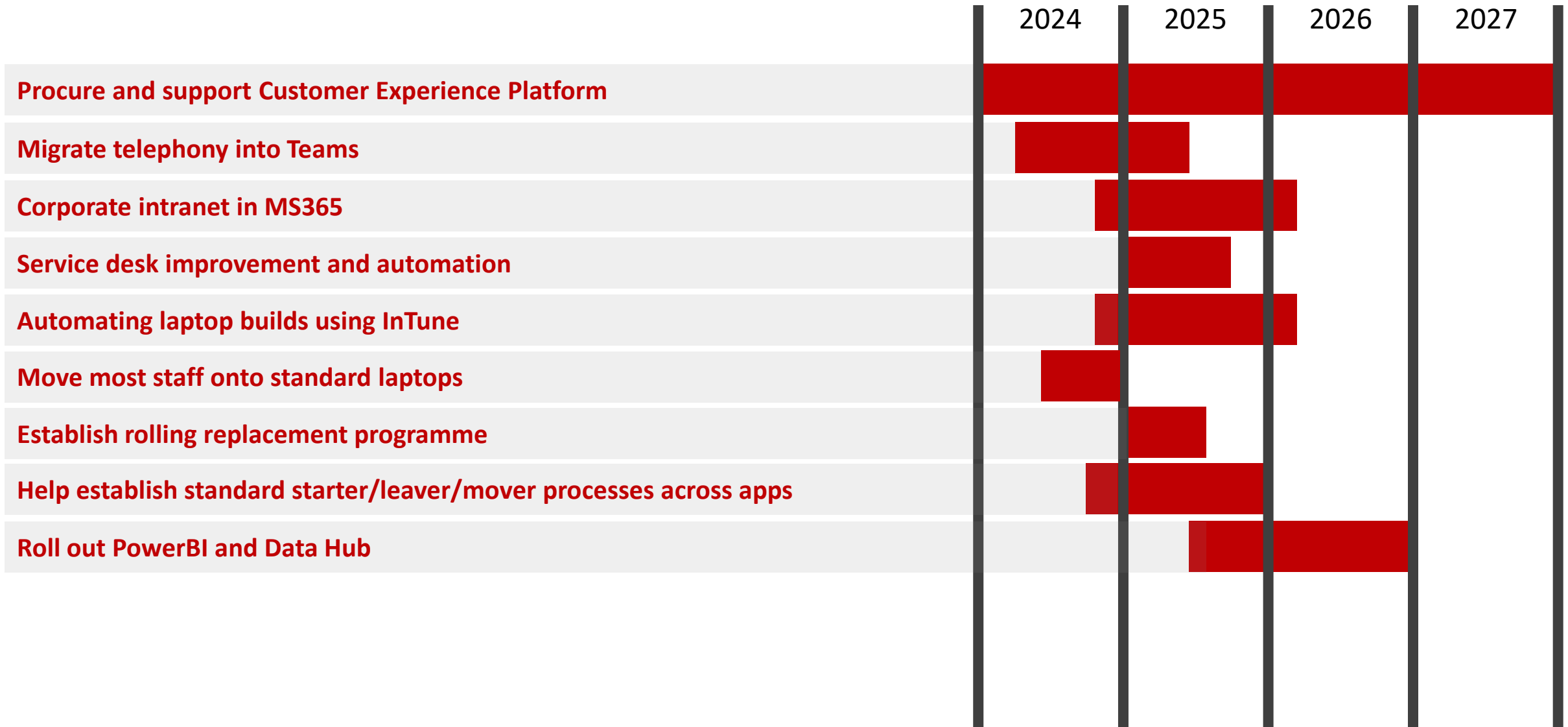
Partners

We aim to support our teams using Line of Business systems to improve relationships and get more out of their contracts with partners, particularly relating to training and support. However, we will be constrained by existing contracts and partners’ support provision.



The IT Team’s current time allocation

Timeline



Related strategies and plans

- Corporate Plan 2020-2024
- Digital Transformation Strategy
- Data Principles
- National Cyber Strategy 2022

Report on	July Committee Schedule
Date of Meeting	6 June 2024
Reporting Officer	Joseph McGuckin
Contact Officer	Joseph McGuckin

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 seek Members approval to move the date of the Committee meetings in July to accommodate the General Election scheduled for 4 th July 2024.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council at its meeting held on 25 April 2024 approved the schedule of meetings for the period 2024-2025 as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee on 11 April 2024. The date set within the schedule for the July Committee meetings were 1-4 th July 2024.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Members will be aware that a general election has been called for Thursday 4 th July 2024. As the run up to the date for the General Election impacts the dates scheduled for the July committees it is proposed to have the committees as undernoted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Committee: 2 July 2024 at 6.00pm Chamber, Dungannon • Environment Committee: 8 July 2024 at 7.00pm Chamber, Cookstown • Development Committee: 9 July 2024 at 7.00pm Chamber, Cookstown • Policy & Resources Committee: 10 July 2024 at 7.00pm Chamber, Cookstown
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Not Applicable
	Human: Not Applicable

	Risk Management: Not Applicable
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Not Applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: Not Applicable
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>That the date of the committee meetings in July 2024 be moved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Committee: 2 July 2024 at 6.00pm Chamber, Dungannon • Environment Committee: 8 July 2024 at 7.00pm Chamber, Cookstown • Development Committee: 9 July 2024 at 7.00pm Chamber, Cookstown • Policy & Resources Committee: 10 July 2024 at 7.00pm Chamber, Cookstown
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	None

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 9 May 2024 in the Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown

Members Present

Councillor Corry, Chair

Councillors Brown, F Burton, Cahoon, Gildernew, Johnston, McAleer, McFlynn, McLernon, S McPeake

Officers in Attendance

Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive
Mrs Campbell, Strategic Director of Environment (SD: Env)
Mrs Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (SD: ODSP)
Ms Dyson, Head of Human Resources (HoHR)
Ms Keys, Marketing and Communications Development Manager (MCDM)
Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E)
Mrs McNally, Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Finance (AD: CS&F)
Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisation Development, Strategy & Performance (AD: ODSP)
Mr Tohill, Strategic Director of Corporate Services and Finance (SD: CS&F)
Miss Thompson, Committee and Member Services Officer

Others in Attendance

Councillor Kerr

Agenda Item 4 – Deputation: NIPSA

Mr Mullholland, Deputy Secretary
Ms McSherry, Classroom Assistant and NIPSA Rep

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 by referring to Annex A to this minute.

PR089/24 Notice of Recording

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

PR090/24 Apologies

Councillors Bell, J Burton, McLean, Molloy, Totten and Wilson.

PR091/24 Declarations of Interest

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

Councillor Gildernew declared an interest in agenda item 15 – Staffing Matters for Decision.

PR092/24 Chairs Business

None.

PR093/24 Deputation – NIPSA

The Chair, Councillor Corry welcomed Mr Mulholland and Ms McSherry to the meeting and invited them to address the committee.

Mr Mulholland stated the purpose of the presentation tonight was to make Members aware of the issues regarding the ongoing pay and grading review in education. Mr Mulholland stated it was regrettable that the presentation is needed but that he was grateful that Members were prepared to listen and take discussion points forward. Mr Mulholland provided a history of the pay and grading review in education which arose from 2018/2019 NJC pay agreement at which it was agreed that all NJC bodies would review pay spines. Mr Mulholland outlined the issues raised as part of the discussions of the pay and grading review, namely –

- Length of pay scales
- Pay differentials
- Outstanding job evaluations
- Ongoing education welfare officers pay dispute

Mr Mulholland stated the pay and grading review was supposed to deal with these issues and after two years of negotiations consent was agreed and a business case was constructed however due to the suspension of the Assembly this business case stopped moving. Since the return of the Assembly with additional budget the expectation was that the pay and grading review would be dealt with quickly however he advised that within the new budget not one penny has been allocated to this review. Mr Mulholland highlighted that the review is not for senior staff in the education authority but for lower paid workers – cleaners, classroom assistants, kitchen staff etc and that the review is valued at £180 million for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. Mr Mulholland advised that since the first draft of the budget there have been new developments and that there is a proposal for an early draw down of £58 million to cover 2024/25 with nothing backdated. Mr Mulholland advised that assurances have been sought that the issue of backdating is also dealt with and a response to this is expected in the near future.

Mr Mulholland stated there is now anger amongst education authority employees and that this will mean a period of industrial unrest and that unions will submit legal notice for industrial action next week. This industrial action will be in the run up to the summer but will continue into the new school term in the autumn. Mr Mulholland stated that it

has been clear in exchanges with political parties that there is agreement as to the justice of the case being advanced and also commitment to try to do something about it but to date this has not turned into cash on the table.

The Chair, Councillor Corry thanked Mr Mulholland for the informative presentation and stated she has stood alongside education workers on the picket lines and recognises the important work they all do.

Councillor McLernon stated that Sinn Féin recognise the importance of the education workers who are amongst the lowest paid in the community and do the most vital work to support children and young people. The Councillor stated that the Sinn Féin Finance Minister is committed to working collectively with the Education Minister to find a resolution for the education workers and will be raising the matter as a priority with the Treasury.

Councillor Kerr stated he was a passionate trade unionist and hoped that the situation regarding the pay and grading review is resolved quickly. The Councillor stated it is a shame there is a shortfall regarding backdated pay and that he would encourage NIPSA to reach out to every other local authority in the North on this matter.

Mr Mulholland stated that both the Education and Finance Minister have been clear on their commitment to go to the Treasury to seek additional funding and that he was also aware of the other pressure points such as health that are out there but that he would ask that the pay and grading review is put to the top of the political agenda. Mr Mulholland stated that there has been engagement at various levels – Secretary of State, Ministers, MLAs and Councillors and anything that can be done by this Council to reach out to other Councils would be extremely helpful and that Councillors use the avenues available to raise the issue up through the assembly. Mr Mulholland stated there needs to be a collective push by everyone and that a lot of pressure will need to be put on Treasury to find a resolution.

Councillor Brown stated he was a Chair on a Board of Governors and that cleaning, kitchen and building maintenance staff are an integral part of the school. The Councillor stated that his party will continue to press on the pay and grading review issue.

Mr Mulholland stated that the Education Minister has met with NIPSA and is fully supportive of the pay and grading review and that this is noted and helpful, likewise with the Finance Minister. Mr Mulholland stated that the issue now needs to be elevated within the Assembly and given the same standing as health as a crisis area that needs to be resolved. Mr Mulholland stated that unfortunately there is potential for an extended period of disruption in schools and one of the things under discussion is industrial action around exam periods and that this is not a comfortable place to be.

Councillor Johnston stated that as a teacher who got a pay award and is going to get backdated pay she was embarrassed that there was no equality for support workers. The Councillor stated she had no doubt that both the Education and Finance Minister will be committed to giving priority to the issue and asked in terms of the £58 million for an early draw down for the 2024/25 pay award if this is the best that can be hoped for.

Mr Mulholland stated that the expectation and demand is that the pay and grading review is paid in full and that there is nothing left out. Mr Mulholland stated that the pay

and grading review was a fully negotiated settlement and that as a trade union he expected that when negotiations take place that it means something. Mr Mulholland stated that the Education Authority are the employer and that they should be instructed to pay what was agreed.

The Chair, Councillor Corry stated the consensus of the Members is that they are fully supportive of the education workers and that Members will continue to raise the pay and grading review issue wherever they can and that she would encourage people to join a trade union as that is where the strength is.

Mr Mulholland, Ms McSherry and Councillor Kerr left the meeting at 7.26 pm.

Matters for Decision

PR094/24 Request(s) to Illuminate Council Property

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

- Mesothelioma UK: Action Mesothelioma Day: 5th July 2024 Colour: Pink
- Deafblind Awareness UK: Deaf Blind Awareness Week: 27 June 2024 Colour: Purple
- Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS): World PCOS Day: 2 September 2024 Colour: Teal
- North West Migrants Forum: Black History Awareness & Show Racism the Red Card: 1 October 2024 Colour: Red

The HoSS&E advised of additional requests which had been received since the report was published namely:

- Child Brain Injury Trust: Acquired Brain Injury Awareness Week: 24 May 2024 Colour: Purple and Blue
- Mid Ulster Loneliness Network: Loneliness Awareness Week: 10 June 2024 Colour: Blue

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake
Seconded by Councillor F Burton and

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to illuminate the three designated Council properties as follows –
- Mesothelioma UK: Action Mesothelioma Day: 5th July 2024 Colour: Pink
 - Deafblind Awareness UK: Deaf Blind Awareness Week: 27 June 2024 Colour: Purple
 - Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS): World PCOS Day: 1 September 2024 Colour: Teal
 - North West Migrants Forum: Black History Awareness & Show Racism the Red Card: 1 October 2024 Colour: Red

- Child Brain Injury Trust: Acquired Brain Injury Awareness Week: 24 May 2024 Colour: Purple and Blue
- Mid Ulster Loneliness Network: Loneliness Awareness Week: 10 June 2024 Colour: Orange and Yellow

PR095/24 Member Services

No issues.

Matters for Information

PR096/24 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 11 April 2024

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 11 April 2024.

PR097/24 Update Committee on the Outcome of the Consultation Undertaken on the Council's Proposed Performance Improvement Objectives 2024 – 2025

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on the outcome of the public consultation undertaken on Council's proposed improvement objectives 2024 – 2025.

PR098/24 Rural Needs Annual Progress Return to DAERA (2023/24)

Members noted previously circulated report which set out Mid Ulster District Council's Annual Progress Report to DAERA in relation to the Rural Needs Act NI (2016) for the period 2023-24.

PR099/24 Annual Subscriptions

Members noted previously circulated report which outlined correspondence received from the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) and the National Association for Councillors (NAC) and Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) on annual contributions payable for 2024-2025.

PR100/24 Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance Directorate Service Plan 2024-25

Members noted presented previously circulated report which set out the Directorate Service Plan for Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance for period 2024-25.

PR101/24 Chief Executive - Marketing & Communications Service Plan 2024-25

Members noted previously circulated report which set out the Service Plan for the Marketing and Communications Service for the 2024-2025 year.

Live broadcast ended at 7.29 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor McLernon
Seconded by Councillor Brown 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 PR102/24 to PR115/24.

Matters for Decision

- PR102/24 Land and Property Matters
- PR103/24 Staffing Matters for Decision
- PR104/24 Revised Policies: (1) Safeguarding of Children & Young People Policy (2) Adult Safeguarding Policy
- PR105/24 Draft ICT Strategy for Review & Feedback
- PR106/24 Ann Street Development – Update
- PR107/24 Verbal Update: Mid South West Growth Deal: Desertcreat Project

Matters for Information

- PR108/24 Confidential Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 11 April 2024
- PR109/24 Microsoft Enterprise Licensing Agreement Tender Award Update
- PR110/24 Staff Matters for Information
- PR111/24 Managing Employee Attendance Report 23/24
- PR112/24 Pension Discretions Policy
- PR113/24 Treasury Management – Update
- PR114/24 Financial report for 12 months ended 31 March 2024
- PR115/24 Contracts and DAC

P116/24 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 8.17 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

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

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

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

Thank you and we will now move to the agenda.

Report on	2024-25 Service Plan: Corporate Services & Finance
Date of Meeting	Thursday 6 th June 2024
Reporting Officer	Claire McNally, Assistant Director Corporate Services & Finance
Contact Officer	JJ Tohill, Strategic Director Corporate Services & Finance Barry O'Hagan, Head of ICT

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's Service Plan for Corporate Services & Finance for period 2024-25.
2.0	Background
2.1	Council is structured around four Directorates together with the Chief Executive's area which includes Communications and our Planning function. To assist Directorates, under the direction of four Strategic Directors, to inform and structure business annually, Directorates engage with their teams in developing Service Plans for their areas of work.
2.2	Whilst directorate plans do not cover everything undertaken, they contain the focus of activity aimed at improving upon how we deliver on our services to the, which are ultimately for the people of our district. These plans are integral to our corporate improvement and planning arrangements running through what we do.
2.3	The directorate service plan for the 2024-25 period is attached as appendix A for reference and consideration.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Our Corporate Services & Finance Directorate cuts across a number of business areas. These areas extend to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance – to include 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 - Facilitating efficient, effective and compliant procurement of goods and services.

- **Insurance** - Ensuring that Council is adequately insured against all reasonable and foreseeable risks in accordance with statutory requirements and the Council's risk appetite.
- **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.
- **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;
- **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.
- **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.

Our Focus 2024-25

3.2 We will continue to deliver on our "business as usual" work throughout the Directorate. Our 2024-25 improvement activities and priority areas of focus for us to deliver on within our directorate are as follows:

- a. Successful implementation of Phase 2 of Financial Management Information System, Tech1.
- b. Improve our financial reporting and information for budget holders and members
- c. Review our Procurement Policy and continue to provide training and support to staff in key areas
- d. Continue to offer training and support to staff (and members where required) on specific legal issues arising;
- e. Support the implementation of the Customer Experience Platform;
- f. Integrate voice and Office Teams
- g. Implement greater security controls and monitoring of our infrastructure
- h. Implement the wider ICT strategic aim & objectives
- i. Support and enable the Digital transformation initiatives

3.3	The Directorate service plan is attached as appendix A.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: not applicable and relevant to this reporting.
	Human: none specifically identified other than a focus on delivery of the plan as part of the Directorate business.
	Risk Management: Implementation and continued improvement serve as mitigation to risk of non-delivery of service.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: not applicable and relevant to this reporting at this time. Considerations will be given to elements as and when required on implementation.
	Rural Needs Implications: A RNIA is not considered proportionate to the scope of this piece of work.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the committee notes the Corporate Services & Finance Directorate Service Plan 2024-25.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: Corporate Services & Finance Directorate Service Plan 2024-25



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

CONTENT

SECTION	TITLE
	Foreword
1.0	OVERALL PURPOSE & SCOPE OF THE DEPARTMENT
1.1	Purpose and scope of the department
1.2	Responsibilities
1.3	Customers & Stakeholders
1.4	Performance Overview in 2023/24
2.0	IMPROVING OUR SERVICES AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2024/25
2.1	Budget - 2024/25
2.2	Staffing Complement Department – 2024/25
2.3	Service Plan – 2024/ 25
2.4	Risk Management of Department
3.0	OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS
3.1	Equality Duty
3.2	Rural Needs Duty

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

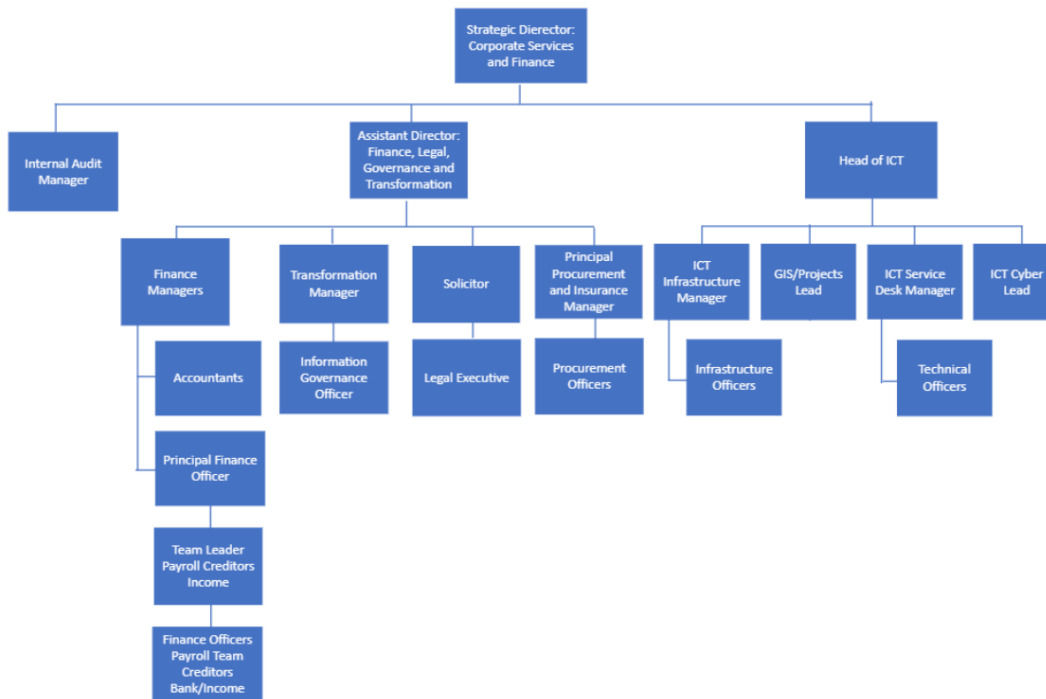
Budget Headings	£
Staffing costs	2,279,154
Insurance	1,233,572
Other	5,364,190
Interest payable	206,833
Minimum Revenue Provision and Capital Financing	1,813,326
Legal Fees & Subscriptions	274,947
Gross Budget	11,172,022
Income	(3,000)
Net Budget for 2024/25	11,169,022

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



16

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.
		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
2						

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

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.

Report on	Somme Association: 2024-2025 Membership Subscription
Date of Meeting	Thursday 6 June 2024
Reporting Officer	Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
Contact Officer	Eileen Forde, Committee & Member Services Manager

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	To update the committee on correspondence received from the Somme Association on annual membership contributions payable for period 2023- 2024
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council is currently a member of the Somme Association to which it has elected member representation. Details of current Membership are confirmed on the council website under Outside Bodies at https://mid-ulster.cmis-ni.org/midulster/OutsideBodies.aspx
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The council has received an invoice for payment to the Somme Association for the period 2024-25. Provision for the subscription has been made within 2025-2025 budgetary provision (Democratic Services).
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Somme Association - £1,200 (£1,000 + VAT).
	Human: not applicable
	Risk Management: not applicable
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: not applicable

5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the committee notes request for payment from the Somme Association for the 2024-2025 annual subscription, arising from its membership.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix A - Correspondence from Director, The Somme Association

THE SOMME ASSOCIATION



Vice-Presidents
The Viscount Brookeborough, DL

Chairman
Mr Alan McFarland

Director
Mrs Carol Walker, MBE

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Email: sommeassociation@btconnect.com

Face Book: The Somme Association

Honorary President:
H.R.H The Duke of Gloucester, KG, GCVO

15th May 2024

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

Dear Mr McCreesh

Re: 'Friends of the Somme' yearly subscription 2024/25

I am writing to inform you that your council's yearly subscription to the Somme Association is now due. This year's fee, in line with the previous year, is as follows: £1,000.00 plus VAT of £200.00 making a total of £1,200.00. The subscription relates to the financial year ending 31st March 2025. Please find an invoice enclosed which contains our bank details for BACS payments. If a purchase order number is required, could you please arrange for it to be sent to sommeassociation@btconnect.com

As in previous years the annual subscription is extremely important to the Association and its' work going forward in these difficult times.

The Officers of the Somme Association wish me to thank your Council for its continued support over this very difficult time and sincerely hope that it will continue to support our work at the Somme Museum and the Ulster Memorial Tower, France. May I take this opportunity to send best wishes and continuing good health.

Yours faithfully

Carol Walker MBE
Director
Enc.

