

Report on	Outcome of consultation undertaken on the Council's proposed improvement objectives 2020-21 and 2021-22
Date of Meeting	Thursday 4 th June 2020
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	L Jenkins, Performance & Quality Officer

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 update the committee on the findings and outcome of the consultation undertaken on the Council's proposed improvement objectives 2020 - 2021 and 2021 - 2022.
2.0	Background
2.1	Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Communities on taking forward the general duty to improve, in deciding how to discharge its duty under section 84 and 85, 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.
2.2.	There is no statutory duty to consult on the improvement plan, but rather the improvement objectives. Four new improvement objectives were previously proposed to and recommended by the committee for a two year period from 2020-21 to 2021-22. Each improvement objective and their assigned SRO will conduct a review at the end of 2021 to ensure that the improvement objectives and associated milestones and activities are still relevant.
2.3	<p>The Committee at its March 2020 meeting considered and approved 4 new Draft Corporate Improvement Objectives for 2020 – 2021 to 2021 - 2022, rationale and associated links to the community and corporate plan. The committee recommended the council's Improvement Objectives as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 the environment. 4. We will contribute to the ongoing regeneration of our district by delivering a capital investment programme, enhancing facilities and opportunities for local people <p>Further detail regarding the rationale on why each objective was identified is attached in Appendix A, pages: 4, 8, 12 & 16).</p>

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p data-bbox="240 275 1203 309">Results from Improvement Objectives Consultation Report May 2020</p> <p data-bbox="240 342 1414 577">This year the consultation exercise ran from the 6th of March to the 1st of May and focused on our proposed objectives. Under each improvement objective, the Council asked whether respondents agreed with the objective or disagreed with the objective. Respondents were also asked to provide any related commentary they had regarding the proposed improvement objectives. The consultation survey also asked respondents to outline any improvements the council should consider in the future. The final question asked respondents to provide any further comments relating to the draft Improvement objectives</p> <p data-bbox="240 611 1414 880">3.2 The consultation involved a survey made available for completion and submission online and or by post to the council. To ensure maximum engagement the process was promoted through a variety of communication channels including social media outlets, the council's website, press releases, e-mails, staff intranet and internal staff meetings. In total 50 consultees responded to the consultation, 24% of consultees responded prior to the lockdown due to Covid-19, while the majority of consultees 76% responded after the 23rd of March (post lockdown). This is down slightly from last year's figure of 55 responses received for the 2019-2020 improvement objectives consultation exercise.</p> <p data-bbox="240 913 1414 1518">3.3 A report on the outcome of the consultation is appended (appendix A). In summary;</p> <ul data-bbox="240 981 1414 1518" style="list-style-type: none"> • 98 % of respondents agreed with objective one: - <i>Mid Ulster District Council will seek to reduce the environmental impacts of our own activities and will contribute to the improvement of the wider environment through local action.</i> • 98% of respondents agreed with objective two: - <i>We will ensure a more connected Mid Ulster where new technologies and ways of working, empower citizens to get the best services that matter to them.</i> • 94 % of respondents agreed with objective three:- <i>To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and the environment.</i> • 94% of respondents agreed with objective four: - <i>We will contribute to the ongoing regeneration of our district by delivering a capital investment programme, enhancing facilities and opportunities for local people</i> <p data-bbox="240 1541 1414 1742">3.4 With such significant endorsement of the four proposed improvement objectives, together with additional commentary provided, the council will be able to develop its Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) around them. When reviewed, the respondent's commentary did not warrant the removal, amendment to or addition to the objectives proposed. The additional commentary and views provided, is informing our wider improvement activity across the services.</p> <p data-bbox="240 1809 1414 1877">Performance Improvement Plan and Annual Assessment Report - Response to Covid-19</p> <p data-bbox="240 1910 1414 2038">3.5 The social and economic disruption of COVID-19 will have a significant impact on our District, our citizens, the services we provide and the way we provide them. As lockdown restrictions ease, social distancing measures are enacted in the workplace and service provision gradually recovers, transitions and adapts to the 'next' normal, the Council must</p>

	<p>consider the impact of COVID-19 on the plans which are currently being developed at all levels of the Service Planning and Performance Management Framework, and in particular the Performance Improvement Plan and the retrospective Annual Assessment Plan. How well we plan ahead now will determine how well we adapt to the challenges and opportunities within the post COVID-19 environment. Council's performance improvement plan (PIP) is normally considered by June Council and the annual assessment report considered by September Council and both reports are then published on the Council's web-site.</p> <p>SOLACE (NI) has written to the Minister for Finance to request that some requirements under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 be suspended for 2020-21. The Department of Communities has verbally confirmed that Councils will not be required to produce their annual Performance Improvement Plans by June 2020. This report was compiled while awaiting written guidance from the Department, regarding performance duties and statutory deadlines, due to have been provided by end of week commencing 18th of May 2020.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Council Financial Recovery Plans in response to Covid-19
	Human: Council Human resource Recovery Plans in response to Covid- 19
	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 the Committee consider the outcome of the Corporate Improvement Objectives Consultation 2020 to 2021 and recommend the adoption of the objectives.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix One: Outworking's from Consultation on Mid Ulster District Council's Performance Improvement Objectives 2020-2021 to 2021-2022