



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Democratic Services Chief Executive's Office

SERVICE PLAN - 2021 / 22

Date

Consulted within staff team

24/06/2020

Discussed & signed off by Director

/ /2020

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1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Service

Reporting to the Chief Executive, Democratic Services delivers a range of services which have a reach and impact across all Council services, and form an integral part of the Council's governance framework. The Service provides back office support to the wider Council, and facilitates the delivery of its committee system and provision of support to its elected representatives (councillors) across its 7 District Electoral Areas.

1.2 Responsibilities

The Service is specifically responsible for and charged with delivering the following functions with an organisational reach across the Council:

Committee Services – facilitation and management of council and committee meetings of Council to include the development of agendas, compilation of meeting packs, providing the summons to councillors and minute taking and follow up activity on decisions resolved

Equality, Disability and Good Relations - in ensuring that the Council meets its Equality Scheme and providing support in ensuring services are delivered in line with obligations under Section 75 (1) and (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Rural Needs - providing assistance across Council on the rural needs statutory duty under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies and in any service design/delivery decisions.

Performance Management & Improvement – developing and embedding arrangements to support continuous improvement in the delivery of services, by embedding a culture which encourages and champions improvement in everything the Council does to meet its Performance Improvement obligations under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. Introduction of an improvement framework, which supports council's strategic planning through reporting, validating performance data and on-going monitoring

Processing Civic Recognition Requests from Elected Representatives – receiving, processing and making recommendation to council on requests made for civic recognition.

Member Services – in providing support to councillors as required, progression and attainment of the Elected Member Development Charter

Corporate Policy – providing support and advice on the formulation of policies and corporate policy development across the Council.

Information Requests – coordinating the receipt and response to Freedom of

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

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

1.4 Performance Overview in 2019/20

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years’ Service Plan (2019-2020). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference. It does not reflect the entire activity of the Service but rather the core areas, which were identified as being a focus throughout 2018-19

2019/20 Performance Overview	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
<p>Member Development & Services: To create efficiencies within Committee Services activities by expanding the use of the council’s Committee Management Information System (CMIS) across three modules by 31st March 2020</p>	<p>Completed: throughout the period of the plan Committee Services have; commenced the use of the minutes module of the CMIS system to build and generate minutes within the platform; publishing the Annual Registration of Interests of Councillors online through CMIS; and now member attendance figures online annually.</p>
<p>Information Requests: To increase the number of Freedom of Information requests</p>	<p>Completed: Overall, the number of requests received is considerably high</p>

<p>responded to within 20 days by 31st March 2020</p>	<p>for an authority the size of Mid Ulster District Council, although the number received is down by approximately 40 requests compared to the 2018-19 period. The council has increased its % attainment by 2 percentage points up from 86% last year to an overall attainment of 88% in 2019-20. Attainment of those responded to within 20 days continues to remain high though falling marginally short of the 90% set standard.</p> <p>The Council has improved its percentage achievement by 2 percentage points on 2018-19. This could in part be interpreted as being achieved due to reduction in the number received throughout 2019-20. Achievement of having 88% of all requests responded to within 20 days should not however be underestimated when you consider the resource in place for the delivery of this function and the approach employed which decentralises responsibility across all Services and Depts. to input/contribute to the process before final responses are issued. In summary, the Council has improved upon its attainment on last year (2018-2019) by 2% moving from 86% up to 88% - just 2% within the 90% standard</p>
<p>Performance Improvement: Develop draft action plan for the introduction of an automated/electronic performance management module as part of Council's enterprise management System by March 2020.</p>	<p>Commenced and Ongoing: The Service has conducted a benchmarking exercise with other regional and UK wide Councils to determine market providers who would provide "best fit" Council requirements of an electronic system tailored to meet the business and reporting requirements of Part 12 of the Local Government Act 2014. Other associated activities delayed somewhat to the introduction of Technology One modules, being put</p>

	back due to HR Core module requiring to take place first. Non-recurring resource bid paper in process of being developed.
Performance Improvement: Corporate Performance and Improvement Policy agreed by Council	Completed: The Corporate Performance and Improvement Policy was adopted by Council in December 2019 and the officer attended a Policy Briefing session for Heads of Services and relevant Managers to outline the new Policy
Performance Improvement: Corporate Improvement Plan compiled and approved by council by 30 th June 2019	Completed: Annual Corporate Improvement Plan developed and agreed by Council, and Annual Assessment Report compiled reviewing Performance in 2018/19, received unqualified audit opinion regarding Council's duty to comply with Part 12 of Local Govt. Act.
Equality, Disability & Good Relations: To further embed further a culture of equality and good relations within decision-making processes across Council by March 2020	Commenced and Ongoing: the embedding of such arrangements is continual with works continually ongoing. Activities throughout the period included provision of support with equality screenings of which there were 12, delivering training/capacity building sessions to 52 staff from across the organisation, engagement of senior management with an equality and good relations professionals on a range of issues and engagement with Action on Hearing Loss on undertaking accessible checks of our building and facilities across the district.

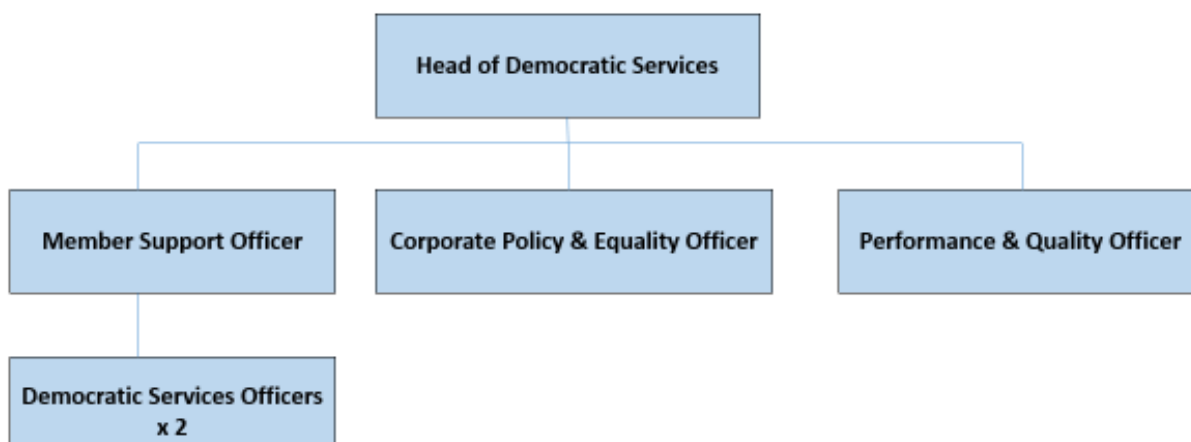
2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2020/21

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2020-21 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1 Budget 2020/21

Service Budget Headings	£
Contributions to Associations & Membership Fees	157,200
Corporate & Democratic Support	268,289
Members Allowances	929,750
Town Twinning	10,000
Gross Budget	1,365,239
Income	0
Net Budget for 2020-21	1,365,239

2.2 Staffing Complement - 2020/21



Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	
Officers	5
Remaining Team	
Total	6

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2020/21

This plan confirms the core activities and actions, forming Democratic Services Work Plan for 2020-21. This is a high-level capture of the Service activities along with some improvement undertakings, which the service will focus on throughout 2020-21. The Plan links to the Councils new 2020-2024 Corporate Plan priorities, Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives, Corporate Indicators and Mid Ulster Community Plan:

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To increase the number of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days by 31st March 2021			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative & creative</i>	<i>Service Delivery: 2.1 We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda</i>			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
To continue to use and further deploy elements of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to process requests	2020-21 throughout	Head of Democratic Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased satisfaction with responses issued determined from the number of Internal Reviews sought over the period Contribution towards meeting the corporate indicator target set by Council 	90% of all Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days
Utilise the Customer Relationship Management System to process Internal Reviews to their conclusion	2020-21 throughout	Head of Democratic Services		

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Enhance the reporting to senior management to display achievement by Service, to identify areas for improvement and early action.	July 2020	Head of Democratic Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased satisfaction with responses issued determined from the number of Internal Reviews sought over the period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days To attain an improvement from 2019-2010 cumulative response rate of 86%
Schedule and facilitate 1hr briefings/conversations with Business Support staff to embed a culture of continued learning around the system, in association with ICT Service.	Sept 2020 - Mar 2021	Head of Democratic Services		
Heads of Services meeting agenda item and continual discussion across the organisation to build capacity	2020-2021 throughout	Head of Democratic Services		

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	Develop (i) a Corporate Performance Improvement Plan 2020 to 2022 and (ii) complete the annual assessment of Council's 2019-2020 Performance Improvement Plan			
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>Leadership: 1.3 We will work collectively to meet the identified needs and priorities of our citizens & connect the people of Mid Ulster</i>			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
1. Analyse documentation regarding potential improvement areas, develop framework for senior management/head of service workshop to identify potential improvement areas/themes/activities. Liaise with senior management and members on potential improvement objectives, develop paper of draft objectives for committee, approval by Council	February 2020	Performance & Quality Officer (PQO)	A performance improvement plan based on prioritised areas	1. Improvement objectives paper to Policy & Resources committee and approved by Council
2. Undertake public consultation exercise of draft improvement objectives	March-May 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	A citizen and stakeholder informed performance improvement plan	2. Public consultation exercise undertaken on Council's new improvement objectives.
3. Following the consultation, analyse and draft consultation outworking's paper on new council improvement objectives and forward report(s) to senior management, Policy & Resources and then Council for approval and communicate with consultees, where requested follow-up was sought	May 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Engaged citizens and approve improvement objectives	3. Consultation outworking's paper on Council's improvement objectives approved

4. Research and draw up key performance questions paper and potential challenges, activities and measures for new improvement objectives and associated projects	April to June 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Provide a challenge and focus for Senior Responsible Project leads	4. Challenge and focus paper produced for Chief Executive and appointed Senior Responsible Officers
5. Develop corporate performance improvement plan for 2020-2022 in line with outworking's of consultation, and in conjunction with Senior Responsible Officers for 4 new improvement projects, as assigned by the Chief Executive, presented to senior management, P&R Committee and thereafter Council approval	July Aug 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Mainstreaming performance improvement in Council	5. Draft Corporate Improvement plan for 2020-2022 developed by end of Aug 2020*
6. Publish approved Corporate Performance Improvement Plan for 2020-2022 by 30 th of September 2019* (proposed)	30 th Sept 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Council transparency and compliance with legislation	6. 2020/2022 Corporate Performance Improvement Plan published on Council web-site by 30 th September 2020*
7. Complete quarterly performance progress reports to Policy & Resources Committee, to include performance improvement plan, corporate performance indicators and statutory performance indicators for 2020 to 2021 performance	Oct 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Informing citizens of Council performance	7. Quarterly performance reports approved by Council
8. Research and liaise with colleagues to develop draft annual performance assessment report for senior management, Policy and Resources Committee and thereafter Council approval	Nov 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Compliance with legislation (Part 12 of the Local Government Act) & Departmental (DfC) Guidance	8. Annual Assessment Report Papers P & R committee and approval by Council
9. Publish Annual Assessment Report for 2019-20 publish by 31 st December 2020.	31 st Dec 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Compliance with legislation (Part 12 of the Local Government Act) &	9. Assessment Report published on Council web-site by 31 st of December 2020**

			Departmental (DfC) Guidance	
10. Prepare folders/files and liaise with Local government auditor in relation to annual inspection of Council's duty to improve***	August 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Compliance with legislation (Part 12 of Local Government Act) & Departmental (DfC) Guidance	10. Unqualified audit opinion

** In context COVID-19, the Dept. for Communities (DfC) corresponded with Councils that new Corporate Improvement plans do not have to be published by June 30th (as in required by guidance/legislation) and new timeframe is to be set*

*** In context of COVID-19 guidance is outstanding from DfC on a date of publication for the annual assessment plan, (guidance usually requires that it be published by 30th of September each year). In the absence of definitive DfC guidance a revised date of 31st December 2020 is being worked to by officers*

**** Awaiting direction from DfC and Northern Ireland Audit Office on timeframes around the Performance Improvement Audit timetable*

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Develop process for verifying and validating performance data through Departmental Business Managers	Sept 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Comply with Audit Recommendations	Validation checker list in place for quarterly reporting
Review, revise and refresh templates for collating, tracking and monitoring PIP projects and PI's	July 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Simplified SMART Performance Improvement project plans	Revised templates in operation

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	Develop the case for the purchase of an integrated performance improvement and business platform			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 2.1 Infrastructure - We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure</i>	<i>Service Delivery: 2.1 We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda</i>			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
<p>1. Move towards developing the case for the purchase of an integrated performance improvement and business platform (phase 2) and system, in line with audit and business requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and research was undertaken during 2019 to 2020 regarding a business performance enterprise electronic platform • During the period, develop the case for and make a bid in 2021 to 2022 budget for an integrated performance improvement and business platform that will allow access, exploration and analysis of performance data using self-service in real time 	Dec 2020	Head of Democratic Services	Single integrated toolkit (enterprise platform) that stores and provides real time and predictive analysis of Council performance data	Budget request successful for use in 2021-2022

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Not applicable, this activity is new and out-with routine service delivery				

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To review and provide recommendations on provision of civic recognition for achievement by our citizens			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 5.2 Vibrant & Safe Communities - We have a greater value and respect for diversity</i>	<i>Leadership: 1.3 We will work collectively to meet the identified needs and priorities of our citizens & connect the people of Mid Ulster</i>			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify representatives for the Working Group on Civic Recognition representative of and in line with the arrangements on the establishment of Councillor Working Groups 	June 2020	Head of Democratic Services Member Support Officer	Members will be engaged in reviewing existing arrangements to identify areas for improvements on providing civic recognition	Meetings have taken place and reports being produced for Policy & Resources Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence and complete an analysis of the provision of civic recognition to date, with a focus on a term of Council 2015-2019 	July 2020	Head of Democratic Services	Members and council officers involved will be informed of arrangements in place and gaps in provision identified	Informed decision making throughout the review process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence and complete a summary paper on existing council practice (provision) and research on existing practice across local government 	July 2020	Head of Democratic Services	Members and council officers involved will be informed of arrangements in place and gaps in provision identified	Informed decision making throughout the review process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene the Working Group of elected members and meet to consider existing practice, existing provision, good practice research and establish a series of 	Aug-Oct 2020	Head of Democratic Services	Meetings of the Working Group held and decisions documented	Meeting Reports will be taken to subsequent and next

recommendations on civic recognition of achievement for citizens of the district				available meetings of Policy & Resources Committees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of Recommendations Report on Provision of Civic Recognition to Policy & Resources Committee by November 2020 	Oct-Nov 2020	Head of Democratic Services	New arrangements in place for receiving, considering and providing Civic Recognition, valued by all elected members, citizens and recipients	Recommendations Report will have been considered and at the stage of implementation by relevant officers

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Not applicable, this activity is new and out-with routine service delivery				

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	Implement Council's Statutory Equality and Disability Duties, to include development of an updated Equality Scheme for 2021-26 and associated Action Plans			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 5.2 Vibrant & Safe Communities - We have a greater value and respect for diversity</i>	<i>Communities: 5.4 We will support & promote respect for diversity & the integration of our minority communities.</i>			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
1. Produce an Annual Report on the delivery and implementation of the Equality Scheme during 2019/20	August 2020	Corporate policy & Equality Officer	Report will identify the progress made in 2020-21 and will provide a focus for the development of a new Equality Scheme.	Report submitted to the Equality Commission
2. Carry out public consultation to seek public and equality consultee approval for the revised Equality Scheme and associated Action Plans	November 2020 - January 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Statutory requirements met and public feedback received to aid service improvement.	Consultation completed and feedback received
3. Develop an updated Equality Scheme, to include a revised Audit of Inequalities, Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Statutory requirements met.	Updated Scheme approved by Council and the Equality Commission (if deemed necessary)
4. Complete and circulate Equality Screening Outcome reports	3 times (April, August & December)	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Equality Consultees will be able to provide comment on screening outcomes.	Reports will be available on the Equality section of the website

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
1. Revise/update Equality Screening form	December 2020	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	An improved screening system	Revised form in place

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To implement the Rural Needs Act. This includes implementing the Actions identified for Local Authorities in the, 'Review of the Implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016'			
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>Leadership: 1.3 We will work collectively to meet the identified needs and priorities of our citizens & connect the people of Mid Ulster</i>			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
1. Provide support to Officers undertaking Rural Needs Impact Assessments (RNIAs)	Ongoing	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Improved Assessment	The number and quality of RNIAs completed
2. Provide training for Officers and Members	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Improved understanding of the role of Council (in Rural Needs) and the legislation	Training evaluations
3. Complete Annual Monitoring Return of Assessments to DAERA	December 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	It will provide a baseline tool for the year ahead	Return completed

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
1. Host regular workshops for decision makers within their organisation (subject to need) for the purposes of increasing awareness	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Increased awareness of Rural Needs legislation	The number of workshops held
2. Review the resources allocated to supporting the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016	March 2021	Corporate Policy &	Improved access to resource	Necessary resources in place

		Equality Officer		
3. Take steps to seek to embed the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 further within their organisation	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Increased awareness of Rural Needs legislation	Inclusion in corporate templates, assurance statements and risk registers
4. Develop effective relationships with rural community organisations and, where appropriate, to seek to engage with the rural community sector in a meaningful and timely manner	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Improved communication and evidence sources to complete assessments	Stakeholder engagements
5. Be open to adopting new and innovative approaches to engaging with the rural community sector	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Improved communication and evidence sources to complete assessments	Stakeholder engagements
6. Publish RNIA Templates on Council's website and that the annual monitoring report includes a link to each public authority's webpage	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Increased transparency for the public and rural dwellers	Templates published on Council's website

Performance Measures	Is the Measure, Statutory, Corporate, Existing, or New?	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 Standard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democratic Services 						
90% of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days	Corporate (Existing)	83%	83%	86%	88%	90%
Responsible Service: Democratic Services						
90% of complaints dealt with within target	Corporate (Existing)	–	–	Baseline	86%	90%
Responsible Service: Chief Executive's Office						
90% of correspondence responded to within target	Corporate (Existing)	–	–	Baseline	86%	90%
Responsible Service: Chief Executive's Office						

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.

3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

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 Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. This is why the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

- Help the Council achieve its overall aims and objectives
- Manage the significant risks the Council faces to an acceptable level
- Assist with the decision making process
- Implement the most effective measures to avoid, reduce and control those risks
- Balance risk with opportunity
- Manage risk and internal controls in the most effective way.

This table illustrates risks identified to deliver the Services business.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	Failure to meet a range of Statutory Obligation on Equality, disability and Freedom of Information Extends to failure to comply with (i) Sec. 75(1) and 75(2) of NI Act 1998, (ii) Freedom of Information Act 2000 and (iii) disability duties under DDA 1995 and Disability Discrimination Order 2006.	4 (Low)	Mitigation extends but not limited to; Equality Scheme in place and being implemented through various action plans and activities; electronic system not being used to process and manage Freedom of Information requests; and Equality Scheme review will commence and the end of 2019-2020 in time for the required 5 year review.
2.	Failure to comply with the Local Government Act 2014 Part 12, to meet a General Duty on performance improvement, which could be caused by having inadequate arrangements in place and this identified during a NI Audit office inspection which could result in statutory recommendations issued by the Local Government Auditor (NIAO) leading to reputational risk. (General Duty on performance improvement requires Council to (i) make arrangements to improve; and (ii) ensure that improvement objectives continually remain relevant to meet the general duty (i.e. continuous improvement)	4 (Low)	Audit undertaken annually by the Northern Ireland Audit Office on the Councils improvement arrangements. No statutory recommendations have been issued to date. Improvement Objectives are being delivered by an appointed Senior Responsible Owners (a member of senior management team)

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)



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Legal Services Chief Executive's Department

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Discussed & signed off by Director

23/06/2020

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1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Service

The service 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 aim of the service is to provide high quality, proactive and timely advice and innovative solutions to the Council in order to assist it operating within the wider legal landscape.

1.2 Responsibilities

The service is specifically responsible for the following:

- The provision of proactive, accurate, innovative and 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;

To liaise with other legal professionals, the courts, government departments, statutory bodies and other organisations in relation to legal matters pertaining to the Council.

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
• The Council; officers; and Elected Members
• Other members of the legal profession, including solicitors and barristers
• The judiciary and court officials
• Individuals residing in and businesses and organisations operating within the district
• Other government departments and agencies
• Other councils; including statutory bodies

1.4 Performance Overview in 2019/20

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2019-2020). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

2019/20 Performance Overview	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent Training delivered for Planning Officers by way of a Workshop on Planning Case Law and Material Considerations. Resulted in tangible improvements for the planning decision making process. 	<p>Completed. To be rolled out and tailored for members.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involved in a cross corporate Collaboration Project regarding Capital Projects with a view to streamlining processes, embedding best practice and ensuring compliance. 	<p>Ongoing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External legal services contract is working well for the most part. Some challenges with particular aspects of work, which we are considering how best to address. 	<p>Completed</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications and outworkings of COVID19 for the service area remain a challenge (and there are potentially opportunities also). 	<p>Extent unknown and ongoing monitoring.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ongoing challenge for the service stems from the very nature of the work involved, i.e., the unpredictability of workflow, work type and caseload, making it difficult to accurately budget and allocate resources. 	<p>Kept under review</p>

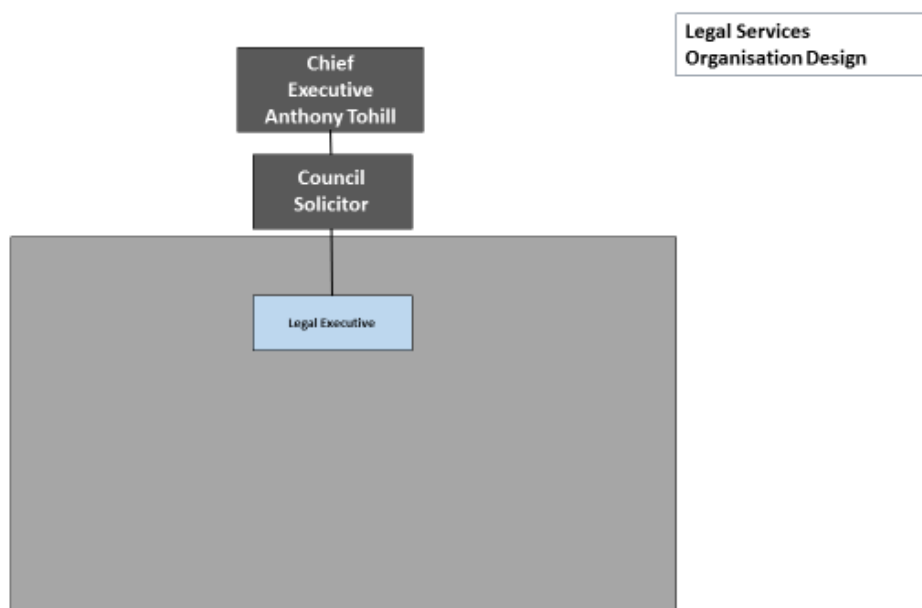
2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2020/21

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2020-21 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1 Budget 2020/21

Service Budget Headings	£
Legal Fees & Subscriptions	124,497
Salaries and mileage	118,356
Gross Budget	
Income	
Net Budget for 2019-20	242,853

2.2 Staffing Complement - 2020/21



Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	
Officers	1
Remaining Team	
Total	2

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2020/21

This plan confirms the core activities and actions, which will form your Service Work Plan for 2020-21. This is a high-level capture of the Service activities as well as some improvement undertakings which the service will focus on throughout 2020-21. The Plan links to the Council's new 2020-2024 Corporate Plan priorities, Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives, Corporate Indicators and Mid Ulster Sustainable Community Plan themes & outcomes:

SERVICE WORK PLAN 2020/21

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	Improvement in performance, recognising diverse service areas, some further ahead than others, particularly in light of the Council's imminent directorate reform/integration.			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 3.1 Education & Skills - Our People are better qualified & more skilled</i>	<i>Service Delivery: 2.2 We will invest in our people to create a customer-focused, purposeful, skilled, high performing, engaged, healthy and safe work space.</i>			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
(i) Ongoing and regular Engagement with key stakeholders;	Ongoing	CMN & NON	Better understanding of key issues and service needs to ensure timely and tailored advice.	Increased satisfaction levels of internal clients.
(ii) Increased collaboration with all stakeholders regarding Capital Projects delivery;	Ongoing	CMN & NON	Ensure proactive legal advice is sought and provided.	Improvement in compliance rates and quicker turnaround times of advices provided.
(iii) The provision of strategic legal advice and assistance across all corporate functions and priorities (including; Local Development Plan, development of key strategic sites, MSW Region Growth Deal, delivery on programme of Capital Delivery etc, COVID19 issues.).	Ongoing	CMN	Solutions will be able to be identified at an earlier stage to ensure more robust and legally sound decision making in line with the Council's Corporate Plan.	Reduction in delays usually associated with legal matters; less successful challenges against the Council; and delivery on our Corporate aims and objectives.

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Assist in the development of an Estates Strategy and Asset Management Plan to provide strategic direction on the management, maintenance, acquisition and disposal of Council property and assets.	March 2021	CMN TS (Property Services)	Central and easily accessible database of Council's assets; Documented plan and procedure of dealing with Council's assets ensuring increased consistency, transparency and efficiencies.	Strategy and Action Plan will be in place with a view to rolling out implementation of same.
Increase staff awareness and knowledge in two key areas of challenge for legal services and the Council; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Planning (Councillors); and (ii) Prosecutions (Officers) 	March 2021	CMN	Reduce risk of (successful) challenges against the Council; Improve and increase knowledge base of Council; Increased transparency and accountability in decision making; Increased public confidence in Council's decisions.	Number of successful challenges will remain low, or potentially reduce; Improvement in successful prosecutions, stemming from enforcement action, leading to more robust statistics in this regard.

Performance Measures: <i>Should include any measures as outlined in work above and relevant measures from Community, Corporate, Performance Improvement Plan, Statutory, Corporate Health Indicators etc.</i>	Is the Measure, Statutory, Corporate, Existing, or New?	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 Target/Standard
Assisting in the development of an Asset Management Plan	Corporate Plan				Plan developed.

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.

3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

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 Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. This is why the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

- Help the Council achieve its overall aims and objectives
- Manage the significant risks the Council faces to an acceptable level
- Assist with the decision making process
- Implement the most effective measures to avoid, reduce and control those risks
- Balance risk with opportunity
- Manage risk and internal controls in the most effective way.

This table illustrates the risks identified to deliver the Services business in 2020-21.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	<i>Failure to maintain effective corporate governance arrangements</i>	8	<i>Engagement with stakeholders to review current arrangements; Design a process to understand the various types of arrangements that exist; what arrangements should be in place; what harmonisation/standardisation can be achieved across arrangements; Develop a suite of documentation according to corporate needs; Provide training to various stakeholders on new process and documentation</i>
2.	<i>Implications of COVID19</i>	6	<i>Monitor the situation and respond accordingly; Proactively seek information and guidance; Proactively assist and advice across corporate services regarding legal issues and obligations during recovery and post recovery.</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)



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Marketing & Communications Service

SERVICE PLAN - 2020 / 21

Date

Consulted within staff team

/ /2020

Discussed & signed off by Director

/ /2020

CONTENT

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3.1	Equality Duty	
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1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Service

Working strategically, as well as across departments and services, the service develops and delivers effective external and internal marketing and communications activity which supports the Council's vision, values and strategic direction.

1.2 Responsibilities

The Marketing and Communications service is responsible for:

- The development, coordination and delivery of external marketing and communications activity, working with different council services and functions to contribute to the achievement of their objectives through positioning, messaging and planned, targeted promotional activity across a range of platforms.
- The development of systems and activities to support effective internal communications, in conjunction with the Organisational Development Department.
- The management of proactive and reactive media relations, including acting as the first point of contact for all media enquiries, advising on appropriate responses, identifying potential issues and monitoring impact.
- The provision of an internal graphic design service which ensures the Council's branding is properly applied.
- The development and content management of digital platforms (web and social media).
- The provision of communications support to elected members, specifically the Chair, Deputy Chair and Committee Chairs.

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
• Elected Members
• SMT & Heads of Service
• Council staff
• Mid Ulster District Residents
• Media
• Local community groups, traders groups, businesses and visitors.

1.4 Performance Overview in 2019/20

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2019-2020). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

2019/20 Performance Overview: Summary

Digital First

The service continued to drive a digital approach to marketing and communications throughout 2019-2020, reducing print requirements, encouraging internal clients to consider digital before traditional methods and actively demonstrating how the use of digital tactics can make significant impacts on reach, engagement and reputation.

There was significant progress in the development of digital channels, including:

- The design, technical build and content review, edit and curation for a new Council website. This was a substantial body of work for the service, with more than 800 pages of content, including hundreds of downloadable documents, reviewed for accuracy and relevance, before being edited to suit the new site in terms of both style and mobile responsiveness.
- The new site also allowed the service to build an e-marketing database which has almost 2,000 subscribers and to begin issuing direct e-newsletters.
- The service successfully introduced a number of new social channels during 2019-2020 including a new Mid Ulster District Council Facebook page and Instagram channel, while new social channels were also created for OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). The service continues to manage and curate for these channels.
- A comprehensive evaluation of the Council's existing Facebook and Twitter social media accounts (5 corporate, 11 leisure and parks, and 7 arts and culture), in line with service's focus on the adoption and use of an evidence-based, customer focussed approach to marketing and communications which demonstrates excellence and value for money. The resulting report provides an overall picture of the efficiency and effectiveness of the channels and based on an analysis of relevant customer engagement and online customer service metrics data, makes a series of 8 recommendations for areas of improvement.

Facilities Marketing

There was a renewed focus on facilities marketing across 2019-20, with significant support for leisure following the completion of the Leisure Marketing and

Communications Strategy in the previous year, and with the scheduled opening of OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory. This included:

- Brand development for the dark skies project, the management of the design and build of a new facility website, creating and planning the marketing campaign for the facility opening and coordinating the opening event planning. Only weeks before the facility was to have its official opening, all work was paused and the opening postponed as a result of the pandemic.
- Significant work was undertaken to develop an overall leisure plan that considered deficit reduction priorities and included planned activities with timescales. Among other activity, a key output of this plan included a comprehensive marketing and communications campaign to launch the new Household Membership (delayed until 2020-21). The delivery of the plan was impacted by the on-going workings of the change process resulting from the Leisure Review and in the final quarter of the year, the closures of the centres as a result of COVID-19.
- The service also continued to contribute to the on-going leisure review process, providing high-level support for internal and external communications throughout.

Service Communications And Support

The service continued to provide wide-ranging communications' support across departments and services. Some of the most notable work in 2019-2020 included:

- The development and delivery of a further integrated recycling campaign 'Plastic Fantastic' to support the on-going reduction in waste which is landfilled. The campaign was omni-channel, combining press, outdoor and cinema advertising, with owned and earned channels. Statistics continue to show that the campaign had a positive impact on recycling figures. In the 6 months from July – December 2019, plastic recycling increased by almost 71 tonnes when compared to the same 6-month period the previous year, with an increase of over 348 tonnes in overall blue bin tonnages recycled in the same period.
- The implementation of activity to support capital investment projects, including a myriad of village renewal projects, the reopening of Dungannon Leisure Centre and the refurbishment of Cookstown Leisure Centre's Fitness suite, with innovative digital content at the core of delivery.
- The launch of the £5M Connecting Pomeroy project in October which included the creation of key messaging, the design of a visual identity for the project, associated artwork, development of a video in-house to support the launch and as the first of a 'before and after' library of footage, PR and social media content planning and delivery.

- Support for 15 strategic events across the summer, Halloween and Christmas periods, managing pre-event promotional activity on and off line, together with on the ground delivery of social media content plans live at each event.
- The development of a comprehensive campaign for Enterprise Week, from delivery of scripts and production of radio ads, creation of web site content, securing of outdoor media, PR activity, speech-writing and messaging and, most notably, the development of substantial content for social media channels. The Enterprise Week web page was the 2nd most visited page on the Council's web site during the campaign.
- The creation and implementation of an initial phase of a litter campaign, 'Don't Mess Up Mid Ulster', which began in August and was supported by press and social media work.

Corporate Communications

Corporate communications remain a key element of service delivery.

- In 2019-2020, the service managed the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan 2020-2024, including both internal and external consultation, drafting and editing plan themes and priorities and presenting final drafts to the Council.
- Media relations continued to be an extremely busy element of the service's core work and in 2019-2020 the service responded to 361 media enquiries, on a par with the volume received in the previous 12 month period. This aspect of the service is also highly rated by journalists for speed and quality of responses. Progress continues to be made in terms of identifying and greater anticipation and planning for potentially negative issues has aided the control of stories from the outset.
- The service was also responsible for the planning and delivery of admissions, information and media management at the election count in May 2019.

2019/20 Performance Overview Of Specific Objectives	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and deliver annual marketing action plans for key services. 	Completed (plans developed and delivered for Leisure, Parks, Environmental Services, Strategic Events, Economic Development, Community Development).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To implement Leisure Marketing Strategy and Parks and Outdoor 	Completed for leisure with ongoing implementation in Parks and Outdoor Recreation (overall 5

Recreation Strategy and associated actions for each.	year strategies still going through Council approval in Q4).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support Environmental Services to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill through the development and delivery of an integrated communications campaign for 2019-2020. 	Completed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a medium-term 'digital by design' strategy. 	Commenced (with completion due in 2020-21).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop and deliver a marketing and communication strategy and action plan for the new Davagh Dark Sky Observatory & Visitor Centre. 	Completed.

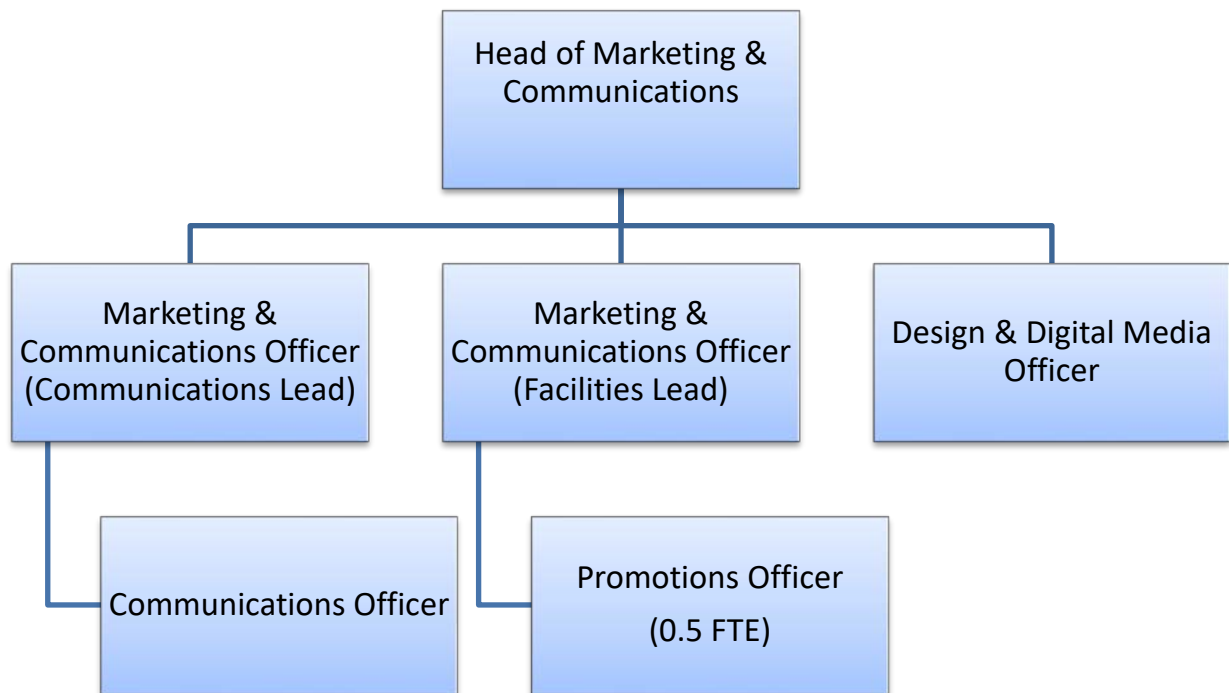
2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2020/21

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2020-21 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1 Budget 2020/21

Service Budget Headings	£
Salaries	234,739
Printing	35,000
Advertising	21,000
Promotional Materials	22,000
Licences	3,200
Fees	5,000
Miscellaneous (postage, mileage, training)	5,949
Gross Budget	326,888
Income	0
Net Budget for 2019-20	326,888

2.2 Staffing Complement - 2020/21



Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	2
Officers	2.5
Remaining Team	0
Total	5.5

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2020/2

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To develop and deliver annual Marketing and Communications post-COVID-19 action plans for key service areas.			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative & creative</i>	<i>Service Delivery: 2.3 We will enhance our financial performance & strength, identifying opportunities to increase income & reduce deficits, as well as to leverage external funding</i>			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How will we know? (Measures)
Planned, timely meetings with relevant service areas: Leisure, Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Capital Projects, Economic Development, specifically town centres.	On-going	UM & KK	We will have cohesive, integrated marketing and communications recovery plans which are aligned to corporate narratives and which contribute to addressing post Covid-19 needs to reduce deficits and make a demonstrable contribution to the achievement of corporate and other service priorities.	No of meetings held.
Recovery marketing and communications developed and agreed.	In line with recovery dates	UM & KK		No of plans developed and agreed.
Plans implemented.	Aa per agreed plan timelines.	UM & KK		Adherence to implementation timescales.
Plan monitoring, evaluation and review.	Plan end implementation dates	UM & KK		Evaluation reports completed.

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How will we Know? (Measures)
Increasing planned, evidence-based, customer-focussed activity has been a focus in the last 2 years for the service. Substantial support for economic	End March 2021.	UM & KK	Cohesive, integrated and longer-term marketing campaigns will position	Real time review of plan implementation.

development, specifically around town centre recovery, is to be an additional area of substantial work in this regard in 2020-2021.			town centres according to their unique, authentic place stories, reinforcing identities and offerings.	Monitoring and evaluation reporting.
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Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To support Environmental Services to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill through the development and delivery of a recycling campaign for 2020-2021			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it for our children</i>	<i>Environment: 4.1 We will continue to reduce our dependency on landfill through waste reduction and increased recycling and recovery.</i>			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How will we know? (Measures)
2020-2021 campaign concept and plans developed and agreed.	End July 2020	MMcN & LMcC	We will have contributed to a reduction in waste going to landfill and to a more sustainable environment.	Plan developed and agreed.
Plan delivery.	Ongoing from September 2020	MMcN & LMcC		Achievement of plan targets.
Plan monitoring, evaluation and review.	Plan end implementation date.	MMcN & LMcC		Evaluation report completed.

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How will we know? (Measures)
The service would like to explore how evidence can be gathered to demonstrate more effectively the direct impact of the campaign on waste targets.	Plan end implementation date.	MMcN & LMcC	Contribution to the adoption of an evidence-based, customer focussed	Metrics agreed and evaluation report completed.

			approach to marketing and communications which demonstrates excellence and value for money.	
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Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):		To support the opening of the new OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory by re-vising and re-developing the associated marketing and communication plans.		
Link to Community Plan Theme:		Align to Corporate Plan Theme		
<i>CMP 1.1 Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger & more competitive economy</i>		<i>Economy: 3.6 We will work to deliver tourism investment and employment concentrating on Mid Ulster's three identified tourism strands</i>		
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How will we know? (Measures)
Revision of existing plans to reflect the opening of a new visitor attraction in the recovery phase of Covid-19 pandemic.	End August 2020	UM	We will have successfully positioned the new facility and associated outdoor recreation and tourism offerings as a flagship visitor attractions in the Sperrins.	Revised plan complete and agreed.
Plan implementation and delivery of official opening marketing & communications plan.	End October 2020 (if October re-opening date confirmed)	UM		Plan implemented and evaluation of associated plan targets.

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How will we know? (Measures)
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N/A				
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Performance Measures: <i>Should include any measures as outlined in work above and relevant measures from Community, Corporate, Performance Improvement Plan, Statutory, Corporate Health Indicators etc.</i>	Is the Measure, Statutory, Corporate, Existing, or New?	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 Target/Standard
% of workforce satisfied with current job	Corporate	60.95%	60.95%	65.34%	80%
% of workforce who take pride in working for Mid Ulster District Council	Corporate	79.48%	79.48%	84.07%	80%
% of workforce who understand council's priorities and how they contribute to them	Corporate	69.91%	69.91%	78.13%	80%

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.

3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

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 Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. This is why the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

- Help the Council achieve its overall aims and objectives
- Manage the significant risks the Council faces to an acceptable level
- Assist with the decision making process
- Implement the most effective measures to avoid, reduce and control those risks
- Balance risk with opportunity
- Manage risk and internal controls in the most effective way.

This table illustrates the risks identified to deliver the Services business in 2020-21.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
MC01	Misuse or inconsistent use of the Council's branding	6	Use of brand identity as per guidelines is now embedded. Branding continues to be consistently applied and the service remains vigilant with regard to maintenance of standards.
MC02	Impact on output of small team through members of staff leaving the service or as a result of sickness absence.	9	Monitoring of sickness absence and application of attendance policy continues. Staff team remains stable and there are no anticipated staffing issues.
MC03	Inadequate management and planning of media relations issues.	8	Media relations service continues to be delivered and media monitored. The service continues to work pro-actively with departments on a project by project or issue by issue basis to pre-empt and/or manage potentially difficult media issues.
MC04	Budget pressure leading to reduced communications activity.	9	Monitoring of existing marketing & communications budget is on-going.
MC05	Ineffective internal communications leading to misinformed, demotivated staff.	12	Work is ongoing to improve internal communications. The service is installing new branded staff notice boards and the use of new animated videos for key policy areas is under development.
MC06	Delay or difficulty in converging legacy web and social media sites.	12	Monitoring and review work is continuous.

			A new web site is under development and web workshops have now been held with leisure, economic development, tourism, parks and the Burnavon.
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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)