



09 September 2021

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee to be held in
The Chamber, Dungannon and by virtual means Council Offices, Circular Road,
Dungannon, BT71 6DT on Thursday, 09 September 2021 at 19:00 to transact the
business noted below.

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

Yours faithfully

Adrian McCreesh
Chief Executive

AGENDA

OPEN BUSINESS

1. Apologies
2. 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.
3. Chair's Business

Matters for Decision

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| 4. | Request(s) to Illuminate Council Property - September 2021 | 3 - 4 |
| 5. | Performance Improvement: Annual Assessment Report 2020-2021 | 5 - 86 |
| 6. | Tamnamore Close Play Park Lease Agreement | 87 - 92 |
| 7. | Member Services | |

Matters for Information

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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. Staffing Matters for Decision
- 14. Legal Update - VAT Matters

Matters for Information

- 15. Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 1 July 2021
- 16. Financial report for 2 months ended 21 May 2021
- 17. Contracts and DAC
- 18. Staff Matters for Information

Report on	Request(s) to Illuminate Council Property - September 2021
Date of Meeting	Thursday 9 th September 2021
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

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 consider request received to illuminate/light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness of and mark; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childhood Cancer Awareness Month from member of public - 27th to 30th September
1.2	Details on request received are set out below.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council has a policy and procedural arrangements in place to facilitate the illuminating/lighting-up of its designated properties from requests made by charitable organisations for charitable causes. The designated properties are the Bridewell, the Burnavon and Ranfurly.
2.2	The policy confirms that requests are considered by the Council's Policy & Resources Committee. Should the scheduling of the committee not permit requests being considered within the timeframes to make a determination they can be presented to monthly Council. The policy is to be reviewed though existing arrangements remain until completed.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Requests for consideration and recommendation by Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To illuminate the three designated properties from Monday 27th to Thursday 30th September - to mark Childhood Cancer Awareness Month - the colour be Yellow/Gold
3.2	The policy scope extends to requests made by charitable organisations for the promotion of its charitable cause on a given date or set of dates.
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	That the Committee considers making recommendation to light up the designated properties to mark Childhood Cancer Awareness on 27 th to 30 th September 2021
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Not applicable

Report	Annual Self-Assessment Report 2020-21 of Council's Performance (Statutory Duty to Improve)
Date of Meeting	Thursday 9 th September 2021
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	L Jenkins, Performance & Quality Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform members on progress made towards discharging its General Duty to Improve under Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) act 2014 by way of an annual self-assessment report. Having due regard for the Department of Communities having set aside Council's requirement to develop a Performance Improvement Plan for 2020 to 2021.
2.0	Background
	Council Discharging Duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014
2.1	Council has a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement and to account for it under the 2014 Local Government Act. The purpose of this report is to present a summary of Council performance at the end of year 2020-21, based on statutory performance indicators, as outlined in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, as well as Corporate Health Indicators. The report also reflects on some key areas of Council's response and assessment in how it supported residents and communities during the pandemic, as well as focusing on activities to assist with recovery outcomes.
2.2.	Usually the annual assessment report would include progress made against Council's annual performance improvement plan (PIP). The PIP plan is normally published each year before the 30 th of June, in order to comply with Part 12 of the Act. An annual assessment report is also undertaken to comply with the Act and provides a retrospective review of the work Council had undertaken to improve its services (i.e. Annual Assessment Report). The annual assessment complies with departmental guidance under the Act and is published before the 30 th of September each year.
2.3	The Department of Communities (DfC) has however set aside the requirement to develop PIP plans for 2020 to 2021, in order that they were able to respond to front-line service provision during the Pandemic i.e. DfC would in effect regularise the legislative position to ease Council's Performance Improvement duties.

2.4	Our work is scrutinised by the Northern Ireland Audit Office to ensure we use public money effectively to deliver benefits to our communities. Council has ensured that this annual report presents progress and performance for the year in a fair and balanced way. Where our services and activity has been affected by Covid-19, this has been highlighted in the body of the report.
3.0	Main Report
	Mid Ulster District Council's Performance During 2020 to 2021
3.1	The Report reflects performance during the financial year 2020 to 2021 and the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on many of the Council's activities and measures of performance. The Council acknowledges that effective performance management arrangements are critical to supporting decision making during these challenging times.
3.2	Following the subsiding of the first wave of the pandemic, in the summer of 2020, saw many of our services re-open, however, a second wave more severe than the first grew to its peak in mid-November, which triggered a second national lockdown ending in December 2020. By Christmas there was a further significant surge in cases as a new more transmissible strain of COVID-19, spreading rapidly to other parts of the UK, which by the end of the year triggered a third lockdown. Council's annual assessment offers some insight into how Council responded to the Pandemic and provides an understanding of how services are continuing to work towards recovery for communities, businesses and partner organisations.
	Annual Self-Assessment Report 2020 to 2021
3.3	<p>The annual self-assessment report has been prepared and is set out in Appendix One to the paper, in summary it covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction: Covid-19 the Greatest Challenge to Public Services in a Generation - Section 1 • Mid Ulster District Council's Response, Reconfiguration and Recovery During 2020 to 2021 - Section 2 • General Duty to Improve and Council's Hierarchy of Plans - Performance Management Framework - Section 3 • Self-assessment of Statutory Indicators & Standards 20 to 21- Section 4 • Council's Self-assessment of Self-imposed Indicators and Standards 2020 to 2021 - Section 5 • Overall Assessment for 2020 to 2021- Section 6 • Have your Say - Section 7
3.4	<p>Benchmarking Data Supplied by DfC</p> <p>It should be noted that in respect of the requirement to compare performance with that of other Councils (benchmarking), DfC in correspondence to Councils have asked, that in addition to benchmarking the statutory indicators among the 11</p>

	<p>Councils, that Council also benchmarks Prompt Payments and Absenteeism figures, (where data has been supplied benchmarking has been undertaken in this regard).</p>
3.5	<p>Council Performance in 2020 to 2021 – An Atypical Year</p> <p>As a result of Covid-19, this has been a very atypical year with large variations across communities and individuals' lived experience during the pandemic. Services were also operating at different levels, as the Council focused on essential services and the safety of, and support for, the most vulnerable. A number of services were mostly closed throughout the year, for example, tourism, arts and cultural venues, and leisure centres, in order to protect the public and members of staff.</p>
3.6	<p>The majority of services continued to operate as normal, some new services were introduced to meet the needs of residents, at very short notice. As a result comparative changes in indicator values from the previous years should be treated with caution, given the impact and extenuating circumstance of the pandemic. Targets could not be set for some of the Corporate Health Indicators for the year 2020-21 and indicator values would be viewed as establishing baselines and reset for the period 2021-22 moving forward (regarding recovery from the pandemic). Four out of the seven statutory performance indicators/standards met or exceeded their target, 2 missed the target significantly, one missed the target narrowly. Two out of the three self-imposed indicators met or exceeded their target and one missed the target narrowly.</p>
3.7	<p>The Council still performs well across many of the Corporate Health and Service indicators in what has been the most challenging of years. In the remaining areas where there is scope for building on levels of performance, services are assessing targets as part of plans for renewal. We also want to retain some of the positive lessons learned during the pandemic to build towards achieving previous performance levels, particularly areas where services were impacted by COVID.</p>
4.0	<p>Other Considerations</p>
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: N/A</p> <p>Human: N/A</p>
4.2	<p><u>Screening & Impact Statements</u></p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: N/A</p>

5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Review and provide comment as necessary on the analysis of the Council's performance as detailed in the Annual Self-Assessment Report 2020 to 2021
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix1: Mid Ulster District Council's Annual Assessment Report 2020 -2021

Mid Ulster District Council

Annual Self-Assessment Report 2020 – 2021

August 2021

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Foreword

The core vision and purpose of the Council is to improve the quality of life of everyone in Mid Ulster. We do that by providing the best possible services for local people, and we continually strive to improve those services, working in partnership with our communities. Public performance reporting is an important part of this process as it explains how well we are delivering on our services, showing how effective we are in terms of achieving high standards.

Last year, councils were allowed to defer the publication of their improvement plans by the Department for Communities, in order to focus on reconfiguring their services in response to the pandemic. At all levels in the organisation, this resulted in redeployment and reprioritisation of resources to respond to the community's needs and this in turn impacted on the delivery of our proposed Improvement Objectives for 2020 to 2021.

The Coronavirus pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges for the Council in supporting our residents, businesses and visitors as well as maintaining a functioning organisation. With devastating human, financial and emotional costs, responding to the pandemic has drawn out the best in our collective spirit within the District and we continue to recover knowing all too well the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on our communities.

This report highlights many of the measures and activities through which the Council has managed the response to Coronavirus, the transition out of response through to the recovery phase during 2020 to 2021. The changes introduced, as a result of the pandemic have challenged us to think differently and to reflect on how we should work to achieve our vision of being "At the Heart of the Community".

The pandemic has given us all a unique insight into what can be achieved when we work together towards a shared goal. We are grateful for the immense contribution, dedication and hard work of our communities, Council's staff and elected members, for the support they have shown in these tumultuous times. We realise we are stronger together, and at our best when we are working alongside the people of Mid Ulster.

We are determined and resilient, and our recovery effort is bringing together expertise from across the public, private and community sectors to help the District build back – and build back better. The COVID-19 pandemic presents a real opportunity to reset how we think about our economy, our communities, our services and the how the Council can concentrate on the things that really matter to the people of Mid Ulster.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Paul Mc Lean". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Councillor Paul Mc Lean

Chair Mid Ulster District Council

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of Council performance at the end of year 2020-21, based on statutory performance indicators, as outlined in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, as well Corporate Health Indicators. The report also reflects on some key areas of Council's response and assessment in how it supported residents and communities during the pandemic, as well as focusing on activities to assist with recovery outcomes.

Usually the annual assessment report would include progress made against Council's annual performance improvement plan (PIP). The PIP plan is normally published each year before the 30th of June, in order to comply with Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 (hereby referred to as The Act). An annual assessment report is also undertaken to comply with the Act and provides a retrospective review of the work Council had undertaken to improve its services. The annual assessment complies with departmental guidance under the Act and is published before the 30th of September each year.

The Department of Communities (DfC) has however set aside Northern Ireland Councils' requirement to develop a PIP plan for 2020 to 2021, in order that they were able to respond to front-line service provision during the Pandemic i.e. DfC would in effect regularise the legislative position to ease Council's Performance Improvement duties.

Our work is scrutinised by the Northern Ireland Audit Office to ensure that we use public money effectively to deliver benefits to our communities (Annual Audit Reports are available to view on our website – refer to Performance section Northern Ireland Audit Office Report). We have ensured that this annual report presents progress and performance for the year in a fair and balanced way. Where our services and activity has been affected by Covid-19, this has been highlighted in the body of the report.

Covid-19 the Greatest Challenge to Public Services in a Generation.

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented the greatest challenge to local public services in a generation. With the first wave of the pandemic hitting in March 2020 the Council focused on the delivery of essential services by enacting its emergency plans, supporting the most vulnerable, including those in the 'shielding' category, responding to and implementing government guidance, as a response to the unprecedented threat to public health.

In response to the extraordinary challenges presented by Covid-19, radical solutions requiring fundamental service redesign were realised by the Council in order to keep, residents, members and staff safe, whilst also preventing transmission of the virus. This relied on the re-allocation of resources and staffing across the system to where they were needed most urgently, while new remote governance arrangements were established to enable rapid and robust decision-making.

Council worked with a range of third sector organisations, as well as government and other public bodies, including Mid Ulster's partnership organisations, while at the same time ensuring that we continued to deliver our normal frontline services to residents as far as possible.

Council was also involved in undertaking new and emerging services. A community hub was established in April to support the most vulnerable people across the district, helping to coordinate the delivery of food parcels, as well as helplines to provide practical assistance including picking up prescriptions, support and advice.

We began with the first lockdown, which meant facility closures and suspensions of some services, but this also saw our essential services continue without interruption and a legion of staff armed with laptops/PC's/tablets and mobile phones, continue to do their jobs remotely. Council also saw more staff redeployed to other services, whilst many colleagues developed new and innovative ways to engage with their customers, and a number of staff were furloughed.

Covid-specific health and safety arrangements were established at pace and scale, in accordance with advice and guidance issued by Northern Ireland Public Health Agency

and the Northern Ireland Executive. The safety and well-being of staff, service users and residents has remained the foremost consideration for the Council, with the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided to ensure that services are delivered safely and effectively.

COVID-19 has forced and demonstrated to services how they can work differently, redesigning processes to allow staff to work from home, boost productivity and generate cashable efficiency savings whilst still delivering a good service to our customers. This brings benefits in terms of productivity, reduced travel time, and includes benefits to the environment.

We prepared for the short-lived recovery, which came in the summer, re-opening facilities, returning to our normal work locations, supporting the community and the local economy. The second lockdown saw further facility and service closures and again Council policy remained to protect frontline service provision by delivering our services as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Behind the scenes, we have also been focusing on what we need to do in the recovery phase, because we recognise that the effects of the pandemic will be long lasting, on individuals, businesses and the economy. They will potentially reshape our community.

The road to the full recovery of our services will be guided by the Executive's 'Pathway Out Of Restrictions' document which was published in early March 2021. There are nine pathways in total, covering all aspects of life from home and work to travel and hospitality, and with 5 phases of recovery in each. Each pathway may move from phase to phase at a different pace and, as everyone will know, there are no set dates at this point – only agreed review points. While this makes it harder to plan when services will resume, we do at least know the sequence in which it will happen.

There's no hiding from the fact there will be more hurdles to clear - not least because we've so much still to learn about COVID-19 and its impacts, however

Council will continue to take decisive action and reshape our services to reduce long term costs whilst embracing new opportunities to do things differently.

The following sections highlight some of Council's activities and measures surrounding its initial responses and recovery to the Pandemic. Section three addresses the legislation/guidance Council must comply with in relation to performance and improvement (i.e. its General Duty to Improve). Section four touches on how Council also chartered its course to continue delivering services, in a most challenging year, through analysis of its performance in relation to statutory indicators and standards, as well as its' Corporate Health Indicators (section five).

2.0 Mid Ulster District Council's Response, Reconfiguration and Recovery During 2020 to 2021.

The Report reflects performance during the financial year 2020 to 2021 and the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on many of the Council's activities and measures of performance. The Council acknowledges that effective performance management arrangements are critical to supporting decision making during these challenging times.

Following the subsiding of the first wave of the pandemic, in the summer of 2020 saw, many of our services re-open, however, a second wave more severe than the first grew to its peak in mid-November, which triggered a second national lockdown that ended in December 2020. By Christmas there was a further significant surge in cases as a new more transmissible strain of COVID-19 was revealed in London and the south-east of England, spreading rapidly to other parts of the UK, which by the end of the year triggered a third lockdown.

The focus is now on recovery whilst still responding to the challenges of COVID-19 before moving to a renewal phase. We also want to retain some of the positive lessons learned during the pandemic in order to build towards achieving previous performance levels, particularly in areas where services were most affected by the impact of COVID.

Over the year, new services have been created to administer grants, create and distribute food packages, undertake wellbeing calls, offer financial support and, of course, enable Covid-19 testing and vaccination delivery through the utilisation of our centres by Health trusts and local G.P practices.

The following sections offers some insight into how Council responded to the Pandemic and offers understanding of how services continue to work towards recovery for our communities, businesses and partner organisations.

Assisting Our Local Economy

The COVID-19 Pandemic is a global public health emergency that continues to have an unprecedented impact on our communities and economy. Council provided dedicated support to businesses by providing advice, direction and support alongside the development of new initiatives, not to grow, but to survive during 2020 to 2021. Much of Council's work has included a range of new interventions, and repurposing of existing programmes.

To help support local businesses the Northern Ireland Executive provided additional funding, managed by local councils. This included the relaxation of Non Domestic Rate payments for retail, hospitality and leisure properties and the provision of grants to businesses. During 2020 to 2021, the Council distributed a total of £1,339, 067.81 of Covid Business Grants to 587 local businesses.

There has been a significant volume of economic development initiatives delivered during the 2020/2021 financial year. A range of new interventions also intertwined with reconfigured existing programmes, to support Mid Ulster businesses and lead to assistance with their recovery, namely:

- The creation of 132 new jobs through the business start programme
- Through the European Social Fund (ESF) programme support 304 participants in total, which meant that 134 people gained employment, the programme also enabled 768 participants to gain new qualifications, and helped/assisted 64 participants' progress to Further/Higher education.
- In total during 2020 to 2021, there were 18 business events, delivered to 797 attendees, including 12 webinars run as part of Mid Ulster Enterprise Week.
- A suite of four business development programmes have supported 287 businesses, created 39 jobs (equating to a value of £767,974), helped 11 businesses win 16 tenders (total value of £3,343,400) and referred 4 businesses to Invest NI for support.
- Twenty two villages have been supported to develop projects with a total of £731,089.
- Public Realm schemes worth £5.9 million were progressed in Maghera and Coalisland.

- In all 57 properties were enhanced with a total investment of £318, 513 under Towns and Villages Spruce up schemes (April 2020 to March 2021). Council grant aid of £195, 159.02 has leveraged a further £123, 354.02 of private sector investment.

Our Workforce – Resilience and Reconfiguration

The current pandemic has had profound implications for the way in which the Council as an organisation works. The Council has learned many things, since lock downs began in March 2020, about the strength and resilience of our staff, the way in which people have responded and continue to respond, (in the future), will be vital to the recovery process.

Health and Safety has played a major role in how we responded to COVID-19 and will continue to have a high profile in order to provide health and safety advice/ guidance for our workforce. During 2020 to 2021, Council worked with our employees who were shielding or who had chronic health conditions to ensure reasonable adjustments in the workplace were made to suit their individual medical circumstances.

Staff briefs, short and factual information notes, became an integral means of communicating accurate, pertinent news in tight timeframes for staff. Ten such briefs were issued in the first 4 weeks of the pandemic alone, before monthly staff newsletters (In Focus) were re-introduced in May 2020, and they continued to characterise how internal communications were undertaken across the rest of the year.

Council like many organisations throughout Northern Ireland, has been impacted financially by the current pandemic, particularly with the closure of Councils leisure and cultural facilities and the associated loss of income, estimated at approximately £620,000 each month. It was clear that in the short term and in the longer term, our finances would be substantially impacted.

An opportunity to offset these financial losses resulting from the pandemic was taken and, following consultation with Trade Unions, the Council moved to apply the

“Furlough” scheme to approximately 350 of our staff (employees affected were mostly in the leisure, culture and tourism sections of the organisation).

The furlough scheme saw the government pay 80% of an employee’s salary up to a limit of £2,500 per month. In implementing the scheme, the Council was being financially prudent, demonstrating a commitment to minimising the impact of the pandemic on our ratepayers and helping to protect employment. Ultimately, the scheme would benefit both the organisation and our residents. All of our affected staff were contacted directly and Council emphasised that this is a temporary measure. Each period of furlough was for 3 weeks and as service needs changed during the furlough period, staff were given one week’s notice of return to work.

The financial impact of Covid-19 remains significant and will require careful management to prioritise key services for the future. There is now an opportunity to redesign our services and this will be done with how we can best serve our communities. An initial re-structuring exercise has already begun in the summer of 2021; across the Council’s departments thus ensuring a customer centric re-shape to service provision.

Arising out of the re-configuration of services during 2020 to 2021, several HR policies and procedures were reviewed to reflect the new normal e.g. flexible working, with meetings previously done face-to-face, were now undertaken via web or tele conference.

Homeworking became the norm in the short to medium term etc. for many office based staff. This in turn influenced travel to and from other Council offices within the District. Council has recognised that by moving to hybrid and agile working practices, this will go some way in reducing Council’s carbon footprint (reduction of CO2 emissions) through grey fleet. Improvement activity regarding Council taking action to reduce its carbon footprint through staff commuting will be included in the Council’s new two year Performance Improvement plan 2021-2022 to 2024-2024 (for more information follow the link to <https://www.midulstercouncil.org/your-council/performance/corporate-improvement-plan-objectives/corporate-improvement-plans>).

Lockdown saw an enhancement of environmental conditions across the UK and the globe, this significantly changed to the way people travel, exercise and work. To ensure these gains are not lost, the Council will take immediate steps to focus work on the climate change agenda, supporting sustainable long-term changes to working arrangements and continue to support our communities to reduce waste.

Staff opportunities for learning and development continued throughout the year, 154 courses (with a total of 1,848 attendees) were held internally including a transition to e-learning programmes and courses, in response to Covid 19 circumstances. Thirty-seven staff having taken up external learning and development opportunities in past year, ranging from third level to occupational qualifications.

Council continued with its flexible approach to working from home practices, in order to take account of those who had continuing caring responsibilities as a result of pre COVID-19 facilities not being open or not operational. Schools returning full time greatly assisted our workforce with childcare responsibilities and return to the office, or utilisation of hybrid working, as restrictions ebbed and flowed over the year, under social distancing and health and safety measure guidance. The challenges associated with social distancing will be a feature of our lives for some time and enabling staff and citizens to access public spaces safely is a key priority.

Well-being initiatives, home/agile working and furlough has resulted in a marked reduction in sickness absence. The outturn position for 2020/21 was 9.72 average days lost per employee across the Council | (Full Time Equivalent). The previous year, 2019 to 2020, saw 11.7 days lost per employee. Within the overall corporate figure, however, there remains room for improvement within specific service areas. Moving forward, the gains made in 2020/21 must be made sustainable post-pandemic. Equally, a continued focus will be required on reducing long-term sickness absence through ongoing case management; managerial focus, particularly in areas of high sickness absence, and the provision of support for staff mental and physical health and well-being.

Digital solutions were made available to allow work to continue flexibly, collaboratively and remotely (where in the main over the year there was a requirement to homework where possible). Many employees embraced this, productivity increased in some areas or not decreased significantly. Financial constraints did not hinder the pace at which Council wished to progress and sound business cases were required to show the benefits that would accrue from digital solutions, including hardware and software solutions. Lessons learnt from the pandemic will redefine the Council's approach to digital service delivery, which will be highlighted in Council's new digital strategy due January 2022.

Communication and Innovative Practice.

In a fast-moving environment, the Council's digital platforms were of paramount importance for reflecting changes and updates to services and engaging with customers both with speed and with accuracy, particularly in the early stages of the pandemic.

The Council's Facebook page in particular proved to be a most effective engagement method. The page now has more than 11,000 followers and, as intended, has out-performed and now replaced the legacy town Facebook pages (Visit Cookstown, Visit Magherafelt and Discover Dungannon) which were unpublished in November 2020. By December of 2020, Facebook posts reached over 700,000 people and engaged almost 67,000 users.

Council has had a strong role in promoting public health messages since the beginning of the pandemic, as well as communicating the impact of the pandemic on the Council's services. From October 2020, there was an increasing shift towards the promotion of a 'culture of compliance' and closer cooperation and sharing of approaches between the local government sector and central government.

One distinct area of work served to illustrate the positive impact, when a bespoke 'culture of compliance' video campaign on social media with the hashtags "#BackToBasics and #BackToBusiness" was created by Council, using Mid Ulster statistics on infection rates and where possible, using authentic Mid Ulster voices.

The 2- week campaign directly reached 83,521 people (representing approximately 57% of the local population) and engaged 12,730 unique users of Facebook. The participation of a local GP, Dr Grainne Shaw, was particularly effective, accounting for almost 30% of the campaign reach. Dr Shaw was viewed as a trusted messenger and qualitative feedback from the practice indicated a positive reaction to the post on social media, which in turn gave practice staff a real boost at an especially difficult time.

Council continued to capture data on the activity of all volunteer efforts in Mid Ulster and expanded this work to include local retailers offering delivery services, as well as community pharmacists. The data allowed us to keep our web site up-to-date as a central hub for information for local people seeking support locally.

Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic period, The Hill of the O'Neill, Dungannon, hosted the regular televised public updates delivered by Northern Ireland Executive and First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Communications with Elected Members was also critical during the pandemic and the fast dissemination of information, about both council services and wider civic issues, was undertaken via a system of email briefings for councillors.

When appropriate, the same approach continued through to the recovery phase, where staff were front and centre, for example, presenting new arrangements for the re-opening of leisure facilities on video via social media. Again, engagement levels soared and other organisations quickly replicated what was appearing on the Mid Ulster channels.

The delivery of Enterprise Week during a pandemic radically altered both the traditional method of staging the events and the focus of activity. Events moved from face-to-face delivery and interaction in a physical location to a virtual environment. Social media support for the week via Facebook achieved a reach of 98,795 with engagement of 4,802 and video views of over 22,000. Impressions on Twitter reached more than 47,000 with engagement of just over 1,200. The designated www.midulstercouncil.org/enterpriseweek webpage received 1,834 page views and ranked in the top 20 of our webpage views during this time, with

business grants and business recovery webpages taking the top spots during this period.

Innovation was demonstrated by the organisation, particularly from those services, which were closed during lockdowns. Leisure's virtual swimming academy and fitness videos, the online programme of performances and educational/creative activities from Culture and Arts, as well as the webinars, online forums and business resilience from Business and Communities were all among the work promoted in the media and via social media during this stage of the pandemic.

Council Facilities

A planned approach to reopening and reconfiguration of the Council's property portfolio has always been meticulously detailed. This has been achieved through constant communications (staff updates, staff newsletters, intranet and Council social media channels) from our Senior Management, Heads of Service and Communications and Marketing teams, in order to support the organisation to recover, engage with our service teams, customers, to ensure effective future service delivery. From March 2020 to the present our main Civic Offices have supported staff, Councillors and members of the public to access services when guidance and adherence to health and safety measures allowed.

Leisure and Recreation Facilities

Leisure services were one of the most affected services throughout the pandemic with closures in the early and later parts of the year, which required intensive communications support. User numbers of Leisure and recreation facilities dropped dramatically from 2,071,748 in 2019/20 to 1,232,504 in 2020/21. However many of our sports and leisure facilities were re-purposed over the year. Meadowbank sports arena was utilised by local company Bloc Blinds as it began to manufacture vital front line Personal Protective Equipment (i.e. PPE – face shields) for the NHS. Other leisure facilities were utilised for Covid testing (e.g. Dungannon Leisure Centre) and facilitated the vaccination programme.

A phased plan was developed for Leisure services alongside a communications plan. This maintained customer engagement across periods of closure for leisure

facilities. The plan included a work out at home video series recorded by leisure staff, sourcing relevant articles and content, as well as providing reassurance to customers on the organisation's approach to safe re-opening first time round. Covid secure videos were developed by Council to encourage return to facilities.

Council owned parks remained open (Dungannon Park, Polepatrick etc.), while the early stages of the pandemic saw parks that Council has partnership arrangements with i.e. Forestry services close e.g. Davagh, Pomeroy, Knockmany, Moydamlaght, Derrynoid and Iniscarn. As restrictions were lifted though the year the parks and open spaces were opened again.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Facilities

Like so many parts of the hospitality and tourism industry, our own visitor attractions have been impacted by the open-close cycle of the pandemic. The Burnavon, Hill of the O'Neill and Seamus Heaney HomePlace have all moved activity online to keep their customers engaged.

Visitor numbers to Mid Ulster attractions in 2019/20 of 135,939 dropped significantly to 7,208 by 2021 year end. While visitor information centres remained closed for most of the year, our tourism team continued to coordinate an online support forum for the tourism and hospitality sector. Close to 90 members shared their own experiences of coping with the current crisis and receiving practical help and advice from a number of industry bodies, including Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI), as well as legal, health and financial specialists.

Throughout the Covid 19 period, the Culture and Arts venues have continued to engage with existing and new audiences through the delivery of their respective online programmes. This has included "how to" demonstrations and workshops, performances from numerous artists, poetry and book reading events, continuation of weekly online Traditional Music in Schools programme for students, special events for St Patrick's Day, Easter and Christmas. Seamus Heaney HomePlace posted an activity for children online every day to help them stay creative and engaged while they were off school and began a new Book Club on Twitter. Hill of The O'Neill and Ranfurly House launched its Facebook home learning project for

Key Stage 2 pupils and their families, which focused on built heritage in Dungannon.

Visitor numbers recorded at Tullaghoge Fort and Hill of the O'Neill throughout the COVID 19 period increased – the site and walking trails continue to be utilised by local residents, many of whom have engaged in the product offering at these locations for the first time during lockdown. Access to these site locations has greatly benefitted the local community and has significantly contributed to the health and well-being of individuals during these difficult and unprecedented times.

While the initial opening of OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory in April 2020, (a £1.2M visitor attraction at Davagh Forest in the foothills of the Sperrins – the Dark Sky Park is free of light pollution and allows world class opportunities to see the constellation in space observatory), had to be postponed. Significant work ensued to prepare for a new opening date in October 2020; however, restrictions once again meant OM was unable to open. The Environment Minister jointly opened a new £1.2 million observatory and 'dark site' in Cookstown with the Chairman of Mid Ulster District Council in June 2021.

Supporting Our Communities

The pandemic saw unprecedented community action complementing the work of the Council. The Council worked with local volunteers to establish a Community Hub connecting vulnerable and isolated households to a range of community supports (e.g. distribution of food parcels, shopping service; welfare calls; and prescription deliveries) many of which were delivered by volunteers and or staff who had been redeployed.

Following confirmation of how the Department for Communities' (DfC) proposed community fund was structured, the Council introduced a complimentary emergency grant scheme of its own. Grant funding of £30,000 was allocated to local groups along with £25,000 of PPE to support groups help their communities. Council agreed an extensive package of support measures, which aimed to underpin community organisations and the local volunteers who provided support within their local communities.

The 10 established foodbanks in the Mid Ulster region received a funding boost to ensure they are able to meet immediate need. The Food parcels scheme (in partnership with over 30 local community groups) saw over 1,200 people supported each week for a period of 16 weeks from April to July (over 5,050 food packages), where a food parcel of estimate £35 was distributed, using over 100 volunteers.

Fuel stamps of £40 delivered to 4,250 families to help support with fuel pressure over this period. This was undertaken in partnership with 20 post primary schools and 89 of our 97 primary schools. There was also emergency support to local Counselling, where £80,000 of support was made available to 8 local community counselling services, which realised 500 people were able to avail of just over 2,500 counselling sessions. Community grants worth £700,000 were distributed to support over 600 groups under fourteen themes (mainly for sustainability of venues and activity purposes).

Monies from the Council's strategic grants programme were released to ensure dozens of existing community organisations could continue to maintain their existing venues and services during the pandemic. AgeWell, the organisation, which provides an essential 'good morning' call and befriending to 400 people, received direct support to allow expansion of its services. Council also created team who worked to support those people who were designated as clinically vulnerable and had received letters from their GPs. Other re-deployed colleagues staff a food distribution centre at the Mid Ulster Sports Arena in Cookstown, which was established as part of the 'shielded persons' scheme.

Technical Services and Capital Projects

The Technical Services Section remained fundamentally focused on the delivery of Council's Capital Programme and continued to support all Departments in the preparation of scoping of Capital project information for submission to the Capital Programme and thereafter overseeing the project commencement, construction to completion. Work also continued in supporting Council functions and the District's local communities with advice, guidance and activities surrounding Sustainability and Biodiversity.

During 2020 to 2021, new industry claims for delays to schemes (i.e. having to deliver works in a more controlled environment to ensure “safe systems of work”) were implemented across all capital build projects, which in turn lead to significant additional workloads for Council’s Technical services team.

Twenty-six projects were completed during 2020-21; this included indicative costs of a value of £1.58 million (construction costs), and survey ancillary costs of £182K. The team were responsible for management of 23 ICT teams with a total ICT fees value of circa £2.27m. There were also 27 Projects which were at construction phase having total value of £8.85m in year.

The Sustainability and Biodiversity team had to adopt new ways of communicating the delivery of their programmes, as events could not be staged in person due to restrictions. During the months of April to October 2020 the team developed a “Growing from Home Project”. The project saw 200 Mid Ulster home gardeners sign up to receive weekly emails, (including many who were just discovering the joys of gardening for the first time, as well as the more experienced and advanced green-fingered residents). Topics covered took into consideration the time of year, current weather conditions and timing (i.e. to know what to sow and when), sometimes making use of back yards, window sills and pots in the absence of large open spaces. Participants learned how to plant using limited resources including growing plants from groceries, using recyclables as seed trays, pots and crop protections.

Building Control

During the year, Building Control managed to exceed all of its suite of service indicators and standards, despite having to re-configure service provision in order to respond to the pandemic. The service, assessed 624 domestic full plan applications (i.e. 94% of applications either being approval or a snag list). One hundred and twenty nine non-domestic full plan applications were assessed, with 95% of applications either being for approval or snag list being issued within 35 days from the date of validation (exceeding the service target that 90% of all non-domestic applications were responded to by Building Control within 35 days).

Nine hundred and seventy two set of amended plans were submitted with 93% of applications either being for approval or further snag list being issued within 14 days from the date of submission (the standard of 90% of all amended plans submitted being responded to by Building control within 14 days was achieved).

Fifty seven per cent of all applications for Building notices and Regularisation applications were submitted online, which saw the target of 50% of online applications being attained. Property certificate applications submitted online by the year-end sat at 61%, exceeding the 50%.

Planning

Planning activity and processing performance in 2020/21 across all 11 Councils were impacted by Covid restrictions. The volume of planning applications received and processed (i.e. decided or withdrawn), and enforcement cases opened, closed and concluded, were lowest during the first quarter of the year, before increasing in subsequent quarters. However, despite increases in the latter three quarters, the number of applications processed and enforcement activity for the year as a whole were at much lower levels compared with 2019/20 (this comprised 12,709 local, 123 major and one regionally significant application). Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, over 1200 planning were decided by Mid Ulster with a 99.2 % approval rate of planning applications received, the highest rate of all Councils. The Council received the third highest number of applications in Northern Ireland for the year, with an increase of almost 8% on applications received the previous year.

The average processing time for local applications brought to a decision or withdrawal during 2020/21 was 17.8 weeks across all councils. This exceeds the 15-week target and represents an increase of 3.8 weeks from the previous financial year. Mid Ulster achieved, an average of 16 weeks and only three of the eleven councils met the 15-week target in 2020/21.

The average processing time for major applications brought to a decision or withdrawal during 2020/21 was 61.4 weeks across all councils. This represents an

increase of 8.6 weeks compared with the previous financial year and is more than double the 30-week target, as councils' ability to process major planning applications was impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

From 1 May 2020, the requirement to hold a public event as part of the pre-application community consultation (all major applications now go through a minimum 12-week consultation process before being accepted) was temporarily removed for five months in response to the coronavirus pandemic. This has subsequently been extended until 30 September 2021². None of the 11 councils met the 30-week target in 2020/21 and Mid Ulster achieved an average processing time of 74.1 weeks in year.

Across all councils, 69.9% of enforcement cases were concluded within 39 weeks during 2020/21. This falls just outside the statutory target of 70% and represents, a considerable decrease from the rate reported 2019/20 (81.4%). Individually, six of the 11 councils met the target in 2020/21, which included Mid Ulster.

Waste Services

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted (both directly and indirectly) on Waste and Cleansing Services, following the commencement of lockdown in March 2020. As a result of being deemed critical services, the majority of employees have continued to attend work daily.

The Council has a statutory obligation to provide waste management and street cleansing services. The key legislative requirements are set out in the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997, the Litter (NI) Order 1994, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, and related Commencement Orders and Regulations.

The primary purpose of the service is to ensure the effective management of municipal solid waste produced within the borough, in order to protect the local environment. Secondly, the Council has a statutory duty under the Litter (NI) Order and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, to keep adopted streets and roads clean and free from litter.

During the early period of lockdown, initial direct impacts on waste services included the following:

- The temporary closure of Recycling Centres and public toilets,
- The loss of significant commercial waste income due to businesses being closed and additional revenue costs as a result of having to put social distancing measures in place within the workplace,
- Difficulties with various markets for materials collected for recycling,
- An increase in fly tipping incidents, and an increase in littering and use of litterbins, due to businesses changing to takeaways and pavement café model.

Despite the impacts listed above, Mid Ulster is consistently at the top of the table for its household recycling rate, most recently achieving the highest household recycling rate of all 11 councils here for the 2020 to 2021 period with 58.9%.

The district also had the biggest reduction in waste sent to landfill out of all 11 councils with only 3.4% of waste being landfilled. These are remarkable achievements; they reiterate the extremely positive position of the Council in terms of waste management, and highlight the dedication of our waste teams to maintaining the service during the height of the pandemic. This also demonstrates the terrific work being done by residents in Mid Ulster in terms of their continued and unwavering recycling efforts, even during an incredibly difficult time.

Environmental Health

The purpose of the Environmental Health Department continues to be the control of factors in the environment, which can affect public health and safety within the realms of the Council's statutory obligations. This is mainly achieved by enforcing environmental health legislation in a reactive and proactive manner. The Department also plays a supportive, informative and advisory role in all aspects of Environmental Health including health and well-being. Outlined below are a sample of some of the support, information, advice and enforcement undertaken during 2020 to 2021.

Whilst the planned programme of Food Hygiene (FH) and Food Safety (FS) inspections had been suspended as per FSA advice, priority visits continued. Approval applications continued to be processed - there were three new applications in this period. In addition, officers from the food team carried out 689 inspections at food premises - 238 of which focused on social distancing measures. There were 82 visits for microbiological sampling and 41 for chemical sampling. Seven hundred and four businesses were provided with access to the necessary FH and FS advice and guidance whilst preparing to re-open after a period of closure helping to ensure food safety. 704 businesses proactively contacted with FH & FS advice and guidance relating to COVID-19.

During 2020 to 2021, the service provided advice to 1,033 businesses on matters relating to food, consumer protection, tobacco control and the fuel stamp scheme and responded to 100% of confirmed notifications of alleged food poisoning incident notifications within 1 working day, on 73 occasions. Ninety seven per cent of complaints relating to food received from members of the public, businesses or other agencies (receipt of 93 complaints), were responded to within 3 days, where the standard set is 90%.

To support businesses affected by the Covid-19 situation to plan for a resumption of their work activities and to assist those businesses who continue to operate by providing both with targeted health and safety advice or signposting to relevant resources (or other agencies where appropriate). Requests were to be responded to within 5 days, with a target set at 85%, by members of the Council's Environmental Health Team; they achieved a 98% response to requests within year. In all 1,134 requests for advice were actioned (93% within same day of request) Over the year there was a total of 836 health and safety queries, the remaining 298 was advice given to businesses or individuals in relation licensable activities. Additionally proactive mailshots to various sectors such as retail, funeral directors, garden

centres, sports ground, hotels etc. have been taken on a number of occasions throughout the year as the Covid related advice changed or was amended.

The team also responded to and investigated 100% of all health and safety and licensing complaints for which environmental health is the enforcing authority for issues within 5 days, which was well above the target set at 80%. This included 484 complaints, which were investigated (461 health & safety and 23 licensing complaints) and in effect, 92 % of complaints were actioned within 1 day.

A total of 2,144 health and safety visits were undertaken in the year 2020/2021. This includes achieving programmed inspections in category A and B1 premises, thereby meeting the target to inspect 50%. The total also includes 1,964 Covid related inspections and monitoring visits, together with an additional 180 health and safety inspections completed in relation to other routine inspection work and visits to investigate accidents or complaints. Furthermore, four prohibition notices and one improvement notice have been served and three health and safety prosecutions have been successful.

Rates

During the last quarter of 2020 to 2021, the Council agreed that the rate for the financial year ahead (2021 to 2022) would not increase. Instead, the additional costs and anticipated income losses amounting to some £3.5M resulting from the pandemic would be absorbed through a mix of savings and efficiencies and by applying funds from reserves. A rise of 1.59% was originally proposed, which would have meant an average domestic ratepayer paid 68p more per month. However, the Council ultimately decided that the rate would remain at the same level as last year, with the aim of reducing the rate burden on residents and businesses, many of whom have been hard-hit already by the impacts of the pandemic and who face uncertainty in the year ahead.

This previous sections captures some of our work amidst a period of global crisis, which for Mid Ulster began in March 2020. Our District and our lives changed very suddenly, and the scale of the Council's involvement to sustain lifeline services and keep our communities safe quickly became clear. Since then, we have worked hard

to keep services running and deliver vital help for those citizens and businesses who need it most. The next section outlines Council's Duty to Improve and also gives an overview of Mid Ulster District Councils hierarchy of plans aligned with its performance management framework.

3.0 General Duty to Improve and Council's Hierarchy of Plans - Performance Management Framework.

General Duty to Improve

Legislation contained within Part 12 of The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (hereafter referred to as 'The Act'), requires that all Councils are, under a general duty, to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions.

The Act sets out a number of Council responsibilities under a performance framework. Even though the Department for Communities has set aside Council's requirement to develop and publish a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for 2020 to 2021, the Department has taken the view that Council should still be able to demonstrate its general duty. This section highlights how Council has embedded its duty to improve within its performance management framework and governance arrangements.

Definition of Improvement with legislative Guidance

Improvement is defined in statutory guidance as 'more than just quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or the internal effectiveness of an organisation. Improvement for councils should mean activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities'. Essentially, improvement is about making things better and our focus is on how we can deliver better services for the benefit of our residents and service users.

What is improvement?

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, put in place a new framework to support continuous improvement in the delivery of council services, in the context of

strategic objectives and issues that are important to those who receive the services. Councils are required to gather information to assess improvements in their services and to report annually on their performance against indicators, which they have either, set themselves or that have been set by departments.

The Act, is supported with guidance from the Department of Communities and “improvement” in the context of the Act means that Improvement is no longer limited to economy, efficiency and effectiveness but rather embraces the following:

- Making Progress towards a Council’s strategic objectives (as set out in the community plan)
- Improving the quality of services
- Improving the availability of services
- Improving fairness by reducing inequality in accessing or benefitting from services, or improving the social wellbeing of citizens and communities
- Exercising functions in ways which contribute to sustainable development
- Improving the efficiency of services and functions
- Innovation and change, which contributes to any of the above objectives.

The Act specifies that Council must make arrangements for the publication of:

- A. Its assessment of its performance during a financial year:
 - In discharging its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement
 - In meeting its improvement objectives which are applicable to that year
 - By reference to the statutory performance indicators and self-imposed indicators which are applicable to that year.
- B. Its assessment of its performance in exercising its functions during a financial year as compared with:
 - Its performance in previous financial years.
 - So far as is reasonably practicable, the performance during that and previous financial years of other Councils.

Mid Ulster District Council is committed to driving continuous improvement and performance across all service areas within the organisation and that the best arrangements for delivering them are in place.

Performance Improvement Plan for 2020 to 2021 Set Aside by Department for Communities

The most significant set of restrictions in living memory, to our way of life, were set in place in March 2020, when as a response to a global pandemic, measures to tackle the COVID-19 virus were put in place. As outlined previously Mid Ulster Council diverted resources and attention to support the emergency response in order to help and protect the most vulnerable in society and ensuring the continued delivery of our essential services.

In recognition of these exceptional circumstances, the Department for Communities (DfC) proposed that Councils were not required to publish a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for the year 2020 to 2021. This was confirmed in a letter sent by Anthony Carleton, DfC, to all Council Chief Executives on 11th June 2020. Council did not develop a Performance Improvement Plan, based on the departmental guidance, however by April Council had already undertaken a public consultation exercise on their four new draft performance improvement objectives.

Further development work on new performance improvement objectives and associated activities and measures (i.e. the PIP plan) were then placed in abeyance while Council re-configured services in response to the Pandemic and the progression of recovery activities,

Each September we publish a retrospective annual assessment plan (this report) of what we achieved the previous year, in normal circumstances utilising Council's PIP plan. As outlined above Council did not publish a PIP plan, and Council recognises that the emergency impacted on the delivery of some of our improvement priorities, however this report outlines some of the work we undertook during this unprecedented year to maintain services, and protect our staff and citizens.

Corporate Planning and Performance Framework

A network of plans (key plans in a clear hierarchy) that work together to create a 'line of sight' to deliver key outcomes for Mid Ulster, informs the Council's Strategic Planning framework (refer to figure 3.1 - Mid Ulster District Council's Strategic Planning Framework).

The plans show the relationship between the long term future of the area, the vision for the Council, mid-term plan of action, plan for Council finances, all the way down to what each Council service plans to achieve in the next year and how each employee understands how they contribute to the organisation achieving its goals and priorities.

Evidence linked to existing and forecasted data informs the Council's policy framework, which in turn informs our planning process. It is important that elements within Council's planning and reporting activities are monitored and reviewed within an annual cycle.

Planning is an essential component of good performance management and the delivery of effective and efficient services. It acts as a tool for making decisions about resource allocation and assists services/teams in staying focused on delivering ambitions, even during time of change. During 2020 to 2021, it became self-evident that Council's emergency planning capabilities came to the fore in being able to sustain front-line service delivery in the face of the first waves of Covid-19 restrictions.

The business planning process translates high-level objectives (e.g. Community and Corporate Plans) into management action linked to performance measures. This process will be undertaken at all levels of the organisation, producing a hierarchy framework of plans that all feed up wards (the "golden Thread") and are aligned to the Council's overarching vision (as outlined in the Corporate plan).

The business plans for 2020 to 2021 were quickly re-focused by Heads of Service to accommodate re-configuration of services dependent on the review and revision of resources

This year as previously highlighted. the Department of Communities set aside all Council's requirement to publish a performance improvement plan for 2020 to 2021, however this does not detract from Council's established Performance Management framework, set against the statutory background of Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) 2014 Act is to:

- Issue an Annual Corporate Improvement Plan (set aside by DfC 2020-2021)
- Issue a Community Plan in conjunction with our partners
- Set objectives and targets, which make a difference to our customers, reflect their needs and expectations as well as values of the Council.
- Stretch and motivate our employees and partners.
- Convert top-level outcomes into specific actions at appropriate levels.
- Assign clear ownership and accountability.
- Measure and review overall council progress at least quarterly and take action to address shortcomings.
- Engage all areas of the Council in performance improvement
- Scrutinise what we do to ensure value for money.

We ensure through our performance management process that the Community plan outcomes and corporate plan priorities and annual improvement objectives (where relevant) are reflected through our service delivery and through our appraisal scheme, this is reflected for individual staff members through their personal development plans (refer to figure 3.2. - Mid Ulster District Council's approach to managing performance).

We rely on having good information on which to base our decisions on how to deliver our services more efficiently and effectively. Successful performance management is organised and structured to allow people to work together to do the right things.

Figure 3.1 - Mid Ulster District Council's Strategic Planning Framework



Community Plan

The 10-year plan for Mid Ulster “Our Community Plan” is the sovereign plan for Mid Ulster and forms part of the new statutory duty, which requires Council to “initiate, maintain, facilitate, and participate in community planning for the district”, (the Community Plan is available on our web site)..Community planning involves integrating all the various streams of public life e.g. education, community safety, health, the voluntary sector, arts, leisure etc. to produce a plan that will set out the future direction of the Mid Ulster District Council area.

The Community Plan reflects what has been outlined at regional level in documents like the Programme for Government Framework, and other regional development strategies such as Growth Deals

The Community Plan describes what the Community Planning Partners’ aim to achieve by working together, over and above what partners could do as individual

organisations and partners include statutory bodies/agencies and the wider community including the voluntary, community and business sectors. The plan sets out the Community Planning partner's strategic priorities for action, and is a shared commitment to tackle these challenges.

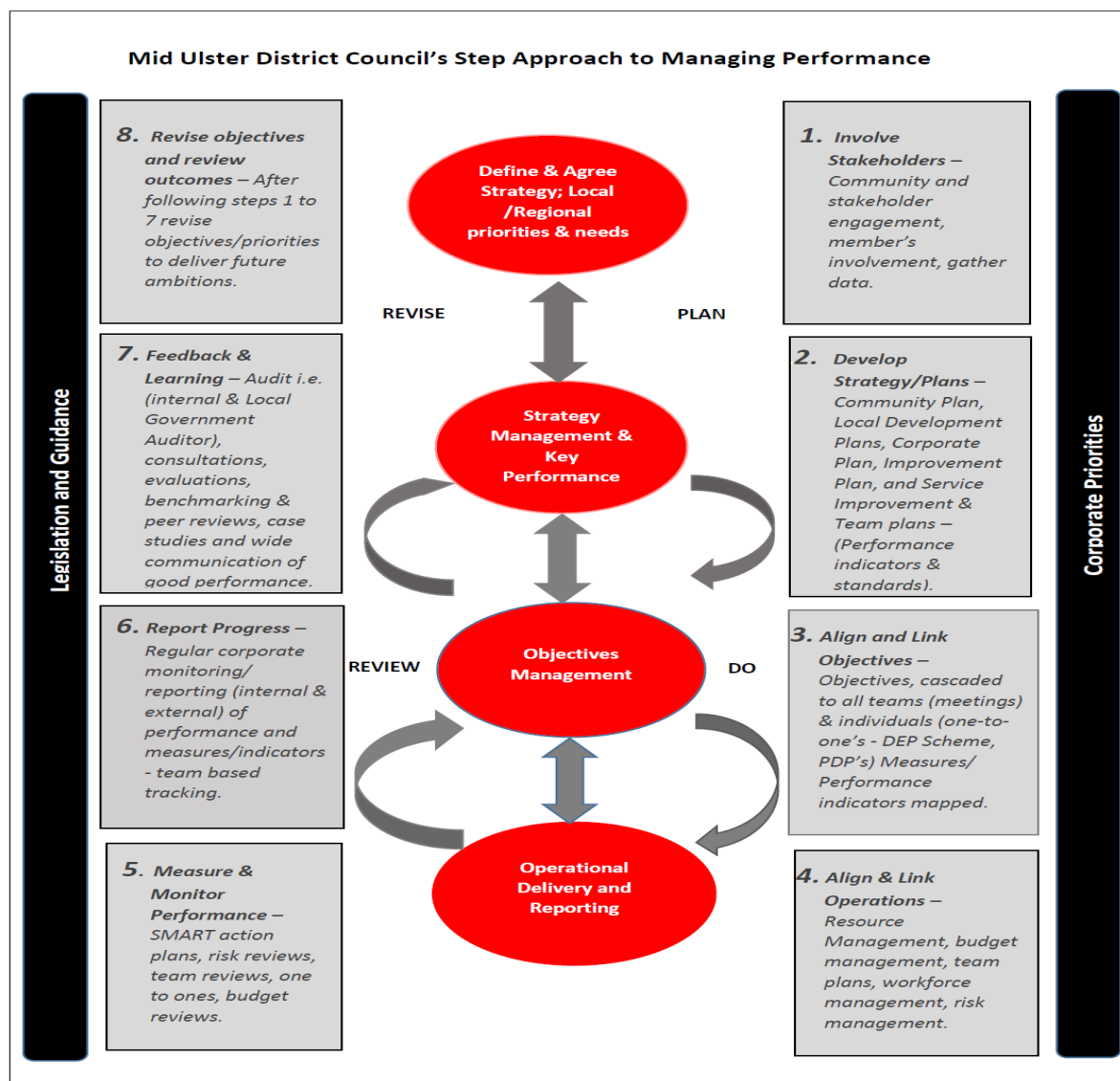


Figure 3.2. - Council's Step Approach to Managing Performance

The plan sets out the vision for Mid Ulster as,

"...a welcoming place, where people are content, healthy and safe, educated and skilled; where our economy is thriving, our environment and heritage is sustained, and where our public services excel".

The Community Plan resonates around five themes (refer to figure 3.3), and running across the five themes are cross cutting guiding principles. All of our strategic actions must incorporate the principles of sustainable environment, equality and the highest standard of public service. The five themes have aligned outcomes associated with each, fifteen outcomes in total:

The Community Plan is the key strategic document for Council and an integral element of the performance management framework and performance improvement, community planning will inform, and be informed, by each other. The Community planning partners and Council must put in place arrangements for monitoring progress and publish a statement every two years, which outlines progress made against the identified outcomes and performance indicators.

Figure 3.3 – Mid Ulster’s Community Plan Themes and Outcomes

Community Plan Theme	Community Plan Outcomes
1. Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We prosper in a stronger and more competitive economy • We have more people working in a diverse economy • Our towns and villages are vibrant and competitive
2. Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure • We increasingly value our environment and enhance it for our children • We enjoy increased access to affordable quality housing
3. Education and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our people are better qualified and more skilled • We give our children and young people the best chance in life • We are more entrepreneurial, innovative and creative
4. Health and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are better enabled to live longer healthier and more active lives • We have the availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time • We care more for those most vulnerable and in need
5. Vibrant & Safe Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are a safer community • We have a greater value and respect for diversity • We have stronger communities with less disadvantage & poverty

The Community plan must also be reviewed before the fourth anniversary on which it was published and every four years thereafter.

Corporate Plan

The Council's corporate plan 2020 to 2024 is the key Council policy document. The current plan sets out how the Council achieves its vision and key priorities as outlined from community consultation.

All Council plans should be consistent with corporate priorities, improvement objectives and values in existence at the time of publication. The Corporate Plan covers improvement priorities and high-level actions, identified to achieve those priorities. The vision and priorities that are set out in the Corporate plan have a direct relationship with directorate business/service delivery plans at all levels, to ensure we are unified in working towards delivering our vision.

Council developed a new corporate plan for 2020 to 2024, encompassing priorities with the key outcomes of the Community plan, thereby ensuring that the Council is able to deliver its commitments we have made alongside our partners, and enable a clear golden thread to be demonstrated within and across our partner organisations. Council undertakes annual monitoring and reporting of the corporate plan's performance. The Council developed a suite of Corporate Indicators in late 2017/18 and are set out in Appendix One, performance status and updates are reported to Senior Management and Council on a regular basis.

Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

The purpose of the Corporate Performance Improvement Plan is to enable the council to evidence it has discharged its duty to, "*...make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions.*" (Section 84 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014). Councils are required to identify, consult upon and publish improvement objectives on an annual basis. To ensure Council discharges its improvement duty it prepares an annual improvement plan containing improvement objectives, (Councils can set improvement objectives spanning more than one year). This plan was set aside by DfC for 2020 to 2021.

Whilst we constantly strive to improve all our services, it is important for us to identify a small number of areas where we want to focus our attention in order to achieve improvements more quickly. These are our Improvement Objectives, set out in our Annual Corporate Performance Improvement Plan. Each year the Council identifies, consults upon and publishes a set of improvement objectives, Council ensures that the objectives are:

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

Service Plans

Service plans describe the core services and objectives/activities and how these are sustained and agreed within an agreed annual budget. They also provide the mechanism for further planning within services, such as requirements resulting from, new legislation or statutory guidance, political or management priorities, improvements identified in the corporate performance improvement plan and recommendations resulting from statutory inspection, internal/external audit etc. They can also include elements within the Community plan, Corporate Plan, and Performance Improvement plan.

Council's service plans provide the essential link between the Council's high-level objectives and the individual employee's contribution towards the achievement of these, and is referred to as "golden thread" of performance management. The service plans are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, to ensure they are achieving their aims, and mitigating actions are developed in response to identified risks. The plans are presented as information to service's respective committees annually. An annual retrospective overview of the previous year's performance (service review) is detailed in the annual service plan.

Statutory Indicators/Standards and Self-Imposed Indicators/Standards

In addition to the improvement, objectives and associated actions used to measure our performance the Northern Ireland Government Departments 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.

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, or if relevant may appear in the annual corporate performance Improvement plan as aligning with one of Council's chosen Improvement objectives. 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 the annual corporate performance improvement plan, statutory performance indicators are managed at a directorate level.

Staff Engagement, Appraisals, and Personal Development Plans (PDP's)

Appraisals are individual plans that translate the service plan objectives (service plans and team plans i.e. how they will be delivered) into working measures and targets for all members of staff within the Council. They ensure employees understand the contribution and accountability towards meeting the Council's vision and objectives. Once performance expectations and targets are agreed, managers will regularly review progress with staff one-to-one meetings throughout the year. Council has developed and adopted an appraisal scheme, called "Developing, Engaging and Performing" - (DEP's).

Relevant parts of the Community Plan, the Corporate Plan, Corporate Performance Improvement Plan and Service Plans forms the basis of personal objectives set for

each SMT members, Heads of Service, Managers and individual team members, and achievement against are discussed at the regular meetings.

Within Council, a personal development plan (PDP) sets out the actions staff propose to take to deliver on objectives, and how to learn/develop themselves.

4.0 Council's self-assessment of statutory indicators and standards 2020 to 2021.

Statutory Indicators/Standards - (Set For Us)

Under the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, statutory performance indicators and standards have been set as part of the performance improvement arrangements for district councils (i.e. set for us). Performance measures have been specified for the functions of: economic development, planning and waste management.

The aim of the performance measures is to promote the improvement of service delivery. The information is currently collated by the Department for the Economy, Department for Infrastructure and DAERA (Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs) respectively and published on their websites. Once released to Council, this information is published for citizens and other stakeholders to assess Council's performance in these areas.

Mid Ulster District Council's 2020 to 2021 performance against these indicators (progress and direction of travel) are outlined in the following section, also included is performance benchmarking data relating to how the other 10 Councils; where available.

COVID-19 has had a large impact on our services over the last 12 months and some of the ways in which services have adapted throughout the year is included to provide a holistic picture of how the Council has performed this year.

The impact of COVID-19 on many services means that performance this year is not comparable to previous years, however analysis comparing performance over time

from 2016 to 2021 has been added where possible. For those services where COVID-19 has had an impact, narrative has been added to describe the impact and our response.

The statutory indicators and standards performance progress is analysed using a R. A.G (red, amber, and green) status-reporting framework.

Status evaluated by colour as	Explanation of colour status
GREEN	Met or exceeded target
AMBER	Missed target narrowly
RED	Missed Target Significantly

Direction of Travel - the direction of travel demonstrates if performance has improved, declined, or been maintained relative to the previous quarter:

- Performance improved
- Performance remained the same
- Performance declined

Economic Development

ED1 – Numbers of jobs promoted through business start-up activity

Purpose of Performance Indicator ED1: The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity (Business start-up means the delivery of completed client led business plans under the Department of the Economy Regional Start Initiative or its successor Programmes) – standard 210 jobs promoted.

Table 4.2 below highlights performance over time for the number of jobs promoted through business start-up in Mid Ulster from April 2016 to March 2021.

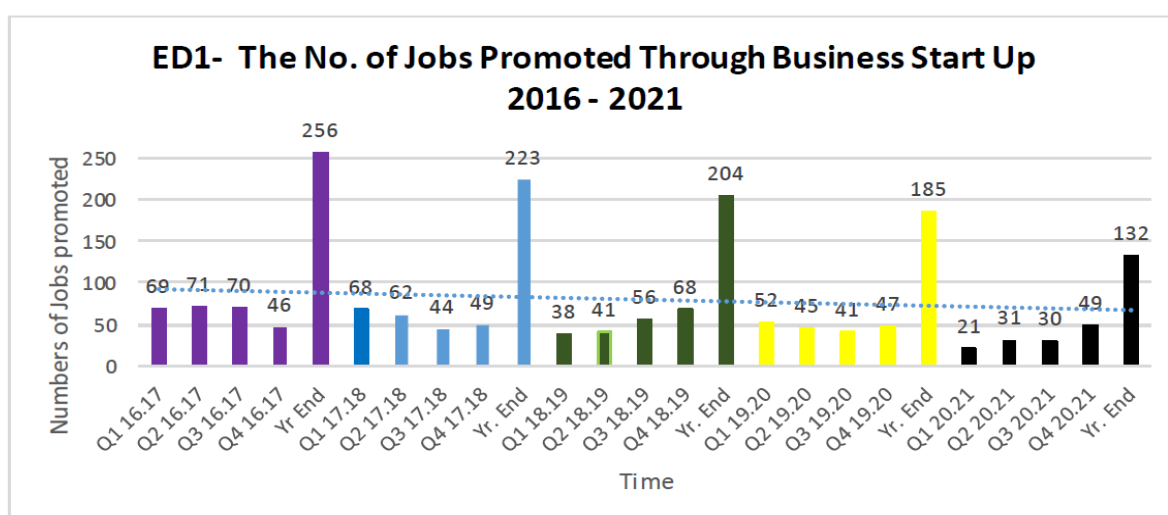


Table 4.3 below highlights quarterly performance outturns for Jobs promoted indicator - 2020 to 2021. The cumulative total for jobs promoted during 2020 to 2021 was 132; the standard to be met was 210 jobs promoted per annum.

Table 4.3 Quarterly performance outturns for jobs promoted 2020 to 2021

Quarter	Actual	Standard to be met	Trend on previous quarter	Status	Cumulative End of Year
January 2021 – March 2021	49	210 jobs p.a	Performance improved	Red	132
October 2020– December 2020	30	210 jobs p.a	Performance declined	Red	
July 2020 – September 2020	31	210 jobs p.a	Performance improved	Red	
April 2020 – June 2020	22	210 jobs p.a	Performance declined	Red	

Analysis : More is better

Quarter One (Q1 2021 to 2022) Business Plans figure is much higher than Q1 in 2020 to 2021 (65 versus 35) resulting in higher jobs (39 versus 22), this was due to the impact of Covid last year, however it has not returned to pre-Covid level of

2019/20 (84 Plans and 52 jobs). Figures are higher than previous Q4 due to Council having offered a small start-up grant of £250 to clients in March 2021. The Department for the Economy (DfE) and Invest NI require Councils to use a lower conversion rate (Plans - Jobs) of 0.6 (not RSI rate 0.75762). This performance level is higher than Q1 in 2020/21 and was on schedule to meet the European Union (EU) Programme target, but not the Statutory Target.

Action Plan:

Standard not achieved. DfE and DfC are going out to consultation with Councils and key stakeholders on the statutory targets and performance indicators, in response to Councils' requests following the Capaxo Review (June 2020). The Contract Management Team (located within Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council - L&CCC) have been liaising regularly with the Contractor (ENI); following approval from funders, ENI are offering both 'virtual' and physical delivery which is working well for clients and enquiry levels are good.

Northern Ireland Councils' ED1 Performance Data during 2020 to 2021

Across the eleven Northern Ireland Councils 1,429 jobs were created during 2020 to 2021, this is down from the previous year's figure of 1,726 jobs promoted. Mid Ulster is 1 of 4 Council areas where there is a 'gap' between the NIBSUP 'Programme Target' and 'Statutory target', the other three Councils are Belfast, Omagh & Fermanagh and Derry and Strabane. Refer to table 4.4 – Northern Ireland Councils Year to Date Jobs Created 2020 to 2021.

Table 4.4 – Northern Ireland Councils Year to Date Jobs Created 2020 to 2021

	Year to Date Performance				
	BPA Year to Date	Jobs Created Year to Date	Statutory Jobs Target	Balance of Jobs to be created	% Jobs Created Vs Statutory Target
Antrim & Newtownabbey	137	84	80		105%
Ards & North Down	165	101	85		119%
Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon	309	190	165		115%
Belfast	342	210	325	115	65%
Causeway Coast & Glens	216	133	125		106%
Derry & Strabane	184	113	140	27	81%
Fermanagh & Omagh	165	101	170	69	60%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	173	106	85		125%
Mid & East Antrim	153	94	85		111%
Mid Ulster	214	132	210	78	63%
Newry Mourne & Down	267	164	155		106%
Total 2020 -21 (Financial Y	2,325	1,429	1,625	289	88%

Planning

P1 – Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 30 weeks

Purpose of Performance Indicator: Planning Department deals with MAJOR Planning applications faster - [An application in the category of major development within the meaning of Planning (Development Management Regulations (NI) 2015(a)]. Major developments have important economic, social and environmental implications.

The majority of major applications are multiple housing, commercial, government and civic types of development. From 1 July 2015, pre-application community consultation became a pre-requisite to a major application. This means that major applications will not be accepted until they have gone through this minimum 12-week process and notice has been submitted to the council or Department. From 1st May 2020, the requirement to hold a public event as part of the pre-application community consultation was temporarily removed for five months in response to the coronavirus pandemic. This has subsequently been extended until 30 September 2021. Table 4.6 below highlights performance over time for Major applications processed from date

valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 30 weeks number from April 1st, 2016 to the 31st of March 2021.

Table 4.7 highlights Council's quarterly performance outturns for Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn indicator 2020 to 2021. The cumulative processing time from date valid to decision or withdrawn for major planning applications is 74.1 weeks; the standard to be met was 30 weeks.

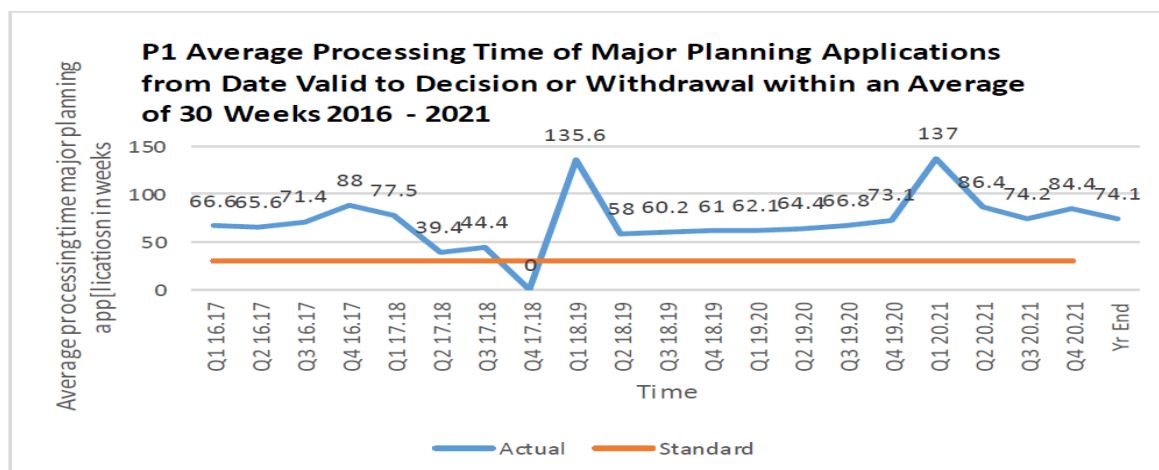


Table 4.7 – Council's Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 30 weeks - quarterly performance outturn for 2020 to 2021.

Quarter	Actual (weeks)	Standard to be met	Trend on previous quarter	Status	Cumulative Year end
January 2021 – March 2021	84.4	30 weeks	Performance declined	Red	74.1 weeks
October 2020– December 2020	74.2	30 weeks	Performance improved	Red	
July 2020 – September 2020	86.4	30 weeks	Performance improved	Red	
April 2020 – June 2020	137	30 weeks.	Performance declined	Red	

Analysis : Less is better

It goes without saying that planning activity and processing performance in 2020/21 were impacted by the restrictions put in place due to the coronavirus pandemic.

This should be borne in mind and caution should be taken when interpreting these figures and when making comparisons with other time periods. Overall processing performance for 2020/21 was impacted. The average processing time in weeks for Major applications in 2019/20 was 73.2 weeks, therefore performance is slightly down from last year (2019 to 2020) by 0.9 weeks. Mid Ulster received 10 major planning applications during 2020 to 2021 (down by one from the previous year) and approved six during the year.

Action Plan:

Standard not achieved, Major applications team to continue to operate under Planning Managers oversight and with monthly group meeting remaining in place. That focus must continue on dealing efficiently with these more complex and historically more time-consuming applications.

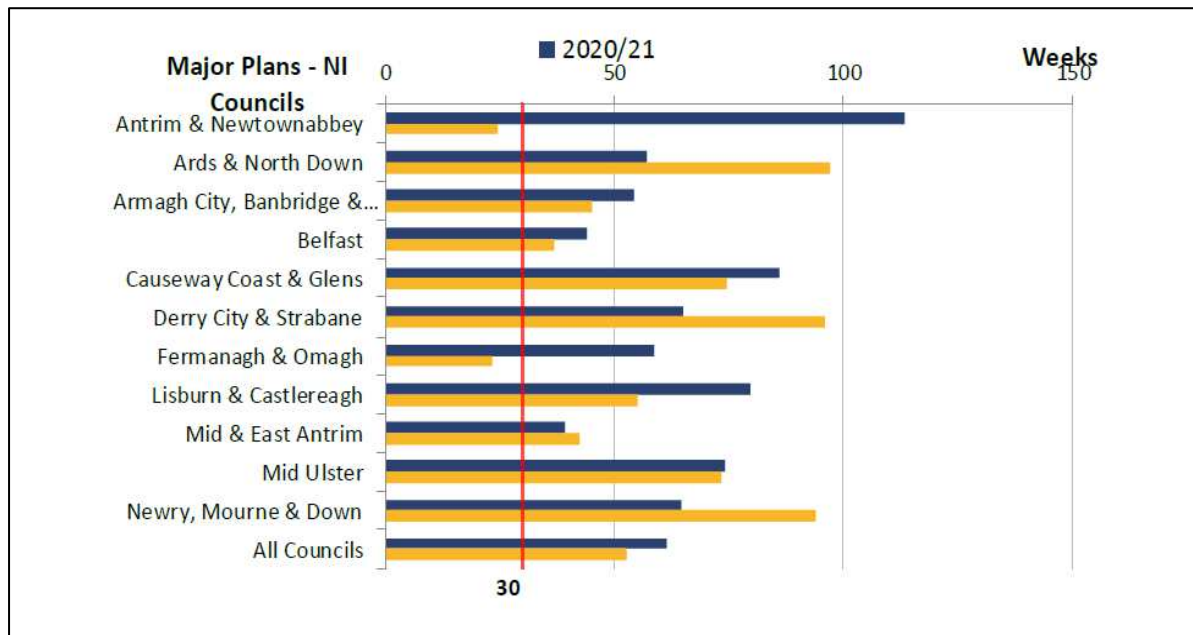
Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2020 to 2021

During 2020/21, 12,833 planning applications were received in Northern Ireland (NI); a 5% increase from the previous financial year. This comprised 12,709 local, 123 major and 1 regionally significant application. A total of 10,483 planning applications were decided during 2020/21, a decrease of over one-tenth from the previous financial year. Decisions were issued on 10,357 local, 123 major and 3 regionally significant applications during 2020/21. The overall Northern Ireland approval rate for all planning applications was 95.7% in 2020/21; an increase from the rate reported for 2019/20 (94.0%) and the highest approval rate reported for any year since the series began in 2002/03. Approval rates varied across councils during 2020/21, from 99.2% in Mid Ulster to 91.2% in Newry, Mourne and Down

The average processing time for major applications brought to a decision or withdrawal during 2020/21 was 61.4 weeks across all councils. This represents an increase of 8.6 weeks compared with the previous financial year and is more than

double the 30-week target. None of the 11 councils met the 30-week target in 2020/21 refer table 4.8.

Table 4.8. – Northern Ireland Councils Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 30 weeks indicator 2020-21



Planning P2 – Average processing time for Local planning applications from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 15 weeks.

Purpose of Performance Indicator: Local applications means an application in the category of local development within the meaning of the (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015, and any other applications for approval or consent under the Planning Act (NI) 2011 (or any orders or regulations made under the Act).

Local Development planning applications are mostly residential and minor commercial applications received and determined by a Council. The time taken to process a decision/withdrawal is calculated from the date on which an application is deemed valid to the date on which the decision is issued or the application is withdrawn.

The number of local planning applications received in Northern Ireland during 2020/21 was 12,709; an increase of 5.4% from the 12,058 received during 2019/20. Across Northern Ireland's 11 Councils, during Q1 2020/21, (the first full quarter impacted by the restrictions put in place due to the coronavirus pandemic), the number of local applications received was 2,284. This was the lowest number received in any quarter since the transfer of planning powers. During the following three quarters there were consecutive increases in the number of local applications received, with the 3,637 received in Q4 2020/21 the highest quarterly total since transfer.

Table 4.9 – MUDC Performance over time average processing time for Local planning applications from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 15 weeks 2016 to 2020

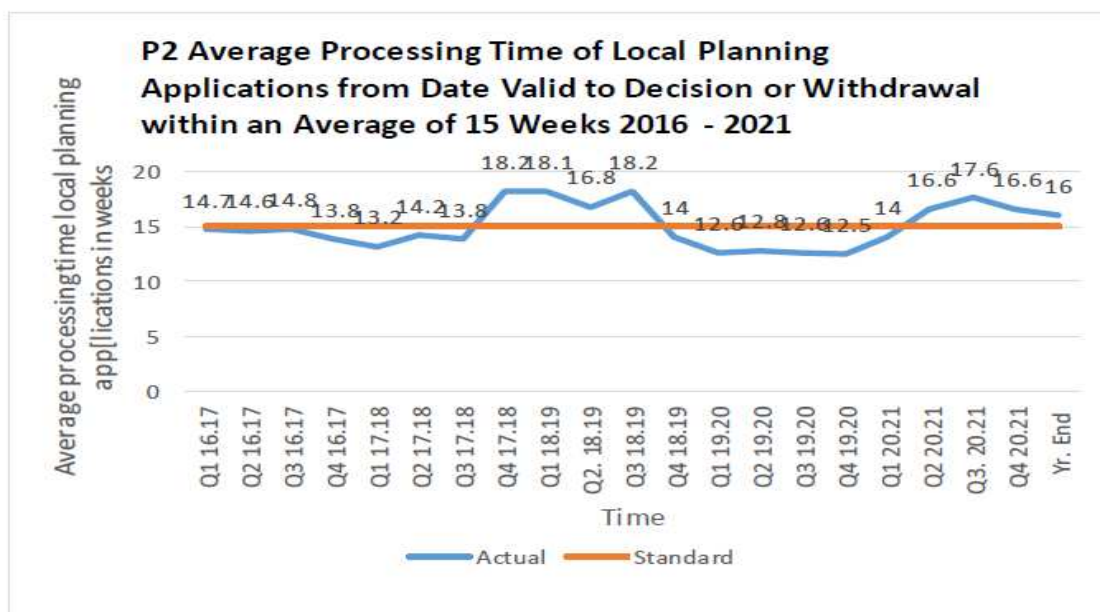


Table 4.10 below highlights Council's quarterly performance outturns for average processing time for Local planning applications from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 15 weeks 2020 to 2021. The cumulative processing time from date valid to decision or withdrawn for local planning applications is 16 weeks; just missing out on the standard to be met of 15 weeks.

Table 4.10 – Council's quarterly performance outturn for average processing time for Local planning applications from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 15 weeks 2020 to 2021.

Quarter	Actual (weeks)	Standard to be met	Trend on previous quarter	Status	Cumulative Year end
January 2021 – March 2021	16.6 weeks	15 weeks	Performance declined	Red	16 weeks
October 2020– December 2020	17.6 weeks	15 weeks	Performance declined	Red	
July 2020 – September 2020	16.6 weeks	15 weeks	Performance declined	Red	
April 2020 – June 2020	14 weeks	15 weeks	Performance declined	Green	

Analysis: Less is better

Despite working in a pandemic and with less efficient homeworking arrangements, local applications processing times have remained just outside target by one week (16 weeks). It is also worth noting that during 2020 to 2021 Mid Ulster Council received the third highest number of local applications 1,524 (up from 1,413 in 2019 to 2020), after Newry and Mourne Council 1,645 and Belfast 1,554. Antrim and Newtownabbey had the lowest number of applications 722 during 2020 to 2021, less than half of those received by Mid Ulster Council.

Action Plan:

Standard not achieved. Moving forward it is proposed to monitor performance via Team leads and the Head of Service.

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2020 to 2021

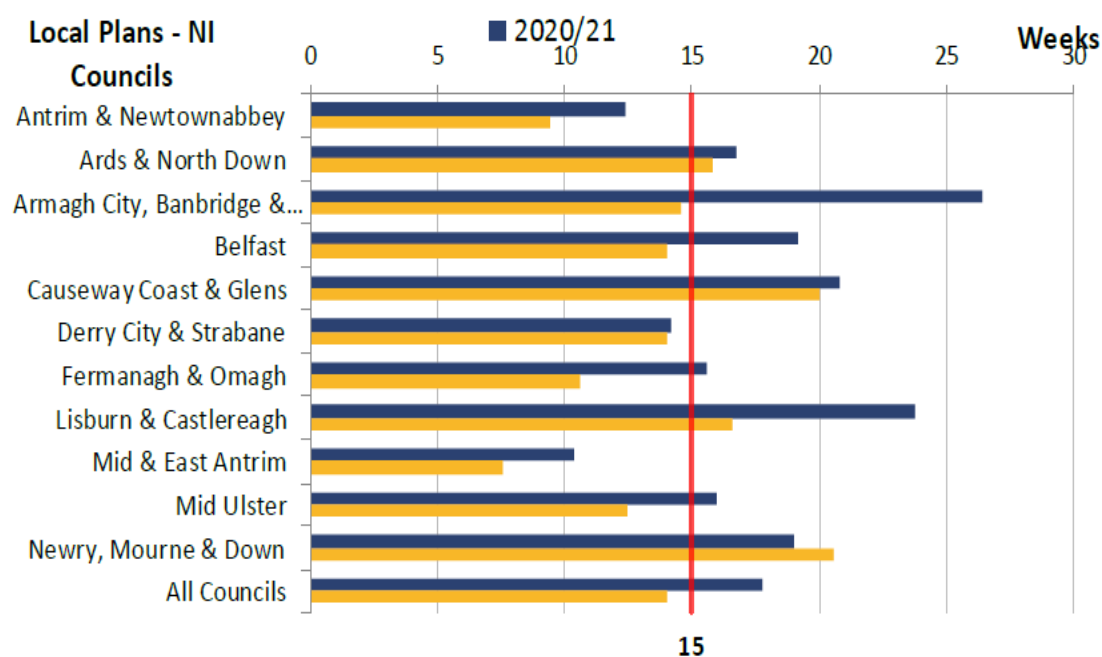
Across all 11 councils, the number of local applications received during 2020/21 ranged from 1,645 in Newry, Mourne and Down to 722 in Antrim and Newtownabbey. Reflecting the overall increase in the number of local applications received in 2020 to 2021 compared with 2019 to 2020 (5.4%), nine of the 11 councils reported an increase over the year. The largest increase, in percentage terms, was in Derry City and Strabane (14.9%).

Over the same period the volume of local planning applications received decreased in Antrim and Newtownabbey (-6.1%), and Lisburn and Castlereagh (-5.7%). The number of local applications, decided across all eleven Councils in 2020 to 2021 was 10,357; a decrease of 10.8% from 2019 to 2020 (11,616) and the lowest number recorded for any year since the transfer of planning powers.

The average processing time for local applications brought to a decision or withdrawal during 2020/21 was 17.8 weeks across all councils, exceeding the statutory target of 15 weeks. This represents an increase of 3.8 weeks compared with 2019/20 (14.0 weeks), as councils' ability to process applications was impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Three of the 11 councils met the 15-week target in 2020/21: Mid and East Antrim (10.4 weeks; 829 applications); Antrim and

Newtownabbey (12.4 weeks; 722 applications); and Derry City and Strabane (14.2 weeks; 948 applications).

Table 4.11. – Northern Ireland Councils average processing time for Local planning applications from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 15 weeks indicator 2020 to 2021.



Planning P3 – The percentage (70%) of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks.

Purpose of Performance Indicator: Planning Department bring more enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks. Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control under Part 5 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 (or under any orders or regulations made under the Act).

An enforcement case is opened when there has been an alleged breach of planning control. An enforcement case is concluded when one of the following occurs: a notice is issued; legal proceedings commence; a planning application is received; or the case is closed. The time taken to conclude an enforcement case is calculated from the date on which the complaint is received to the earliest date of the following: a notice is issued; legal proceedings commence; a planning application is received; or the case is closed.

Table 4.12 – MUDC Performance over time the percentage (70%) of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks 2016 to 2020

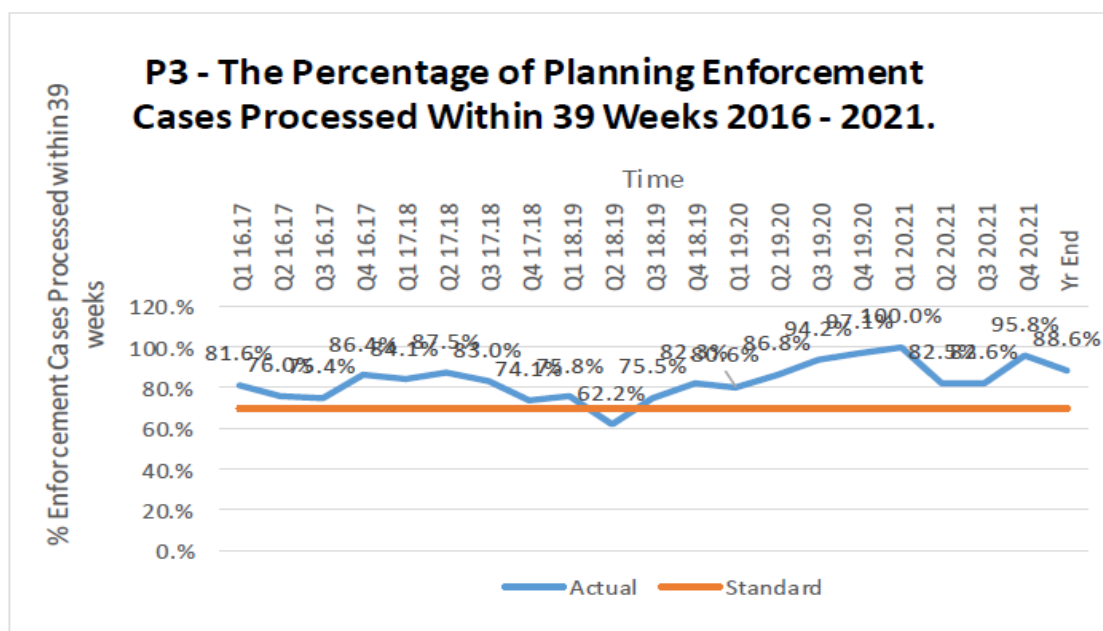


Table 4.13 below highlights Council's quarterly performance outturns for average processing time for the percentage (70%) of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks 2020 to 2021. The cumulative processing time of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks was 88.6 %, 18.6% above the 70% standard, the standard was met.

Table 4.13 – Council's quarterly performance outturn for the percentage (70%) of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks 2020 to 2021.

Quarter	Actual (%)	Standard to be met	Trend on previous quarter	Status	Cumulative Year end
January 2021 – March 2021	95.8%	70%	Performance Improved	Green	88.6%
October 2020– December 2020	82.6%	70%	Performance improved	Green	
July 2020 – September 2020	82.5%	70%	Performance declined	Green	
April 2020 – June 2020	100%	70%	Performance improved	Green	

Analysis: More is better

Last year the Council attained 90.1% of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks. Processing times for enforcement cases improved in Q4 despite high number of new cases opened. This means that enforcement performance remains steady and well within 70% target during an extremely tumultuous year in relation to the pandemic.

Action Plan:

Standard achieved. Maintain management.

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2020 to 2021

The number of enforcement cases opened in Northern Ireland during 2020/21 was 3,229; down almost one-quarter (-24.2%) from the number opened in 2019/20 (4,262), and the lowest annual total reported since 2015/16.

During Q1 2020/21, the first full quarter impacted by the restrictions put in place due to the coronavirus pandemic, 628 enforcement cases were opened; the lowest number opened in any quarter since Q4 2014/15. The number opened was higher in the following three quarters (848 in Q2, 882 in Q3 and 871 in Q4). Across councils, the number of enforcement cases opened in 2020/21 ranged from 445 in Belfast to 177 in Mid and East Antrim. Eight councils reported decreases in the number of cases opened in 2020/21 compared with the previous year. This decrease was greatest in Belfast, where the number of cases opened fell by more than one-half (-54.8%)

over the year (from 984 to 445). The number of cases opened increased in three councils over this period, with the largest increase, in percentage terms, recorded in Mid Ulster (up 11.2%, from 196 to 218). The number of enforcement cases closed during 2020/21 was 3,014, down by over one-quarter (-28.8%) from the same period a year earlier (4,236).

Mid Ulster Council had the second highest (88.6%) processing time of planning enforcement cases after Antrim and Newtownabbey, whose processing time was 90.8%, Newry and Mourne Council attained the slowest processing time for enforcement cases of 40.9% during 2020 to 2021.

Across councils, the number of cases concluded during 2020/21 ranged from 619 in Belfast to 150 in Ards and North Down. Nine councils recorded decreases in the number of enforcement cases concluded in 2020/21 compared with the previous year, with the greatest decrease occurring in Ards and North Down, where the number concluded fell by more than two-thirds (down 67.0%, from 455 to 150).

Increases in the number of cases concluded over the year were recorded in Derry City and Strabane (up 26.3%, from 160 to 202), and Mid Ulster (up 8.2%, from 171 to 185).

Table 4.14. – Northern Ireland Councils the percentage (70%) of planning enforcement cases processed (conclusion times) within 39 weeks 2020 to 2021.

Table 6.2.5 - Enforcement cases conclusion times^{3,4} by planning authority, 2020/21

	Antrim & Newtownabbey	Ards & North Down	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	Belfast	Causeway Coast & Glens	Derry City & Strabane	Fermanagh & Omagh	Lisburn & Castlereagh	Mid & East Antrim	Mid Ulster	Newry, Mourne & Down	Strategic Planning Division	Northern Ireland
<u>% of cases concluded within 39 wks</u>													
Apr-Jun 2020	88.4%	48.5%	92.7%	78.0%	70.0%	13.3%	55.0%	82.0%	83.3%	100.0%	24.8%	z	59.6%
Jul-Sep 2020	82.4%	77.5%	82.2%	72.4%	71.2%	48.7%	80.4%	83.5%	78.2%	82.5%	60.9%	z	73.5%
Oct-Dec 2020	83.3%	75.0%	78.5%	68.4%	75.0%	72.2%	82.9%	80.8%	81.5%	82.6%	42.0%	z	69.5%
Jan-Mar 2021	92.5%	54.4%	70.7%	59.8%	52.2%	93.8%	48.2%	88.2%	94.1%	95.8%	45.7%	z	71.5%
2020/21	90.8%	62.0%	77.7%	66.2%	66.5%	73.3%	56.6%	83.6%	82.6%	88.6%	40.9%	z	69.9%
2019/20	98.7%	81.1%	85.8%	93.2%	87.6%	78.1%	81.1%	84.5%	88.8%	90.1%	38.2%	z	81.4%
Change over year: 2019/20 - 2020/21 (pp)	-7.8	-19.1	-8.2	-27.0	-21.1	-4.9	-24.5	-0.9	-6.2	-1.4	4.7	z	-11.5

Source: NI Planning Portal

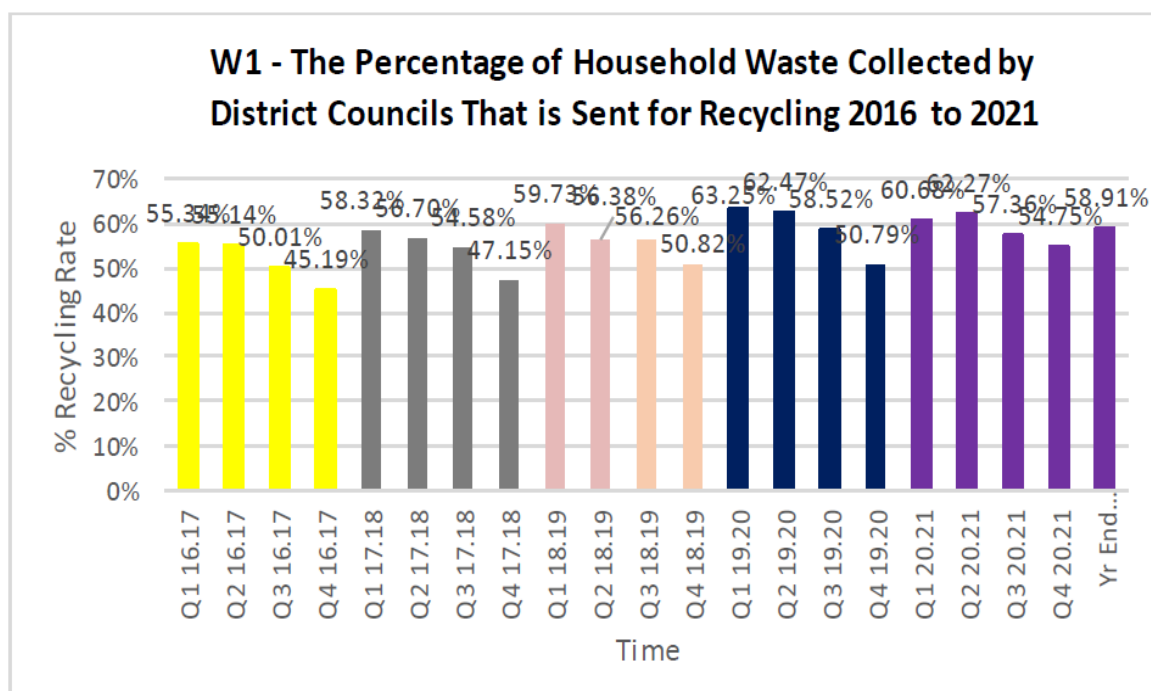
Waste

Waste W1 – The Percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse)

Purpose of Performance Indicator: The percentage of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse). It is to meet Statutory Targets – Households 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). Failure to meet statutory waste targets could result in infraction proceedings and fines.

The Council has a statutory duty to make quarterly returns to the NI Environment Agency in respect of waste arisings managed by the Council. The results for all eleven Northern Ireland Councils are published quarterly by statistics and analytical services branch – DAERA. An Annual report is also provided.

Table 4.15 – MUDC Performance over time for the percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse) 2016 to 2020



****Note in Table 4.15.** This table contains twelve-month rolling figures, as provided in the Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics January to March 2021 – as provisional estimates. They were calculated by combining data from the quarter published in this report with data from the three preceding quarters. It should be noted that some data used in this calculation are provisional data. An annual report, with fully validated figures for 2020 to 2021 is scheduled to be published in November 2021

Table 4.16 – Council’s quarterly performance outturn for the percentage (and tonnage) of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse) 2020 to 2021.

**Quarter	Actual (% or tonnes)	Standard to be met	Trend on previous quarter	Status	Cumulative Year end
January 2021 – March 2021	54.75% or 10,040 tonnes recycled. Cumulative position of 58.91% or 45,159 tonnes	NILAS Scheme 50% by 2020	Performance declined	Green	58.91% or 45,159 tonnes
October 2020– December 2020	57.36% or 10,646 tonnes recycled. Cumulative position of 60.21% or 35,119 tonnes	NILAS Scheme 50% by 2020	Performance declined	Green	
July 2020 – September 2020	62.27% or 13,473 tonnes recycled. Cumulative position of 61.55% or 24,473 tonnes	NILAS Scheme 50% by 2020	Performance improved	Green	
April 2020 – June 2020	60.68% or 11,000 tonnes recycled	NILAS Scheme 50% by 2020	Performance improved	Green	

Analysis: More is better

During the last quarter of 2020 to 2021, there was a decrease of 606 tonnes compared to the previous quarter (three), which can be attributed to seasonality. We can compare quarter four figures, during 2020 to 2021 (54.75% or 10,040 tonnes recycled - cumulative position of 58.91% or 45,159 tonnes) with the same time period last year 2019 to 2020 (50.79% or 7,889 tonnes recycled - cumulative position of 59.17% or 41,407 tonnes,). During this same reporting period there has been an Increase of 2,151 tonnes, this is due to the impact of pandemic.

Action Plan:

Standard achieved. Maintain management.

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2020 to 2021

This is the latest in a number of impressive successes for the district in terms of its waste management performance. Mid Ulster is consistently at the top of the table for its household recycling rate, most recently achieving the highest household recycling rate of all 11 councils here for the 2020 to 2021 period with 58.9%. The district also had the biggest reduction in waste sent to landfill out of all 11 councils with only 3.4% of waste being landfilled.

These are remarkable achievements; they reiterate the extremely positive position of the Council in terms of waste management, and highlight the dedication of our waste teams to maintaining the service during the height of the pandemic. This also demonstrates the terrific work being done by residents in Mid Ulster in terms of their continued and unwavering recycling efforts, even during an incredibly difficult time.

Table 4. 17. – Northern Ireland Councils twelve-month rolling figures for local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste key performance indicators and Waste from Household recycling rate by council and waste management group 2020 to 2021.

Authority	Household waste preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting as a % of household waste arisings	Household waste landfilled as a % of household waste arisings
Antrim & Newtownabbey	54.5	29.0
Ards & North Down	51.0	42.9
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	54.3	6.7
Belfast	43.1	26.7
Causeway Coast & Glens	53.9	13.3
Derry City & Strabane	46.1	9.1
Fermanagh & Omagh	47.1	38.3
Lisburn & Castlereagh	50.4	41.4
Mid & East Antrim	50.8	36.4
Mid Ulster	58.9	3.4
Newry, Mourne & Down	52.6	5.3
arc21	49.5	29.8
NWRWMG	50.0	11.2
Northern Ireland	50.7	22.6

Waste W2 – The amount (tonnage) of Biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled.

Purpose of Performance Indicator: Meet Statutory Targets -Local Authority collected Municipal Waste as defined in section 21 of the Waste Emissions Trading Act 2003 (c).

Table 4.18 – MUDC Performance of the amount (tonnage) of Biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled over time 2016 to 2020

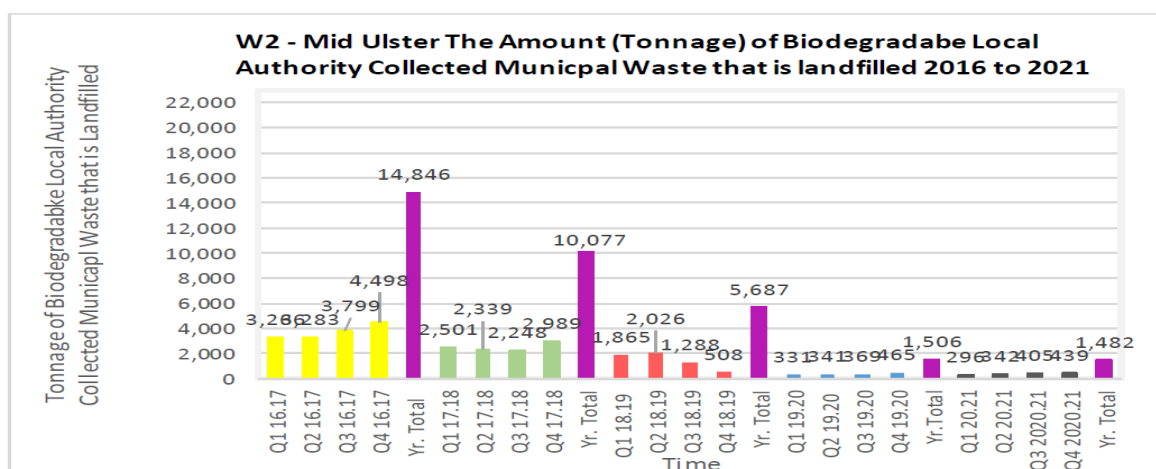


Table 4.19. - Outlines Mid Ulster District's Council quarterly performance data during 2020 to 2021. Last year's allowance was set at 16, 932 tonnes for 2019 to 2020 , however no allowance has been set this year and Council awaits further guidance by the Department

Table 4.19 – Council's quarterly performance outturn for amount (tonnage) of Biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled 2020 to 2021.

Quarter	Actual (tonnes)	Standard to be met	Trend on previous quarter	Status	Cumulative Year end
January 2021 – March 2021	439	No allowance set	Performance declined	Green	1,482 tonnes
October 2020– December 2020	405	No allowance set	Performance declined	Green	
July 2020 – September 2020	342	No allowance set	Performance declined	Green	
April 2020 – June 2020	296	No allowance set	Performance improved	Green	

Analysis: Less is better

During the final quarter of the year in 2020 to 2021, there was an increase of 34 tonnes compared to quarter three. If we look at last year's figures there was a cumulative position of 8.89% or 1,506 tonnes by 2019 to 2020, by the end of 2020 to 2021 the end of year position was 1,482 tonnes, a reduction of 24 tonnes from the previous year. As of August 2021, there are still no NILAS targets for 2020/21 and Councils are awaiting further guidance from the Department as the waste strategy for Northern Ireland ended in 2020.

The landfill rate exhibits seasonality and the April to June and July to September quarters tend to have lower rates than October to December and January to March. The seasonality stems from the higher level of compostable garden waste arising during spring and summer.

Action Plan:

Standard achieved. Maintain management.

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2020 to 2021

The total amount of biodegradable local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste sent to landfill for all eleven Councils during 2020 to 2021 was 125,402 tonnes. Mid Ulster had the lowest incidence of reported biodegradable LAC municipal waste sent to landfill of all the eleven Northern Ireland Councils at 1,482 tonnes, while Belfast recorded the highest at 30,071 tonnes.

Table 4.20. – Northern Ireland Councils twelve-month rolling figures for local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste key performance indicators and Waste from Household recycling rate by council and waste management group 2020 to 2021.

Authority	KPI(g)
	Reported biodegradable LAC municipal waste sent to landfill (tonnes)
Antrim & Newtownabbey	11,694
Ards & North Down	19,873
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	4,340
Belfast	30,071
Causeway Coast & Glens	5,861
Derry City & Strabane	4,802
Fermanagh & Omagh	14,410
Lisburn & Castlereagh	15,967
Mid & East Antrim	14,508
Mid Ulster	1,482
Newry, Mourne & Down	2,494
arc21	94,607
NWRWMG	10,663
Northern Ireland	125,502

Source: NIEA, NISRA, LPS

Waste – W3: The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings.

Purpose of PI: Meet Statutory Targets - Local Authority collected Municipal waste arisings is the total amount of local authority collected municipal waste, which has been collected by a district Council. Table 4.21 outlines Council's performance over time for the amount of tonnage of LAC municipal waste arisings from 2016 to 2020/21

Table 4.21 – MUDC Performance over time for the amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings 2016 to 2020

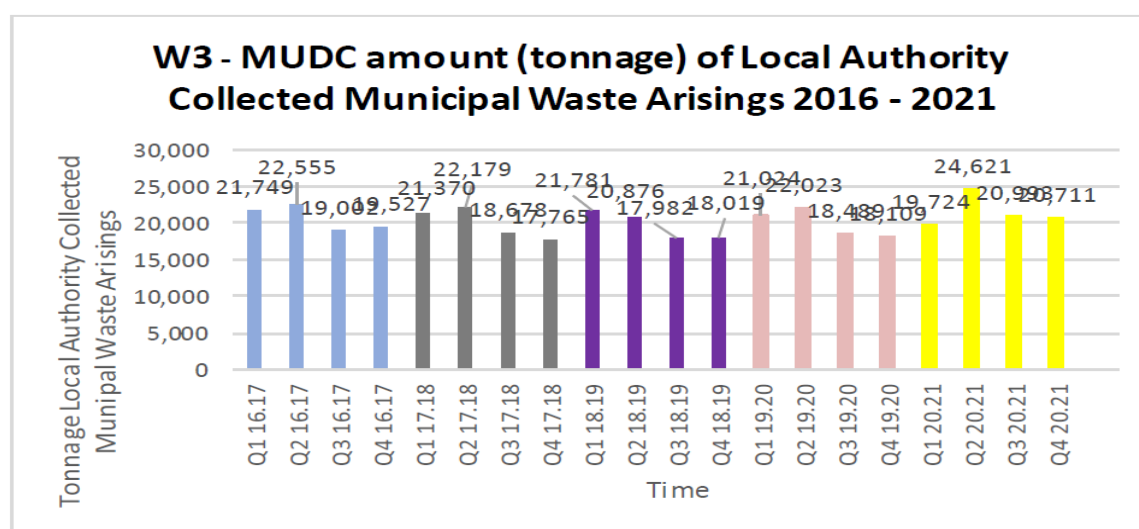


Table 4.22 – Council's quarterly performance outturn for the amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings 2020 to 2021.

Quarter	Actual (tonnes)	Standard to be met	Trend on previous quarter	Status	Cumulative Year end
January 2021 – March 2021	20,711	Awaiting NILAS targets	Performance improved	Green	86,049 tonnes
October 2020– December 2020	20,993	Awaiting NILAS targets	Performance improved	Green	
July 2020 – September 2020	24,621	Awaiting NILAS targets	Performance declined	Green	
April 2020 – June 2020	19,724	Awaiting NILAS targets	Performance declined	Green	

Analysis: Less is better

During the last quarter of 2020 to 2021, there was a decrease of 282 tonnes compared to quarter three and this is attributable to seasonality. If we take a comparison with the performance data from quarter four last year, in the same reporting period this year there was an increase of 2,602 tonnes, this is attributable to impact of pandemic.

Action Plan:

Standard achieved. Maintain management.

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2020 to 2021

During 2020 to 2021, the total amount (tonnage) of local collected municipal waste arisings was 1,031,206. Omagh and Fermanagh Council reported the least amount of tonnage of local collected waste arisings at 58,109 tonnes, Mid Ulster reported 86,049 over the year and Belfast recorded the highest tonnage of local waste arisings at 171,794 tonnes.

Table 4. 23. – Eleven Northern Ireland Councils amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings 2020 to 2021.

Authority	KPI(j)
	LAC municipal waste arisings (tonnes)
Antrim & Newtownabbey	95,425
Ards & North Down	93,705
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	113,712
Belfast	171,794
Causeway Coast & Glens	81,611
Derry City & Strabane	83,989
Fermanagh & Omagh	58,109
Lisburn & Castlereagh	80,846
Mid & East Antrim	78,986
Mid Ulster	86,049
Newry, Mourne & Down	86,980
arc21	607,736
NWRWMG	165,600
Northern Ireland	1,031,206

5.0 Council's Self-assessment of Self-imposed Indicators and Standards During 2020 to 2021

Corporate Health Indicators (Self-imposed - Set by us)

During the start of 2016/17, Mid Ulster District Council in the absence of an agreed region wide local authority performance management framework, decided to concentrate on ensuring the data quality of three of its proposed “set by us” or “self-imposed” performance indicators. The three original indicators were prompt payments, freedom of information requests (FOI) responded to within 20 days and percentage lost time rate (relating to sickness absence).

At its meeting in November 2017 the Council's Policy and Resources committee approved a further suite of “Corporate Health Indicators”. The indicators provide a barometer of how the Council is doing across its services and effectively provide a “performance dashboard” or a summary of how the Council is performing across eight key areas. The information is used by Council to help inform management decisions, plan services, benchmark performance and cost, and inform target setting. The eight key performance areas include the following: economy, waste management, Council facilities, better responses, resident satisfaction, staffing, engaged workforce and finance, (refer to Appendix A).

As outlined previously, Council is required statutorily to compare its performance for the 2020/21 year to that of previous years, legislation also requires Council, so far as reasonably practicable, to report their performance against other councils in the exercise of the same or similar functions.

To date there is no agreed overarching Northern Ireland Local Government Performance Management Framework; however, correspondence received from the Department of Communities during early August 2021 supplied Prompt Payment and absence management data regarding all 11 Councils and this has been included in this section.

Performance progress in this section also follows that described in the section outlining Council's self-assessment of statutory indicators and standards i.e. RAG

(red, amber, green) status framework as well as the Performance direction of travel relative to the previous quarter.

Corporate: Prompt Payments- 90% of invoices paid within 30 day target

Purpose of Performance Indicator: Prompt payments speed up cash flow from the public sector to its suppliers, particularly SME's. Council recognises that late payments are a key issue for business, especially for smaller businesses as it can adversely affect their cash flow and jeopardises their ability to trade and we recognise that as a Public body we should set a strong example by paying promptly.

This indicator allows Council to have a "signal" that it has an effective prompt payment system delivery, has in place a clear framework for managing prompt payments, in order to support an environment in which businesses flourish. Given the impact the pandemic has had on the economy this indicator has become even more important in protecting jobs and local businesses.

Table 5.1 – MUDC Performance of 90% of invoices paid within 30 days over time 2016 to 2020

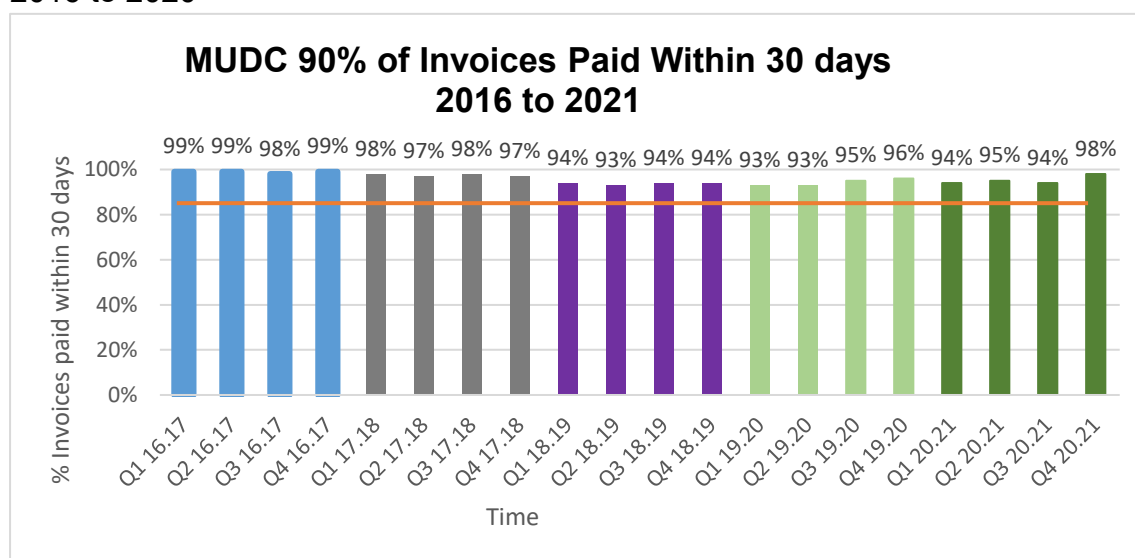


Table 5.2. Outlines Mid Ulster District's Council quarterly performance data of Prompt Payment; that is, 90% of invoices are paid within a 30 day target for 2020 to 2021. At the commencement of the first lock down many of our office based Finance team worked from home or in a hybrid model as various stages during 2020 to 2021 in response to the Northern Ireland Executive directing opening and closing restrictions of businesses i.e. safe social distancing measures and health and safety assessments were put in place.

Table 5.2 – Council's quarterly percentage of invoices paid within 30 days 2020 to 2021.

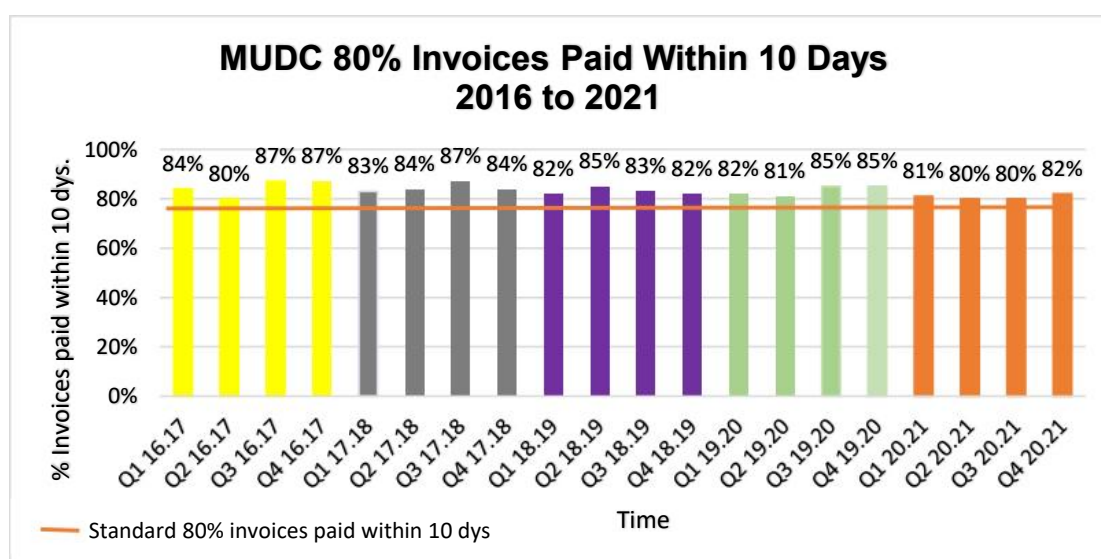
Quarter	Actual	Standard to be met (%)	Trend on previous quarter	Status	Cumulative Year end
January 2021 – March 2021	98%	90%	Performance improved	Green	95%
October 2020– December 2020	94%	90%	Performance declined	Green	
July 2020 – September 2020	95%	90%	Performance improved	Green	
April 2020 – June 2020	94%	90%	Performance declined	Green	

Analysis: More is better

Council managed to achieve 95% of invoices paid within 30 days during, exceeding the target in what was an exceptional year and even improved its performance over last year's figure of 94%. Council and its Finance team are to be commended on their duty to ensure our businesses were paid for work or services they had supplied to Council. Our incredible small businesses will be vital to our recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, supporting many tens of thousands of livelihoods across Northern Ireland.

Mid Ulster has also consecutively hit its target since 2016 of paying 80% of all invoices paid within 10 days (refer to table 5.3 MUDC performance of 80% invoices paid within 10 days between 2016 to 2021). The end of year cumulative total was 81% of all invoices paid in 2020 to 2021, which equates to 10,931 invoices.

Table 5.3 – MUDC Performance of 80% of invoices paid within 10 days over time 2016 to 2020



Action Plan:

Standard achieved. Maintain management.

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2020 to 2021

Mid Ulster has consecutively year on year remained one of the fastest payers of invoices to businesses within all eleven Councils. During 2020 to 2021, Mid Ulster Council averaged payment of invoices within 10 days. Mid Ulster is ranked as the top Council for its speed of invoice payment (refer to table 5.4 - Northern Ireland Councils twelve-month figures for average days to pay invoice during 2020 to 2021).

Lisburn and Castlereagh Council also paid a similar number of invoices during the year, i.e. 13,813 in total; however, the Council took just over 21 days to pay their invoices and ranks 9th out of the 11 Councils, with Derry and Strabane taking the longest to pay an invoice of 23 days.

Table 5.4. – Northern Ireland Councils twelve-month figures for average days to pay invoice during 2020 to 2021.

NI Councils	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2020/21 Average Days to Pay Invoice	Speed to pay by rank (days)
Antrim & Newtownabbey	14.83	13.16	13.36	15.64	14.25	6
Ards & North Down	12.00	13.00	13.00	12.00	12.50	5
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	12.67	13.55	11.13	11.61	12.24	4
Belfast	12.00	17.00	16.00	16.00	15.25	7
Causeway Coast & Glens	15.89	13.85	16.26	17.02	11.78	3
Derry & Strabane	25.50	23.66	20.62	23.08	23.22	11
Fermanagh & Omagh	11.00	11.00	12.00	11.00	11.25	2
Lisburn & Castlereagh	7.00	18.00	48.00	13.71	21.68	9
Mid & East Antrim	14.54	21.00	15.60	16.00	16.79	8
Mid Ulster	9.00	9.00	11.00	11.00	10.00	1
Newry Mourne & Down	24.00	21.00	23.00	24.00	23.00	10

Corporate: Absenteeism – Percentage (%) Lost Time Rate sickness absence - (5% or less p.a.)

Purpose of Performance Indicator: The Lost Time Rate (LTR) shows the percentage of total time available that has been lost due to sickness absence during a certain time period. The indicator is based on full time equivalent (FTE) employees, and is useful as a general measure of the significance of sickness absence levels for an organisation.

This measure will be one indicator that allows Council to have a “signal” that it has an effective absence policy, has in place a clear framework for managing sickness absence, while setting out reporting mechanisms, states the attendance levels expected, uses monitoring arrangements, trigger mechanisms, effective roles and responsibilities, as well as ensuring management commitment. The lost time rate is useful as a general measure of the gravity of sickness absence levels for an organisation. Teams or departments, who want to ascertain whether or not there are absence issues in certain areas, can also use this measure.

Table 5.5 – MUDC Performance of the Percentage (%) Lost Time Rate sickness absence (5% or less p.a.) over time 2016 to 2020

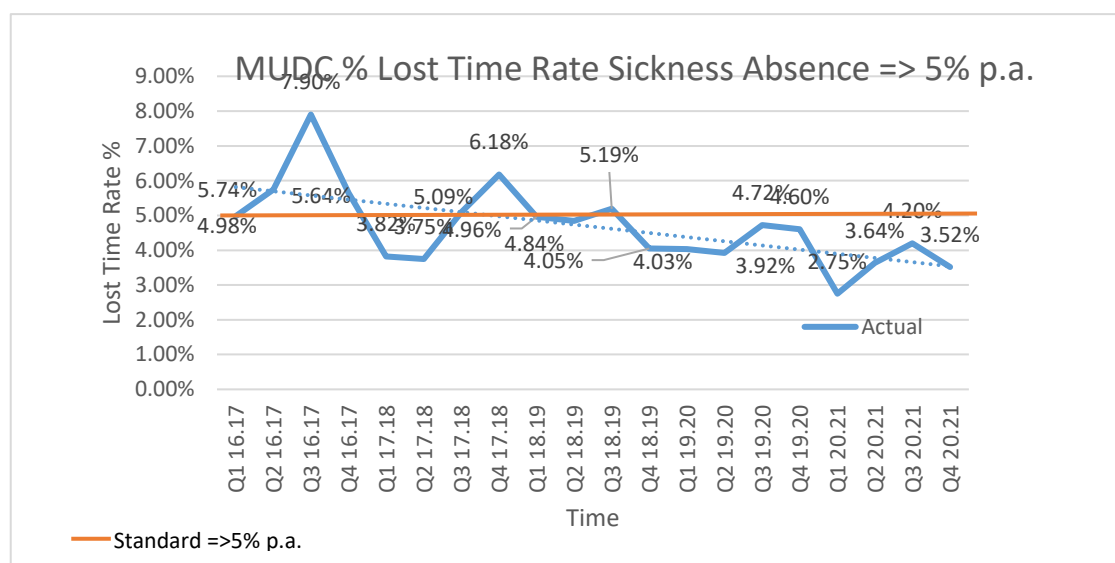


Table 5.6. Outlines Mid Ulster District's Council quarterly performance data for Percentage (%) Lost Time Rate sickness absence (5% or less p.a.) during 2020 to 2021. Without staff that are well and at work, Mid Ulster District Council could not deliver quality and effective services to businesses, residents and our partnerships throughout the District. We need to ensure that staff are provided with an environment and opportunities that encourage and enable them to lead healthy lives and make choices that support their wellbeing, this will be our guiding principle.

The CIPD¹ states that everyone in the workforce, at all levels, feels the impact of ill health and sickness absence as it significantly affects organisations performance, productivity and workforce output. This in turn affects the level and quality of services provided to customers, both internal and external.

It makes business sense to support those who are ill and help them get back to work and to emphasise the importance of tackling health through good employment practices and pro-active well-being employer support, to encourage good occupational health management and to transform opportunities for people to recover from illness while retaining their jobs. This aligns with the Mid Ulster Community Plan outcome of, "We are better enabled to live longer and healthier more active lives". Employee absence is considered to represent one indicator of

employee health and well-being (Mc Hugh² 2001a) and how well managed and efficient the organisation is; that is the 'health of the organisation' (HSE³ 2002).

1. Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2006a) Absence management: annual survey report. London. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
2. McHugh, M (2001a) Employee absence: an impediment to organisational health in local government, The International Journal of Public Sector Management, 14:1, .43-58
3. Health and Safety Executive (2002) Survey of Occupational Health Support. HSE Contract Research Report 445/2002, London. Health & Safety Executive

Table 5.6 – Council's Quarterly Percentage (%) Lost Time Rate sickness absence (5% or less p.a.) 2020 to 2021.

Quarter	Actual	Standard to be met (5% p.a)	Trend on previous quarter	Status	Cumulative Year end
January 2021 – March 2021	3.52 %	5%	Performance improved	Green	3.57 %
October 2020– December 2020	4.2 %	5%	Performance declined	Green	
July 2020 – September 2020	3.64 %	5%	Performance declined	Green	
April 2020 – June 2020	2.75 %	90%	Performance improved	Green	

Analysis: Less is better

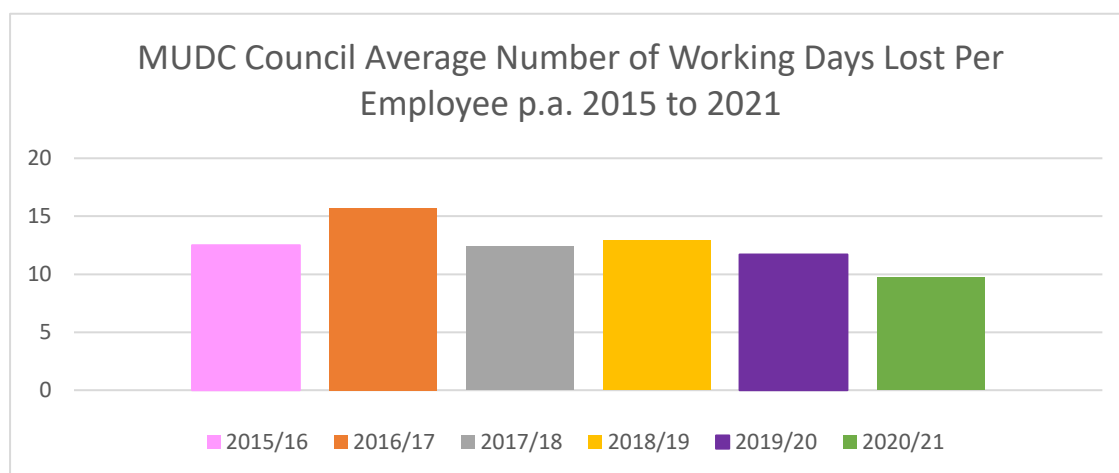
During the last quarter (Q4) of 2020 to 2021 the loss rate was 3.52% (1,742 days), a reduction of 0.68% from Q3 (4.20% - 402 days less than last quarter), a reduction of 1.08% on the same quarter in 2019/20 and the second lowest quarterly % loss figure since 2016. However, the Covid-19 Global Pandemic has impacted on sickness absence levels in varying ways considering that a number of staff have been furloughed due to facility closures and those considered Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (C.E.V) being advised to shield and have therefore been furloughed in line with Government advice until 11th April 2021.

The number of staff furloughed has resulted in a lower number of staff being available for work, which may have contributed to the lower percent loss rate to date.

Absence due to infections has increased from 6.98% last quarter, to 27.64% this quarter. This is due to the fact that COVID absence (Long Covid etc.) lasting more than the initial 10 days is now recorded in the absence stats, under "infections". COVID infection related absence accounts for 21% of the 27.64% of absence due to infections. The rollout of the COVID vaccination will hopefully reduce the percentage loss due to COVID Infection and it is hoped this will be reflected in future absence statistics as we move into 2021/2022.

It is also helpful to realise the average number of days lost per employee or full time equivalent from the new Council forming in 2015 until 2021 (table 5.7), and benchmarking with other Councils can also be made against the data.

Table 5.7 - The Average Number of Working Days Lost in Mid Ulster District Council from 2015 to 2021.



Action Plan:

Standard achieved. To summarise there continues a reduction in the number of days lost due to absence each quarter and we will continue to monitor and manage the absence levels in line with MUDC Policy and Procedures

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data Average Total Number of Days Lost (Sickness Absence) during 2018/19 and 2019/20.

The average numbers of days lost per employee performance data for all eleven Northern Ireland Councils is still not available for 2020 to 2021. Reflection on the figures supplied to date demonstrates that Mid Ulster has moved from being ranked the Council with the fourth lowest number of average days lost due to sickness absence during 2018 to 2019, at 12.9 days to second lowest after Mid and East Antrim Council (at 10.64 days). Mid Ulster during 2019 to 2020 had 11.7 days average sickness absence meaning a difference of 1.2 days from the previous year. This has dropped yet again during 2020 to 2021 to 9.72 days.

Table 5.8 - NI Councils Average Days Lost 2018/19 and 2019/20

Council	2018 to 2019		2019 to 2020	
	Average Total Number of Days Lost (per *FTE)	Rank	Average Total Number of Days Lost (per FTE)	Rank
<i>Antrim and Newtownabbey</i>	13.73	7	12.41	3
<i>Ards and North Down</i>	14.23	8	14.19	7
<i>Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon</i>	16.73	10	18.28	10
<i>Belfast City</i>	13.71	6	13.58	4
<i>Causeway Coast and Glens</i>	17.13	11	**0.00	
<i>Derry City and Strabane</i>	12.3	2	14.5	8
<i>Fermanagh and Omagh</i>	10.44	1	13.77	5
<i>Lisburn and Castlereagh</i>	13.3	5	13.8	6
<i>Mid and East Antrim</i>	12.45	3	10.64	1
<i>Mid Ulster</i>	12.9	4	11.7	2
<i>Newry, Mourne and Down</i>	14.7	9	15.8	9

FTE means Full time equivalent

***Causeway Coast & Glens awaiting annual accounts certification*

Corporate: Freedom of Information - 90% of Freedom of information requests responded to within 20 days.

Purpose of Performance Indicator: The measure is needed to ensure that Council meets its statutory obligations and that customer requests are met within specified timeframes. Citizens can get information in a timely manner through a transparent process.

Table 5.9 – MUDC Performance of 90% of Freedom of information requests responded to within 20 days over time 2016 to 2021

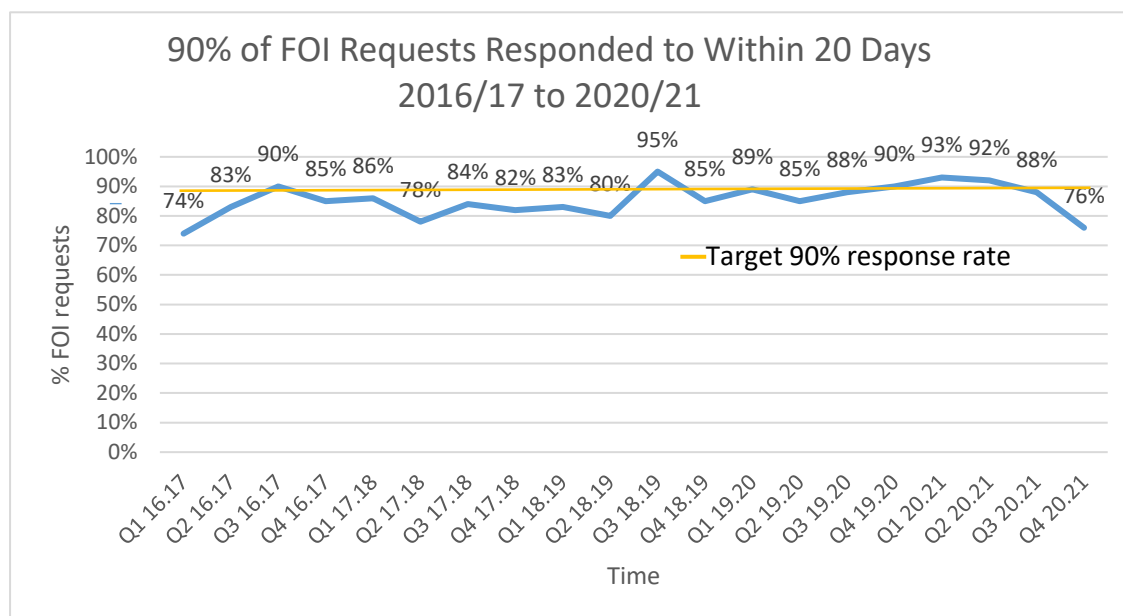


Table 5.10. Outlines Mid Ulster District's Council quarterly performance data of 90% of Freedom of information requests responded to within 20 days, for 2020 to 2021. The overall attainment of 87% for the year was nonetheless significant in light of the COVID context in which the council was operating for the entire year and to date.

Table 5.10 – Council’s quarterly percentage of 90% of Freedom of information requests responded to within 20 days.

Quarter	Actual	Standard to be met (%)	Trend on previous quarter	Status	Cumulative Year end
January 2021 – March 2021	76%	90%	Performance declined	Red	87%
October 2020– December 2020	88%	90%	Performance declined	Amber	
July 2020 – September 2020	92%	90%	Performance declined	Green	
April 2020 – June 2020	93%	90%	Performance improved	Green	

Analysis: More is better

The number of Freedom of Information requests received by Council remained steady and relatively in line with the numbers received when compared to the same number last year. A total of 107 FOI requests were received and processed in the last Quarter of 2020-21. There was, however, a downward trend on the number of those, which were responded to within 20 days during this quarter. Of the 107 requests almost one quarter were not responded to within the 20 day period (i.e. 24%).

The lower number of requests responded to within 20 days in the last quarter has contributed towards the 90% of all requests being responded to standard not being met for 2020-2021. Quarters 1 to 3 had attainment rates in the high eighty to early ninety percent. The drop in the final quarter to 76% has made the 90% standard unobtainable for 2020-2021.

During quarter four, the achievement of 76% is significantly down on the same period last year where it peaked at 90% for Quarter 4. The services within the single Department where non-compliance is most prevalent have been identified as contributing towards this lower than expected attainment.

Action Plan:

Standard not achieved. Continue to track requests through the Council's CRM module. Quarterly reporting to senior management now broken down across service area illustrating those services with non-compliant cases to identify trends. There are is no comparable data relating to Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days for Northern Ireland Councils

6.0 Overall Assessment for 2020 to 2021

As a result of Covid-19, this has been a very atypical year with large variations across communities and individuals' lived experience during the pandemic.

Services were also operating at different levels, as the Council focused on essential services and the safety of, and support for, the most vulnerable. A number of services were mostly closed throughout the year, for example, tourism, arts and cultural venues, and leisure centres, in order to protect the public and staff.

Many services continued to operate as normal, some vital new services were introduced to meet the needs of residents, at very short notice and Council for the first time, like many other organisations across the world, attained unprecedented levels of remote and agile working. As a result comparative changes in indicator values from the previous years should be treated with caution, given the impact and extenuating circumstance of the pandemic. Targets could not be set for some of the Corporate Health Indicators for the year 2020-21 and indicator values would be viewed as establishing baselines and reset for the period 2021-22 moving forward (regarding recovery from the pandemic).

The Council still performs well across many of the Corporate Health and Service indicators in what has been the most challenging of years. In the remaining areas where there is scope for building on levels of performance, services are assessing targets as part of plans for renewal.

Departments will continue to closely monitor progress and take appropriate action. The focus is now on recovery whilst still responding to the challenges of COVID before moving to a renewal phase. We also want to retain some of the positive lessons learned during the pandemic in order to build towards achieving previous performance levels, particularly in areas where our services were most affected by the impact of COVID.

Despite the focus on the response to COVID and the impact on the means and methods of service delivery i.e. considering the additional services created and resources required. Mid Ulster District Council has continued to achieve robust

performance results across many areas including, giving members of the public and businesses guidance and ensuring compliance with regulatory services such as waste, planning, environmental health and building control.

Council has maintained support for local businesses through economic development activities in addition to helping business survive through the distribution of COVID business recovery grants. Mid Ulster has maintained excellent household waste recycling rates and is a local Councils' leader in ensuring prompt payments are received by suppliers of works or services. Council has also significantly reduced its sickness absence rate in year.

Working collaboratively with our Trade Unions colleagues will greatly assist our recovery journey. As we emerge into what will be our new normal, continual dialogue on how we emerge stronger, learn from the digital solutions and new ways of working developed, manage expectations and how we manage workforce change, allowing service delivery to change and develop is critical. This will ensure new ways of working are sustainable for individuals and the organisation.

It is a given that the recovery process will take significant time and be influenced by a number of significant issues, and will not necessarily be linear. Clearly, there is a difficult period ahead, but there is good reason for optimism in the medium term as Northern Ireland, alongside many other Countries around the world began their vaccination programmes. Council has provided logistical support to partner organisations to make full use of its assets, in order to support the immunisation of residents through some of its centres.

The recovery from the pandemic will dominate most of our lives for some time to come and we have been honest in this report where our performance has been impacted by COVID-19 and, where possible, set out how we are going to get back on track. This report fulfils our statutory duty to report on our performance but, more importantly, it provides a holistic picture. Despite growing challenges the Council's aim remains unchanged – to be at the heart of the local community and making people's lives better by achieving positive outcomes for all of our communities.

7.0 Have Your Say

We welcome your comments or suggestions at any time of year. Mid Ulster District Council is committed to improving its services and is keen to hear from the community on what it has to say. We welcome your comments or suggestions at any time of the year. There are a number of ways in which to influence Council decision-making.

You can get involved and participate in consultations being conducted by, or on behalf of the Council. Meetings of the Council and its Committees are open to the public, with the exception of those times when sensitive or confidential issues need to be discussed.

That is why we want to hear what you think about our performance and what we can do to improve. Please join us on the journey by sharing your thoughts.

If you have any comments, would like any further information, or would like a copy of this plan in an alternative format please contact

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Appendix One – Mid Ulster Council Corporate Health Indicators 2020 to 2021

Mid Ulster District Council: Corporate Health Indicators				QUARTER FOUR 2020/21							
	Measures	Target/Standard 2020-2021	Annual Outturn 2018-19	Annual Outturn 2019-20*	Reporting (Calculating) Officer	Responsible Lead Service	QUARTER ONE 2020/21 (Total Q1)	QUARTER TWO 2020/21 (Cumulative total Q1 and Q2)	QUARTER THREE 2020/21 (Cumulative total Q1 + Q2 & Q3)	QUARTER FOUR 2020/21 (Cumulative Q1+ Q2+ Q3 & Q4)	
	1.0 Economy										
1	1.1	No. of jobs promoted	**210	204	185	Director, Business & Communities	Economic Development	22	53	83	132
2	1.2	Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	15 weeks	16.9 weeks	12.5 weeks	Planning Manager	Planning: Development Management	15	16.9	12.5	16
3	1.3	Average processing time for major planning applications (weeks)	30 weeks	64.7 weeks	73.2 weeks	Planning Manager	Planning: Development Management	30 weeks	64.7 weeks	73.2 weeks	74.1 weeks
4	1.4	% building regulations applications determined to target	90%	90%	91%	Director, Public Health & Infrastructure	Building Control	96%	95%	95%	94%
	2.0 Waste Management										
5	2.1	% of household waste going to landfill	4%	16.31%	3.75%	Director, Environment & Property	Environmental Services	3.20%	3.15%	3.49%	3.66%
6	2.2	% of household waste recycled	58%	55.98%	58.86%	Director, Environment & Property	Environmental Services	60.68%	62.27%	57.36%	54.75%
	3.0 Council Facilities										
7	3.1	Visitors to arts/cultural venues	TBC	120,247	135,939	Director, Business & Communities	Arts & Culture	0	6,231	7,208	7,208
8	3.2	Users of leisure and recreation facilities	TBC	2,230,312	2,071,748	Director, Leisure & Outdoor Recreation	Leisure	163,948	420,631	799,790	1,232,504
9	3.3	Visitors to council offices	TBC	Not Available	40,294	Director, Organisational Development	Human Resources	0	3,325	6,370	9,484
10	3.4	No. of RIDDOR incidents		11	14	Director, Public Health & Infrastructure	Health & Safety	2	2	5	6
	4.0 Better Responses										
11	4.1	Fol requests responded to within target	90%	86%	88%	Head, Democratic Services	Democratic Services	93%	92%	89%	87%
12	4.2	Complaints dealt with within target	90%	Not Available	89.47%	Head, Democratic Services	Chief Executive's Office	83.33%	91.66%	86.96%	79.42%
13	4.3	Correspondence responded to within target	90%	Not Available	85.75%	Head, Democratic Services	Chief Executive's Office	82.35%	82.05%	80.59%	80.74%
14	4.4	No. of online transactions	<17,022	16,655	17,022	Director, Finance	ICT	893	11,795	15,594	17,062
	5.0 Resident Satisfaction										
15	5.1	% of residents content with our services	80%	Not Available	Not Available	Head, Marketing & Communications	Marketing & Communications	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
16	5.2	% of residents agree that council keeps them informed	80%	Not Available	Not Available	Head, Marketing & Communications	Marketing & Communications	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
17	5.3	% of residents agree that council listens and acts on concerns	80%	Not Available	Not Available	Head, Marketing & Communications	Marketing & Communications	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
18	5.4	No. of organisations receiving Grant Aid		800	860	Director, Business & Communities	Community Development	368	374	396	399
	6.0 Staffing										
19	6.1	Number of Staff (FTEs) on payroll		713.3	706.82	Director, Organisational Development	Human Resources	734.97	732.39	733.86	726.83
20	6.2	Number of Casual Staff employed in past 12 months		70	31	Director, Organisational Development	Human Resources	0	0	14	14
21	6.3	% Attendance	95%	95%	95.69%	Director, Organisational Development	Human Resources	97.25%	96.68%	97.16%	96.46%
22	6.4	% Overtime	2.5%	1.66.%	1.32%	Director, Finance	Finance	0.74%	0.76%	0.70%	0.71%
	7.0 Engaged Workforce:										
23	7.1	% of workforce satisfied with current job	80%	60.95.%	65.34%	Head, Marketing & Communications	Marketing & Communications	***65.34%	***65.34%	***65.34%	***65.34%
24	7.2	% of workforce who take pride in working for Mid Ulster District Council	80%	79.48.%	84.07%	Head, Marketing & Communications	Marketing & Communications	***84.07%	***84.07%	***84.07%	***84.07%
25	7.3	% of workforce who understand council's priorities and how they contribute to them	80%	69.91.%	78.13%	Head, Marketing & Communications	Marketing & Communications	***78.13%	***78.13%	***78.13%	***78.13%
	8.0 Finances										
26	8.1	Loans Outstanding		6,746,933	6,114,748	Director, Finance	Finance	6,114,748	5,790,201	5,790,201	5,459,789
27	8.2	Cash Reserves	£10m	13,029,169	11,791,888	Director, Finance	Finance	15,475,674	16,223,512	17,630,687.28	****29,955,234
28	8.3	Invoices paid within 30 Days	90%	94%	94%	Director, Finance	Finance	94%	95%	94%	95%
		*some data awaiting validation reports from Executive Departments						***Figures relate to 2019/20 survey			
		** Currently under review by Department - subject to change in statute/guidance arising from Capaxo recommendations				Page 84 of 146		**** Non recurring receipts : £7M Covid funding, £1.8M Daera funding, & £850K Rates support finalisation			
		The above data is management information and may be subject to change post validation exercises									

Report on	Tamnamore Close Play Park Lease Agreement
Date of Meeting	Thursday 9 th September 2021
Reporting Officer	Head of Parks
Contact Officer	Nigel Hill

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	Council approval to progress lease proposals in relation to a parcel of land adjacent to 1 and 4 Tamnamore Close, Dungannon from Northern Ireland Housing Executive.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Tamnamore was identified as one of the villages selected for minor works programme to a value of Circa £17,000 for the provision of play/leisure equipment. A continual issue identified in each of the villages was the need to upgrade existing facilities and amenity areas in all the villages. These priorities have been strongly identified in the village planning process and subsequently can be referenced in the village plans.</p> <p>The communities living in this rural area have suffered in terms of low economic activity and general development the potential investment in the infrastructure has the potential to generate social and economic opportunities by addressing need and stimulating pride. The final approved concept designs have been agreed by each community within the Villages to further enhance the significant consultation exercise recently undertaken within each village..</p> <p>Community meetings held on following dates – 9th March 2017– Public meeting to discuss priorities for Village Plan and Village Renewal Project 27th March 2018 - Initial project meeting with representatives of all groups to identify priorities. 23rd July 2019 - First Meeting with Community and Design Team to discuss potential projects outlined in Village Plan 18th September 2019 – Concept Designs presented to Community 25th September 2019– Final sign off on priority projects and concept designs by Community</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The project aims to achieve the following outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greater community and recreational activity in rural villages/communities 2. Greater quality of life provision in our local areas 3. Increased sustainability in relation to rural areas and accessibility of services 4. Increased activities focused on children and young people 5. Village renewal and regeneration of rural settlements.

3.2	To seek the establishment of a lease with Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) for the parcel of land as out lined in red (Appendix) for a period of 25 years subject to Letter of Offer and LPS valuation.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p><u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u></p> <p>Financial: Council are in receipt of LPS valuation for the provision of 25-year rental agreement for £25.00.</p> <p>Human: Existing staff resources sufficient to coordinate project support.</p>
4.2	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>In line with Council policy and procedures</p>
4.3	<p><u>Risk Management Implications</u></p> <p>In line with Council policy and procedures</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members approval is sought to accept the Lease Agreement from Northern Ireland Housing Executive in relation to the proposed 25 year lease for the amount of £25.00 for the designated land at Tamnamore Close, Dungannon for the provision of public play facilities.
5.2	Members approval is sought to present all associated lease documentation for approval and Seal.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	NIHE Indicative Valuation letter and Location map, Tamnamore Close (Appendix).

-- MID ULSTER COUNCIL BURN ROAD
COOKSTOWN
BT80 8DT

Ref Number: 80713

10/08/2021

Without Prejudice and Subject to Contract

Dear Mid Ulster District Council,

Land at Lands at Tamnamore Close Dungannon edged red on attached map

I refer to your application to purchase the land outlined red on the attached map. In order to proceed further we are required to obtain the necessary internal approvals including obtaining a valuation from Land & Property Services.

I can now advise you that we have received a valuation of £25.00 for the leasehold interest in the land. However before we can process the application further we require confirmation that you wish to continue on the basis of the above valuation of £25.00 for a 25 year lease by completing the attached form and returning it to the above address.

For the avoidance of doubt this letter does not constitute an offer to sell the land.

Once we receive your confirmation we will process the application to the next stage and if approved we will contact you again with a formal offer to purchase the land. If the Housing Executive does not approve your application we will advise you accordingly.

The valuation provided by Land & Property Services is only valid until 24/08/2021 and is not open for negotiation. The Housing Executive also reserves the right to review the valuation if the transaction does not complete before that date. Please note that your acceptance of the valuation **does not** form a binding contract with the Housing Executive and you can withdraw your application at any time prior to the signing of the contract.

The attached form should be returned by 24/08/2021 and if we do not receive the form by that date we will assume that you do not wish to proceed with your application and will close our file in respect of this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mona Conway
Land & Regeneration Services Manager (South)

"WITHOUT PREJUDICE AND SUBJECT TO CONTRACT"

To: Mona Conway

Date: 10th August 2021

Ref No 80713

Address of site: Lands at Tamnamore Close Dungannon edged red on attached map

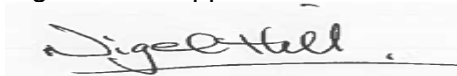
Land Valuation: £25.00 leasehold

* Delete as appropriate

*** (A) I confirm that I wish to continue with the application for a 25 year lease on the land at the above location**

~~* (B) I do not wish to proceed with the application to purchase the land~~

Signature of Applicant



Nigel Hill
Head of Parks MUDC

Please return completed form by 24/08/2021 to:

Land & Regeneration South Region
Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Marlborough House
Central Way
Craigavon BT64 1AJ

02895 983505

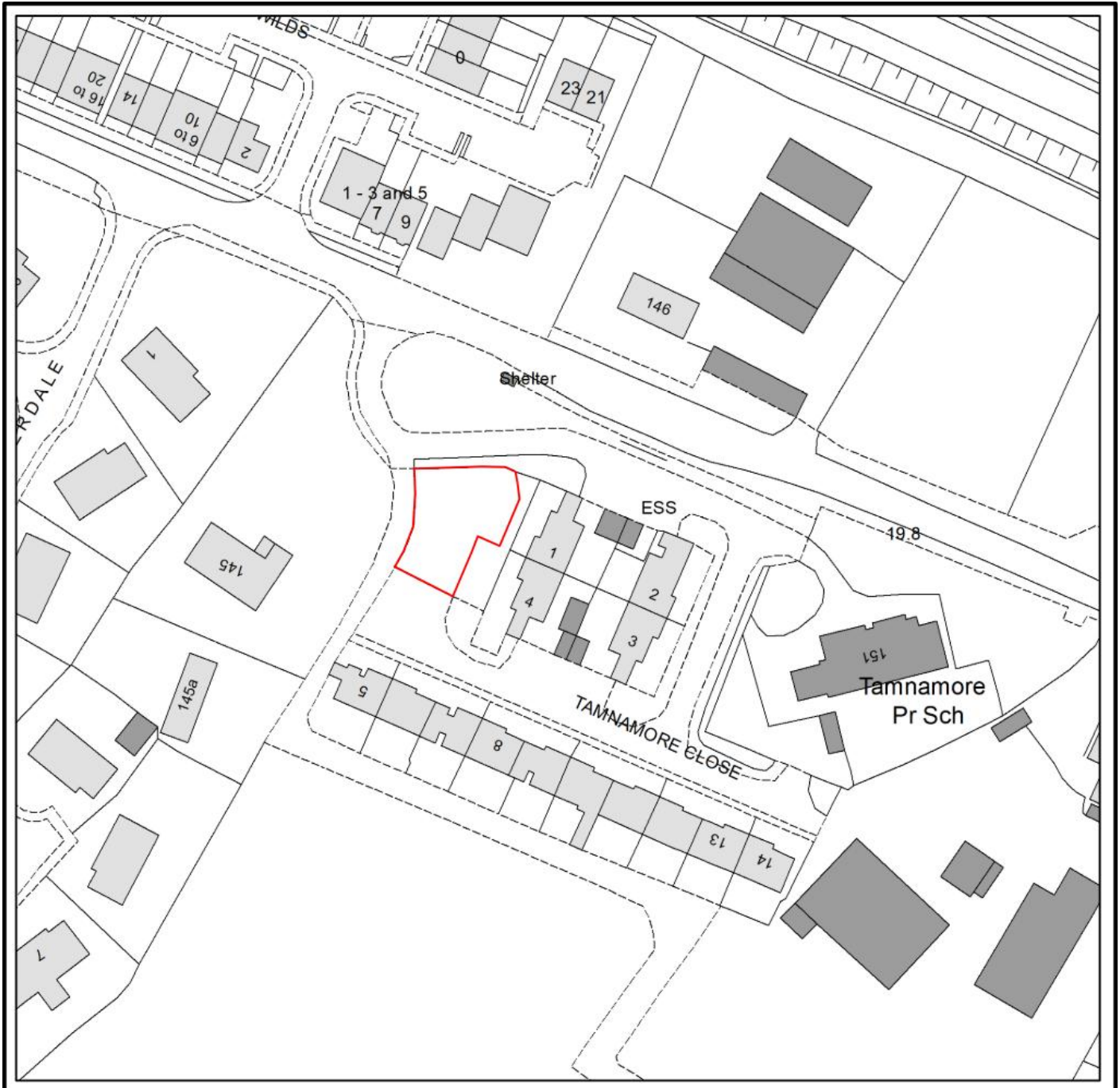
N.I.H.E.
Place Shaping South
Marlborough House
Central Way
CRAIGAVON
BT64 1AD



NIHE TO: Mid Ulster District Council

ADDRESS: Land at Tamnamore Close
Dungannon
Co Tryone

REF. NO: 80713



ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP NO: I.G. 16114SE

APPROXIMATE SCALE: 1:1,250

PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR CLIENT(S) IS/ARE SATISFIED THAT THE BOUNDARY AS
OUTLINED IN RED ON THE MAPS ATTACHED IS CORRECT

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 1 July 2021 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor McKinney, Chair

Councillors, Ashton, Buchanan*, Cuddy, Doris* Elattar, Kearney, S McAleer*, S McGuigan*, McLean*, S McPeake, Molloy*, Quinn*, Totten*

Officers in Attendance

Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive
Mrs Dyson, Head of Human Resources
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health & Infrastructure
Lowry Raymond**, Head of Technical Services
Ms Mezza**, Head of Marketing and Communications
Mr Moffett**, Head of Democratic Services
Mr O'Hagan, Head of ICT
Mr Tohill, Director of Finance
Mrs Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

Others in Attendance

Councillor Bell* (7.42 pm)

- * Denotes members present in remote attendance
- ** Denotes Officers present by remote means
- *** Denotes others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

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

PR134/21 Apologies

Councillors Forde and Gildernew.
Mrs Canavan, Director of Organisational Development.

PR135/21 Declarations of Interest

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

Councillor Buchanan declared an interest in agenda item 4 – Connecting Pomeroy project as he is a member of the committee.

PR136/21 Chair's Business

None.

Matters for Decision

PR137/21 Community Development – Connecting Pomeroy

The Head of Technical Services presented previously circulated report on behalf of the Head of Community to accept funding from the Rural Development Programme to proceed with the court yard parking and amenity area at Pomeroy Forest.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor McLean and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority Resolve under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officers to accept funding from the Rural Development Programme, with match contribution and proceed with the court yard parking and amenity area at Pomeroy Forest.

PR138/21 Annual Progress Return – Equality Commission for NI (2020/2021)

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report asking members to consider Mid Ulster District Council's Annual Progress Report for the period 2020-21 on meeting the statutory equality and good relations duties as detailed within Section 75(1) and 75(2) of the N Ireland Act 1998. Deadline for submission is 31 August 2021.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority Resolve under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officers to approve that Council submits the Annual Progress Report (2020-2021) on the implementation and activity surrounding its Equality and Good Relations statutory duties to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

PR139/21 Council's Corporate Performance Improvement Plan: 2021-22 and 2022-23

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report to consider Council's Corporate Performance Improvement Plan for period 2021-2022 to 2022-2023.

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority Resolve under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of

Delegation for Senior Officers to approve the Council's Corporate Performance Improvement Plan 2021–2022 to 2022-2023.

PR140/21 Member Services

No Issues.

Matters for Information

PR141/21 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 10 June 2021

Members noted Policy and Resources Committee Minutes of Meeting held on 10 June 2021.

Live broadcast ended at 7.09 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Molloy

Seconded by Councillor Elattar 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 Member consider items PR142/21 to PR156/21.

Matters for Decision

PR142/21	Economic Development: Legal Agreements
PR143/21	Financial Report for 12 Months Ended 31 March 2021
PR144/21	Staffing Matters for Decision
PR145/21	Firewall Replacement
PR146/21	Desertcreat Lands
PR147/21	Cot Lane Footbridge – Repairs
PR148/21	Property in Dungannon
PR149/21	Civic Offices Refurbishment Works
PR150/21	ICT Fees - Update

Matters for Information

PR151/21	Confidential Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 10 June 2021
PR152/21	Staff Matters for Information
PR153/21	Labour Market Partnership
PR154/21	Managing Attendance
PR155/21	Contracts and DAC

PR156/21 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and concluded at 9.05 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

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

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

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

- If you have joined the meeting remotely please keep your audio on mute unless invited to speak and then turn it off when finished speaking
- Keep your video on at all times, unless you have bandwidth or internet connection issues, where you are advised to try turning your video off
- If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the meeting or on screen and keep raised until observed by an Officer or myself
- Should we need to take a vote this evening I will ask each member to confirm whether they are for or against the proposal or abstaining
- When invited to speak please introduce yourself by name to the meeting
- For any member attending remotely, if you declare an interest in an item, please turn off your video and keep your audio on mute for the duration of the item
- If referring to a specific report please reference the report, page or slide being referred to
- Lastly, I remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted

Thank you and we will now move to the first item on the agenda - apologies and then roll call of all other Members in attendance.

Report on	Provisional Recommendations on Local Government Boundaries Review
Date of Meeting	Thursday 9 th September 2021
Reporting Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner review of the Local Government Boundaries in Northern Ireland.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council received notification at its February meeting that a review of the Local Government Boundaries would be undertaken throughout 2021, with final recommendations expected to be submitted with the Department for Communities (DfC) by 31 st May 2022.
2.2	The purpose of the Commission is to review and make recommendations on the number, boundaries and names of the 11 local government districts and the number of boundaries and names of the wards into which each council district is divided. Members received a briefing on the process from the Commission in May 2021 at which they detailed the purpose of the review, their plans to publish provisional recommendations and consultation arrangements.
2.3	The Local Government Boundaries Commissioner for NI has now published her Provisional Recommendations and are open for consultation. The closing date for written submissions on the proposals is 21 st September 2021. After the initial consultation period, a series of public hearings are to be held across Northern Ireland. Refer to appendix A.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The Local Government Boundaries Commissioner has now published her Provisional Recommendations. The full report is accessible from the following link and for ease of reference, recommendations specific to Mid Ulster are on pages 43 to 45:</p> <p>LGBC - Provisional Recommendations 2021-2022 Review</p>

3.2	<p>Reflecting on section 7.9 (pages 43 to 45) of the report the provisional recommendations are summarised as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The council's boundary is recommended to remain the same 2. No recommendation is made on the local government district name 3. That the council district continues to be comprised of 40 Electoral Wards 4. Recommendations are made on changing the total electorate in 20 of the 40 Electoral Wards, to balance the electorate across the district to achieve an average of 2,535 electors per ward
3.3	Changes in the number of electors per ward in most cases are marginal and in most cases only moves electors from one ward to another which will be within the same District Electoral Area. This review does not deal with District Electoral Areas (DEAs) boundaries.
3.4	It should, however, be noted that this may have an impact on Ballysaggart and Coalisland South wards which make up the Coalisland & Dungannon Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership area. On an initial review of the recommended electorate size of these wards, when taken together will reduce across by approximately 300 people. Whilst marginal this may have an impact on a small number of people currently residing in these wards who may be benefiting from government support (either directly or through a funded programme) because they form part of the Neighbourhood Renewal Area.
3.5	<p>On discussion at a previous council meeting, it was agreed that members consider the content of the provisional recommendations once published and respond accordingly as parties and/or as individual members. Further information on the consultation is accessible from the Local Government Boundary Commissioner website at:</p> <p>https://www.lgbc-ni.org.uk/consultation</p>
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	That the committee notes the publication of the Provisional Recommendations as part of the Local Government Boundaries Review and considers those issues specific to Mid Ulster local government district.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix A: Correspondence from Local Government Boundaries Commissioner



**Office of the Local Government
Boundaries Commissioner**

C/O Local Government Division,
Department for Communities,
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

27 July 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

**Local Government Boundaries Review in Northern Ireland
Provisional Recommendations**

I am pleased to announce that my Provisional Recommendations have now been published and are open for public consultation at www.lgbc-ni.org.uk/consultation. The closing date for written feedback and suggestions about these proposals will be 21st September 2021.

Today's publication is the outcome of work completed over the last few months by my team, working alongside colleagues in the Electoral Office NI and with mapping and charting officers from Ordnance Survey NI. The review has used the latest mapping technology to increase accessibility and transparency around my proposed changes.

The process undertaken is about independently ensuring electoral equality and fairness across Northern Ireland, with the aim that all the wards within a district should, as far as possible, have a similar number of electors. The Statutory Rules that I must follow are set out in the Local Government Act (Northern) Ireland Act 1972, as amended. There is more information about my Review on the LGBC website at www.lgbc-ni.org.uk.

After the initial consultation period a series of 11 public hearings will be held in each council area facilitated by Assistant Commissioners. The public hearings, which will be subject to public health guidance at that time, will be held in late September and early October. Further details will be shared on the LGBC website in due course. In order to maximise public participation in the hearings, and to mitigate against any public health restrictions that may be in place, my current plan is to deliver events in a hybrid format that will allow for both in person and online participation.

I hope that these Provisional Recommendations will now act as a catalyst for meaningful public engagement and that is why I would encourage you to consider the recommendations and share your views with us.

Full details of how to respond are available at <https://www.lgbc-ni.org.uk/consultation> or alternatively you can submit a response by e-mailing my team on consultation@lgbc-ni.org.uk. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Sarah Havlin LLB

Report on	Recordings of Council and Committee Meetings - Audio and Video
Date of Meeting	Thursday 9 th September 2021
Reporting Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update members on the arrangements in place for audio-video recording council and committee meetings in line with the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 and in response to the movement to virtual meetings emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic.
2.0	Background
	<p>Council Meetings</p> <p>2.1 Members will be aware that there is a requirement on the Council to make an audio recording of all its council meetings, so far as is reasonably practicable, under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014. There is a requirement on the council to make an audio recording of the section of the council meeting that is open to the public. The purpose of this audio recording is to then have it available to the public for a period of 6 years from the date of the meeting and that it be published on our website for a period 2 years from the date of the meeting. This requirement does not extend to committee meetings.</p> <p>2.2 The Act states:</p> <p><i>47. (1) so far as is reasonably practicable, a council must make an audio recording of so much of a meeting of the council as is open to the public and the recording must be available to the public at the offices of the council until the expiration of the period of six years from the date of the meeting and published on the council website until the expiration of the period of two years from the date of the meeting</i></p> <p><i>(2) This section does not apply in relation to meetings of any committee or sub-committee of the council.</i></p> <p>Video Recordings of Council and Committee meetings</p> <p>2.2 The onset of COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a new way of running council and committee business to allow us to get business transacted, whilst adhering to</p>

	<p>COVID restrictions. Meetings over this period and to date have been held in a hybrid form with Members and council officers being able to join them virtually. Video recordings of virtual meetings were made from the live stream broadcasts generated for members of the public to hear open business debate, as they were unable to come into the chambers.</p>
2.3	<p>These video recordings are available for public viewing on the council's You Tube channel going back a period of 3 months.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/c/MidUlsterDistrictCouncil/featured</p>
2.4	<p>The other video recordings (i.e. 3 months plus) are archived and taken from the public facing webpage.</p>
3.0	Main Report
	<p>Council Meetings (audio recordings)</p> <p>3.1 To meet the requirement placed on the Council by Section 47 of the Act, we have been making the audio recordings of meetings available on our website since the council's establishment in April 2015. We are now applying to the six-year requirement and removing the audio recordings on a month-by-month basis, which are now outside the six-year period.</p> <p>3.2 In line with data protection principles and GDPR, the council no longer has a legal obligation for processing/holding this information and will be moving to disposing of audio recordings in excess of 6 years. This would be in line with council retention and disposal arrangements. We do not have a continuing business need to hold this information</p> <p>Video Recordings of Council and Committee meetings</p> <p>3.3 As referred at 2.2 (above) we currently hold videos of all virtual council and committee meetings held from June 2021, with videos accessible from the Council's YouTube account (3 months of meetings being publically available at any one time).</p> <p>3.4 The purpose of these videos were to provide members of the public with remote access to view and hear proceedings. There is no requirement for council to hold this information or have them made publically available on a long-term basis. In line with data protection principles and GDPR, the council has no lawful basis for continuing to process and hold this information for any longer than it has to – which is to allow members of the public view proceedings as they happen.</p> <p>We will be moving to disposing of any video recordings held which are older than 3 months. Video recordings will however be held for up to three months for business reasons (a public task) for purpose of minuting meetings to check back on proceedings for accuracy purposes, if required.</p>

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: not applicable
	Human: not applicable
	Risk Management: the action being taken as outlined will fulfil legislative requirements of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 and (GDPR)
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 considers and notes the action that will be taken on the management of audio and video recordings of Council and Committee Meetings
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Ref: Sec. 47 (Audio Recording of meetings) Local Government Act (NI) 2014

Report on	Service Improvement Plan – Legal Services
Date of Meeting	9 September 2021
Reporting Officer	Director of Finance
Contact Officer	Director of Finance

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 provide Members with an update in relation to the Legal Services Department Service Improvement Plan for 2021/22.
2.0	Background
2.1	The attached Service Improvement Plan (SIP) shows how the service provided by the Legal Service's Department will contribute to Council's corporate objectives during 2021/22.
2.2	A Legal Services Department SIP was also in place for 2020/21 and a section of the attached SIP details the performance overview for that year.
2.3	The SIP also includes a work plan and action plan for 2021/22 outlining the various actions to be taken by the Department during the current year.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	There are several actions and outcomes set out within the attached SIP which will be reported on over the course of 2021/22.
3.2	The SIP also includes details of risks relevant to the Legal Services Department and details of the mitigation measures in place to control these in the most appropriate way.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: All aspects of the Legal Services Department's costs have been included within 2021/22 revenue budgets. However, outsourced and third party legal costs, and potential Court awards are difficult to budget with any degree of certainty,

	<p>especially given the increasingly litigious environment in which the Council operates. Notwithstanding the inevitable uncertainty surrounding the adequacy of revenue budgets, the officers are satisfied that the Council's reserves and cash balances, together with its insurance arrangements should be sufficient to meet any costs associated with the Legal Services Department (which represents the Council's corporate interests) that may arise during 2021/22.</p>
	<p>Human: The Legal Services Department is supplemented by a range of third party legal advisers, each with specific areas of expertise. The balance between internal and external resourcing will continue to be kept under review.</p>
	<p>Risk Management: The Legal Services Department is a key contributor to the Council successfully managing its strategic and operational risks. Given the small staffing complement, the Department (and therefore the Council) may be exposed to risks associated with prolonged staff absences should they arise for whatever reason. The repositioning of the Department within the Corporate Services/Finance Directorate should mitigate some of this risk, with the residual risk remaining under review.</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the Committee notes the 2021-2022 Service Improvement Plan for Legal Services.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Legal Services Department's Service Improvement Plan 2021/22



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Legal Services Department

SERVICE PLAN - 2021 / 22

CONTENT

SECTION	TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
	Foreword	
1.0	OVERALL PURPOSE & SCOPE OF THE SERVICE	
1.1	Purpose and scope of the service	
1.2	Responsibilities	
1.3	Customers & Stakeholders	
1.4	Performance Overview in 2021/22	
2.0	IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2021/22	
2.1	Budget - 2021/22	
2.2	Staffing Complement – 2021/22	
2.3	Service Work Plan – 2021/ 22	
2.4	Risk Management of Service	
3.0	OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS	
3.1	Equality Duty	
3.2	Rural Needs Duty	

Foreword

At the start of 2020, Northern Ireland faced the spread of the global Covid-19 pandemic, which in turn has impacted on the way, Mid Ulster District Council delivers its services to communities. The Council's initial response was to protect frontline services, support the vulnerable in the community and ensure continuity of services.

On the Council's road to recovery and reinstatement of services, we have established 'Recovery Activities' that will enable the Council to learn from the impacts that Covid 19 caused, i.e. the new and emerging challenges that services face and the opportunities that have emerged from new ways of working. These 'Recovery Activities' will support the Council's Corporate Plan and this Service Plan will also support the delivery of these higher level objectives and associated outcomes for the residents of the District.

To make sure that we are transparent in what we are aiming to achieve, there is a series of activities outlined within the Service Plan. It should be noted, that it is proposed, that this will be a dynamic service plan, in light of Council's ongoing response to the Pandemic, reflecting the changing context within which it has been developed. Any changes that need to be made to the service plan (i.e. new actions added, or actions removed) will be reported to the Director of the Department as well as being reported as part of our 'business as usual' performance monitoring activity through committee papers during 2021/22.

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 2020/21

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2020-2021). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

2020/2021 Performance Response/ Overview (What we achieved- Measured Activities)	End of Year Progress Status: Activity was - Completed /Commenced/ Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 prior to Dec 2020 Training to be tailored for members and rolled out.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved in cross-departmental Collaboration Project regarding Capital Programme delivery with a view to streamlining processes, embedding best practice and ensuring compliance. 	<p>Ongoing and continued engagement with relevant Directors. Monthly meeting and training workshops to continue to review and develop procedures and best practice, ensuring compliance and overall engagement and delivery of service, in line with corporate plan and community plan.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External legal services contract is working well for the most part. Some challenges persist in relation to particular aspects of work, which are currently under review. 	<p>Ongoing. External legal support is required to provide timely support on particular expert areas of law.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implications of COVID19 for the service area may have delayed the service provision for the start of the year, due to limited Court functions etc. However, throughout this time a high quality legal advice service has continued with the Legal Services Department remaining fully functional while staff worked from home in accordance with Public Health Authority guidance, attending the office only as necessary to securely retrieve and/or return retrieve files, original documents or attend online Court Hearings which required officer attendance. 	<p>Ongoing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Legal Services Department continues to be subject to the unpredictability of workflow, work type and caseload, making it difficult to 	<p>Kept under review.</p>

accurately budget and allocate resources (particularly in relation to third party legal fees, which are generally case specific).	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued participation in and assistance with 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. 	Ongoing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff awareness and knowledge in in areas prone to legal challenge as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Planning (Councillors); and (ii) Prosecutions (Officers) 	Ongoing

2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2021/22

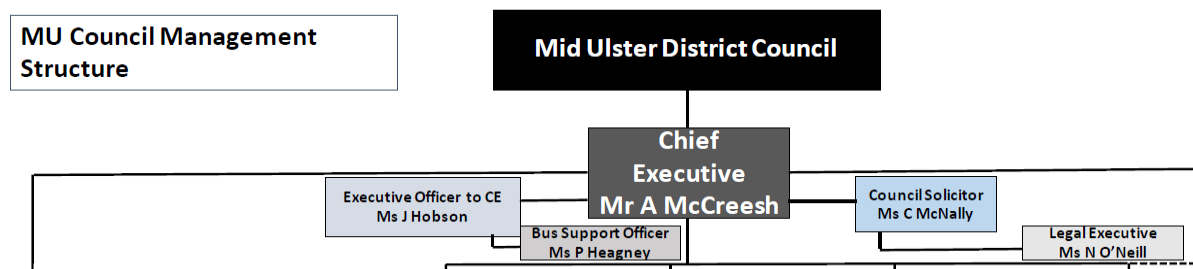
The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2020-21 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1 Budget 2020/21

Service Budget Headings	£
Legal Fees & Subscriptions	129,497
Salaries and mileage	133,487
Gross Budget	262,984
Income	0
Net Budget for 2020/21	262,984

2.2 Staffing Complement - 2020/21

Prior to the Council's recent organisational restructuring, the Legal Services Department was positioned as below within the Council's organigram.



The recent organisational restructure has resulted in the Legal Services Department falling within the Corporate Service/Finance Directorate. Although a revised organigram is yet to be prepared, the staffing complement remains as in previous years, i.e. 1 number Solicitor and 1 number Legal Executive.

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

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2020/21

The Covid-19 pandemic has been one of the most significant challenges that Mid Ulster District Council has ever faced. It has required sudden and dramatic changes to the way we work, as Councillors and officers. The previous year has saw Council hold fast with front line service delivery and the section below outlines; our response during 2020 to 2021 i.e. what we achieved, the remaining challenges, and how our service made a difference.

SERVICE WORK PLAN 2020/21

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):		Providing 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 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	CMN, KD & NON	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 2021/22. Reminder information/brief (regarding usage of legal instruction format/template) forwarded to staff by end of Q2

(ii)	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 strategic sites, MSW Region Growth Deal, effective delivery of Capital programme, COVID19 related issues, etc.)	Ongoing	CMN, KD & NON	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 perspective and service delivery within an effective and efficient governance framework.	Increased stakeholder satisfaction with Legal Services contributions notably in relation to timelines associated with operational legal transactions. Increased corporate assurance in relation to the elimination and/or mitigation of potential challenges against the Council's strategic and operational aspirations/plans/actions.
(iii)	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	TS, CMN, KD & NON	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.
(iv)	Increase staff and member awareness and knowledge in areas prone to legal challenge as follows: (i) Planning (Councillors); (ii) Prosecutions (Officers)	Ongoing	CMN, KD & NON	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,

			<p>Increased transparency and accountability in decision making.</p> <p>Increased public confidence in the Council's decisions and enforcement actions.</p>	<p>stemming from improved enforcement action, and leading to more robust statistics in this regard.</p> <p>Provision of internal and external advice as identified</p>
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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)
(i) Proactive engagement with relevant Council departments to support the Council's Transformation Agenda.	Ongoing	CMN, KD & NON	<p>Increase probability of successful identification of appropriate Transformation opportunities.</p> <p>Accelerate effective consideration of relevant aspects of potential opportunities to ensure that the Council has the necessary vires to advance the opportunities.</p> <p>Provision of timely, relevant and appropriate legal advice to ensure that Transformation opportunities are advanced as expediently and effectively as practicable having due regard to relevant risks, uncertainties and financial implications.</p>	<p>Positive stakeholder feedback</p> <p>Identification and advancement of potential Transformation opportunities to the Council (to include relevant legal briefing where relevant).</p>

2.4 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;</i> <i>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;</i> <i>Develop a suite of documentation according to corporate needs;</i> <i>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;</i> <i>Proactively seek information and guidance;</i> <i>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)

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	Service Plan 2021-22: Democratic Services
Date of Meeting	Thursday 9 September 2021
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

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 consider the draft Service Improvement Plan for Democratic Services within the Chief Executive Dept. for the 2021-2022 year.
2.0	Background
2.1	In line with corporate performance improvement requirements and to ensure that every service contributes to performance improvement, each service produces an annual individual improvement plan.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Service Improvement Plan for 2021-2022 set out key priorities for the service in the year ahead and build on the work undertaken during the 2020-2021 year. The Following provides a high level summary of the areas of focus for the 2021-22 period: <u>Democratic Services</u>
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop (i) Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) - 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023 for approval by Council and (ii) an annual assessment of Council's previous years' PIP for Council approval, and publish Implement Council's Statutory Equality and Disability Duties to include development of an updated Equality Scheme for 2021-26 (including associated Action Plans) To implement Rural Needs Act to include implementing the Actions identified for Local Authorities in the, 'Review of the Implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016' To increase the number of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days by 31st March 2022

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: N/A
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the Committee considers and reviews as necessary the 2021-2022 Service Improvement Plan for Democratic Services (Chief Executive's Dept.)
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendices A: Democratic Services Improvement Plan 2021-2022



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Democratic Services Chief Executive Section

SERVICE PLAN - 2021 / 22

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Foreword

At the start of 2020, Northern Ireland faced the spread of the global Covid-19 pandemic, which in turn has impacted on the way, Mid Ulster District Council delivers its services to communities. The Council's initial response was to protect frontline services, support the vulnerable in the community and ensure continuity of services.

On the Council's road to recovery and reinstatement of services, we have established 'Recovery Activities' that will enable the Council to learn from the impacts that Covid 19 caused, i.e. the new and emerging challenges that services face and the opportunities that have emerged from new ways of working. These 'Recovery Activities' will support the Council's Corporate Plan and this Service Plan will also support the delivery of these higher level objectives and associated outcomes for the residents of the District.

To make sure that we are transparent in what we are aiming to achieve, there is a series of activities outlined within the Service Plan. It should be noted, that it is proposed, that this will be a dynamic service plan, in light of Council's ongoing response to the Pandemic, reflecting the changing context within which it has been developed. Any changes that need to be made to the service plan (i.e. new actions added, or actions removed) will be reported to the Director of the Department as well as being reported as part of our 'business as usual' performance monitoring activity through committee papers during 2021/22.

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 Information (Fol) made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

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 2020/21

The Covid-19 pandemic has been one of the most significant challenges that Mid Ulster District Council has ever faced. It has required sudden and dramatic changes to the way we work, as Councillors and officers. The previous year has seen Council hold fast with front line service delivery and the section below outlines; our response during 2020 to 2021 i.e. what we achieved, the remaining challenges, and how our service made a difference.

2020/2021 Performance Overview	End of Year Progress Status: Completed /Commenced/ Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Improvement: Annual Performance Assessment Plan completed, approved and ratified by Council. Liaised with Northern Ireland Audit Office regarding their annual Performance Improvement Audit 	<p>Completed: throughout the 2020-21 period. In the context of COVID-19 pandemic there was much uncertainty as to the continuation of this service within Council as to the exact requirements to meet the statutory duty. Constant contact was had with representatives of the Department for Communities (DfC). Even though the council reverted to essential services only for much of 2020-21 the Annual Assessment was completed and published within the statutory timeframe of 30th Sept 2021. Engagement also took place with the NI Audit Office with respect their statutory audit on the duty to improve placed on Mid Ulster Council.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Requests: To increase the number of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days by 31st March 2021 	<p>Completed: The cumulative position for year-end was 87%, this is nonetheless significant in light of the COVID context in which the council was operating for the entire year and to date. A total of 107 FOI requests were received and processed in the last Quarter of 2020-21. There was, however, a downward trend on the number of those, which were responded to within 20 days during this quarter. Of the 107 requests almost one quarter</p>

	<p>were not responded to within the 20-day period (i.e. 24%). The lower number of requests responded to within 20 days in the last quarter has contributed towards the 90% of all requests being responded to standard not being met for 2020-2021. Quarters 1 to 3 had attainment rates in the high eighty to early ninety percent. The drop in the final quarter to 76% made the 90% standard unobtainable for 2020-2021. A year end 87% attainment in the context COVID was nonetheless an achievement given the variances of working patterns and absences throughout the period.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Services: Development of arrangements to facilitate the seamless transaction of business during the COVID pandemic in 2020. 	<p>Completed: In response to the COVID pandemic Democratic Services developed and brought forward arrangements to allow meetings of council to continue to attain decision-making whilst meeting the challenges of social distancing and virtual meetings of committees and Councils. The Council has been successful in been able to meet throughout the COVID pandemic following a short suspension in April and May 2020. Meetings have been successfully held from late May 2020 throughout the rest of the period in the context of COVID restrictions and Regulations.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Services: deployment of aspects of the Committee Management Information System (CMIS) 	<p>Completed: The Council has deployed a further aspect of the Committee Management Information System (CMIS), utilising the web-based functionality to publish Councillor Annual Registration of Interest Submission. Democratic Services have now pushed this facility/service online therefore no longer necessitating members of the public to make an appointment with the Chief Executive's Office to come to the Council Offices to view the Registration of Interests. Democratic Services has</p>

	<p>now also pushed members annual attendance figures at Council and Committee meetings online, likewise making the information available to the public without having to contact the office to request.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality, Disability, Good Relations and Rural Needs: To further embed a culture of equality, good relations and rural within Council decision-making across all services 	<p>Commenced & Ongoing: the embedding of such arrangements across the Council continues with the relevant Corporate Policy & Equality officers working across services to support their activities in ensuring equality, disability and rural needs form part of how they do business and decide policy direction. Activities throughout the period included provision of support in completing 13 Rural Needs Impact Assessments and 19 equality screenings of policies and decisions of Council, together with delivering bespoke training to officer teams across the council.</p>

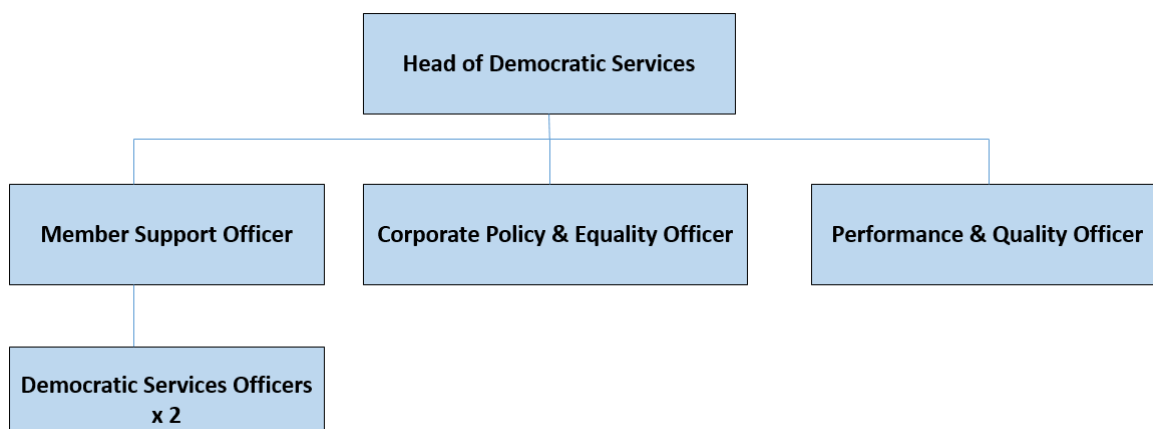
2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2021/22

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2021-22 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1 Budget 2021/22

Service Budget Headings	£
Contributions to Associations & Membership Fees	157,200
Corporate & Democratic Support	270,360
Members Allowances	916,803
Town Twinning	10,000
Gross Budget	1,354,363
Income	0
Net Budget for 2021-22	1,354,363

2.2 Staffing Complement - 2021/22



Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	0
Officers	5
Remaining Team	
Total	6

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2021/22

This plan confirms the core activities and actions, which will form your Service Work Plan for 2021-22. This is a high-level capture of the Service activities as well as some improvement undertakings which the service will focus on throughout 2021-22. 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 Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	Develop (i) Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) - 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023 for approval by Council and (ii) an annual assessment of Council's previous years' PIP for Council approval, and publish			
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 & research documentation regarding potential improvement areas for Council. Develop framework for SMT to identify potential improvement areas/ themes/ activities. Liaise with CEX/SMT on potential improvement objectives, develop paper of draft objectives for committee, approval by Council.	February 2021	Performance & Quality Officer (PQO)	A performance improvement plan based on prioritised areas	1. improvement objectives paper to P & R committee for approval and ratified by Council
2. Undertake public consultation exercise of draft improvement objectives	March to April 2021	Performance & Quality Officer	A citizen and stakeholder informed PIP 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 SMT,	May 2021	Performance & Quality Officer	Engaged citizens approve new improvement objectives	3. Consultation outworking's paper on Council's

P&R and then Council for approval Post approval forward to relevant consultees (as requested).				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	Feb to March 2021	Performance & Quality Officer	Provide a challenge and focus for Senior Responsible Improvement Project leads	4. Challenge and focus Key performance questions paper produced for SRO's
5. Liaise with colleagues/stakeholders, & develop corporate performance improvement plan (PIP) for 2020/22 in line with outworking's of consultation, and in conjunction with Senior Responsible Officers for 4 new improvement projects, (assigned by CEX), forward to SMT, P&R approval and thereafter Council ratification –	April to May 2021	Performance & Quality Officer	Mainstreaming performance improvement in Council	5. Draft Two Year Corporate Performance Improvement plan (PIP) for 2021/2022 to 2022/2023
6. Publish approved Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for 2021/2022 to 2022/23 by 30 th of June 2021. <i>Due to response to Covid-19, the Department of Communities (DfC) corresponded to Councils that new Corporate Improvement plans do not have to be published by 30th June (as in required by guidance/legislation) and DfC will confirm new timeframes</i>	30 th June 2021	Performance & Quality Officer	Council transparency and compliance with legislation	6. 2021/2022 to 2022/23 Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) published on Council web-site by 30 th June 2021
7. Complete quarterly performance progress/status reports to P & R committee, to include PIP, Stat Pl's and Corporate Indicators for 2021 to 2022 performance	Quarterly	Performance & Quality Officer	Informing citizens of Council performance	7. Quarterly performance reports approved by Council
8. *Subject to guidance received from the Department for Communities; -research, collate and liaise with colleagues to develop draft annual performance assessment report for SMT, P&R committee, and thereafter Council approval	30 Sept 2021	Performance & Quality Officer	Compliance with legislation (Part 12 of the Local Govt. Act) & (DfC) and subject to further Departmental Guidance (awaiting)	8. *Annual Assessment Report Papers P&R committee approval and ratified by Council

<i>* This is subject to further guidance to be issued from the Department of Communities, as it relates to guidance received in 2020 i.e. Councils did not have to publish a PIP plan for 2020/21.</i>				
9. Subject to guidance received from the Department of Communities and seek approval (P & R committee) & ratification (Council) of Annual Assessment Report for 2020/21 publish on Council web-site – date to be confirmed	Sept 2021	Performance & Quality Officer	Compliance with legislation (Part 12 of the Local Govt. Act) & Departmental (DfC) Guidance	9. Assessment Report published on Council web-site – TBC post guidance from DfC.
10. **Prepare folders/files and liaise with Local government auditor in relation to annual inspection of Council's duty to improve <i>** Awaiting further instruction from DfC and the Northern Ireland Audit Office on Performance Improvement Audit</i>	*TBC	Performance & Quality Officer	Compliance with legislation (Part 12 of Local Govt. Act) & Departmental (DfC) Guidance	10. Unqualified audit opinion

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2021/22? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Review and facilitate the revision of Council's current Corporate Performance Framework (indicator sets) to align and inform the strategic direction and outcomes* of Council (i.e. through the hierarchy of strategic plans e.g. Programme for Government, Community Plan, Local Development Plan, Growth Deal, Corporate Plan, Council re-structure, Vision and Council Values). <i>While Council will focus on outcomes they are often difficult to measure. Council therefore will include measures of outputs (which are easier to measure), with</i>	Commence Q4 2022	Performance & Quality Officer	Formulated performance measures will provide: Relevance to Council's priorities, a method of comparison that can be used to tell whether performance is good or not. Base objective evidence that gives reasonably accurate & reliable picture of current performance. Sufficient	Comprehensive performance information that meets the needs of a number of audiences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will have information to support strategic decision-making and continuous improvement (efficient, effective, sustainable),

<p><i>an understanding that there is a relationship between outputs and desired outcomes & that the measures are in part, proxies for measures of outcomes. Output information is also critical for efficient and effective management of Council activities & is often the level of performance information that is of most interest to individuals who access services. It should also be acknowledges that outcomes may be influenced by factors outside the control of Council</i></p>			<p>degree of granularity to detect changes in performance highlighting response. Ability to show changes in performance levels over time.</p>	<p>within revised new structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities will have information about Council performance and productivity • Regulators will have information to monitor compliance with relevant reporting requirements.
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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 (including associated Action Plans)			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 4.3 Health & Wellbeing - We care more for those most vulnerable and in need</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)
Produce an Annual Report on the delivery and implementation of the Equality Scheme during 2021/22	August 2022	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer (CPEO)	The report will identify the progress made in 2021-22 and any gaps to address for 2022-23.	Report submitted to the Equality Commission by 31 st August 2022.
Implement the Equality Action Plan 2021-26 and Disability Action Plan 2021-26	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Statutory requirements met.	The actions and out-workings of the plan will be delivered
Complete and circulate Equality Screening Outcome reports	3 times annually (April, August & December)	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Equality Consultees will be able to provide comment on screening outcomes.	Reports will be available for review, comment and feedback.

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2021/22? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Increase the number of Accessibility Audits carried out on Council facilities	March 2021	CPEO	Council facilities will become more physically accessible.	The number of recommendations completed as a result of Accessibility Audits

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To implement Rural Needs Act to include 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)
Provide support to Officers undertaking Rural Needs Impact Assessments (RNIAs)	Ongoing	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer (CPEO)	Improved Assessment	The number and quality of RNIAs completed
Provide training for Officers and Members	March 2022	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Improved understanding of the role of Council (in Rural Needs) and the legislation	Training evaluations
Complete Annual Monitoring Return of Assessments to DAERA	July 2021	Corporate Policy &	It will provide a baseline tool for the year ahead	Return completed

		Equality Officer		
Publish RNIA outcomes on Council's website and that the annual monitoring report includes a link to each public authority's webpage.	March 2022	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Increased transparency for the public and rural dwellers	Templates published on Council's website

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2021/22? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Continue to develop effective relationships with rural community organisations and further develop the Rural Needs Consultee List established in 2021.	March 2022	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Improved communication and evidence sources to complete assessments	Number of consultees.

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 2022			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative & creative	<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	2021-22 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	2021-22 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)
Reporting to senior management to display achievement by Service, to identify areas for improvement and early action.	June 2021	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 2020-2021 cumulative response rate of 87%

2.4 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 2021-22

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	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

	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)		appointed Senior Responsible Owners (a member of senior management team)
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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)

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.