

Report on	Planning Department Service Improvement Plan 2017 -2018
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Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide Members with a copy of the Planning Department's Service Improvement Plan (SIP) for the period 2018 – 2019.
2.0	Background
2.1	The attached SIP shows how the service provided by the Planning Department will contribute to the Council's corporate objectives.
2.2	A SIP was in place for the period 2017 -2018 and a section of the attached SIP sets out the performance overview for that period. Also included is a work plan and action plan for the period 2018 – 2019 outlining the various actions to be taken by the Department over the new reporting period
3.0	Main Report
3.1	There are a number of actions and outcomes set out within the attached SIP which the Planning Department will report on over the course of the period 2018- 2019. The key initiative to improve performance is the pilot of how Roads consultations can be carried out more swiftly.
3.2	Also included are a number of risks for the Planning Department and details of the mitigation in place to control these in the most effective way. The key risk relates to staff retention and the ability to maintain a full complement of staff needed to deliver an effective service.

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u> Financial: Human:
4.2	<u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u>
4.3	<u>Risk Management Implications</u>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the attached Planning Department Service Improvement Plan 2018- 2019 is noted and agreed by Members.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Planning Department Service Improvement plan 2018- 2019



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Planning Department

SERVICE PLAN - 2018 / 19

	Date
Consulted within staff team	07/02 /2018
Discussed & signed off by Planning Manager	28/ 03 / 2018

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1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Service

The Planning Department is led by the Planning Manager and it is responsible for the delivery of a number of functions including the following:

- receiving and making decisions on planning applications;
- enforcing breaches of planning control;
- making tree preservation orders and providing advice on conservation area development; and
- producing a local development plan which will outline how land in Mid Ulster should be used and developed in the future.

1.2 Responsibilities

In order to deliver these services the Planning Department is divided into 2 separate functions:

Development Management

This function is made up of the following area teams all of which are based at the Councils offices on the Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt.

1. Cookstown, Magherafelt, Carntogher and Mayola
2. Dungannon, Clogher and Torrent
3. Major applications team

The Development Management function has a number of responsibilities including:

- Determining Major, Local planning applications
- Providing Pre-application advice and facilitating pre-application discussions
- Dealing with non-material changes to planning approvals
- Determining certificates of lawfulness

The 3 area teams are supported by an Administrative Support Team which also offers support for the wider Planning Department.

Development Plan, Environment and Enforcement

The Enforcement team are responsible for investigating and responding to enforcement complaints regarding breaches of planning control.

The Development Plan team are responsible for the production of the new Local Development Plan for Mid Ulster District.

The Environment team are responsible for consideration of environmental issues including the carrying out the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of the

new Local Development Plan as well as providing advice on Conservation matters and Tree Preservation Orders.

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
• applicants
• agent / architects
• objectors
• complainants in relation to breaches of planning control
• Planning Committee
• Council officers and elected representatives
• Statutory Consultees
• Local Development Plan Consultation Bodies
• Mid Ulster residents, businesses and interested parties

1.4 Performance Overview in 2017/18

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last year's Service Plan (2017-2018). It also details key successes, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

2017/18 Performance Overview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To determine 50% of all local applications within 15 weeks Interim figures up until February 2018 suggest performance on local applications has been within target for 2017/18. Latest unvalidated information indicates an average processing time of 14 weeks in relation to the statutory target of 50% of local application within 15 weeks. This represents a marked improvement on 2016/17 when processing times were 14.6 for the same period. Applications number are remaining steady for the period when compared to the previous year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To determine 50% of all Major applications within 30 weeks Major applications average processing time is at 44.4 weeks for the period until end February 2018 (based on unvalidated figures) which remains below the target of 50% within 30 weeks. This is a vast improvement on the same period last year when processing times were at 73.6 weeks. There has also been a significant increase in the number of majors received within the 2017/18 year with 17 received to-date whereas only 10 were received in the same period in 2016/17.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To process 70% of all enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint The statutory target of 70% has been met and exceeded during the period until the end of February 2018 (based on unvalidated figures). The percentage of cases concluded within 39 weeks at the end of February 2018 sits at 83.1% which is a further improvement on the figure for the same period in 2016/17 which was 78.2%.

This is a marked improvement on the performance for the previous year. In addition prosecutions leading to successful convictions remains high.

- **To progress the publication of a draft Plan Strategy and related Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Interim Reports and supporting documents by end of Q4 2018.**

The target for 2017/18 was to publish a draft Plan Strategy by the end of March 2018. Unfortunately this target has not been met due to a number of factors including prolonged absence within the Planning Department which has led to the diversion of resources from development plan to development management. In addition, as a result of the public consultation on the Preferred Options Paper, further evidence gathering has been undertaken. Mid Ulster has along led the way in working with neighbouring councils setting up planning forums for Lough Neagh, the Sperrins and Cross Border. Additional work has been undertaken to agree shared commons issues with neighbouring councils. It is anticipated that a draft Local Development Plan Strategy and related Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Interim Reports and supporting documents will be published in the late 2018.

- **To provide internal consultation advice on conservation matters on 90% of cases within 10 working days.**

Over this period a response rate of 82% has been achieved. While this falls short of the internal target and is lower than the same period last year, which was 86%, it does relate to a higher number of internal consultations. It is anticipated that the internal target can be achieved in the next reporting year.

- **To provide submissions on Appeals, Judicial Reviews, Consultations and Calls for Evidence – 100% response within set timeframe**

Over this period there have been many consultation responses and well as JR and appeal submissions and all have been within the timeframe set by the external bodies.

- **To have a planning enforcement strategy review document available by 30/09/16.**

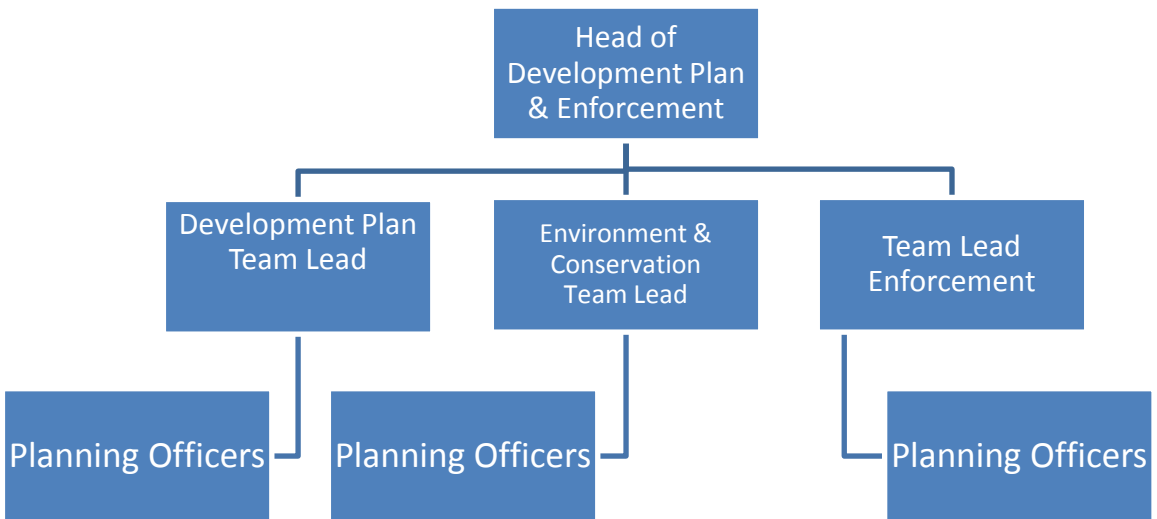
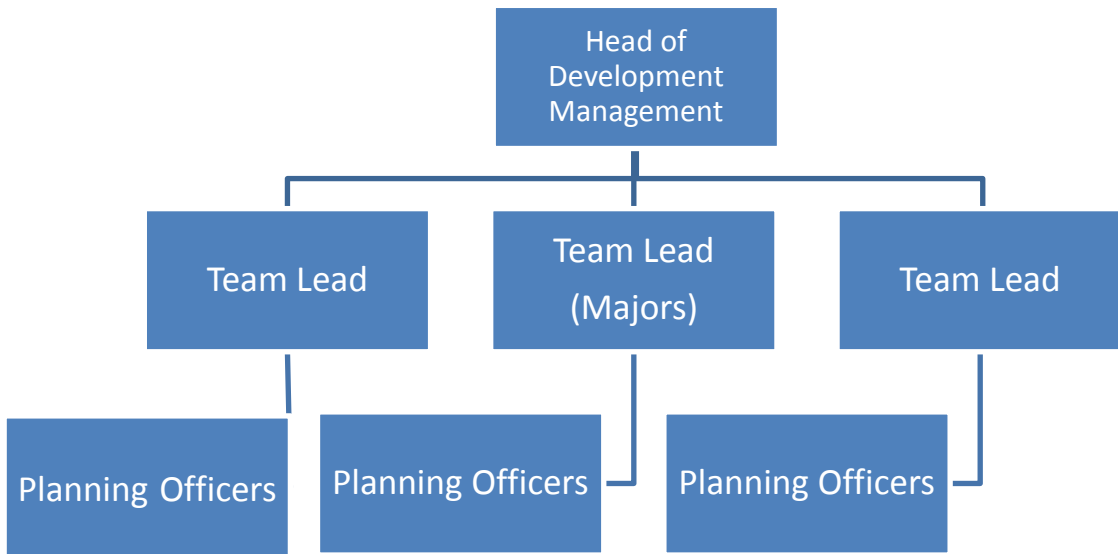
This document was agreed by the Planning Committee on 1 November 2016 and the review was agreed. The Enforcement Strategy remains as was adopted in January 2016.

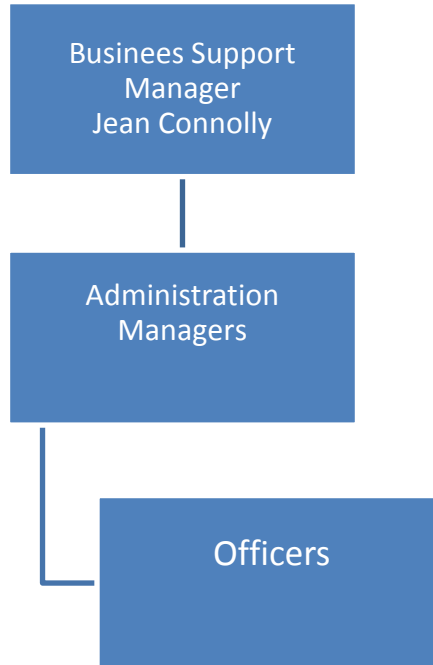
- **To respond to correspondence within 15 working days (20 days for requests under**

The Planning Department received 39 EIR/FOI requests, 38 of which were responded to within target (97%)

11 complaints were received, 9 of which were responded to within target (82%)

239 items of general correspondence were received, 200 (84%) of which were responded to within the target date for response





Current Staffing	No. of Staff
Planning Manager	1
Head of Service	2
Managers	6.8
Officers	17.26
Business Support Teams	9
Total	36.06
Complement	39.86

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2018/19

This plan confirms the core activities and actions which will form your Service Work Plan for 2018-19. This should be a high level capture of the Service activities and work which it will focus on throughout 2018-19. The Plan links to the Council's 2015-2019 Corporate Plan priorities, Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives, Corporate Indicators and Mid Ulster Sustainable Community Plan themes & outcomes:

SERVICE WORK PLAN

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 1.1 Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger & more</i>	<i>CRP 2.1 Creating Growth - Preparation of a local development plan</i>						
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
To complete the second phase in the preparation of a new local development plan for Mid Ulster – publication of draft Plan Strategy, and associated documents including Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment, by end of quarter 3.	Progress against key actions/milestones	Phase 1 – preparatory work and public consultation completed. Phased 2 - Working towards publication of draft plan strategy and associated documents.	100% against key actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broker agreement with neighbouring councils on cross boundary issues Broker agreement with elected members on the draft plan strategy Complete SA/SEA of the draft plan strategy Complete rural proofing of the draft plan strategy Complete EQIA screening and where relevant assessment of draft plan strategy Publish draft plan strategy and associated documents. 	End Q2 End Q2 End Q2 End Q2 End Q3	Chris Boomer Sinead McEvoy	Provide public certainty on the development of Mid Ulster District for the period up to 2030.

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it for our children</i>	<i>CRP 3.5 Sustaining our Environment - Efficiencies in processing Planning Enforcement Cases</i>						
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
To process 70% of all enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint.	By monitoring monthly and quarterly figures provided by Dfl.	At the end of February 2018 the percentage of cases concluded within 39 weeks sits at 83.1%.	To continue to meet the target of processing 70% of all enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to hold monthly group meetings Monitor staff resources 	Monthly Ongoing	Chris Boomer Melvin Bowman Sinead McEvoy	Continued efficiencies in processing of enforcement cases.

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it</i>	<i>CRP 1.5 Delivering for Our People - Delivery of quality and timely planning decisions implement and organisational strategy for a modern workplace</i>						
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
To determine 50% of local planning applications with 15 weeks.	By monitoring quarterly figures provided in regional statistics	In the 2017/18 year we achieved a figure of 14 weeks	To continue to process local applications within target.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly discussion on internal delegated decisions Monthly monitoring of progress at group meetings 	Ongoing	Chris Boomer Melvin Bowman	We contribute to the delivery of quality and timely planning decisions.

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Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it</i>	<i>CRP 1.5 Delivering for Our People - Delivery of quality and timely planning decisions implement and organisational strategy for a modern workplace</i>						
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
To determine 50% of Major planning applications with 30 weeks.	By monitoring quarterly figures provided in regional statistics	In the 2017/18 year we achieved a figure of 44.4 weeks	To improve major processing times towards target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Manager direct oversight of newly established Major applications team. monitoring of progress at Majors group meetings 	Ongoing	Chris Boomer Melvin Bowman	We contribute to the delivery of quality and timely planning decisions.

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it</i>	<i>CRP 1.5 Delivering for Our People - Delivery of quality and timely planning decisions implement and organisational strategy for a modern workplace</i>						
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
To provide internal consultation advice on conservation matters on 90% of cases within 10 working days.	By monitoring and our quarterly internal figures.	In the 2017/18 year we achieved a figure of 82%.	Achieve target of 90% responses within 10 working days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly discussion on internal consultations. Monthly monitoring of progress on internal consultations. 	Ongoing	Chris Boomer Sinead McEvoy	We contribute to the delivery of quality and timely planning decisions.

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it</i>	<i>CRP 1.5 Delivering for Our People - Delivery of quality and timely planning decisions implement and organisational strategy for a modern workplace</i>						
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
To speed up consultation responses on applications.	By monitoring quarterly figures provided in regional statistics	14 weeks to process 50% of local applications.	To surpass past performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To pilot planners undertaking the evaluation work for TNI Roads Service on single houses in the countryside 	April 2018	Melvin Bowman	Further improved processing times.

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme						
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
To continue working with other councils on a new Planning portal to promote easier access on-line submission of applications.	By Progress against project timescales	Draft Business case circulated	An improved planning system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to be represented on the Planning Portal Governance Board and to provide key staff to the project as required. 	March 2019	Chris Boomer	New PP that meets needs of MUDC

3.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE

3.1 Annual Improvement Objectives and Associated Programs

The Council has set a number of annual improvement objectives and associated programs (projects and activities) for 2018/19 which aim to bring about improvement. The improvement objectives and key improvement programs, set out Council's contribution to the sustainable Community Plan for the District; against which we can monitor and report progress.

Each Council department provides resources to assist with the improvement activities contained within each improvement project (individual service improvement contribution activity linked to corporate improvement programs can be found in 3.2 of the service plan). The annual improvement objectives also align to the Council's main corporate planning document (Corporate Plan 2015 - 2019), which contains the council's strategic direction and main priorities.

The Council will focus on the following improvement objectives for 2018 to 2019:

- (i) To assist in the growth of the local economy by increasing the number of visitors to our district.
- (ii) To help manage our waste and environment by reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.
- (iii) To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online.
- (iv) To support people to adopt healthier lifestyles by increasing usage of Council Recreational facilities

We utilise outcome based accountability methodology to manage our performance. This tells us the impact our services are having on communities. Further detailed information relating to Council's improvement objectives, associated activities, outcome indicators, projects and targets is available at www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Performance (*Mid Ulster Council's Improvement Plan 2017/18 – 2018/19*) or by contacting the Democratic Services Team on 03000 132132.

3.2 Service Contribution to the Corporate Improvement Objectives/Projects

Link to Community Plan Theme:		Corporate Plan Theme						
Improvement Plan Objective	Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
					Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
3.0 To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online	To continue working with other Councils on a new Planning Portal to provide an ability to submit online applications.	By agreeing and progressing work in accordance with a joint business plan	A discovery phase has been completed to identify user needs	To be ready to implement new system by 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue working with other Authorities Agree the Business Plan 	2018/19	Dr Chris Boomer	Progress made on new portal.

Link to Community Plan Theme:		Corporate Plan Theme						
Improvement Plan Objective	Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
					Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 			

3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

The purpose of risk management is to manage the barriers which prevents the Council from achieving its objectives. This section of the service plan includes space for the Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. This is why the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

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

This table illustrates the risks identified to deliver the Services business in 2018-19.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	Failure to meet Major application target	7	Use of Major applications team and dedicated Major applications group meeting with Planning Manager oversight.
2.	Failure to meet local planning applications target.	7	Risk caused by staff losses therefore efforts are being made to ensure staff retention. Continued efficient use of scheme of delegation, monthly group meetings and case allocation.
3.	Failure to publish the draft Plan Strategy and associated documents including Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment, by end of quarter 3 as a result of not brokering agreement with neighbouring authorities and elected members and as a result of reduction in staff numbers.	7	Continued engagement at cross boundary forums. Further engagement with elected members and with project management team as part of SA/SEA process. Secure legal advice to audit SA/SEA process. Secure 'critical friend' on landscape work to audit and validate process.
4.	Failure to meet enforcement targets due to staff absence.	6	Continued use of monthly group meetings and monitoring of staff resources. Risk could become greater if staff are lost or need to be transferred to Development Management due to instability.

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)