



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

*Building Control Service
Department of Public Health and
Infrastructure*

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

The Building Control Service has primary responsibility for the enforcement of the Building Regulations in accordance with Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended) within Mid-Ulster District.

The BC Service is responsible for the administration of Property Certificates on behalf of the Council as well as the Policy on Street Naming and Dual Language Signage.

The BC Service has also responsibility for the enforcement of the Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations throughout the District.

In addition, the BC Service carries out the licensing function for Entertainment Licensing, Petroleum Licensing, Cinema Licensing and Approved Places for Marriages and Civil Partnerships.

Currently there are 15 Building Control Officers and 1 Licensing Officer assisted by 5.5 Business Support Officers and 1 Licensing Support Officer located in 3 offices at Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt to ensure that a high level of service is available across the District.

1.2 Responsibilities

The section is specifically responsible for the following functions:

- All plans submitted in accordance with the relevant legislation will be assessed and decisions issued.
- Building works in progress will be inspected as necessary to ensure as is reasonably practicable, Building Regulations are not contravened.
- The administration of Property Certificates which primarily details relevant information in relation to a property with regards to Building Control and Environmental Health issues where applicable.
- The administration of Street Naming and Property Numbering for all new streets – both Residential and Commercial developments
- The administration of the Dual Language Signage Policy.
- The inspection of Dangerous Structures in accordance with “The Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907 – Section 30”

- The enforcement of The Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations to ensure the production of Energy Performance Certificates, Display Energy Certificates and Air Conditioning Certificates.
- The Licensing of Places of Entertainment in accordance with The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1985
- The Licensing of Premises for the storage of Petroleum in accordance with the Petroleum (Consolidation) Act (NI) 1929.
- The Licensing of Cinemas in accordance with The Cinemas (NI) Order 1991
- Approval of venues for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships in accordance with The Marriage Regulations (NI) 2003, The Civil Partnership Act 2004 and The Civil Partnership Regulations (NI) 2005.

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
• Residents of the District
• Building Control Applicants
• Architects, Agents, Engineers and Contractors
• Licensing Applicants
• Elected Representatives
• PSNI and NIFRS
• NIHE
• Land and Property Services
• Solicitors and Estate Agents

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 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.

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"> 90% of all domestic applications were responded to by BC within 21 days 	624 domestic full plan applications were assessed with 94% of applications either being approval or a snag list being issued within 21 days from the date of validation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of all non-domestic applications were responded to by BC within 35 days 	129 non-domestic full plan applications were assessed with 95% of applications either being approval or a snag list being issued within 35 days from the date of validation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of all amended plans submitted were responded to by BC within 14 days 	972 set of amended plans were submitted with 93% of applications either being approval or a further snag list being issued within 14 days from the date of submission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Building Notice and Regularisation online Applications to 50% 	57% of all applications for Building Notices and Regularisation Applications were submitted online
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Property Certificate applications received online to 50% 	61% of Property Certificate Applications were submitted online
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of online facility for the submission of full plan applications 	Final testing of online facility ongoing with the view to the facility being available to architects /agents for the submission of full plan applications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	

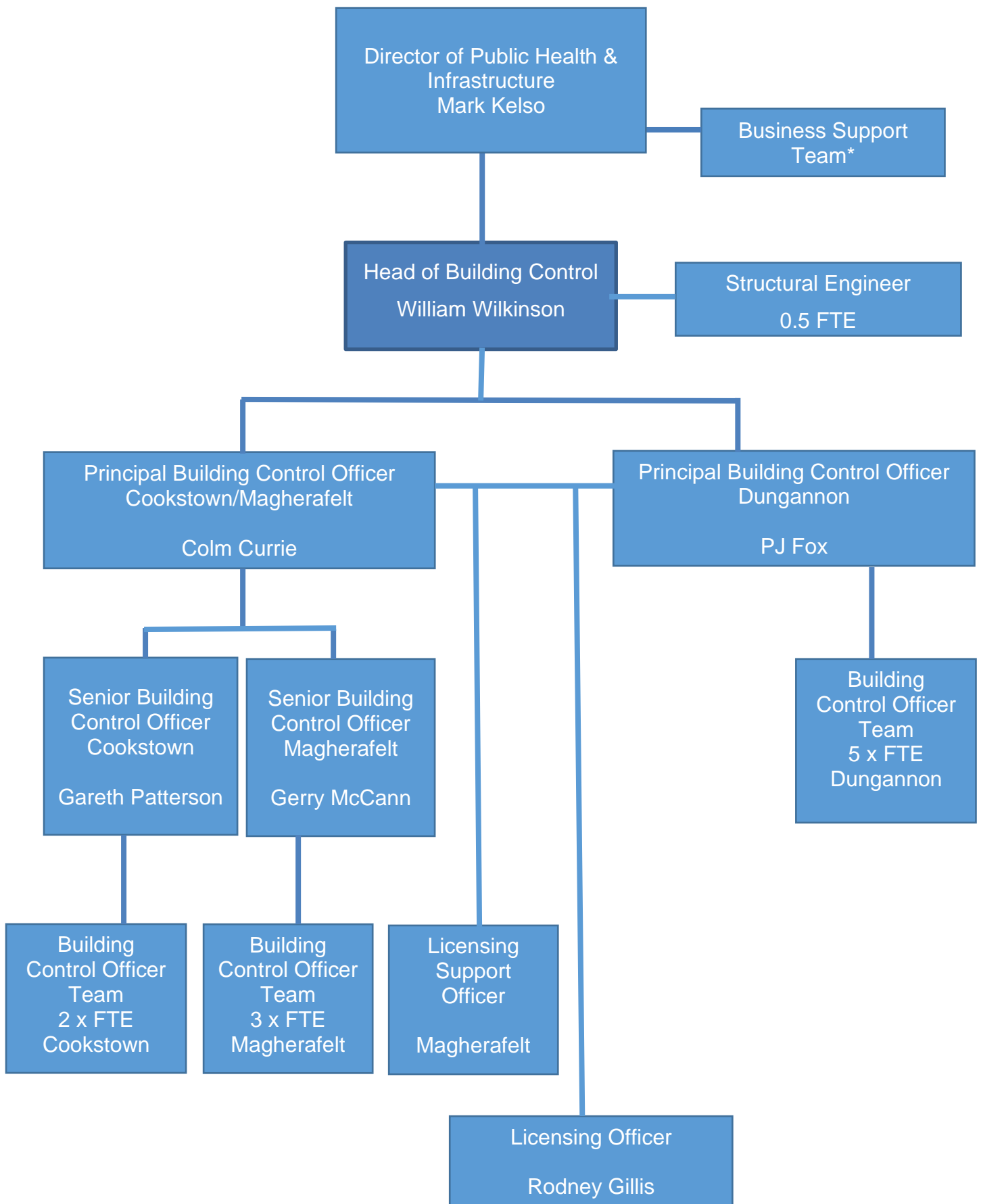
2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2021/22

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	£
Building Control Income	(£692,900)
Building Control Staff Costs	£702,098
Building Control Office Costs	£4,675
Service Level Agreement – Specialist Structural Services	£45,000
Property Certificate Income	(£90,850)
Licensing Staff Costs	£78,228
Licensing Income	(£56,925)
Gross Budget	£830,001
Income	(£840,675)
Net Budget for 2021-22	(£10,674)

2.2 Staffing Complement - 2021/22



Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	4
Officers	11
Remaining Team	1
Total	17

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 WORK PLAN 2021/22

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	e.g. XX			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
CMP 1.1 Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger & more competitive economy	Service Delivery: 2.1 We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda			
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 ensure decisions are issued in respect of domestic applications within 21 days for 90% of applications <ul style="list-style-type: none">Each application is allocated to an officer on validation of application with deadline detailedDaily monitoring of domestic applications by PBCO’s to ensure deadlines are met	31/03/2022	PJ Fox, Colm Currie	A high standard has been set for customers to have decisions issued in respect of domestic applications within 21 days	Decisions issued in respect of domestic applications within 21 days of validation for 90% of applications

<p>To ensure decisions are issued in respect of non-domestic applications within 35 days for 90% of applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each application is allocated to an officer on validation of application with deadline detailed • Daily monitoring of non-domestic applications by PBCO's to ensure deadlines are met 	31/03/2022	PJ Fox, Colm Currie	A high standard has been set for customers to have decisions issued in respect of non-domestic applications within 35 days	Decisions issued in respect of non-domestic applications within 35 days of validation for 90% of applications
<p>To ensure decisions are issued in respect of amended applications within 14 days for 90% of applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each application is allocated to an officer on validation of application with deadline detailed • Daily monitoring of amended applications by PBCO's to ensure deadlines are met 	31/03/2022	PJ Fox, Colm Currie	A high standard has been set for customers to have decisions issued in respect of amended applications within 14 days	Decisions issued in respect of amended applications within 14 days of receipt for 90% of applications
<p>To ensure that all new addresses are registered and activated on the LPS Pointer Addressing Database</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each new dwelling to be registered and allocated an address at validation stage • Street nameplate signage for new developments to be erected following occupation of dwellings 	31/03/2022	PBCO's and SBCO's	Each new property being erected and subsequently occupied will be registered on the Pointer Addressing Database	<p>Each property will be allocated an "Unique Property Reference Number" by LPS following the verified submission of an application to Building Control.</p> <p>Street nameplates to be erected on new streets following occupation of properties on that street.</p>

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)
Develop an agile working process for Building Control Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce requirement for desk space in offices • Investigate the use of Council buildings located throughout the district for use as a hot desk space • Research location of Wi Fi hotspots within District where not close to Council buildings • Commence work from home and carry out inspections prior to returning to office/home and vice versa • Work remotely where workload facilitates in terms of plan assessments etc. 	31/03/2022	PBCO's and SBCO's	<p>Can assist to alleviate current pressures on Building Control office space due to social distancing requirements from Covid pandemic by a blend of home working and better utilisation of other council buildings</p> <p>Potentially reduce the travelling required by officers, thereby reducing mileage expenditure, which will in turn reduce the carbon footprint of the Building Control Department</p> <p>All officers have access to mobile IT equipment and can connect to all Building Control IT systems remotely, therefore officers can create some of the relevant communications electronically (i.e. Rejection & Defects letters) and distribute via email without the requirement of using current Business Support Services</p>	<p>All officers have access to mobile IT equipment and can connect via remotely. Therefore continuation of current workloads/ targets should be maintained.</p> <p>Communications generated electronically reducing demand on Business Support, thus reducing duplication of works.</p>

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	e.g. XX			
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>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)
Increase Building Notice and Regularisation online Applications to 50% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of online facility with companies which make multiple applications • Encourage applicants to make applications online • Ensure all online applications are validated daily 	31/03/2022	PJ Fox Colm Currie	Customers can avail of online facilities thereby have access to services 24/7	Number of applications received from the online portal for Building Notices and Regularisation Certificates
Increase Property Certificate applications received online to 75% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continually raise awareness of online facility with Solicitors • Actively encourage non-participating Solicitors to utilise the online portal. • Staff to prioritise online applications to highlight the benefits of the online portal 	31/03/2022	PJ Fox Colm Currie	Customers can avail of online facilities thereby have access to services 24/7. More efficient service for online applications	Number of applications received from the online portal property certificate applications

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)
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<p>Launch online facility for the submission of Full Plan Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with Tascomi regarding provision of online facility on Council Direct • Develop and finalise procedural documentation for Officers on implementation of online facility • Initially accept the applications for alterations and extensions (up to 60m2) to domestic properties with the view to developing the Online Service 	31/03/2022	PBCO's and SBCO's	<p>Customers can avail of online facilities thereby have access to services 24/7.</p> <p>Submission of plans online will lead to a fully digital service being available.</p>	<p>Availability of online portal for submission of full plan applications by Architects/Agents.</p>
<p>Investigate further file digitisation of files</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to all files available to all Officers remotely • Long term preservation of records • Easy retrieval of digitised information 	31/03/2022	PBCO's and SBCO's	<p>Potentially can reduce carbon footprint of the Building Control Department as file information is available to others digitally in lieu of hard copy and officers do not require to travel to main offices to access the relevant information.</p> <p>Can assist to alleviate current pressures on storage space in Building Control offices</p> <p>File records can be accessed digitally, therefore can be accessed remotely, thereby easy retrieval of information</p>	<p>All officers have access to mobile IT equipment and can connect via remotely. Therefore access to this information is available without visiting main offices and continuation of work practices (i.e. site inspections) remain undisrupted</p> <p>Use of paper/ printing should be reduced, therefore effectively reducing ongoing departmental costs if a further digitised project is carried out.</p>

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	e.g. XX			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it for our children</i>	<i>Environment: 4.4 We will work to mitigate against impacts of climate change by taking steps to reduce our carbon emissions as an organisation.</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)
Enforcement of Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection of premises for compliance • Provide additional information to estate agents • Enforcement in relation to non-compliant estate agents and premises • All new Buildings to have an EPC in place where applicable 	31/03/2022	PBCO's and SBCO's	Increase in EPB Legislation compliance from Estate Agents in accordance with the agreed Procedural Document	Monitoring and enforcement will show that there will be a measured reduction in the number of non-compliant estate agents due to the risk of receiving a Penalty Charge Notice

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)
				This is not a long narrative but a clear measurement e.g. %, #, £, date etc.

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.	Non-Compliance of Building Regulations	6	1) Timetabled Staff meetings to discuss any discrepancies that may have occurred on site 2) Continue to monitor and develop system for ensuring consistency of inspections
2.	Delivery and consistent implementation of Policies & Procedures across Mid Ulster Council	6	Monitoring of Policies being carried out on a regular basis by Principal Officers
3.	Health & Safety: Scope of risk extends to: (1) Lone working (2) Daily visits to sites where safety risks are evident to officers	6	Risk assessments reviewed in conjunction with Health and Safety Advice team
4.	Fraud Scope of risk extends to: (1) Fraud generally (2) Cash and Cheque Handling	6	(1) Review financial procedures with Finance Service to ensure compliance with Council procedures for cash handling (2) Monitoring of finance procedures by Principal Officers on a regular basis
5.	Downturn in construction sector as a result of the implementation of Brexit	6	Continually monitor applications to identify any marked reduction in activity within Construction Sector
6.	Failure to meet budget requirements due to the impact of Covid-19	6	Continually monitor financial income to identify any level of reduction of income within Building Control Service

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.