



November 27th, 2015

Notice Of Meeting

You are invited to attend the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting to be held on **Thursday, 12th November 2015 at 6:00 pm** in **Downshire Civic Centre**.

The Members of the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee are:-

Chair: Councillor R Burgess

Vice Chair: Councillor H Reilly

Members:	Councillor P Brown	Councillor S Burns
	Councillor M Carr	Councillor W Clarke
	Councillor G Craig	Councillor D Curran
	Councillor G Donnelly	Councillor L Kimmins
	Councillor C McGrath	Councillor B O'Muirí
	Councillor B Quinn	Councillor M Ruane
	Councillor W Walker	

Agenda

1 **Apologies**

2 **Declarations of Interest**

3 **Action Sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee held on 15 October 2015 (copy attached)**

[SPR-17-10-2015.pdf](#)

Page 1

4 *Presentations*

4a **Presentation - Eurocities**

- Laura Leonard, Belfast City Council

[Eurocities Presentation.pdf](#)

Page 5

4b **Presentation Report from Councillors Burns and Carr re Sister Cities**

Official signing of the Sister Cities Agreement will take place prior to the SPR Meeting.

Corporate Planning and Policy

5a **Irish Language Strategy (copy enclosed)**

[Irish Language Strategy Report for 12 November 2015 4SPR Meeting.pdf](#)

Page 12

[NMDDC Irish Language Strategy Final.pdf](#)

Page 13

6 *Local Development Plan*

6a **Local Development Plan Paper 4 : Town Centres and Opportunity Sites**

7 Estate

7a Capital Projects - Progress Report (copy attached)

Capital Projects Progress Report 6 November 2015.pdf

Page 128

7b Kindle Integrated PS - letter from Education Authority (copy attached)

Kindle Integrated PS letter from EA.pdf

Page 131

7c Play Area and Mobile at Oriel Drive, Downpatrick (copy attached)

Play Area and Mobile at Oriel Drive Downpatrick.pdf

Page 132

7d Orior Park Changing Rooms, Bessbrook (copy attached)

Report re Orior Park Changing Rooms Bessbrook.pdf

Page 136

Map of Orior Football pitch.pdf

Page 137

7e Request to purchase land at Station Road, Castlewellan (copy attached)

Request to purchase land at Station Rd, Castlewellan.pdf

Page 138

7f Request to acquire Lisburn Street car park, Ballynahinch (copy attached)

Report re Car Park, Ballynahinch.pdf

Page 142

Appendix 1 Lisburn Street South Car-Park, Ballynahinch.pdf

Page 144

Appendix 2 Proposed Acquisition by Supermarket.pdf

Page 145

Appendix 3 Proposed floor plan.pdf

Page 146

Appendix 4 perspective drawing.pdf

Page 147

7g	Valuation of Land at Greenbank Industrial Estate, Newry (copy attached)	
	<i><u>Valuation of land at Greenbank Ind Estate, Newry.pdf</u></i>	Page 150
7h	Storm Water Drainage at Corrags Road, Burren Village Green (copy attached)	
	<i><u>Storm Water Drainage at Corrags Road, Burren-Burren Village Green.pdf</u></i>	Page 156
	<i><u>15-265 Rev B C-02 Drainage Layout.pdf</u></i>	Page 158
	<i><u>03 NI Water Correspondence etc.pdf</u></i>	Page 159
7i	Murphy Trust (copy attached)	
	<i><u>Murphy Trust.pdf</u></i>	Page 165
7j	Council land at The Green, Strangford - Request for use (copy attached)	
	<i><u>The Green, Strangford - use of.pdf</u></i>	Page 166
7k	Parking Issues at Council Offices, Greenbank (copy attached)	
	<i><u>Report on Parking Issues at Council Offices Greenbank.pdf</u></i>	Page 172

8 Corporate Services

8a	Approval for call for Financial Assistance 2016/17 (copy attached)	
	<i><u>Financial Assistance Nov.pdf</u></i>	Page 178
8a(i)	Update on Christmas Events Funding	
	<i><u>Update on Christmas Events Funding.pdf</u></i>	Page 180
	<i><u>Christmas Budget SPP.pdf</u></i>	Page 181

- 8b Elected Member Application to Undertake Accredited Training (copy attached)**
- [Elected Member Application to undertake Accredited Training...pdf](#)* Page 184
- [Appendices 1-4 Accredited Training Application.pdf](#)* Page 186
- 8c Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment (copy attached)**
- [Letter of Assurance.pdf](#)* Page 190
- 8d Contributions Expenditure - Update (copy attached)**
- [Contributions budget.pdf](#)* Page 193
- 8e Rate Support Grant 2015/16 (copy attached)**
- For Noting
- [Rates Support Grant.pdf](#)* Page 195
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9 Verification

- 9a Appointment of Members to the Board of the Carlingford Louth Commissioners (copy attached)**
- Appointment of Members to the Board of the Carlingford Louth Commissioners (only 2 Members of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to be appointed in accordance with the 1867 Legislation)
- [carlingford lough commissioners spr nov15.pdf](#)* Page 205
- 9b Sister City/Twinning Issues (copy attached)**
- [Report on Grozny.pdf](#)* Page 206
-

10 Grant Aided Programmes

- 10a SIF - Update (copy attached)**

10b PEACE IV (copy attached)

PEACE IV update.pdf

Page 209

Community Planning and Well-being

11a Statutory Guidance for the Operation of Community Planning (copy attached)

Report - Statutory Guidance for the Operation of Community Planning.pdf

Page 211

council-guidance-lg2815-community-planning-oct-2015.pdf

Page 212

11a (i) Appointment of an Arbitrator (copy attached)

Datahub Report November 2015.pdf

Page 245

Items Restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014

12a Valuation for the sale of land at former Down District Council offices at Strangford Road, Downpatrick (report to follow)

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial of business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public, may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

Strangford Road Disposal.pdf

Page 246

Appx to 12.pdf

Page 247

12b Update on Voluntary Severance Scheme (copy attached)

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial of business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public, may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

Invitees

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ACTION SHEET- STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING – THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER 2015

AGENDA ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	FOR COMPLETION BY DIRECTOR – including actions taken/date completed or progress to date if not yet completed
SPR/171/2015	Land offered to Council at Former Abbey Grammar School, Courtney Hill, Newry	It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor Ruane to proceed with the acquisition of land comprising 5.44 acres offered to the Council by the Christian Brothers at the former Abbey Grammar School, Courtney Hill, Newry, as there is an identified need for amenity land in Newry City	Ongoing – proceed with acquisition.
SPR/172/2015	Bessbrook Community Centre – Hydro & Heat Pump	It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Ruane, that the matter be referred to SMT for consideration of Option A or Option B.	Referred to SMT on 9 November 2015
SPR/73/2015	Request from the Quays Shopping Centre to use St. Christopher's Park at Newry Albert Basin for Staff Car Parking for 6 weeks at Christmas 2015	It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Kimmins, that the request from the Quays Shopping Centre to use St. Christopher's Park at Albert Basin for staff car parking for 6 weeks at Christmas 2015, be acceded to.	Valuation sought and included in SPRC agenda for 12 November 2015
SPR/174/2015	Marketing and Communications Strategy 2015/16	It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor Donnelly, that the Marketing and Communications Strategy 2015/16, be approved.	Approved
SPR/176/2015	Treasury Management	It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to give retrospective approval for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to join a Tender for Treasury Management to be led by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council.	Referred to Robert Dowey

AGENDA ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	FOR COMPLETION BY DIRECTOR – including actions taken/date completed or progress to date if not yet completed
SPR/181/2015	IT Equipment Storage Devices	It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor Quinn, to give retrospective approval to spend £18,888 to appoint Capita to supply, install and configure additional computer storage.	Referred to Robert Dowey
SPR/182/2015	Staff Recognition Event	It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor W Clarke, to give £5,000 under Section 37 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2011 for Council to host a staff recognition event in December 2015.	J Farrell to set up a working group in the Downshire and Monaghan sites to consider the events.
SPR184/2015	Car Loans	<p>It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor O’Muir:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Newry, Mourne and Down District Council adopts the provision in Section 41B of the Local Government Act to allow it to make loans to officers in accordance with the specified conditions. 2. That condition 1 on the previously circulated ‘Schedule’ for which a loan may be made to an officer for the purchase of a motor vehicle is determined by management where it is satisfied that it is essential for officers to use their private vehicles in carrying out official duties. 	Approved.
SPR/185/2015	Consultation Response to an Independent Review of NILGA	It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Burns, for the issues raised within the report to be submitted as the Council’s formal response to an independent review of NILGA.	Actioned
SPR/171/2015	Land offered to Council at Former Abbey Grammar School, Courtney Hill, Newry	It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor Ruane to proceed with the acquisition of land comprising 5.44 acres offered to the Council by the Christian Brothers at the former Abbey Grammar School, Courtney Hill, Newry, as there is an identified need for amenity land in Newry City	Ongoing. A.Robb

AGENDA ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	FOR COMPLETION BY DIRECTOR – including actions taken/date completed or progress to date if not yet completed
SPR/189/2015	2016 Decade of Centenaries Grant Programme	<p>It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Burns, seconded by Councillor Walker :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That an additional £20,000 be allocated within the 2016/17 budget to establish a total budget of £40,000 for a Decade of Centenaries Grant Programme – 2016. • That the call for applications to the Decade of Centenaries Grant Programme 2016 proceed. 	<p>Ongoing – closing date for applications 03/12/15.</p> <p>A copy of the details of this programme will be circulated to all Councillors.</p>
SPR/190/2015	Community Planning and the Arts – An Arts Council of NI Symposium	<p>It was agreed that an email would be sent to Party Representatives requesting their nominations to the symposium on 21 October 2015.</p>	<p>Actioned</p>
SPR/191/2015	Sister City/Twinning Report	<p>It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Burns, seconded by Councillor Ruane, that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The following 4 Sister Cities/Twinning projects are adopted for the 2015/2019 period: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Bezons (France) formal structure agreed b) Listowel (Ireland) have formal structure agreed c) Kirovsk (Russia) have formal structure agreed d) Southern Pines (USA) have formal structure agreed. 2. The projects above will be evaluated annually and will be tabled at Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in the future. 3. The projects of New Ross, South Dakota and the Western Isles of Scotland will undergo further investigation regarding twinning. 4. The request from Gronzy, Russia, to twin with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, to be further investigated. 	<p>Report on Twinning project in Gronzy, Russia included on SPRC Agenda for November.</p>

AGENDA ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	FOR COMPLETION BY DIRECTOR – including actions taken/date completed or progress to date if not yet completed
SPR/192/2015	Scheme of Delegation for Officers	It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Carr, that the Scheme of Delegation Report be adopted.	Adopted.
SPR/194/2015	Tender for the Advertising of Planning Application Notices	Protocol to be brought back to the November Committee meeting for consideration.	Included on agenda for SPRC Meeting on 12 November 2015.
SPR/195/2015	Release of Charge – Mayobridge Community Association	It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Burns, that the Council agrees to the Release of Charge registered on 2 May 2000 by the Council as a burden on the land comprised in Folio DN 46560L County Down owned by the Mayobridge Community Association.	Approved

Presentation to Newry, Mourne and Down Council

Thursday 12 November 2015
6.00pm

Laura Leonard- European and
International Relations Manager
Belfast City Council

Agenda: Benefits of Eurocities Network

- Overview of Network
- Structure
- Fora and Working Groups
- Value/ Opportunities
- How to Join

Network

- Network of Major EU cities > 250,000 population
- Represents 130 large cities, 40 partner cities
- EU policy influence, maximising EU Funding, early intelligence, best practice solutions to urban challenges

Structure

- Executive Committee
- Social affairs Economic Development, Environment, Mobility, Cooperation Culture, Knowledge Society

EUROCITIES - forums & working groups

Cooperation - Ghent

ENP & enlargement
Tbilisi

Public services
Munich

Urban agenda
Vienna

Creative citizens
Athens

Culture Forum - Ghent

Creative industries
Ghent

Cultural access & entitlement
Birmingham

Culture & young people
Rotterdam

Mobility of artists
Turin

Resources for culture
Strasbourg

Economic Development Forum - Genoa

City branding & attractiveness
Genoa & Rotterdam

Cohesion policy
Leipzig & Liverpool

Entrepreneurship & SMEs
Gothenburg & Lisbon, Barcelona

Innovation
Helsinki

Integrated urban development
Stockholm

International economic relations
Espoo & Utrecht

Metropolitan areas
BrabantStad

Environment Forum - Utrecht

Air quality, climate change & energy efficiency
Birmingham & London

Clean cities
Copenhagen

Green areas & biodiversity
Stockholm & Utrecht

Greening the local economy
Vienna

Noise
Rotterdam

Waste
Oslo

Water
The Hague & Eindhoven

Knowledge Society Forum - Manchester

Cyber-security
Tallinn

eInclusion
Sunderland

Open data
Ghent

Smart cities
Manchester

Mobility Forum - Malmö

Barrier-free city for all
Berlin

Developing a new mobility culture
London

Road Safety
Warsaw

TransEuropean Transport Networks
Netwerkstad Twente

Transport & energy efficiency
Copenhagen

Social Affairs Forum - Leipzig

Education
The Hague

Employment
Malmö

Health inequalities
Amsterdam

Homelessness
Utrecht

Housing
Vienna

Migration & integration
Helsinki

Roma Inclusion Taskforce
Ghent

Smart social inclusion
The Hague





Values & Benefits to Members

- Shaping the EU Agenda
- Ensuring an Integrated Urban dimension
- Resources
- Learning/Dialogue
- Information/Intelligence
- Profile
- Competitive Funds e.g IUA
- Dublin-Newry-Belfast economic corridor
- EU-International delegations

How to Join

- Associate Membership
- Application (Derry City Council)
- Belfast City Council Support
- Cost
- Next Steps

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Irish Language Strategy 2105-2016
Date:	12 November 2015
Reporting Officer:	Ursula Mhic An tSaoir
Contact Officer(s):	Ursula Mhic An tSaoir

<u>Decisions Required</u>	
Members are asked to consider the contents of the report and agree the Irish Language Strategy 2015 -2016 .	
1.0	<u>Purpose & Background</u>
1.1	This Irish Language Strategy covers the period up to 31 March 2016 and its aim is to outline the Council's approach to creating a supportive environment for the use and regeneration of the Irish Language in public, personal, economic and community life.
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	The aims of the strategy are to <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Support quality and sustainable acquisition and learning of the Irish language;  Enhance and protect the status and visibility of the Irish language;  Deliver sustainable Irish language networks and communities; and  Promote the Irish language in a way that will contribute towards building a strong and shared community.
3.0	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.1	Resources to be identified to undertake the implementation
4.0	<u>Equality & Good Relations Implications</u>
4.1	The implementation of this strategy will be delivered taking account of the Council's duty to promote a good and harmonious working environment, affirmative actions and Section 75 statutory requirements.
5.0	<u>Appendices</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Irish Language Strategy 2015-2016.



Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Straitéis na Gaeilge 2015/16

Irish Language Strategy 2015/16

Samhain 2015

November 2015

Contents		Page
1.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
2.	INTRODUCTION	4
2.1	IRISH LANGUAGE STRATEGY	6
2.2	A NEW LANDSCAPE	7
2.3	ELECTED REPRESENTATION.....	8
2.4	GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES.....	9
2.5	MERGER IMPACT ON IRISH LANGUAGEUNIT.....	10
3.	PROFILE OF THE COUNCIL AREA	11
3.1	POPULATION	11
3.2	RELIGION, ETHNICITY and NATIONAL IDENTITY	11
3.3	LANGUAGES SPOKEN	12
3.4	IRISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS	15
3.5	IRISH MEDIUM COMMUNITY and VOLUNTARY GROUPS	16
3.6	ULSTER SCOTS COMMUNITY.....	18
4.	LEGISLATIVE, STRATEGIC and OPERATIONAL CONTEXT	20
4.1	LEGISLATIVE and STRATEGIC CONTEXT.....	20
4.2	OPERATIONAL CONTEXT	21
4.3	SWOT ANALYSIS	25
5.	AIMS and OBJECTIVES.....	27
5.1	IDENTIFIED NEEDS.....	27
5.2	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	28
6.	IRISH LANGUAGE STRATEGY (2015-16)	36
6.1	INTRODUCTION	36
7.	DELIVERY MECHANISMS	46
7.1	OPERATIONAL APPROACH	46
7.2	STRUCTURE	46
7.3	FUNDING AND BURSARIES	48
7.4	ACCOUNTABILITY and MANAGEMENT	48
7.5	RESOURCE ALLOCATION	48
7.6	MONITORING and EVALUATION	48
7.7	APPENDICES	51

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Irish Language Strategy creates a framework in which Irish can flourish in the Council area and be accessible to all who wish to use it. It aims to protect and support the development and learning of Irish and to promote wider understanding of the cultural background of the Irish language.

The following sections outline the key elements of the Plan, namely, the needs to be addressed, Vision, aims, objectives, strategic priorities and indicative actions. A detailed Action Plan is presented in Chapter 6.

NEEDS



VISION

"To create a supportive environment for the use and regeneration of the Irish language in public, personal, economic and community life."

AIMS

- ✚ Support quality and sustainable acquisition and learning of the Irish language;
- ✚ Enhance and protect the status and visibility of the Irish language;
- ✚ Deliver sustainable Irish language networks and communities; and

- ✚ Promote the Irish language in a way that will contribute towards building a strong and shared community.

OBJECTIVES

- ✚ To facilitate access to opportunities to learn the Irish language outside of formal education;
- ✚ To support an increase in the number of daily speakers of the Irish language;
- ✚ To meet all obligations towards the Irish language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;
- ✚ To increase awareness of the economic and social value of the Irish language;
- ✚ To develop sustainable local community-based Irish language plans and initiatives;
- ✚ To provide opportunities to use Irish for as a wide a range of people as possible by encouraging family, social and community based language networks;
- ✚ Positively promote the Irish language in the community
- ✚ Positively promote the Irish language in the Protestant Unionist Loyalist community

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✚ Development of 2016-19 Action Plan; | ✚ Strengthen links between Council and the Irish language community; |
| ✚ Promotion of community-based initiatives to learn Irish; | ✚ Irish language community involved in DEA fora; |
| ✚ Develop Guidelines for the Use of Irish in Council; | ✚ Deliver community based events; |
| ✚ Staff training provision; | ✚ Distribute information on funding; |
| ✚ Increased inclusion of Irish language in events/festivals | ✚ More promotion through social media; |
| ✚ Partnerships between businesses operating through the medium of Irish | ✚ Support Good Relations to promote the Irish language in PUL communities; |
| ✚ Irish Language reflected in all Council marketing and communications | ✚ Scope the Ulster Scots community in NMDDC and provide needs based support |
| ✚ Strengthen links between Council and the Irish language community; | ✚ Deliver a joint Ulster Scots/Irish language event in partnership with Good Relations |

ACTIONS

A range of innovative and challenging actions will take place to deliver our Vision. Examples of actions that will take place include:

DELIVERY

The Irish Language Unit reports to the **Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee** and makes members aware of projected activity via regular written and verbal reports. The Unit will provide progress updates against key actions on a six monthly basis. This will take the format of written reports to Council and will be available on the Council website. An Annual Overview will be developed and the associated yearly Action Plan will be revised to reflect progress and ongoing business needs and external environment. The Irish Language Unit has a budget of £142,788 in 2015/16. This consists of:

- ✚ £103,491(72%) for Salaries (including national insurance etc.);
- ✚ £27,000 (19%) for Events (Piping Festival one off funding for August 2015);
- ✚ £4,800 (3%) for Travel;
- ✚ £3,250 (2%) for Advertising, Publications and Translations;
- ✚ £2,217 (1.5%) for Miscellaneous;
- ✚ £1,530 (1%) for Overheads; and
- ✚ £500 (0.5%) for Training/Conferences.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 IRISH LANGUAGE STRATEGY

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises that the Irish language is an integral part of the heritage, national identity and cultural life of the District. We are committed to the objectives set out in the Bilingualism Policy and have put in place the necessary structures and initiatives to ensure that the Irish language has a sustainable future in the Council area.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Irish Language Strategy was prepared within the framework of the Council's Bilingualism Policy. It sets out how we will use the Irish language in the operation of our functions, how we will facilitate the use of the Irish language when communicating with the public and key partners and how we will promote and develop the Irish language across the Council area.

2.2 A NEW LANDSCAPE

Local government reform saw the merger of **Newry and Mourne District Council and Down District Council**. The new Council area covers the Southeast of Northern Ireland, including southern County Armagh and large parts of County Down. It primarily comprises the former Newry and Mourne and Down District Council areas, but also includes the Ballyward electoral ward which was previously within the Banbridge District Council area. It is the third largest council area in Northern Ireland, incorporating all of the Mourne Mountains Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Ring of Gullion Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Beauty. It benefits from an extensive coastline stretching from Strangford Lough to Carlingford Lough and borders counties Louth and Monaghan in the Republic of Ireland. The district has a population of around 171,500. In addition to Newry city, the principal settlements are Downpatrick, Ballynahinch, Kilkeel, Newcastle, Warrenpoint and Crossmaglen.¹

¹ Newry, Mourne and Down Corporate Plan (2015-19)



A number of powers have transferred from central to local government. These include increased responsibilities for planning, roads, urban and rural regeneration, community development, housing, local economic development and tourism. The Council also has a new statutory duty of Community Planning and a new General Power of Competence. Urban regeneration and community development responsibilities will transfer in 2016.

Community planning will provide the framework for Council, Government departments, statutory bodies and other relevant agencies and sectors to work together to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area, based on community engagement.

2.3 ELECTED REPRESENTATION

The Council has strong representation from Sinn Féin and the SDLP, with 14 and 13 seats respectively.

Table 2.1 Membership of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Political Party	Seats
Sinn Féin	14
SDLP	13
DUP	4
UUP	3
Alliance	1
UKIP	1
Independent	5
Total	41

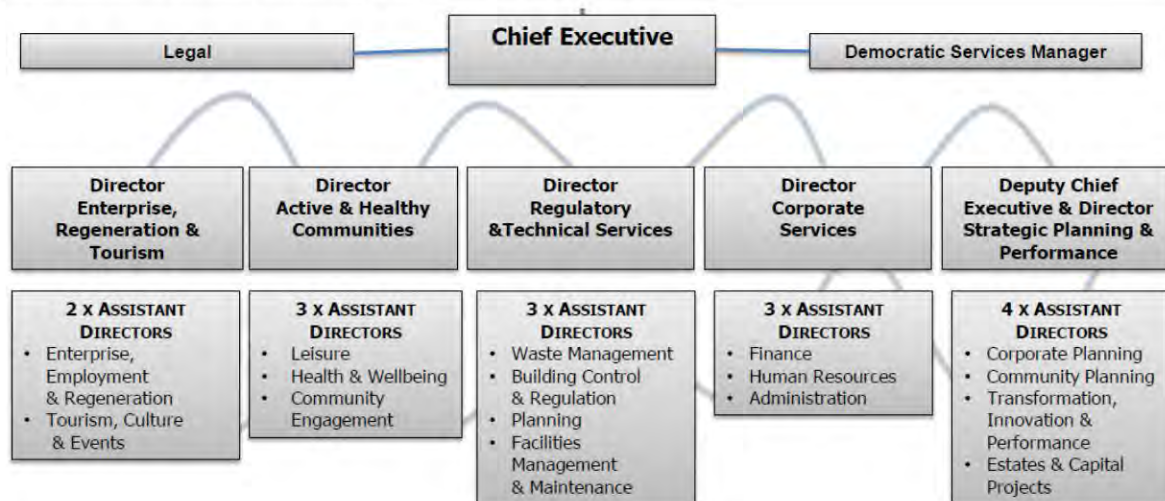
2.4 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

New governance structures have been agreed to ensure ownership and scrutiny across the entire organisation. This is represented by a Committee structure, which enables Elected Members of Council to fulfil their leadership and scrutiny roles, as well as a Management structure, to ensure there is sufficient organisational capacity for successful implementation. These are summarised in Figure 2.1 and 2.2.

Figure 2.1 NMDDC Committee and Management Structure



Figure 2.2 NMDDC Management Structure



The Council employs approximately 750 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees and has an annual budget in excess of £50m. This is made up of rates income, grants from central government and from the fees charged for specific Council services.²

²Newry, Mourne and Down Corporate Plan (2015-19)

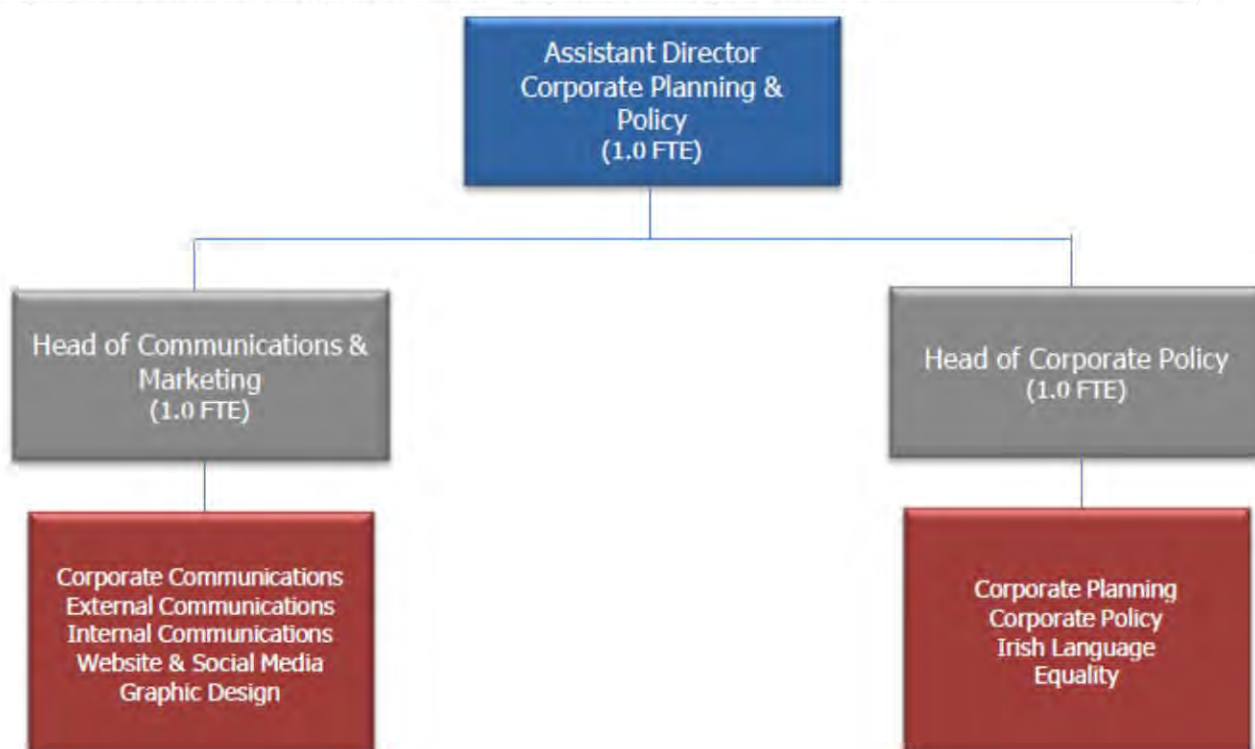
2.5 MERGER IMPACT ON THE IRISH LANGUAGE UNIT

The predecessor Down District Council did not have an Irish Language Unit. Instead the Policy was implemented through the Equality and Policy Officer. In the legacy Newry and Mourne District Council, the Irish Language Unit was positioned within District Development (alongside culture, arts, community and economic development functions). The Irish Language Unit provided reports to the Irish Language Committee and the Ulster Scots Committee.

Within the new Council, the NMDDC Irish Language Unit is situated within the Strategic Planning and Performance Directorate. This incorporates Corporate Planning and Policy, Community Planning and Transformation, Innovation and Performance, Estates and Capital Projects and Strategic Programmes.

Figure 2.3 illustrates the new structure of the Corporate Planning and Policy Service. The Assistant Director has overall responsibility for Equality, Irish Language and Communications and Marketing functions within the Council.

Figure 2.3 NMDDC Corporate Planning and Policy Structure



3. PROFILE OF THE COUNCIL AREA

3.1 POPULATION

With an estimated population of 174,829, the Council accounts for 9% of the total population of NI (n1,929,725).³

- ✚ Between 2003 and 2013 the population of Newry, Mourne and Down Local Government District (2014) increased by 18,434 people (12% compared to 7% NI);
- ✚ The new District Council area has a relatively low population density with 1.06% people per square hectare compared to the NI average of 1.34%;
- ✚ The proportion of young people aged under 16 years was 23% (n39,517) slightly higher than the Northern Ireland average (21%; n382,607);
- ✚ The proportion of older people aged 65 and over was 13% (n24,521) slightly lower than the Northern Ireland average (14%; n279,134);
- ✚ The median age of the population is 36 years, compared to the NI median of 37 years;
- ✚ People of young working age (16-39 years) make up 33% of the population (n55,645) which is the same as the Northern Ireland Average (33%; n583,753);
- ✚ People of older working age (40-64 years) make up 12% of the population (n55,146) which is slightly less than the Northern Ireland average of 13% (n584,231);
- ✚ The total proportion of the working age population is 45%, just under the NI average of 46%; and
- ✚ Under the Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM) the most deprived ward in the Local Government District (LGD) is Ballymote with a rank of 24. The least deprived ward is Saintfield (552 out of 583 wards in NI).⁴

3.2 RELIGION, ETHNICITY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY⁵

The District is predominantly made up of people from a Catholic community background with 72% belonging to, or being brought up in the Catholic religion. Twenty-four percent of the population are from a Protestant community background. Around 1,790 people (1%) are from an ethnic minority population background. There is a higher proportion of migrants from the EU in Newry, Mourne and Down 2.81% (n4,811) compared to the NI average (2.51%; n45,407). Table 3.1 provides a breakdown of the ethnicity of those living in the Council area.

³NISRA, Mid-Year Population Estimates, June 2013

⁴ NISRA, 2011 Census

⁵ NISRA, 2011 Census

Table 3.1 Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Number	% NMDDC	% NI	Higher/lower than NI average
Total	171,533	100	100	-
White	169,743	98.96	98.21	Higher
Chinese	301	0.18	0.35	Lower
Irish Traveller	183	0.11	0.07	Higher
Indian	267	0.16	0.34	Lower
Pakistani	44	0.03	0.06	Lower
Bangladeshi	29	0.02	0.03	Lower
Other Asian	158	0.09	0.28	Lower
Black Caribbean	29	0.02	0.02	Same
Black African	105	0.06	0.13	Lower
Black Other	90	0.05	0.05	Same
Mixed	409	0.24	0.33	Lower
Other	175	0.10	0.13	Lower

A higher proportion of residents perceived themselves to be Irish (44%), followed by Northern Irish (30%) and British (29%).

3.3 LANGUAGES SPOKEN⁶

The main languages spoken by people over the age of 3 years, are as follows:

- 🚩 96.97% of people speak English as their first language, slightly higher than the rest of NI at 96.86%;
- 🚩 3.03% of people speak a language other than English as their first language. This equates to 4,968 people;
- 🚩 16.05% have some knowledge of Irish;
- 🚩 4.45% have some knowledge of Ulster-Scots.

Table 3.2 illustrates the main languages of residents in the District.

⁶ NISRA, 2011

Table 3.2 Main Languages Spoken

Main Languages spoken (3years+)	Number	% NMDDC	% NI	Higher/lower than NI average
Total	163,917	100	100	-
English	158,949	96.97	96.86	Higher
Polish	2,129	1.30	1.02	Higher
Lithuanian	837	0.51	0.36	Higher
Irish	367	0.22	0.24	Lower
Portuguese	86	0.05	0.13	Lower
Slovak	134	0.08	0.13	Lower
Chinese	121	0.07	0.13	Lower
Tagalog/Filipino	56	0.03	0.11	Lower
Latvian	208	0.13	0.07	Higher
Russian	109	0.07	0.07	Same
Malayalam	87	0.05	0.07	Lower
Hungarian	74	0.05	0.06	Lower
Other	760	0.46	0.75	Lower

The concentration of the population who do not speak English as their first language varies across the 54 NMDDC wards:

- ✚ From 0.5% in the Strangford ward to 11.1% in St Marys ward;
- ✚ In nine of the 54 wards (17%) between 5-11% of the population do not speak English as their first language. These wards are all located within Newry and Mourne District;
- ✚ The percentage of residents who have some ability in Irish ranges from 3% in Ballymaglave ward to 29% in Silverbridge ward; and
- ✚ The percentage of residents who have some ability in the Ulster Scots language ranges from 1% in Silverbridge ward to 11% in Derryboy ward.

Table 3.3 provides a breakdown of reported National Identity and language use by ward.

- ✚ In the former Down District Council area, ability in Irish is highest in the Castlewellan (21%) and Tollymore (19%) wards and lowest in Ballymaglave (3%), Killyleagh and Kilmore (4.7%) and Derryboy (5%) wards;
- ✚ In the former Newry and Mourne District Council area, ability in Irish is highest in Silverbridge, Camlough, Creggan (29%) and Forkhill (27%) wards and lowest in Kilkeel Central (5%), Annalong and Binnian (12%) wards; and

- ✚ The Derryboy (11%), Kilmore and Saintfield(10%) wards in the former Down District Council area report the highest levels of Ulster Scots ability, whilst in the former Newry and Mourne District Council area, ability is strongest in Binnian and Kilkeel Central (10%).

As can be seen from Table 3.3, there appears to be an association between perceived National Identity and ability in Irish/Ulster Scots. For example, 71% of the population in Creggan perceive themselves to be Irish and 29% have some ability in Irish, whereas 65% of the Kilkeel Central population describe themselves as British and 10% have some ability in Ulster Scots.

Table 3.3 **Main Languages Spoken by Ward**

Ward	Previous LGD	% National Identity			% Ability in		% English NOT first language
		British	Irish	N. Irish	Irish	Some Ulster Scots	
Ballyward	B'bridge	32.8%	35.5%	31.4%	13%	5.9%	1.9%
Ardalass	Down	25.1%	40.9%	39.6%	12.9%	3.3%	0.9%
Audlev's Acre	Down	25.2%	47.6%	32.9%	14.1%	2.2%	0.8%
Ballymaulave	Down	70.6%	8.6%	27.9%	3.0%	7.5%	2.9%
Ballymote	Down	25.1%	41.6%	37.8%	12.9%	2.5%	2.2%
Ballynahinch East	Down	52.7%	21.6%	32.8%	6.5%	6.5%	3.5%
Castlewellan	Down	20.1%	52.8%	29.5%	21.1%	3.1%	3.2%
Cathedral	Down	24.7%	42.6%	35.4%	12.4%	2.6%	1.9%
Crossgar	Down	44.1%	27.6%	34.7%	8.5%	6.0%	2.8%
Derryboy	Down	59.8%	16.6%	34.1%	5.0%	11.1%	0.7%
Donard	Down	34.9%	35.4%	35.3%	14.5%	4.3%	1.7%
Drumaness	Down	28.7%	36.8%	40.1%	11.2%	2.9%	1.0%
Dundrum	Down	39.9%	32.5%	34.5%	12.1%	5.3%	1.3%
Dunmore	Down	56.2%	21.6%	31.5%	7.1%	7.6%	1.3%
Killough	Down	36.0%	31.5%	32.5%	11.5%	4.6%	1.5%
Killyleagh	Down	63.3%	14.0%	32.4%	4.7%	8.2%	2.2%
Kilmore	Down	66.4%	14.8%	32.9%	4.7%	9.9%	0.9%
Murlough	Down	32.9%	36.4%	34.3%	11.7%	3.1%	2.5%
Ouioile	Down	32.6%	40.5%	32.2%	13.2%	5.5%	2.1%
Saintfield	Down	64.5%	14.5%	34.1%	5.1%	9.0%	1.0%
Seaforde	Down	42.9%	30.1%	34.9%	9.8%	6.8%	0.7%
Shimna	Down	32.0%	37.1%	36.4%	13.5%	4.8%	3.0%
Stranford	Down	24.9%	43.7%	37.5%	12.3%	5.0%	0.5%
Tollymore	Down	22.2%	52.9%	30.7%	19.2%	3.6%	1.1%
Annalong	NandM	51.1%	24.5%	30.7%	11.9%	7.5%	1.3%
Ballybot	NandM	13.0%	52.4%	31.9%	15.9%	3.3%	6.5%
Bessbrook	NandM	28.2%	41.3%	32.8%	13.8%	4.1%	3.1%
Binnian	NandM	56.2%	25.3%	27.7%	12.1%	10.1%	1.1%
Il Urren and	NandM	10.0%	62.1%	28.9%	24.2%	3.0%	2.5%
Camlough	NandM	5.8%	70.8%	24.2%	27.2%	1.6%	2.0%
Clonallan	NandM	14.3%	56.5%	29.1%	21.5%	2.9%	4.3%
Creggan	NandM	6.6%	71.1%	23.8%	29.1%	2.6%	1.2%
Crossmaalen	NandM	5.4%	74.3%	20.5%	23.4%	2.2%	1.9%
Daisy Hill	NandM	8.2%	58.3%	27.9%	19.7%	1.3%	9.5%
Derryveckaagh	NandM	13.6%	59.2%	28.2%	22.9%	2.6%	3.9%
Derrymore	NandM	12.3%	58.8%	27.6%	18.9%	1.8%	3.6%
Donaghmore	NandM	31.3%	43.3%	30.6%	17.1%	6.0%	0.7%
Drumalane	NandM	7.9%	62.6%	22.9%	24.5%	2.8%	9.9%
Drumcaullion	NandM	13.1%	53.6%	30.4%	19.7%	1.8%	7.9%
Fathom	NandM	6.6%	67.5%	25.3%	22.6%	1.8%	3.5%

Ward	Previous LGD	% National Identity			% Ability in		% English NOT first language
		British	Irish	N. Irish	Irish	Ulster Scots	
Forkhill	NandM	6.5%	74.7%	21.5%	27.0%	1.7%	2.1%
Kilkeel Central	NandM	64.6%	12.3%	26.1%	5.2%	9.9%	5.8%
Kilkeel South	NandM	44.8%	28.4%	29.8%	12.4%	7.7%	4.2%
Lisnacree	NandM	35.1%	37.9%	32.7%	19.3%	5.5%	1.3%
Mavobridge	NandM	16.9%	55.1%	31.3%	18.4%	3.3%	1.7%
Newtownhamilton	NandM	30.2%	44.4%	27.8%	15.0%	4.7%	2.6%
Rostrevor	NandM	14.3%	56.5%	30.3%	23.9%	3.2%	3.2%
Seaview	NandM	15.4%	54.2%	31.1%	21.4%	2.5%	5.8%
Silver Bridge	NandM	4.8%	76.5%	18.9%	29.2%	1.1%	2.2%
Spelga	NandM	17.6%	53.1%	32.6%	21.5%	3.4%	1.0%
St Mary's	NandM	11.0%	57.6%	24.5%	17.3%	2.5%	11.1%
St Patrick's	NandM	11.6%	56.7%	25.9%	18.0%	2.1%	10.2%
Tullyhannv	NandM	36.4%	41.2%	27.2%	16.5%	5.7%	0.9%
Windsor Hill	NandM	23.6%	44.0%	29.1%	17.0%	3.5%	9.0%

3.4 IRISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS

An audit undertaken by NMDDC Irish Language Unit identified the following 13 Irish Medium education providers:⁷

- ✚ Ardscoil Naomh Mhaolmhaodhóg: Caisleán Uidhilín
Irish Language Unit in St. Malachy's High School, Castlewellan
- ✚ Bunscoil an Iúir: Iúr Chinn Trá, Newry Irish Medium(IM) Primary School (78);
- ✚ Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche: Caisleán Uidhilín, Mourne IM Primary School (85);
- ✚ Bunscoil Mhuire is Pádraig: Dún Pádraig, Downpatrick IM Primary School (93);
- ✚ Gaelscoil na mBeann: Cill Chaoil, Mourne Mountains IM Primary School, Kilkeel (40);
- ✚ Gaelscoil Phádraig Naofa Crois Mhic Lionnáin: Crossmaglen IM Unit (103);
- ✚ Náiscoil an Chreagáin: Creggan Irish Medium Nursery, Silverbridge;
- ✚ Náiscoil an Iúir: Newry (3 assistants)Newry IM Nursery;
- ✚ Náiscoil UachtarTíre Caisleán Uidhilín: Castlewellan IM Nursery;
- ✚ Náiscoil Chill Locha: Killough IM Nursery;
- ✚ Náiscoil Dhún Padraig: Dún Pádraig, Downpatrick IM Nursery;
- ✚ Náiscoilna mBeann Cill Chaoil: (n40)Kilkeel IM Nursery;
- ✚ Náiscoil Shliabh gCuilinn Baile an Chláir: Slieve Gullion IM Nursery
Jonesborough

Adult Education providers include University of the Third Age: U3A and Southern Regional College/Ulster University. There are also a range of Irish Language Summer Schools facilitated throughout the District:

- ✚ Ballyholland Primary School, Ballyholland;
- ✚ Coláiste Áit Tí Cathail, Attical;

⁷ August, 2015

- ✚ Coláiste Bhlinne, Camlough;
- ✚ Coláiste Bhóirche Íochtar, Annalong;
- ✚ Coláiste Airt, Mullaghbawn;
- ✚ Coláiste Shliabh gCuillinn, Drumintee;
- ✚ Coláiste Uí Fhiaich, Cullyhanna;
- ✚ Coláiste Lorcáin Uí Thuatháil, Beleek;
- ✚ Coláiste Dhroichead Mhaigh Eo, Mayobridge;
- ✚ Coláiste Leath Chathail, Downpatrick;
- ✚ Coláiste Uachtar Tíre, Castlewellan; and
- ✚ Coláiste Samhraidh Bhoirche Íochtar: Lower Mourne Summer College.

3.5 IRISH MEDIUM COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS

The wide range of groups, operating through the medium of Irish within the District, including youth groups, mother and toddler groups, walking groups, sports organisations and book clubs, is as follows.

South Armagh:

- ✚ Cairde Ghaelscoil Phádraig Naofa: Friends of Irish Medium(IM)Unit in St. Patricks PS Crossmaglen;
- ✚ Cairde Náiscoil an Chreagáin: Friends of IM Nursery at Silverbridge;
- ✚ Cairde Náiscoil Shliabh gCuillinn: Friends of IM Nursery in Jonesborough;
- ✚ Glór na Croise: Irish Language community group in Crossmaglen;
- ✚ Gaeltacht Oirdheisceart Uladh: South East Ulster Gaeltacht;
- ✚ Grúpa Gaeilge an tSrutháin: Bessbrook Irish Language group;
- ✚ Ógras Oiriaila: Irish Medium Youth Club in Crossmaglen.

Down:

- ✚ Craobh Bhoirche Íochtair de Chonradh na Gaeilge: Lower Mourne Gaelic League;
- ✚ Teanga Trí Chairdeas: Warrenpoint Irish Language community;
- ✚ Cumann Scoildrámaíochta: Irish Language Schools Drama Groups;
- ✚ Cumann Gaelach Leath Chathail: Dún Pádraig, Lecale Irish language Association; Downpatrick
- ✚ Glór UachtarTíre: Caisleán Uidhilín: Irish Language Community in Castlewellan;
- ✚ Cumann Siúlóide Caisleán Uidhilín: Castlewellan Irish Language Walking Group;
- ✚ Grúpa Túistí is Tachrán: Caisleán Uidhilín: Castlewellan Irish Language Mother and Toddlers;
- ✚ GrúpaTúistí is Tachrán: Baile Hill, Hilltown - Mother and Toddlers
- ✚ Club Óige Chaisleáin Nua – Newcastle IM Youth Club
- ✚ Ciorcal Comhrá Chaisleán Uidhilín
- ✚ Scoil Samhraidh Shéamais Uí Néill

Newry:

- ✚ Craobh an Iúir de Chonradh na Gaeilge – Newry Branch of the Gaelic League;

- 🇮🇪 Cairde Bhunscoil an Iúir – Friends of Newry Irish Medium Primary School;
- 🇮🇪 Cairde Náiscoil an Iúir- Friends of Newry Irish Medium Nursery School;
- 🇮🇪 Cumann Óige an Iúir- Newry Irish medium Youth Club;
- 🇮🇪 GRADAM an Iúir – Monthly Lunch Club for Irish Language speakers;
- 🇮🇪 Club Leabhar Líofa- Líofa(DCAL Irish Language Initiative) Bookclub.

There is also a range of **cultural and sporting organisations** and four community festivals in Camlough, Down, Lower Mourne and Forkhill which have a large Irish language element in them:

- 🇮🇪 An Fhleadh Rua – Forkhill
- 🇮🇪 Michael J. Murphy Winter School
- 🇮🇪 An Cumann Scoil dramaíochta – Irish Language Schools/Youth Club Drama Group;
- 🇮🇪 Aisteoirí Oirghialla- Irish Language Adult Drama Group;
- 🇮🇪 Campa Chormaic an Iúir- Newry GAA and Irish Language Camp;
- 🇮🇪 Campa Chormaic an Dúin- Down GAA and Irish Language Camp;
- 🇮🇪 Coiste na Gaeilge — CLG an Dúin – Down GAA Irish language Committee;
- 🇮🇪 Coiste na Gaeilge — CLG Ard Mhacha – Armagh GAA Irish language Committee;
- 🇮🇪 Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann – Craobh an Iúir- Newry Music and Irish Language;
- 🇮🇪 Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann – An Caisleán Nua
- 🇮🇪 Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann – Rinn Mhic Giolla Rua- Warrenpoint Music and Irish Language
- 🇮🇪 Cuimhneamh- Cultural Group- South Armagh;
- 🇮🇪 Cumann Cultúrtha Chluain Daimh: Clonduff Cultural Group;
- 🇮🇪 Cumann Cultúrtha Chill Shléibhe: Killeavy Cultural Group;
- 🇮🇪 Cumann Pobail Áit Tí Chathail: Attical Community Association
- 🇮🇪 Soma: Arts and Music Festival - Castlewellan.

There are five **Irish Language Cultural Centres**. These are Gaeláras Mhic Ardghail: An tIúir, Newry, Páircna Mara: Áth na Long, Annalong, Tí Chulainn: An Mullach Bán, Mullaghbawn, An Lóiste: Caisleán Uidhilín, Castlewellan and Cnocnafeola Centre, Attical. These centres play an important role in delivering grassroots development services within their respective communities. Furthermore, three National Irish Language organisations have offices in Newry:














1. Glór na nGael: Lead Organisation with specific responsibilities to develop and promote the Irish language in the community, in business and in family life;
2. Conradh na Gaeilge: The Gaelic League providing a platform for Irish language community both in Ireland and around the world. Since its foundation in 1893, members of Conradh na Gaeilge have been actively promoting Irish in every aspect of life, from legal and educational affairs to the development of new media and services through Irish; and

3. Oireachtas na Gaeilge: the Annual Irish Language Arts Festival that is hosted in various towns, cities and rural communities across the island of Ireland and represents the largest annual gathering of Irish language speakers with huge media coverage appealing to both young and old. The Oireachtas is a great tourism draw for the district that hosts the event. In 2015 it will be held in Dublin on 27th October – 1 November. It will promote a wide variety of Irish medium arts and events both traditional and modern.

Two media companies are based in Newry, Big Mountain Productions, an Irish Language film and TV production company and Raidió Pobail an Iúir, Newry Community Radio. Cross-border alliances include Craobh Ó Méith de Chonradh na Gaeilge – Omeath Gaelic League, Ciorcal Comhrá Ó Meith- Omeath Conversation Group and POBAL ChluainTairbh- Clontarf Irish Language Community, Co. Dublin.

3.6 ULSTER SCOTS COMMUNITY

At the time of writing the Council has not a comprehensive register of groups who promote Ulster Scots culture and heritage in the Down District area. In the predecessor Newry and Mourne District Council the Irish Language Unit has worked with local groups promoting Ulster Scots arts, heritage and culture and most recently the Council hosted the RSPBANI Pipe Band Ulster Championships in Kilbroney Park. Staff of the Irish Language Unit provided support to groups and facilitated the provision of grant aid to local groups through the Council's Ulster Scots Committee. These groups include:

-  Ballyvea Rural Development Association, Kilkeel
-  Cranfield Cultural Society, Kilkeel
-  Mourne School of Dance, Kilkeel
-  Schomberg Society, Kilkeel
-  Ballymageough Rural Development Association, Kilkeel
-  Schomberg Thistle Club, Kilkeel
-  Orangefield Flute Band, Kilkeel
-  Kingdom of Mourne Military History Society, Kilkeel
-  Kirknarra School of Dance, Kilkeel
-  Drumlough and Ballygorian Rural Development Association, Drumlough
-  Moneygore Rural Development Association, Moneygore
-  Finnard Rural Development Association, Finnard
-  Lisnamulligan Rural Association, Lisnamulligan
-  Donaghmore Development Association, Donaghmore
-  Tullymurray Historical Culture Society, Poyntzpass
-  Altnaveigh House, Newry
-  Curley Rural Community Association, Newry
-  Commons Rural Development Association, Newry
-  Hunter Moore Memorial Flute Band, Newry



Bessbrook Crimson Arrow Pipe Band, Bessbrook
Whitewater Pipe Band, Newtownhamilton

4. LEGISLATIVE, STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

4.1 LEGISLATIVE AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement committed the UK Government to 'recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic minority communities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.'

The use of Irish and Ulster-Scots is specifically promoted in order to safeguard them as an important part of our shared cultural heritage. Irish and Ulster-Scots are recognised and protected by the UK Government under the **European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**. The Council has specific responsibilities towards the Irish Language under Part III of the Charter. The St Andrews Agreement (October 2006) committed the UK Government to work with the NI Executive to protect and enhance the development of the Irish and Ulster-Scots languages. This commitment was consequently included in amendments to the Northern Ireland Act 1998, placing duties on the Executive to adopt strategies setting out how it proposes to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language and Ulster-Scots culture, heritage and language.

In the Programme for Government (2011-2015), the Executive included a Strategy for the Irish Language as a key building block under Priority 4 'Building a Strong and Shared Community'. DCAL's subsequent **Strategy to Enhance and Protect the Development of the Irish Language (2015-2035)** sets out a roadmap for the Irish language over the next 20 years in areas such as education, public services, the community and media, taking account of the needs of the Irish language community and international best practice. The key aims are to:

- ✚ Support quality and sustainable acquisition and learning of the Irish language;
- ✚ Enhance and protect the status and visibility of the Irish language;
- ✚ Deliver quality and sustainable Irish language networks and communities; and
- ✚ Promote the Irish language in a way that will contribute towards building a strong and shared community.

DCAL published a **Strategy to Enhance and Develop the Ulster Scots Language, Heritage and Culture (2015 – 2035)**. The key aims are to:

- ✚ Promote and safeguard the status of, and respect for, the Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture;
- ✚ Build up the sustainability, capacity and infrastructure of the Ulster-Scots community;

- ✚ Foster an inclusive, wider understanding of the Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture in a way that will contribute towards building a strong and shared community. The establishment of an Ulster-Scots Academy will be an important element of this Strategy.

4.2 OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

There are a number of Council Strategies, Policies and Plans which are particularly relevant to the development of the current Plan. These are:

✚ NMDDC Corporate Plan (2015-19)

Our Vision is to:

- ✓ Create a district that is an attractive place for doing business;
- ✓ Realise the full economic potential of our people and unlock their enterprising spirit so that there are jobs for us all;
- ✓ Build active and responsible citizenship and encourage everyone to play their part in contributing to social and economic development;
- ✓ Improve health outcomes and facilitate healthy lifestyles; and
- ✓ Be an age-friendly District offering a good quality of life for people of all ages, especially for children and older people who may need more support.

Our mission

Our mission as a Council is to lead and serve a District that is prosperous, healthy and sustainable.

Our values

- **Citizen focused**
- **Accountable**
- **Collaborative**
- **Sustainable**
- **Fair**

Our Priorities (Strategic Objectives)

- 1 Become one of the premier tourism destinations on the island of Ireland.
- 2 Attracted investment and supported the creation of new jobs.
- 3 Supported improved health and well-being outcomes.
- 4 Protected our natural and built environment.
- 5 Led the regeneration of our urban and rural areas.
- 6 Advocated on your behalf specifically in relation to those issues which really matter to you.
- 7 Empowered and improved the capacity of our communities.
- 8 Transformed and modernised the Council, providing accessible as well as value for money services.

NMDDC Bilingualism Policy

All District Councils in Northern Ireland have responsibilities under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Charter is an international convention designed to promote and promote regional and minority language as a threatened aspect of Europe’s cultural heritage. The Charter’s aim is to create a culture where regional and minority languages can flourish alongside each other and along with the majority language of the State. The Charter establishes a common core of principles set out in Part II which apply to all regional and minority languages. Part III of the Charter contains specific provisions concerning the place of regional or minority languages in the various sectors of the life of the community. The UK government in ratifying the Charter recognised obligations to protect and promote the Irish language as which has Part III status. UK Government has selected thirty six articles to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, the use of the Irish language in education, the media and to permit its use in judicial and administrative contexts, economic and social life and cultural activities.⁸


The NMDDC Bilingualism Policy sets out the Council’s commitment to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish language and the English language in the Council area. The aim is to build on the Council’s commitment to celebrate diversity by:



1. The delivery of equality of opportunity for all who avail of and/or provide Council services using progressive realisation;
2. To fulfil Council’s obligations as contained in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The Policy applies to all Council Departments with regard to the functions they deliver and applies to all communication and engagement between internal

and external stakeholders. The policy objectives are to:

-  Enable everyone who receives or uses Council services, or contributes to the democratic process, to do so through the medium of Irish or English, according to personal choice;

⁸ European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages see Appendix 3

- ✚ To foster and promote the use of Irish in the internal administration of Council, in its dealings with other public bodies and also with bodies that provide services to the public in the District;
- ✚ Recognise that members of the public, Council members, management and employees can express their views and needs better in their preferred language;
- ✚ Recognise that enabling the public to use their preferred language is a matter of good practice and customer care and not a concession; and
- ✚ Seek to remove, where possible, restrictions which would discourage or work against the maintenance or development of the language.

The Council objectives regarding the promotion, protection and use of the Irish Language will be delivered through the following procedures:

- ✚ Corporate Identity;
- ✚ Signage;
- ✚ Communication;
- ✚ Council Activities;
- ✚ Publications;
- ✚ Public Relations;
- ✚ Presentations;
- ✚ Marketing Activity;
- ✚ Event Management;
- ✚ E-communications;
- ✚ Website and Social Media;
- ✚ Councillor/Staff Training

The implementation of this Irish Language Strategy(2015/16) must be delivered taking account of the Council's duty to promote a good and harmonious working environment, affirmative actions and Section 75 statutory requirement to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations. A number of regional and local strategies and plans have been reviewed to inform content and ensure complementarity rather than duplication or displacement of provision.



The Irish Language Strategy develops the Council's commitments to make information and services accessible to those who belong to the Irish language community. However, there is much more potential for the Council to unlock the social and economic value of a well-developed and resourced Irish language sector. The desk review demonstrated the linkage between the aims and objectives that support the implementation of NMDDC Bilingualism Policy and those of a variety of Council functions. Newry, Mourne and Down has rich heritage and tourism assets, stemming from the three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which are located within the region. Improving Irish language infrastructure would have a positive impact upon economic development, including urban and rural regeneration, tourism, creative industries and business support. Indeed the lack of cohesion within the cultural sector, few links with tourism and poor recognition of the contribution of heritage, culture and arts to the economy was identified in the development of the Council's Regeneration and Investment Strategy. Growing the culture and arts sector has a pivotal role within this strategy.



There is a strong Irish language arts and culture base within the region and this has the potential to add significant value to the economic vitality of the area and is a means of building cohesive communities. Relationships between Irish language, Community Support, Arts, Equality and Good Relations functions also need to be developed and promoted. There is a need to explore joint events and programmes which would help improve equality of opportunity to language acquisition and help deliver the T:BUC (Together Building a United Community) objectives of building a strong shared community which positively celebrates and respects cultural diversity.

4.3 SWOT ANALYSIS

There are immense challenges ahead in terms of ensuring financial security, safeguarding budgets and services and building a cohesive identity across the geographical area.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Irish Language has recognised Minority Language status; ❖ NMDDC Bilingualism Policy and Procedures already adopted; ❖ Development Naming, Postal Numbering and Erection of Nameplates Policy and Procedures; ❖ Language Awareness Training already offered to Newry and Mourne Council staff; ❖ Variety of established Irish language voluntary and community groups in NMDDC; ❖ Five Irish Language Cultural Centres; ❖ Thriving and expanding Irish Medium Education sector driven by community; ❖ Presence of Glór na nGael, Conradh na Gaeilge and Oireachtas na Gaeilge; ❖ Newry and Mourne District Council and Ciste Infheistíochta Gaeilge investment in Páirc na Mara (Lower Mourne Gaelic League's Cultural Centre in Annalong) and Gaeláras Mhic Ardghail (Newry's Gaelic League Irish Language Cultural Centre in Upper Chapel St. Newry) ❖ High levels of activism and participation within Irish Language communities ❖ Knowledge base within Irish Language Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Negative perceptions about the Irish language and its speakers ❖ Bilingualism Policy and Procedures not fully implemented; ❖ Need to strengthen and publicise the new Council and brand identity; ❖ Limited funding for Irish language groups; ❖ Lack of understanding of the role and remit of the Irish Language Unit within Council; ❖ Ulster Scots is underdeveloped within NMDDC, with fewer groups and lower capacity; ❖ Need to develop a sense of cohesion throughout NMDDC; ❖ Limited financial and staff resources amidst increased expectations for the Unit; ❖ Lack of joined-up planning and integration between Council functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Synergy with Good Relations and celebration of cultural diversity; ❖ Strong connectivity between language, arts and culture; ❖ Potential to link with economic development and tourism product; ❖ Involvement of Irish language communities in NMDDC Community Plan; ❖ Local TV and Radio companies producing Irish Language Programmes. ❖ High percentage of Irish speakers within new Council area ❖ To develop the economic potential of the Irish Language within the district ❖ Linkage to DEA Fora and outworkings of same ❖ Signposting of funding opportunities ❖ Linkage to DCAL Strategy ❖ Where possible seek funding ❖ Enhance promotion of Corporate Brand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Economic climate and reduced public expenditure; ❖ Potential for Irish language to be perceived as low priority for funding; ❖ Low support for Irish language in some parts of the District ❖ Lower levels of support within PUL communities; ❖ Concerns that Irish Language is perceived as contentious

5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overarching **Vision** for the Irish Language Strategy is:

"To create a supportive environment for the use and regeneration of the Irish language in public, personal, economic and community life."

Our underpinning **Values** support those of the NMDDC Corporate Plan (2015-19):

- ✚ **Citizen Focused:** Actively encouraging citizen and community engagement, as well as listening and being responsive;
- ✚ **Accountable:** Making decisions based on an objective assessment of need and operate in a transparent way in addition to openly reporting on our performance;
- ✚ **Collaborative:** Actively encouraging and pursuing working in partnership and at all levels to deliver for our District;
- ✚ **Sustainable:** We will take into account the social, economic and environmental impacts of our decisions on current and future generations; and
- ✚ **Fair:** We will proactively target actions at those groups and individuals who are marginalised in our community.

5.1 IDENTIFIED NEEDS

This Irish Language Strategy has been informed by an audit of Newry and Mourne and Down District Councils' Irish language practice. A desk-based activity review was undertaken and this was supplemented by staff consultations.

Based upon the evidence gathered the following needs were identified in relation to the Council's Irish Language services:



5.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Irish Language Service provision will reflect the values of the Strategy and actions will be **Citizen-Focused** and promote **Sustainability, Accountability, Fairness** and **Collaboration**. The aims and objectives of the new Irish Language Service reflect and support those of DCAL's Strategy to Enhance and Protect the Development of the Irish Language (2015-2035) and NMDDC Corporate Plan (2015-19):

Support quality and sustainable acquisition and learning of the Irish language, by:

- ✚ Facilitating access to opportunities to learn the Irish language outside of formal education;
- ✚ Supporting an increase in the number of daily speakers of the Irish language.

Enhance and protect the status and visibility of the Irish language, by:

- ✚ Meeting all obligations towards the Irish language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;
- ✚ Increasing awareness of the economic and social value of the Irish language.

Deliver sustainable Irish language networks and communities, by:

- ✚ Developing sustainable local community-based Irish Language Strategies and initiatives;
- ✚ Providing opportunities to use Irish to as wide a range of people as possible by encouraging family, social and community-based language networks.

Promote the Irish language in a way that will contribute towards building a strong and shared community, by:



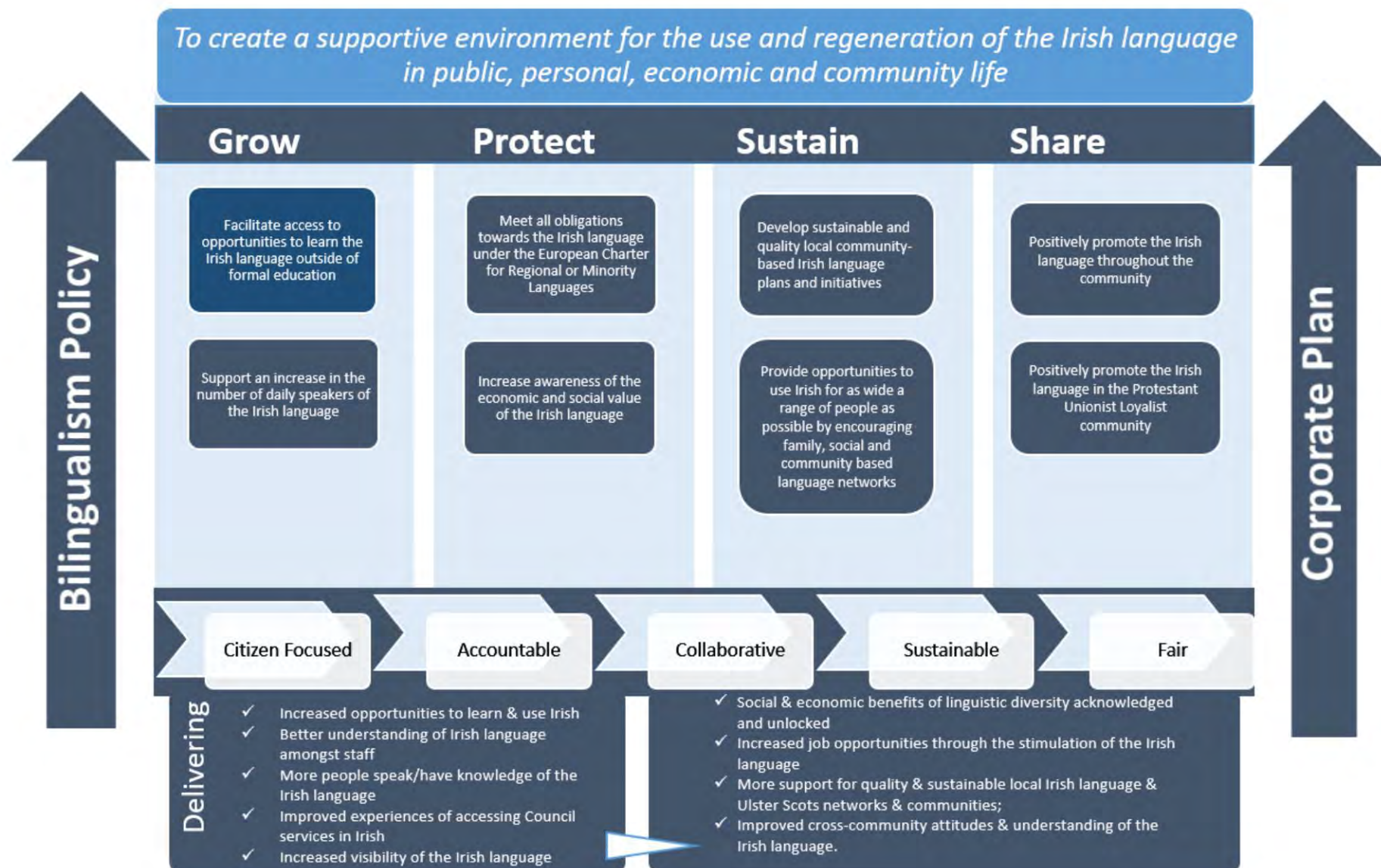
-  Positively promote the Irish language throughout the community;
-  Positively promote the Irish language in the Protestant Unionist Loyalist community.

Figure 5.1 summarises the strategic framework which we will work within over the duration of the Irish Language Strategy.

Figure 5.1 Irish Language Service Aims and Objectives



Aim One: Support quality and sustainable acquisition and learning of the Irish language

- ✚ Facilitating access to opportunities to learn the Irish language outside of formal education within the Council among elected members and staff;
- ✚ Support an increase in the number of daily speakers of the Irish language

Learning a second language can benefit a person in a number of ways, for instance, exposure to a different culture, developing problem solving and creative thinking skills. Knowledge of a second language is a valuable skill to have.

Irish language awareness initiatives and courses directed at non-Irish speakers or those with a little Irish all contribute to enhancing, protecting and developing the language. In a staff survey carried out by Newry and Mourne Council in 2009, 16 Irish speaking staff within the Council were identified. Ten were learning Irish and 34 expressed a desire to learn the language. Twelve staff reported that they can speak, read and write in Irish and three staff had specific skills related to the use of Irish in the workplace (e.g. translation services or bilingual service delivery).

In order to promote adult Irish language learning and promote Irish as a useful skill in the workplace, NMDDC will continue to provide Language Awareness Training to Council staff and to support them in integrating the Irish Language throughout the Council. For example, in 2014 Newry and Mourne Council Irish Language Unit partnered with the Good Relations Unit to enable those staff to achieve their silver fáinne badge. We will continue to promote these learning opportunities to those who wish to avail of them.

Aim Two: Enhance and protect the status and visibility of the Irish language

- ✚ Meeting all obligations towards the Irish language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;
- ✚ Increasing awareness of the economic and social value of the Irish language;

NMDDC is fully committed to fulfilling its duties under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (the Charter) in our dealings with the public – ensuring that the Irish language is used and visible in the provision of public services. Irish speakers should be able to conduct their business through Irish and all Departments of the Council should facilitate the use of Irish both orally and in writing.

The Council has adopted and is implementing a Bilingualism Policy and Procedures, which apply to all Council Departments with regards to the functions they deliver. The Bilingualism Policy applies to all our communication and engagement between internal and external stakeholders. It is crucial that we monitor and audit all goods, services and functions of the Council in order to ensure compliance with the

Bilingualism Policy within each Departmental remit. To this end an inter-departmental Internal Liaison Committee will be established to provide oversight and review.


The provision of our staff Language Awareness Training programmes will ensure an increased understanding of Irish amongst Council staff and will assist with the integration of the Irish language within Council functions. We also provide simultaneous translation services for the use of Irish for meetings of various committees and functions of the Council.

The use of Irish in a range of printed material can assist the development of the language in a variety of ways. It helps increase the visibility of the language, it enhances the status of Irish by being used in our corporate branding, publications, official documents and forms in line with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. We are committed to making information available through the medium of Irish. As more people access Council information online and via social media, we need to ensure that the Irish language is included across all communication platforms.

The Irish Language Unit has a central role in the successful implementation of the Bilingualism Policy and the promotion of the Irish language across the NMDDC area. Hence, there is a need to publicise the skills of its staff and the services available both internal and external to Council. We also need to ensure greater levels of partnership between the Unit and other Council Departments, particularly with regard to the delivery of social and economic outcomes.

The Council through its Development Naming, Postal Numbering and Erection of Nameplates Policy and Procedures, facilitates the preservation and signposting of Irish place-names and the naming of new housing developments bilingually. We will continue to facilitate and extend this dual language approach with the support of local residents, groups and businesses. This plays an important role in making areas welcoming to the community that live there, but also increases the visibility of Irish within everyday life. It enables visitors to see both Irish and English as being integral to the cultural heritage experience. There are further opportunities to facilitate the inclusion of the Irish language in arts, cultural and tourism events throughout the District – providing a platform for the development of a very unique and area-specific tourism/economic product. The Irish language also has economic value as a marketing tool, particularly in developing and delivering services through the medium of Irish and the use of Irish language signage or bilingual signage.

Aim Three: Deliver sustainable Irish language networks and communities

-  Developing sustainable local community-based Irish Language plans and initiatives;



Providing opportunities to use Irish by as wide a range of people as possible by encouraging family, social and community based language networks.

The Irish language is the oldest spoken literary language in Europe and was spoken by the majority of people in Ireland until around the middle of the 19th century. Today Irish is a modern European language and there is renewed interest and commitment in its continued revival. The value of linguistic diversity is recognised both nationally and internationally. Languages are our principal tools for interacting and for expressing ideas, emotions, knowledge, memories and values. Languages are also primary vehicles of cultural expressions and heritage, essential to the identity of individuals and groups. The key role of language in the expression and transmission of cultural heritage is recognised in the United Nations 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Language is transmitted culturally; that is, it is learned. One of the most important functions of language is its role in the construction of reality. Language is not simply a tool for communication, it is also a guide to social reality. If language is transmitted as part of culture, culture is as a whole transmitted through language insofar as it is explicitly taught. Language transmission in the home and community is a crucial element in the efforts to increase the number of fluent Irish speakers in succeeding generations. An Irish Language Strategy (2016-19) will be developed to help support sustainable language communities and networks throughout the District where Irish speakers live, work and use services to ensure the protection and longer-term sustainability of the Irish language as an integral part of the economic and social viability of the region.

It is important to develop an area-based approach which focuses on supporting those places in which Irish language communities exist or are being developed; for example, through pre-school groups, book clubs, youth groups, community groups etc. We recognise the need to understand more about the Irish language community in the district and how Council can support their community development requirements to enable them to become self sustainable. The Community Planning process will be an important opportunity to ensure that the voices of Irish language speakers and related cultural organisations and groups are heard and community infrastructure developed and sustained. We also need to increase our understanding and collaboration with the Ulster Scots community, in our promotion of mutual understanding between the District's linguistic communities.

Aim Four: Promote the Irish language in a way that will contribute towards building a strong and shared community



Increasing positive attitudes to the Irish language throughout the community;

- ✚ Increasing positive attitudes towards the Irish language in the Protestant Unionist Loyalist community.

It is important that steps are taken to gain support and acceptance for linguistic and cultural diversity from all sections of the community.

Language is recognised as being a primary means of communication, but it is so much more than this. A common language may help express the unique character of a social group and encourage common social ties. Our use of language makes us unique and differentiates us from others. Its preservation, safeguards our sense of continuity as individuals, as well as our distinctiveness.

Language can be a robust marker of social identity, capable of both binding and dividing groups. However, the development and protection of the Irish language should not be viewed as divisive or a threat to any member of our community. This Strategy aims to make the Irish language more accessible, to break down the barriers and myths and to support and enable people to use it.

Priority 4 of the Executive's Programme for Government 2011-2015 and DCAL's Strategy to Enhance and Protect the Development of the Irish Language (2015-2035) identify a role for the Irish language as a key building block for developing relationships between communities. We recognise that there are particular challenges involved in promoting the Irish language within the PUL community. Therefore the Irish Language Unit must work with others to positively promote the Irish language throughout the entire community by encouraging more understanding, recognition and engagement with the language as an important strand in our common heritage.

6. IRISH LANGUAGE STRATEGY (2015-16)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter details recommended actions in the delivery of the Irish Language Strategy (2015-16). These have been developed in line with the Irish Language Unit's strategic aims and objectives.

Table 6.1 provides detail on how each of the four Strategic Aims set out in Chapter Five will be implemented. They also demonstrate how the indicative actions relate to the NMDDC Corporate Plan and provide information on:

- ✚ Aims and objectives;
- ✚ Indicative actions;
- ✚ Performance indicators;
- ✚ Budgets; and
- ✚ Outcomes.

A summary timetable is also provided at Table 6.2.

Table 6.1 **Irish Language Strategy until 31st March 2016**

Aim			Support quality and sustainable acquisition and learning of the Irish language	
Objective 1			Facilitate access to opportunities to learn the Irish language outside of formal education	Performance Indicators
Indicative Actions	1	1	Support, complement and facilitate the development of Irish Language resources for other Council Departments working with Irish Medium schools, youth groups etc.	4 Education Partners (both internal and external)
		2	The Irish Language Unit promotes community-based opportunities to learn the Irish Language	Website and social media promotion of learning opportunities – tweets and Facebook posts
	2	3	Staff Training on use of Irish in the Council with a view to increasing number of staff who can deal with enquiries etc	2 Language Awareness Sessions; 20 Language Awareness Participants;
Objective 2			Support an increase in the number of daily speakers of the Irish language	Performance Indicators
Indicative Actions	1	4	Ensure Irish Language is reflected in all Council marketing and communications, to include management of Irish Language content on website	4 Bilingual Press Releases; Up-to-date Irish language content on new Council website; ILU Social Media presence researched and developed where possible; Irish language / bilingual publications; Radio/Television interviews.
Outcomes			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increased opportunities to learn and use Irish; ✓ Better understanding of Irish language amongst staff; ✓ More people speak/have knowledge of the Irish language. 	

Links
Corporate Plan

to

Objective 7: Empowered and improved the capacity of our communities
Objective 8: Transformed and modernised the Council, providing accessible as well as value for money services

Priority 2		PROTECT THE LANGUAGE		
Aim		Enhance and protect the status and visibility of the Irish language		
Objective 1		Meeting all obligations towards the Irish language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages	Performance Indicators	
Indicative Actions	1	5	Irish Language Strategy (2015-16) for the implementation of the Bilingualism Policy and Procedures	2015-16 Irish Language Strategy
	2	6	Development of Irish Language Strategy (2016-19) for implementation of the Bilingualism Policy and promotion of the Irish language within Council and within the Community	Scoping of Goods and Services and Functions of Council completed; Audit of Irish Language Community needs which will inform the 2016-19 Irish Language Strategy
	3	7	Communication with Directors, Deputy Directors, Councillors and staff on implementation of Bilingualism Policy	Guidelines for use of Irish in Council produced; 2 staff information sessions on Guidelines; Presentation to Councillors on Guidelines.
	4	8	Promote the Irish Language Unit and Irish language resources within Council (e.g. bilingual materials, translations, training)	20 Bilingual materials produced; 6 Bilingual Events in Council; 4 Events in Council with Irish Language Unit input
Objective 2		Increase awareness of the economic and social value of the Irish language	Performance Indicators	
Indicative Actions	1	10	Research, update and maintain the database of dual language street names for NMDDC	Database of dual language streetnames
	2	11	Research and update the Townlands database	Dual language nameplates which promote the Townland
	3	12	Research place names in accordance with Development Naming, Postal Numbering and Erection of Nameplates Policy and Procedures	Placenames promoted in new developments, streets etc.

	4	13	Work in co-operation with the Tourism sector and the Irish Language Community to explore the potential for increased Irish language element in festivals and tourism events	Liaison with Events Team; Tourism/IL Partnership events; Irish Language Festivals.
	5	14	Facilitate the generation of partnerships amongst local businesses utilising the Irish language	Irish language businesses engaged
Outcomes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improved experiences of accessing Council services in Irish; ✓ Increased visibility of the Irish language; ✓ Social and economic benefits of linguistic diversity acknowledged and unlocked; ✓ Increased job opportunities through the stimulation of the Irish language. 		
Links to Corporate Plan		<p>Objective 1: Become one of the premier tourism destination on the island of Ireland</p> <p>Objective 2: Attracted investment and supported the creation of new jobs</p> <p>Objective 5: Lead the regeneration of our urban and rural areas</p> <p>Objective 8: Transformed and modernised the Council, providing accessible as well as value for money services</p>		

Priority 3		SUSTAIN THE LANGUAGE		
Aim		Deliver quality and sustainable Irish language networks and communities		
Objective 1		Develop sustainable local community-based Irish Language Strategies and initiatives		Performance Indicators
Indicative Actions	1	15	Scope Irish language community across District through Irish Language audit to be undertaken early 2016 to establish needs and appropriate actions	Register of Irish Language groups; 3 Year Irish language Strategy developed
	2	16	Irish language community engaged in DEA fora and Community Planning Process	IL groups involved; Needs of Irish Language community to be reflected in Community Plan
	3	17	Deliver community based events which promote the Irish Language and the work of the Irish Language Unit	community based Irish Language Unit events; community events with Irish Language Unit input
Objective 2		Provide opportunities to use Irish for as wide a range of people as possible by encouraging family, social and community based language networks		Performance Indicators
Indicative Actions	1	18	Strengthen links between Irish Language Unit and community/voluntary Irish language sector clubs, societies, Committees and groups	Target groups identified; ILU/Community Partnerships; Representation on 1 community working group
	2	19	Promote the services of the Irish Language Unit within the community	System developed to record public enquiries
	3	20	Promotion of community-based Irish language activities by Council	Community directory developed by end March 2016
	4	21	Continue to build the capacity and infrastructure of the Irish language community	New Irish Language projects; 30 groups receiving ILU services; Funding information circulated

Outcomes	✓ Quality and sustainable local Irish language communities and networks
Links to Corporate Plan	Objective 1: Become one of the premier tourism destination on the island of Ireland Objective 3: Supported improved health and wellbeing outcomes Objective 5: Lead the regeneration of our urban and rural areas Objective 6: Advocated on your behalf specifically in relation to those issues which really matter to you Objective 7: Empowered and improved the capacity of our communities Objective 8: Transformed and modernised the Council, providing accessible as well as value for money services

Priority 4		SHARE THE LANGUAGE		
Aim		Promote the Irish language in a way that will contribute towards building a strong and shared community		
Objective 1		Positively promote the Irish language throughout the whole community		Performance Indicators
Indicative Actions	1	22	Increase understanding of the shared nature of the Irish language and dispel myths and stereotypes	Awareness Programmes; Participants
	2	23	Support networking across language and cultural sectors	Inter-community networking or study visits
Objective 2		Positively promote the Irish language within the PUL community		Performance Indicators
Indicative Actions	1	24	Work with Good Relations to increase understanding of the shared nature of the Irish language and dispel myths and stereotypes within the PUL community	Target PUL groups identified; Programmes delivered in PUL community
	2	25	Scope Ulster Scots community within NMDDC and identify their needs	Register of Ulster Scots groups; Action Plan developed; US groups supported
	3	26	Work with Good Relations on joint cultural event – Ulster Scots and Irish Language	Good Relations/ILU cultural event participants
Outcomes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More positive attitudes towards the Irish language resulting in improved cross-community attitudes and understanding; ✓ Quality and sustainable local Ulster Scots communities and networks 		
Links to Corporate Plan		Objective 1: Become one of the premier tourism destination on the island of Ireland Objective 3: Supported improved health and wellbeing outcomes Objective 5: Lead the regeneration of our urban and rural areas Objective 7: Empowered and improved the capacity of our communities		

Table 6.2 **Timetable for 2015-16**

Implement from...	April 2015 – March 2016
STRATEGIC THEME	
GROW THE LANGUAGE	
Objective 1	
Support, complement and facilitate production the Irish Language resources for other Council Departments working with IM schools, youth groups etc.	On-going to end of March 2016
Irish Language Unit promotion of community-based opportunities to learn the Irish Language	End of March 2016
Staff Training on use of Irish in the Council	End of March 2016
Objective 2	
Ensure Irish Language is reflected in all Council marketing and communications	On-going until end of March 2016
PROTECT THE LANGUAGE	
Objective 1	
Strategy (2015-16) for the implementation of the Bilingualism Policy and Procedures	End of November 2015
Strategy (2016-19) for implementation of the Bilingualism Policy and promotion of the Irish language within Council and within the Community	End of March 2016
Communication with Directors, Deputy Directors, Councillors and staff on implementation of Bilingualism Policy	End of December 2016
Promote the Irish Language Unit and Irish language resources within Council (e.g. bilingual materials, translations, training)	On-going until end of March 2016
Objective 2	
Research, update and maintain the database of dual language street names for NMDDC	On-going until end of March 2016
Research and update the Townlands database	
Research place names in accordance in accordance with Development Naming, Numbering and Erection of Nameplates Policy and Procedures	
Work in co-operation with the Tourism sector and the Irish Language Community to explore the potential for increased Irish language element to festivals and tourism events	
Facilitate the generation of partnerships amongst local businesses utilising the Irish language	

Implement from...	April 2015 – March 2016
STRATEGIC THEME	
Objective 3	
Ensure corporate branding is reflected in all Council marketing and communications	On-going until end of March 2016
SUSTAIN THE LANGUAGE	
Objective 1	
Scope Irish language community across District to establish needs and appropriate actions	End of February 2016
Irish language community engaged in DEA fora and Community Planning Process	End of March 2016
Deliver community based events which promote the Irish Language and the work of the Irish Language Unit	On-going to end of March 2016
Objective 2	
Strengthen links between Irish Language Unit and community/voluntary Irish language sector clubs, societies, Committees and groups	On-going to end of March 2016
Promote the services of the Irish Language Unit within the community	
Promotion of community-based Irish language activities by Council	
Build capacity and infrastructure of Irish language community	
SHARE THE LANGUAGE	
Objective 1	
Increase understanding of the shared nature of the Irish language and dispel myths and stereotypes	On-going to end of March 2016
Support networking across language/cultural sectors and geographies	
Objective 2	
Work with Good Relations to increase understanding of the shared nature of the Irish language and dispel myths and stereotypes within the PUL community	On-going to end of March 2016
Scoping Ulster Scots community within NMDDC and identifying their needs	
Work with Good Relations on joint cultural event – Ulster Scots and Irish Language	

7. DELIVERY MECHANISMS

The restructuring of the Irish Language service for NMDDC will be challenging, with new responsibilities, leadership and ways of working. This chapter provides detail on operational approach, staffing, management and resource allocation.

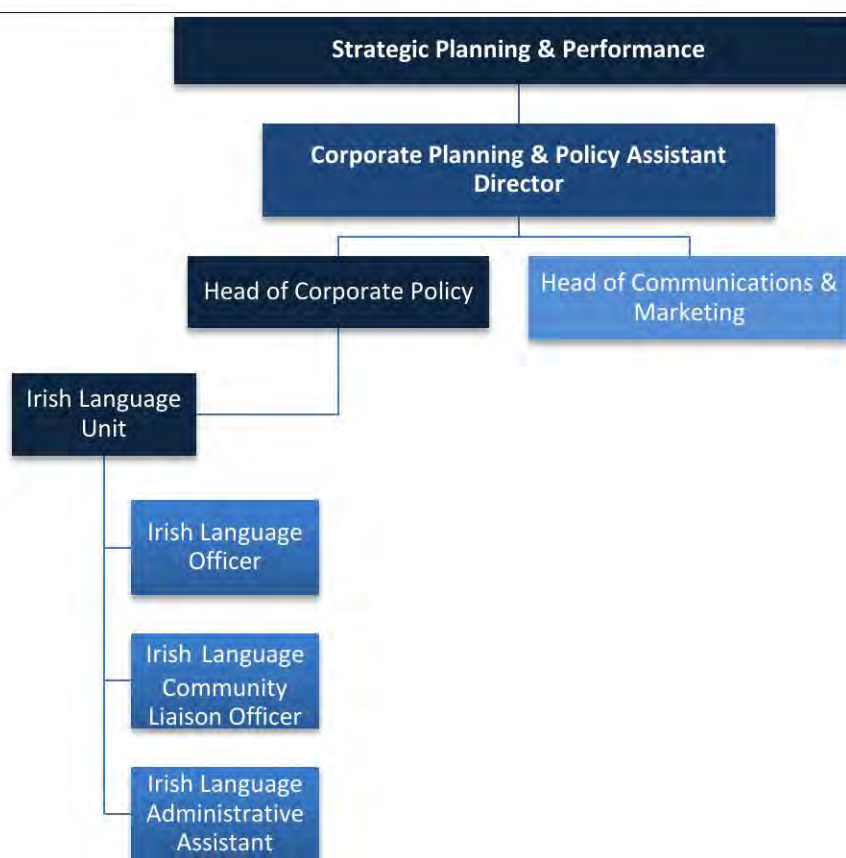
7.1 OPERATIONAL APPROACH

We are conscious of the need to deliver a targeted approach in order to reduce duplication and overlap where possible. Therefore, efficiency, effectiveness and value for money have been considered in resource allocation.

Irish Language Unit staff will deliver the Strategy on the ground. Specialist services will be procured as and if required.

7.2 STRUCTURE

Figure 7.2 illustrates the staff structure of the Irish Language Unit. The Irish Language Development Officer reports to the Head of Corporate Policy who reports to Assistant Director of Corporate Planning and Policy within the Strategic Planning and Performance Directorate. There are currently three full-time positions within the unit.

Figure 7.2 **Irish Language Unit Staff Structure**

The **Irish Language Unit** is the first point of contact and drives the implementation of the Bilingualism Policy within Council. The **Irish Language Development Officer** is responsible for leading the Irish Language Team in raising the profile and usage of the language and increasing job opportunities through the stimulation of economic, community development and language awareness schemes. The Irish Language Development Officer's role in developing local, national and international links requires the initiation, co-ordination and delivery of cultural schemes within the District in conjunction with internal departments of Council and outside agencies. The Irish Language Development Officer also has responsibility to promote all aspects of the Ulster Scots heritage, tradition, culture and language.

The **Irish Language Community Liaison Officer** has a community facing role which promotes use and understanding of the Irish Language through the development of the District's Irish Language community, in partnership with Economic Regeneration, Arts, Good Relations, Equality and Community Support initiatives. The role includes assistance with Irish language Summer Schools and Schemes and contact with education providers in addition to providing support to Irish language clubs, societies, Committees and community and voluntary groups.

Officers also carry out translation duties and maintain the Council's Simultaneous Translation System, update the Council's Dual Street Names database and provide research, guidance and support to other Council functions on the implementation of the Bilingual Policy and Procedures, in addition to working with external stakeholders and the public.

The **Administrative Assistant** provides administrative, clerical and secretarial services to the Unit.

7.3 FUNDING AND BURSARIES

The predecessor Newry and Mourne District Council administered grants through the Irish Language Fund and the Ulster Scots Fund. Since April 2015, small grants up to £5,000 have been centralised and consequently, the Irish Language Unit no longer administer funding to groups.

7.4 ACCOUNTABILITY AND MANAGEMENT

The Irish Language Unit reports to the **Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee** and informs members of projected activity via regular written and verbal reports. The Unit will provide progress updates against key actions on a six monthly basis. This will take the format of written reports to Council and will be available on the Council website. An Annual Overview will be developed and the associated yearly Action Plan will be revised to reflect progress, on-going business needs and external environment.

Decisions on expenditure are authorised by the Corporate Planning and Policy Assistant Director.

7.5 RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The Irish Language Unit has a budget of £142,788 in 2015-16. This consists of:

- ✚ £103,491(72%) for Salaries (including insurance etc.);
- ✚ £27,000 (19%) for Events (Piping Festival one off funding for August 2015);
- ✚ £4,800 (3%) for Travel;
- ✚ £3,250 (2%) for Advertising, Publications and Translations;
- ✚ £2,217 (1.5%) for Miscellaneous;
- ✚ £1,530 (1%) for Overheads; and
- ✚ £500 (0.5%) for Training/Conferences.

7.6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (hereafter "the Act") conferred on councils a new duty of performance improvement from 1st April 2015. The Act sets out the framework for the operation of Council Performance Improvement and places a general duty on a council to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement

in the exercise of its functions and to set improvement objectives for each financial year. Councils will be required to gather information to assess improvements in their services and to issue a report annually on their performance against indicators which they have either set themselves or that have been set by Departments. Local Councils performance improvement plans and the arrangements made to deliver on those plans, will be audited by the Local Government Auditor.

All Irish Language Unit (ILU) activity will be informally and formally monitored and evaluated throughout the lifetime of the Strategy within the context of Performance Improvement. Six monthly reports will be produced in order to measure performance against the Irish Language Strategy and to help us improve our services. The following Key Performance Indicators will be adopted for benchmarking purposes for the period up to 31 March 2016:

Grow the Language

Education Partners

ILU Website and social media promotion of learning opportunities

2 Language Awareness Sessions

20 Language Awareness participants

Increase in the numbers of staff who can deal with enquiries etc from IL community

Bilingual Press Releases

Up-to-date Irish language content on website

ILU Social Media Presence

Protect the Language

2015-16 Irish Language Strategy

Scoping of Functions of Council completed

Internal Liaison Committee established

2016-19 Irish Language Strategy

2 Staff Information Sessions

Guidelines for use of Irish in Council produced

Councillors engaged

Bilingual materials produced

4 Bilingual Events in Council

4 Events in Council with Irish Language Unit input

Dual language street/road nameplates;

Dual language nameplates which promote the townlands

Place names promoted in new developments, streets etc.

Liaison with Events Team

Tourism/IL Partnership events

Irish Language Festivals

Irish Language Businesses engaged

Sustain the Language

Audit of needs of Irish Language community needs throughout the District
 Register of Irish Language (IL) groups;
 3 Year Irish Language Strategy developed
 IL groups involved in community planning;
 IL needs reflected in Community Plans
 2 community based Irish Language Unit events
 2 community events with Irish Language Unit input
 Target groups identified
 ILU/Community Partnerships
 Representation on 1 community working groups
 System for recording public enquiries to ILU developed
 Community directory published
 Community events calendar published
 2 new IL projects initiated
 30 groups receiving ILU services
 Funding information distributed

Share the Language

Community Awareness Programmes;
 Community Awareness participants
 Inter-community networking or study visits
 Target PUL groups identified;
 Programmes delivered in PUL community
 Register of Ulster Scots groups;
 Action Plan developed;
 Ulster Scots groups supported
 GR/ILU cultural event participants

Appendix 1

Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin
Polasaí Dátheangachais
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Bilingualism Polasaí

1. Title

The Bilingualism policy sets out the Council's commitment to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish language and the English language in the Council area.

2. Statement

Council approves this policy to ensure linguistic equality for all who avail of and/or provide Council services as far is reasonably possible.

3. Aim


The aim of this policy is to build on the Council's commitment to celebrate diversity by:

3. The delivery of equality of opportunity for all who avail of and / or provide Council services using progressive realisation
4. To fulfil Council's obligations as contained in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*

4. Scope.

The Bilingualism Policy applies to all Council Departments with regard to the functions they deliver and applies to all communication and engagement between internal and external stakeholders.

The policy objectives are to:

-  Enable everyone who receives or uses Council services, or contributes to the democratic process, to do so through the medium of Irish or English, according to personal choice

- ✚ To foster and promote the use of Irish in the internal administration of Council, in its dealings with other public bodies and also with bodies that provide services to the public in the District
- ✚ Recognise that members of the public, Council members, management and employees can express their views and needs better in their preferred language
- ✚ Recognise that enabling the public to use their preferred language is a matter of good practice and customer care and not a concession
- ✚ Seek to remove, where possible, restrictions which would discourage or work against the maintenance or development of the language.

*See Appendix 1 - Definitions

5. Related Policies

- Dual Street Name.
- Street Naming and Numbering.
- Corporate Brand Guidelines.
- Guidelines for the Use of the Irish Language in the Council.
- Comply with its statutory requirements under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).
- Linkage to wider policy and legislation⁹.

6. Definitions

Definitions at Appendix 1

7. Policy Owner

Gerard Mc Givern, Director of District Development, Tel: 02830313233

8. Contact details in regard of this policy are:

Tel: 028 3031 3233 Email: gerard.mcgivern@newryandmourne.gov.uk

9. Policy Authorisation

⁹Detailed in Appendix 2

TMT Authorised on _____

Governance Committee Authorised on _____

Council Authorised on _____

10. Policy Effective Date

11. Policy Review Date

Policies should be reviewed at least every four years

12. Procedures

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Bilingualism Procedures

13. Equality Impact Assessment

Policy equality – policy to be equality checked by policy owner & Equality Officer

DEFINITIONS

Progressive Realisation

The Council will take steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realisation of the Bilingualism Policy using affordable resources.

This is known as the principle of "progressive realisation". It acknowledges that some of the actions may be difficult in practice to achieve in a short period of time and be subject to resource constraints, but requires the Council to act as best it can within its means.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages:

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) is a European treaty (CETS 148) adopted in 1992 under the auspices of the Council of Europe to protect and promote historical regional and minority languages in Europe.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).

The statutory duties under Section 75 require public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and also to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations.

The Good Friday Agreement (Belfast Agreement)

The Good Friday Agreement or Belfast Agreement was signed in Belfast on 10 April 1998 (Good Friday) by the British and Irish governments and endorsed by most Northern Ireland political parties. The concord was endorsed by the voters of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in separate referenda on 23 May 1998.

St Andrews Agreement

The St Andrews Agreement was an agreement between the British and Irish Governments and the political parties in relation to the devolution of power to Northern Ireland. The agreement resulted from multi-party talks held in St Andrews, Fife, Scotland from 11 October to 13 October 2006, between the two governments and all the major parties in Northern Ireland. It resulted in the restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the formation (on 8 May 2007) of a new Northern Ireland Executive.

Linkage to wider policy and legislation

This policy relates directly to the following:

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages states that policies, legislation and practice are to be based on the following objectives and principles:

- the recognition of the Irish language as an expression of cultural wealth;
- the respect of the geographical area of the Irish language in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Irish;
- ✚ the need for resolute action to promote Irish in order to safeguard the language;
- ✚ the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Irish, in speech and writing, in private and public life;
- ✚ the maintenance and development of links between groups using Irish and other groups in the State employing the Irish language in identical or similar form, as well as the establishment of cultural relations with other groups in the State using different languages;
- ✚ the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of Irish at all appropriate stages;
- ✚ the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of Irish living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire;
- ✚ the promotion of study on and research into Irish at universities or equivalent institutions;
- ✚ the promotion of appropriate types of transnational exchanges (i.e. cross border exchanges)

Article 10 of The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages refers specifically to Administrative Authorities and Public Services and the relevant principles designed to guide them:

- ✚ To ensure that users of Irish may submit oral or written applications to the administrative authority;
- ✚ To allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in Irish;
- ✚ To use Irish in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State;
- To use or adopt, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official

language(s) of traditional and correct forms of place-names in Irish.

With regard to public services provided by the administrative authorities or other persons acting on their behalf, the Council must undertake to:

- To allow users to submit a request in Irish.
- To provide translation or interpretation as may be required;
- To allow the use or adoption of family names in Irish at the request of those concerned.

Appendix 2

Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin Nósanna Imeachta an Pholasaí Dhátheangachais Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Bilingualism Procedures

1. TITLE

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Bilingualism Procedures

2. STATEMENT

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to the protection and encouragement of the Irish Language. The Council recognises the Irish Language is an expression of cultural wealth and there is a need for the Council to promote Irish in order to safeguard and strengthen it.

3. AIM



The procedures will build on the Council's commitment to celebrate diversity by

5. The delivery of equality of opportunity for all who avail of and / or provide Council services using progressive realisation*
6. To fulfil Council's obligations as contained in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*
7. Comply with its statutory requirements under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998)*

4. PRINCIPLES

The procedures apply to all Council business and functions and are intended to deliver linguistic equality for all who avail of and / or provide Council services (using progressive realisation).

The procedures will:

-  Enable everyone who receives or uses Council services, or contributes to the democratic process, to do so through the medium of Irish or English, according to personal choice
-  Ensure and promote the use of Irish in the internal administration of Council, in its dealings with other public bodies and bodies that provide services to the public in the Council District

- ✚ Ensure members of the public, Council members, management and employees can express their views and needs better in their preferred language
- ✚ Ensure that enabling the public to use their preferred language is a matter of good practice and customer care and not a concession
- ✚ To ensure members of the public and employees can use their name and address in Irish
- ✚ To ensure the right of employees to use Irish within the workplace and that of members of the public to use Irish within Council buildings

The Council objectives regarding the Irish Language will be delivered through the following procedures:

5. IDENTITY

5.1 Corporate Identity

The corporate identity, Council image and reputation are all part of the Council's brand. The logo of the Council will be consistent and projected as a primary vehicle for customer contact on all printed material.

Guidance on adopting and using the bilingual corporate identity, as detailed in the Council's Corporate Brand Guidelines, will be issued to staff, designers and others who reproduce the Council's written material.

The title of Council reflects the Council's commitment to promoting the Irish language and should always be bilingual with the Irish language above the English and when side by side the Irish Language should be to the left of the English.

5.2 Signage / Visibility / Exhibitions

The Council will continue to apply Dual Street Name and Street Naming and Numbering policies (which are currently under review). An index of dual-language street names will be maintained and updated. Certain exemptions will apply e.g. safety warnings at quays / harbours which will be dealt with under progressive realization.

A phased implementation plan will be devised for the erection of English and Irish internal and external signage on Council owned properties;

Irish will be incorporated into some display material. Marketing of exhibitions to include Irish using progressive realisation.

6. COMMUNICATION

6.1 Reception

Guidance will be offered to receptionists and telephonists, through the provision of a 'courtesy code', allowing them to respond appropriately to enquiries in Irish.

6.2 Mail and Email

Written communications received in Irish will be responded to in Irish within an agreed timescale. Guidance provided to staff on how to deal with written communications in Irish. Bilingual strap line to be included on Council emails.

6.3 Telephone

Guidance will be given to staff on how to deal with calls from Irish speakers. When no Irish speaker is available calls received in Irish will be returned by an Irish speaking member of staff or outside source where that is the preference of the caller.

6.4 Internal / External Forms

Irish versions of all internal documentation, with the exception of technical/ long documents which will be dealt with using progressive realisation, will be made available to the public and staff on request.

7. COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

- 7.1 Council will work to ensure people attending Council meetings are able to contribute through the medium of Irish, using progressive realisation and where prior notice has been received
- 7.3 Council will provide interpretation facilities using progressive realisation when requested to do so.
- 7.3 When English and Irish presentations need to be made, simultaneous translation services will be made available to employees who have no knowledge of the Irish language supported by Irish speaking members of staff
- 7.4 Council will establish a budget for delivery of the policy and to follow normal Council business processes i.e. Council sections to include costs / expenditure in yearly estimates and business plans.
- 7.5 According to need and as resources allow, information leaflets, flyers and other Council literature should be available to the public in English and Irish format where appropriate.
- 7.6 According to needs and as resources allow forms will be produced in English and Irish format.

8. PUBLICATIONS

8.1 Printed Material

The Council's main documents will be provided in bilingual format e.g. Corporate Plan, Annual Report and incorporate Irish in non-Irish publications. Irish language versions of materials will be made available to ratepayers upon request.

8.2 Website

The Council's website will include an English and Irish format with the Irish language text updated in line with the English text where possible. Those pages receiving most user traffic, for example main front pages, will be available initially in English and Irish format. Headings of dynamic sections will also be of English and Irish format

9. RELATIONS

9.1 Public Relations

Council will use the Irish language in a range of printed material to increase the visibility of the language e.g. Irish or bilingual versions of selected press releases to be made available.

9.2 Media Relations

Council will issue press releases issued in Irish for the Irish Language media and where possible provide a bilingual spokesperson. Press releases will be selected for translation on the basis of qualitative criteria.

10. PRESENTATIONS

10.1 Public Speaking

Council representatives at civic events will be permitted to use Irish in their presentations and public speaking where advance notice has been provided. Provision of simultaneous interpretation services will be made where resources allow.

10.2 Events

Council will ensure when planning all festivals / civic celebrations consideration is given to the opportunity to promote the Irish language as a component part of these events. Council will support Irish language and cultural activities by facilitating events within Council buildings and venues using progressive realisation.

11. COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES / STAFF

11.1 Training

Council representatives will be provided with training opportunities in the Irish language the level and type of training required to be identified through the Performance and Development Review process

11.2 Personal Development Review (PDR)

Staff training requirements in the Irish language will be identified as part of the Performance and Development Review process.

12. PROCEDURE OWNER

Gerard McGivern
Council

Director

13. CONTACT DETAILS REGARDING THESE PROCEDURES:

gerard.mcgivern@newryandmourne.gov.uk

Tel: 02830313233

14. PROCEDURE AUTHORISATION

Governance Committee Authorised on10 February 2015.

Council Authorised on

15. PROCEDURES EFFECTIVE DATE

.....

Appendix 3

Linkage to wider policy and legislation

This strategy relates directly to the following:

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages states that policies, legislation and practice are to be based on the following objectives and principles:

- ✚ the recognition of the Irish language as an expression of cultural wealth;
- ✚ the respect of the geographical area of the Irish language in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Irish;
- ✚ the need for resolute action to promote Irish in order to safeguard the language;
- ✚ the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Irish, in speech and writing, in private and public life;
- ✚ the maintenance and development of links between groups using Irish and other groups in the State employing the Irish language in identical or similar form, as well as the establishment of cultural relations with other groups in the State using different languages;
- ✚ the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of Irish at all appropriate stages;
- ✚ the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of Irish living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire;
- ✚ the promotion of study on and research into Irish at universities or equivalent institutions;
- ✚ the promotion of appropriate types of transnational exchanges (i.e. cross border exchanges)

Article 10 of The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages refers specifically to Administrative Authorities and Public Services and the relevant principles designed to guide them:

- ✚ To ensure that users of Irish may submit oral or written applications to the administrative authority;
- ✚ To allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in Irish;
- ✚ To use Irish in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State;
- ✚ To use or adopt, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s) of traditional and correct forms of place-names in Irish.

With regard to public services provided by the administrative authorities or other persons acting on their behalf, the Council must undertake to:

- ✦ To allow users to submit a request in Irish.
- ✦ To provide translation or interpretation as may be required;
- ✦ To allow the use or adoption of family names in Irish at the request of those concerned.

Report to:	Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan Preparatory Studies Paper 4: Town Centres and Opportunity Sites
Date:	12 November 2015
Reporting Officer:	Anthony McKay, Chief Planning Officer
Contact Officer:	Andrew Hay, Development Plan Manager

<u>Decisions Required</u>	
Note the content of this report.	
1.0	<u>Purpose & Background</u>
1.1	Preparatory studies are essential in providing the evidence base for preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP). A reliable and comprehensive evidence base is vital to informing and justifying the 'soundness' of the LDP documents (Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan) and to show how policies and proposals help to achieve the social, economic and environmental objectives for the plan area.
1.2	As part of the programme of preparatory work, the purpose of this report is to present 'Paper 4: Town Centre and Opportunity Sites' for Members consideration.
1.3	The paper, attached at Appendix 1, provides members with an overview of the current retail offer within the Newry, Mourne and Down towns, examines the take up of town centre development opportunity sites and reviews vacancy rates. The paper builds on the existing evidence base and sets out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regional and local policy context for formulating local development plan policies for retail development; • an overview of Retail Trends in Northern Ireland; • provision of town centres, primary retail cores and development opportunity sites within existing Development Plans; • a review of Town Centre Masterplans and relevant Village Plans; • town centre studies focusing on town centre health checks; and • key recommendations.
2.0	<u>Key Issues and Conclusions</u>
2.1	As part of a review of town centre designations within the existing Development Plans (i.e. Ards and Down Area Plan 2015; and Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015), the paper looks at each designated town centre and considers the various designations contained within them, including primary retail cores and frontages, development opportunity sites, and housing areas; and the contribution these designations make to the variety and viability of the town centres across the District.

2.2	The paper also reviews the relevant Masterplans and Village Plans in relation to each town centre and considers the development and regeneration proposals and projects identified and the potential these have in enhancing and developing the town centres.
2.3	As part of a review of Town Centre Studies, as available for some of the District's towns, the paper considers the range of convenience and comparison retailing, vacancy levels and public realm improvements, across the District and looks at the extent to which these reveal the vitality and viability of the District's town centres.
2.4	As part of the settlement appraisal work, the paper recommends that any candidates for reclassification from a village to a town should also be assessed to establish if there is sufficient retail offer to warrant a town centre designation.
2.5	The paper proposes that the Preferred Options Paper should seek public comment to suggest where changes should be made to the town centre boundaries and retail designations, and/or identify additional town centre development opportunity sites.
2.6	The paper also suggests that candidate locations should be appraised to establish whether any existing shopping facilities in Newry or Downpatrick should be identified in the Preferred Options Paper as local or neighbourhood shopping centres.
2.7	Data gathered as part of this and other preparatory studies will be used to establish the baseline of the social, economic, and environmental characteristics of the plan area and enable the Council to identify the issues which need to be addressed by the LDP. Furthermore, it will provide a sound basis on which to formulate the plan strategy, policies and proposals within the LDP that will subject to independent public examination.
3.0	<u>Recommendations</u>
3.1	Members are requested to note the content of this report.
4.0	<u>Resource Implications</u>
4.1	N/A
5.0	<u>Appendices</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper 4: Town Centres and Opportunity Sites



Comhairle Ceantair
**an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin**

**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

**Local Development Plan
Preparatory Studies**

**Paper 4: Town Centres and Opportunity Sites
November 2015**

CONTENTS	PAGE
Purpose	3
Content Overview.....	3
1.0 Introduction.....	4
2.0 Regional Policy Context.....	4
3.0 Overview of Retail Trends in NI	8
4.0 Existing Development Plans	11
5.0 Town Centre Masterplans and Village Plans	21
6.0 Town Centre Studies.....	28
7.0 Conclusions.....	35
8.0 Recommendations.....	37

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Town Centre Health Check Indicators & Retail Capacity Studies Best Practice Guidance
- Appendix 2 Glossary of Terms
- Appendix 3 City/Town Centre Boundaries & Development Opportunity Sites
 - Part 1 Newry
 - Part 2 Downpatrick
 - Part 3 Ballynahinch
 - Part 4 Crossmaglen
 - Part 5 Kilkeel
 - Part 6 Newcastle
 - Part 7 Newtownhamilton
 - Part 8 Warrenpoint

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide Newry, Mourne and Down Council with an overview of the retail provision in the Council area and to provide information to help determine the need to formulate a detailed retail strategy to accommodate growth and enhance the vitality and viability of existing town centres up to 2030.

Content

The paper provides:-

- the regional policy context for retailing in Newry, Mourne and Down;
- a brief overview of retail trends across Northern Ireland and the UK;
- an overview of town centre policy within the current Area Plans, an examination of current Masterplans, and the provision of opportunity sites including take-up;
- an overview of the health and vitality of existing towns based on the findings of Town Centre Studies for the towns within Newry, Mourne and Down; and
- a summary of recommendations.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to inform the Members for Newry, Mourne and Down about the nature of the current retail offer within Newry City and the main towns in the District, the take up of town centre development opportunity sites and vacancy rates. The focus of the paper is on Newry, Downpatrick, Warrenpoint/Burren, Ballynahinch, Crossmaglen, Kilkeel, Newcastle and Newtownhamilton. In compiling the paper the main sources of information have included the South East Coast Masterplan, and the Masterplans for Newry City Centre, Downpatrick Town Centre and Ballynahinch Town Centre. The findings of a report by GL Hearn¹ looking at town centres in Northern Ireland on behalf of DOE Planning 2014 as part of the formulation of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) are also included in this paper. The paper allows Members to commence consideration of how policy for the enhancement of town centres may be formulated within the context of the Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) and the SPPS.

2.0 Regional Policy Context

2.1 The Regional Policy Context is provided by the NI Executive's Economic Strategy and Sustainable Development Strategy; the Department for Regional Development's RDS and the Department of the Environment's SPPS. A summary of these documents as they pertain to formulation of town centre and retail development policy and proposals in the Local Development Plan (LDP) is provided in the following sections.

(a) Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

2.2 The RDS is the key policy guiding development in Northern Ireland and is underpinned by a Spatial Framework and Strategic Planning Guidelines. The Spatial Framework consists of urban hubs² and clusters³. The RDS identifies Newry and Downpatrick as main hubs, forming clusters with the local hubs of Warrenpoint and Newcastle respectively. Newry is the South Eastern City gateway⁴ due to its proximity to the land border and the port of Warrenpoint. Newry is also well positioned on a key transport corridor while a link corridor connects Downpatrick to the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area.

2.3 Policy SFG 11 within the RDS aims to promote economic development opportunities at hubs. Hubs perform important economic roles in their area and

¹ A consultancy consortium led by GL Hearn Limited was appointed in February 2013 by DOE Planning to carry out research into issues surrounding town centres and retailing in Northern Ireland.

² Main and local towns which play a strategic role as centres of employment and services for both urban and rural communities.

³ Cities and towns which can work together to create a critical mass to attract economic development and deliver services.

⁴ Strategically important transport interchange points which connect ports and airports to the internal transport network.

have the potential for further economic expansion. This policy thus directs LDPs to consider the hubs and clusters of hubs first for any new development proposals. In reference to the RDS infrastructure wheel⁵ retail provision at each settlement level would be considered as follows:

- Level 1 (Villages); These are locations that will have shops primarily to meet resident's needs. They may also have other commercial services e.g. pub, post office, petrol station. Any growth is likely to be minimal. Consideration should be given to defining village centres in the LDP.
- Level 2 (Urban or District Centres/Smaller Towns): These are locations that meet both the daily and weekly needs of surrounding residents. They offer supermarkets, restaurants and a mix of retail facilities.
- Level 3 (Regional Towns/Clusters): These are locations where the proximity of business facilitates competition from which all consumers are able to benefit and maximises the opportunity to use a means of transport other than the car. They will have shops to meet the weekly and longer terms needs of residents. They will also have a mix of different retail/commercial facilities e.g. shopping centres, retail warehouses, range of restaurants/bars.
- Level 4 (Principal Cities): These are locations which in addition to those services provided in Level 3 settlements also have department stores, specialist shops, arts and cultural activities.

2.4 It may be useful to investigate if there are any locations worthy of designation as a District or Local Centre (definition within glossary) within the Newry, Mourne and Down City/Towns. These are locations within an existing town, usually beyond the town centre boundary that provide locally accessible convenience goods to meet the daily and weekly needs of local residents. A local centre is currently designated at Fiveways in Newry and at Ballymote in Downpatrick. There are no District Centres currently designated in the Newry, Mourne and Down City/Towns.

2.5 The RDS makes specific reference to the retailing in the District. It acknowledges that Newry is a significant employment centre with a strong retail offering, which benefits from its strategic location on the Belfast Dublin corridor. It recognises that Downpatrick performs a higher order role than might be expected by its size, with it being the main location for retail provision for the surrounding area. It also recognises that Downpatrick and Newcastle act as important centres for retailing, commerce and business and serve a substantial number of dispersed rural settlements.

⁵ Regional Development Strategy – Diagram No.22 , Hierarchy of settlements and Related Infrastructure Wheel

(b) Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

- 2.6 The Department of the Environment's SPPS (September 2015) will eventually replace existing planning policy statements once a Council has its LDP Plan Strategy adopted. However in the case of retailing policy the SPPS replaces the existing policy provisions within PPS 5 Retailing and Town Centres with immediate effect. The SPPS states that there should be a town centre first approach for retailing and other town centre uses. This is reflective of the 'sequential approach' introduced in Draft PPS 5⁶. The SPPS also states the importance of adopting a variety of uses, good urban design and accessibility within the town centre.
- 2.7 In preparing Local Development Plans, the SPPS requires Councils to undertake an assessment of the need or capacity for retail and other main town centre uses across the plan area. A key element in developing the evidence base will be the preparation of Town Centre Health Checks and the SPPS also requires Councils to undertake and regularly update these (at least once every five years). They will contain information on a range of indicators , including:
- existing town centre uses;
 - vacancy rates;
 - physical structure and environmental quality – including opportunities, designations and constraints;
 - footfall;
 - retailer representations;
 - attitudes and perceptions;
 - prime rental values; and
 - commercial yields.
- 2.8 The SPPS suggests that as part of the process of identifying sites to be allocated for town centre uses in the plan Councils should undertake a 'call for sites' exercise. An example of this process can be examined further here:
- <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/Council/Planning/The-local-plan-and-planning-policy/Local-plan/Local-Plan-Allocations.aspx>
- 2.9 Litchfield District Council (LDC) commenced a 'call for sites' in 2015 inviting anyone who wished a site within the District to be considered for development to complete and submit a call for sites suggestion form. LDC sought a range of information to enable all potential development sites to be fully considered. The information sought included a description of the proposed future use and the site's capacity, details of site ownership, the degree of market interest in the site, the availability of utilities on the site and any site constraints.

⁶ Published in July 2006 but never finalised. In April 2013 the Department announced that Draft PPS5 would not be taken forward instead a new fit for purpose retail policy would be included in the SPPS.

- 2.10 The requirement to allocate sites should be considered on the basis of fulfilling sustainably and objectively assessed needs for retail/economic development during the plan period.
- 2.11 Arising from the evidence base, LDP's should include a Retail Strategy and contain appropriate policies and proposals that must promote town centres first for retail and other main town centre uses. Plans should also:
- define a network and hierarchy of centres – town, district and local centres;
 - define the spatial extent of town centres and the primary retail core;
 - set out appropriate policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in the hierarchy of centres and other locations, and the factors that will be taken into account for decision taking;
 - provide for a diverse offer and mix of uses, which reflect local circumstances; and
 - allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and form of retail, and other town centre uses.

(c) Planning Policy Statement 5 – Retailing and Town Centres

- 2.12 As highlighted in paragraph 2.6 above, PPS 5 Retailing and Town Centres has now been cancelled by the Department of the Environment following introduction of the SPPS. Many of the themes running through PPS5 have now been reiterated in the SPPS.

(d) NMD District Council Corporate Plan

- 2.13 The Plan highlights the importance of the retail sector across the District with 17.23% of the workforce employed in this area. Whilst the District is seen to be well served with a strong retail offering the challenge is the vulnerability of the retail sector to exchange rate fluctuation and the rise in online shopping.
- 2.14 The new LDP has an important role to play in not only protecting but enhancing town centres through policies and proposals which promote diversity in town centres, promote high quality design and improve accessibility. The LDP will aim to support and sustain vibrant town centres making them attractive to retailers and consumers alike.

3.0 Overview of Retail Trends in NI

3.1 As part of the preparation of the SPPS a study was undertaken by GL Hearn on behalf of DOE Planning to research issues surrounding town centres and retailing in Northern Ireland (January 2014). This included health checks for a number of town/city centres as designated in adopted plans using a variety of health check indicators. For the Newry, Mourne and Down District Newry, Downpatrick and Newcastle town centres were included within the study. This research also included an assessment of town centre and retail trends. Overall the town centre checks did not identify any towns that were performing badly, but equally there was little evidence of any particularly strong performance. Therefore there is room for improvement in the vitality and viability of town centres and a policy stance which seeks to protect and enhance town centre performance and diversity will contribute to uplifting existing city centre vitality and viability.

3.2 In compiling the GL Hearn study, town centre composition data was obtained from Experian Goad⁷ who carry out physical town centre surveys and prepare occupier plans for most town centres in the UK. Some of the key findings regarding town centres in Northern Ireland included:

- Newry has a city centre footprint floorspace of 132,710 sqm, Downpatrick 61,190 sqm and Newcastle 27,920 sqm. In comparison to towns in the rest of the UK, Northern Irish towns tend to have smaller catchment areas.
- Diversity of uses shows the importance of the service sector in town centres (42%), followed by non-food shops (35%). Service uses take up a larger proportion of town centres by unit number, reflecting the smaller sized units these units tend to occupy.
- Convenience goods floorspace is focused in a proportionately small number of larger units reflecting the wider UK trend of the dominance of larger supermarkets in meeting shopping needs.
- Independent operators typically comprise 76% of town centre occupiers. In most centres, independents have a strong offer in food, non-food and service sectors. Unlike many town centres in the rest of the UK, local independent food retailers remain a feature of Northern Irish towns. Newry, Mourne and Down area has a good representation of independent long-established family businesses offering convenience and comparison retailing and service uses.
- The proportion of other town centre uses was notably higher in NI than the UK average. The other category includes transport services, employment and commercial activities, religious buildings, wholesale trade, civic and unclassified buildings.

⁷ Experian Goad is a retail property intelligence system that provides retail location plans and reports covering over 3,000 shopping areas in the UK and Ireland.

- Having a range of other uses within town centres should be considered a positive attribute which confirms town centres are performing as a hub for a range of activities thereby contributing to overall vitality and viability
- In 2013 the Northern Ireland vacancy rate is notably higher, both by floorspace and unit numbers (14.5% & 11.9%) than the UK average (12% & 10%).
- NI City/Town Vacancy rates for 2013 (both by unit numbers and floorspace) are shown in the graphs below (Figures 1 & 2).

Figure 1: NI vacancy rates by unit numbers

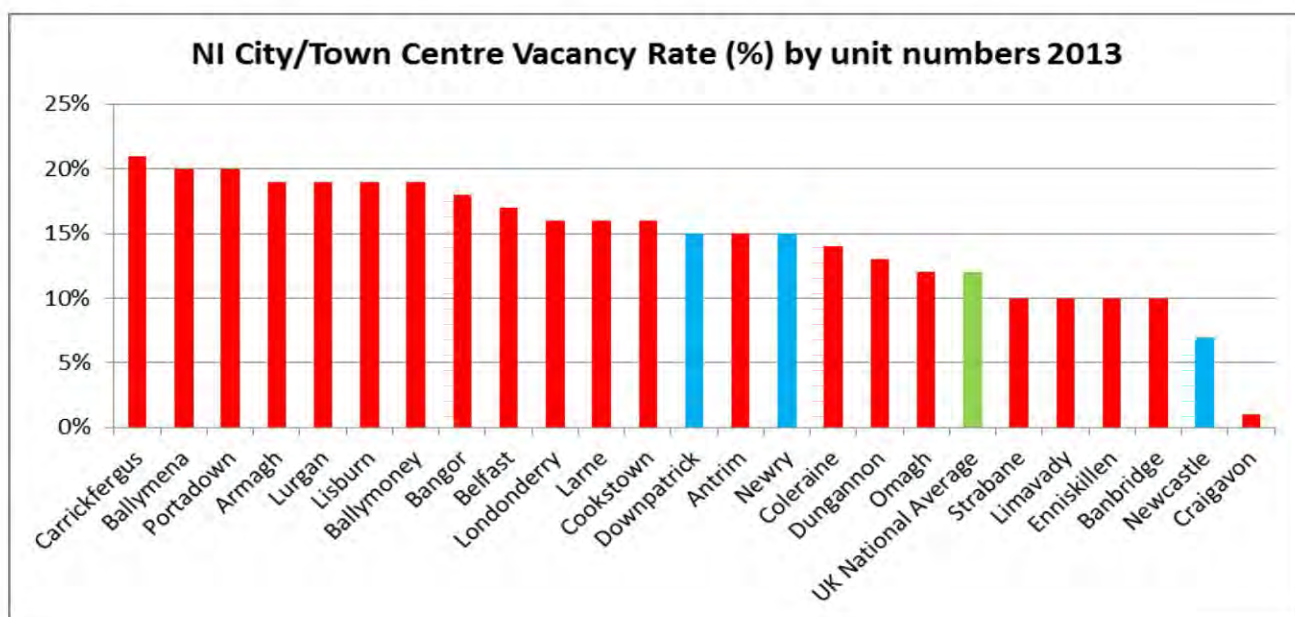
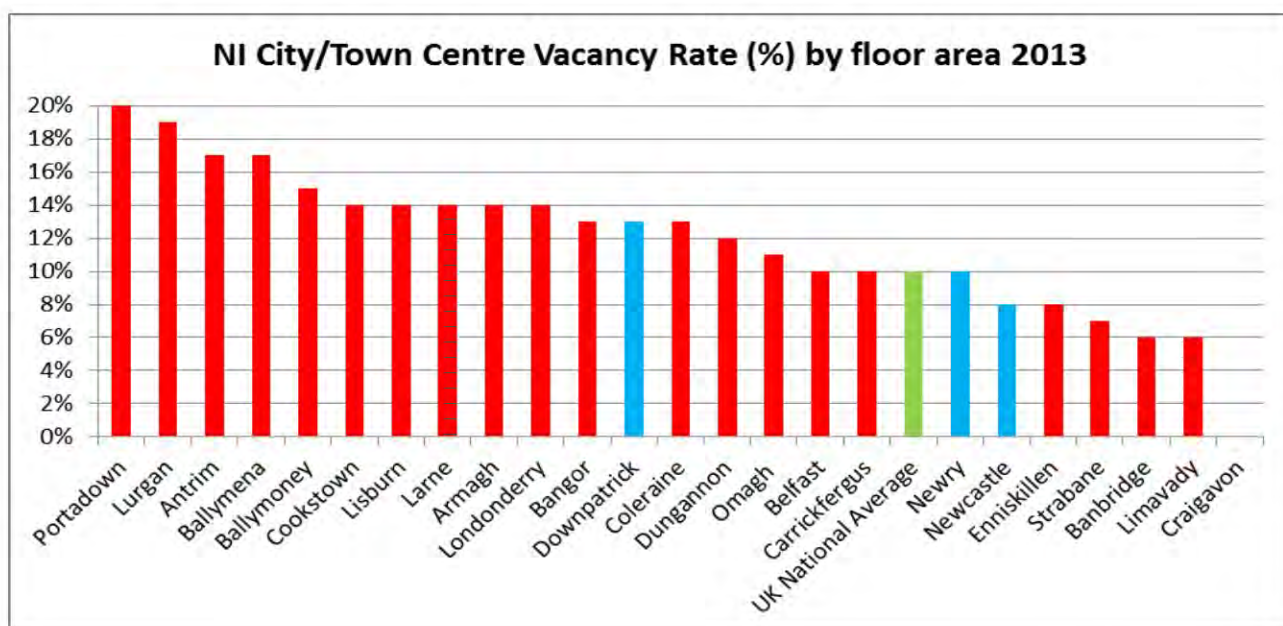


Figure 2: NI Vacancy rates by floor area



Source: GL Hearn Town Northern Ireland town centres and retail report

Further detail on the main findings of the town centre health checks for the Newry, Mourne and Down Area is provided in Section 6.0 covering Town Centre Studies.

- 3.3 The report highlighted that out-of-centre retailing is focused outside larger town centres or on strategic routes. In terms of functions, the role of these retail parks is almost exclusively retail. In comparison to the rest of the UK, leisure uses such as cinemas and bowling alleys are not commonly found in these locations. The report indicates that in Newry, Downpatrick and Newcastle, there are no notable out-of-centre retail parks, however this is not the case as Damolly Retail Park is located approx. 1.5 miles north of the city centre. Damolly Retail Park is considered further within this report at paragraph 6.13.
- 3.4 There are also a number of town centre issues facing Northern Ireland towns which are summarised in Table 1 below. The weaknesses and threats identified by GL Hearn "indicate that it would be appropriate to have a stronger policy stance on protecting and enhancing town centres, encouraging private sector investment and development and making town centres the focus for not just retail but other significant footfall generating uses."

Table 1: Town Centre Issues

Strengths/Opportunities	Weaknesses/Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of existing town centres. • Strong local independent retail offer. • Good quality physical environment • Town centre parking, particularly short stay 'on street' provision. • Employment uses within town centres. • Good accessibility and public transport hubs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacancies and potential obsolescence of some floorspace. • Low and falling retail rents. • Amount and profile of out of centre retailing. • Development pipeline. • Limited private sector investment/development in town centres. • Heavy traffic flows and congestion leads to conflict with shoppers.

- 3.5 The retail sector is constantly evolving and adapting in response to consumer and lifestyle trends and other market influences. Much of this change has been in the growth in personal income and disposable consumer spending, coupled with population growth. Such trends and influences have and will continue to transform traditional high street retailing and commercial leisure development. The economic downturn has had a negative effect on consumer spending and retail spending is forecast to remain low for the next three to four years.
- 3.6 National trends in consumer expenditure show a growth in home shopping and electronic commerce. The home shopping sector includes a number of retailing

channels including catalogue sales, direct retailing, TV shopping and internet shopping⁸. The growth in online shopping habits does not however mean the end of the high street. Whilst online sales are increasing so too is 'click and collect' where consumers order online but visit the store to collect their goods. This service can help ensure that town centres will attract people and remain viable.

3.7 Although there are fewer retailers actively looking for units in Northern Ireland than elsewhere in the UK, certain retailers are taking new units. These include discount stores; the likes of Home Bargains and Poundworld. The food sector including restaurants and coffee shops are also showing growth.⁹ This report states that there is a growing trend by national multiple retailers to achieve increasing economies of scale. This results in centralisation of services whereby larger stores serving an extensive catchment are replacing a number of smaller stores. These new stores are unlikely to be accommodated in existing town centres.

3.8 The GL Hearn report concludes that many of Northern Ireland's towns have remained reasonably vital and viable due to a number of factors:

- many towns retain a good mix of uses, in particular services within the heart of the centre;
- most towns have reasonable/good accessibility on the street and nearby surface parking;
- most visits appear to involve a number of linked trips (shopping, leisure, social and business);
- many have a high level of independent and long standing family business providing provenance of food and quality of service;
- there is a degree of loyalty to the town centre as being the heart of the community; and
- some towns are finding niche markets or their own "brand" identities – cultural, visitation, seaside, gateway to countryside, specialist food etc.

3.9 Town centres however do need to offer an experience above the average functional shopping trip which might otherwise be carried out online or at an out-of-town retail park.

4.0 Existing Development Plans

4.1 The existing adopted Area Plans, the Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) and Ards and Down Area Plan (ADAP) are the statutory Development Plans for the District and provide the policy framework against which to assess development proposals. Newry, Downpatrick, Ballynahinch also have their own non-statutory Town Centre Masterplans which provide the basis and

⁸ DOE NI – GL Hearn Report, January 2014.

⁹ NI Commercial Property Report 2013 – Lisney

justification for the Department for Social Development's decision making on the promotion, implementation and timing of urban regeneration initiatives in the respective town centres.

- 4.2 The existing Development Plans designate Town Centre boundaries and Primary Retail Cores (PRC) within Newry, Downpatrick, Ballynahinch and Newcastle. Regional Strategic Planning Policy for town centres and retailing is now contained in the SPPS following its publication in final form in September 2015. Where town centres are defined it was anticipated that commercial activity would concentrate within them. The vitality and viability of the town centres is retained by new shopping and office development. Within the Development Plans for the District, Development Opportunity Sites are also identified for the main towns. These sites are identified within the Plans as having special merit for a particular land use. The status of the sites is illustrated in Tables 1 - 8 below. Within a number of towns the Plans also designate Areas of Townscape Character, Areas of Archaeological Potential and Local Landscape Policy Areas. However these designations do not unduly limit the potential for retail development within the towns.

Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 (BNMAP)

- 4.3 To sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres the Plan adopts a strategy for accommodating retail, commercial and leisure growth within existing centres based on their role within the settlement hierarchy. It recognises that bars, cafes and restaurants have an important role complementing the primary shopping function of city and town centres and contributing to tourism and the evening economy. Town centre housing also has an important role both in terms of vitality of a city/town centre and offering a sense of security.

Newry

- 4.4 A city centre boundary together with primary retail core and frontage have been designated in Newry to ensure the continuance of a compact and attractive shopping environment, offering both choice and convenience. The Newry Conservation Area covers all of the primary retail core and additional lands to the west (Abbey Way) and north (Trevor Hill, Sugarhouse Quay and New Street).
- 4.5 The city centre boundary (see Appendix 3, Part 1) extends north to the largely office area of the Downshire Road and the commercial/industrial area north of Upper Edward Street and Cecil Street, west to the campus of the Southern Regional College and neighbouring business, and south to the Quays shopping complex and major brownfield development opportunity sites at the Albert Basin and Warrenpoint Road.

- 4.6 The primary retail core centres around Hill Street, John Mitchel Place, Merchant's Quay and the upper part of Monaghan Street, together with Buttercrane and The Quays shopping centres.
- 4.7 A primary retail frontage is designated along both sides of Hill Street. This is to retain the focus of retail use and ensure the maintenance of a compact shopping environment.
- 4.8 The plan also contains a policy on town centre housing. It is acknowledged that specific housing areas provide valuable housing stock and are homes for established communities which contribute to the variety and vitality of life in the city centre. Accordingly there is a policy restricting change of use to non residential uses. In addition proposals for new housing on derelict or backland sites and re-use of upper floors for residential use can help support variety and vitality within the city centre.
- 4.9 Ten Development Opportunity Sites have been identified within the City Centre. Table 1 provides the current status of the development opportunity sites identified in the BNMAP.

Table 1: Newry Development Opportunity Sites

Plan Ref	Location	Area Plan Proposal	Current Status	Planning History
NY81	Lower Catherine St	Office and residential use	Tbc at Survey Stage	Car Parking – Approved 20/05/2013
NY82	Merchants Quay North	Office, commercial, leisure and cultural together with residential	Not developed	Nothing Applicable
NY83	Merchants Quay Middle	Office, commercial, leisure and cultural together with residential.	Not developed	Nothing Applicable
NY84	Bank Parade	Residential, office, leisure and cultural.	Not developed	Mixed Use development (49 residential units, cafe and offices) Approval lapsed.
NY85	Merchants Quay South	Retail, office, commercial, leisure and cultural	Not developed	Nothing Applicable
NY86	North Street	Office, leisure and residential use	Not developed	Nothing Applicable
NY87	John Mitchel Pl/St Mary's St	Retail, office, and commercial together with a residential	Not developed	Nothing Applicable
NY88	Courtney Hill	Employment, educational, leisure and cultural together with residential element.	Not developed	Development of Community Treatment and Care Centre Outline Approval 14/05/2015
NY89	Middlebank, Albert Basin	Mixed use – office, leisure and residential.	Not developed	Upgrading existing pathway and access along greenway, new pedestrian crossings at the weir and Victoria Lock gates – Decision Pending
NY90	Warrenpoint Road	Mixed use	Tbc at Survey Stage	Retail led, mixed use scheme incorporating a food superstore, non-food retail units, enterprise centre and 50 No apartments - Approved 25/06/2012

(For DOS locations see map in Appendix3, Part 1)