- consult upon its performance improvement objective(s) by 31 May 2015. This consultation could have been undertaken as part of the corporate planning process;

- publish its performance improvement objective(s) by 31 July 2015. This could have been part of the publication of the Council's Corporate Plan; and

- put in place a timetable and plan to develop and progress the specified performance improvement objective(s) by 30 September 2015.

4. In forming my opinion for this introductory year, I performed an assessment (as directed by the Department) to ascertain:

    - whether the Council has at least one performance improvement objective and that it has been published;

    - that each objective meets at least one of the seven relevant criteria specified in the Act;

    - that a consultation process has been conducted; and

    - whether a satisfactory timetable and plan is in place to develop and progress the specified performance improvement objective (s).

5. For the introductory year, the Guidance allowed councils to select strategic objectives as performance improvement objectives and these objectives can be part of the Corporate Plan. The Council identified one performance improvement objective which was ratified by the Council on 14 May 2015. The performance improvement objective is linked to, but not included in, it's 'Corporate Plan 2015- 2019' and was published on the Council's website in the Minutes of the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee relating to its meeting on 14 May 2015. The performance improvement objective meets at least one of the seven relevant criteria specified in the Act and was subject to public and staff consultation as part of the corporate planning process. A satisfactory timetable and plan is in place to develop and progress the performance improvement objective in 2015-16.

6. In my opinion, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has established arrangements to secure continuous improvement in 2015-16 in the exercise of its functions for the introductory year of the commencement of Part 12 of the Act.

Yours sincerely

LOUISE MASON
Local Government Auditor

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL - Contributions/Events and Marketing for Meeting 12 Feb 2015

				2015/2016									
	Flag		Account Code	Gross Spend	Grant Received	Net Spend	SLA	Voluntary Contribution Applications	Council Run Events	Economic Development	Tourism Spend & Marketing	Contrib's to Committees	Sponsored Events
				£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Irish Language Committee	N	CC	2051	5,000		5,000						5,000	
P.C.S.P.	B	CC		650,914	(413,532)	237,382						237,382	
Promotions and Events	D	CE		24,000	0	24,000					24,000		
Ring of Gullion - AONB	N	CE	2070	5,000		5,000					5,000		
Ring of Gullion - Landscape Partnership	N	CE	2077	25,900		25,900					25,900		
2016 Commemoration (£20K USE RESERVES)	N	CRE	2002	0		0			0				
Ballynahinch Harvest & Country Festival	D	CRE		10,000	0	10,000			10,000				
Chriskindl	D	CRE		18,991	(10,000)	8,991			8,991				
Civic Pride Initiative	N	CRE	2213	13,500		13,500			13,500				
Curragh Event	N	CRE	2100/1154	3,600		3,600			3,600				
District Arts Committee - Sean Holywood	N	CRE	2004	1,250		1,250			1,250				
Downpatrick summer season	D	CRE		13,500	0	13,500			13,500				
Environmental Services (clean ups etc)	D	CRE		9,000	0	9,000			9,000				
Famine Commemoration (£50k USE RESERVES	N	CRE	2002	0		0			0				
Festival of Flight	D	CRE		92,300	(23,000)	69,300			69,300				
Fireworks (5 Electoral Areas)	N	CRE	2100/1173	10,000		10,000			10,000				
Good Food Cycle	D	CRE		2,430	0	2,430			2,430				
Hallowtides	D	CRE		30,000	0	30,000			30,000				
Mourne International Walking Festival	D	CRE		15,000	0	15,000			15,000				
Newry City Day / Festival of Water	N	CRE	2100/1173	15,000		15,000			15,000				
Newry City Triathlon	N	CRE	2100/1154	5,000		5,000			5,000				
Newry Festival - Halloween	N	CRE	2100/1173	30,000		30,000			30,000				
Newry St Patricks Day Festival	N	CRE	2100/1173	36,000		36,000			36,000				
Ross Bi-Centenary Celebrations	N	CRE	2388	9,000		9,000			9,000				
RSPBANI - Ulster Piping Festival	N	CRE	2050	27,000		27,000			27,000				
Sports Development - Committee Sean Hollywoo	N	CRE	2054	1,250		1,250			1,250				
St.Patricks Festival	D	CRE		47,250	0	47,250			47,250				
Switch ON Events - Christmas	N	CRE		9,450		9,450			9,450				
Ulster Cross Country Race at Kilbroney	N	CRE	2056	4,500		4,500			4,500				
Ulster Wildlife Trust	N	CRE	2019	0		0			0				
Willey Malley Soccer Tournament	N	CRE	2100/1173	4,500		4,500			4,500				
Econ Development - Programs	D	ED	054050-6920	205,693	(177,935)	27,758				27,758			
Economic Development - LED Plan	N	ED	2060	245,000	(11,000)	234,000				234,000			
Green Tourism	D	ED		135,250	(135,250)	0				0	0		
Industry Training	D	ED		6,520	0	6,520				6,520			
Integerated Rural Development	N	ED	2061	2,500		2,500				2,500			
Project Support Econ Development	D	ED	056000-3254	25,000	0	25,000				25,000			
Rural Development - South Armagh	N	ED	2359	7,000		7,000				7,000			
Rural Development - South Down	N	ED	2358	7,000		7,000				7,000			
Rural Match Funding Programme	N	ED	2072	50,000		50,000				50,000			
Sister Cities	N	ED	2065	4,500		4,500				4,500			
Ballynahinch Game and Market Fayre	D	SE		25,000	0	25,000							25,000
Circuit of Ireland Motor Rally	D	SE		35,000	0	35,000							35,000
Euromeet conference	D	SE		15,000	0	15,000							15,000
International Equestrian Endurance Event	D	SE		5,000	0	5,000							5,000
Irish Golf Tour Operators Assoc Conf (Oct 15)	D	SE		10,000	0	10,000							10,000
Irish Open (£60,000 From Reserves)	D	SE		0		0							0
Mourne Mountain Marathon	D	SE		0	0	0							0
Assumption Grammar	D	SLA		0	0	0	0						
Citizens Advise Bureau	B	SLA	400100-3220	299,077	(123,744)	175,333	175,333						
Contribution to St Patricks Centre	D	SLA	310200-3220	115,000	0	115,000	115,000						
County Down Rural Community Network	D	SLA		10,000	0	10,000	10,000						
Down Noonan Security	D	SLA		15,000	0	15,000	15,000						
Down Secured	D	SLA		15,000	0	15,000	15,000						
Downpatrick Railway	D	SLA		21,600	0	21,600	21,600						

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL - Contributions/Events and Marketing for Meeting 12 Feb 2015

				2015/2016									
	Flag		Account Code	Gross Spend	Grant Received	Net Spend	SLA	Voluntary Contribution Applications	Council Run Events	Economic Development	Tourism Spend & Marketing	Contrib's to Committees	Sponsored Events
				£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
East Border Region Committee	N	SLA	2375	20,000		20,000	20,000						
Good Morning	D	SLA		7,500	0	7,500	7,500						
Irish Language	D	SLA	400100-3220	6,586	0	6,586	6,586						
Mourne Heritage Trust	B	SLA	052000-3221	135,000	0	135,000	135,000						
Mourne Mountain Landscape Project	D	SLA		7,000	0	7,000	7,000						
Newry Gateway Club	N	SLA	2550	9,460		9,460	9,460						
Newry Town Centre Mgt	N	SLA	2060	25,000		25,000	25,000						
NUC	D	SLA	400100-3220	3,124	0	3,124	3,124						
ORNI	D	SLA		165,000	0	165,000	165,000						
Resource Centre/Confed of Comm Groups	N	SLA	2550	25,800	(10,000)	15,800	15,800						
St Patricks Country	D	TE		18,000	0	18,000					18,000		
Destination Mournes	D	TS	050110-1562	32,287	0	32,287					32,287		
Destination Strangford	D	TS	050111-1563	23,000	0	23,000					23,000		
Event Film Production	D	TS		4,375	0	4,375					4,375		
Events Monitoring	D	TS	050100-	18,000	0	18,000					18,000		
Hospitality	D	TS		2,000	0	2,000					2,000		
Market Research	D	TS		6,500	0	6,500					6,500		
Marketing	D	TS		31,000	0	31,000					31,000		
Miscellaneous Events	N	TS	2100/1154	5,000		5,000					5,000		
Mourne Landscape Partnership	N	TS	2358	7,000		7,000					7,000		
Tourism Marketing	N	TS		110,750		110,750					110,750		
Tourist Development Committee - Contributions	N	TS	2356	5,000		5,000					5,000		
Tourist Promotions - General Contributions	N	TS	2355	6,500		6,500					6,500		
Transferring Functions - Bus Dev	N	TS	2060	365,650	(365,650)	0				0			
Marketing Reductions	B	TS		(33,000)		(33,000)					(33,000)		
Blues in the Bay	N	VC	2100	5,000		5,000		5,000					
Bonfire Management Prog in P.C.S.P.	D	VC		0	0	0		0					
Celtic Fusion	D	VC		20,000	0	20,000		20,000					
Community Festivals - Grant Aid Payable	N	VC	2100	22,250		22,250		22,250					
Community Floral Schemes	N	VC	2972/1100	5,000		5,000		5,000					
Community Relations	D	VC	036000-2255	45,514	(34,136)	11,378		11,378					
Community Services	D	VC	035000-3210	82,092	(61,569)	20,523		20,523					
Cross Community Relations	N	VC	2045	10,000		10,000		10,000					
Down District Council Support Fund	D	VC		55,000	0	55,000		55,000					
Feile Camlough	N	VC	2100	5,000		5,000		5,000					
Fiddlers Green Festival	N	VC	2100	5,000		5,000		5,000					
Kilkeel Dev Assoc - Festival	N	VC	2100	5,000		5,000		5,000					
Maiden of the Mournes	N	VC	2100	5,000		5,000		5,000					
Newry Feis	N	VC	2100	5,000		5,000		5,000					
Voluntary Contributions - Revenue Schemes	N	VC	2550	5,000		5,000		5,000					
Sports Development	D	VC	044000-3210	44,500	0	44,500		44,500					
Sports Development - Able Bodied - Southern	N	VC	2056	5,000		5,000		5,000					
Summer Schemes	N	VC	2100	4,000		4,000		4,000					
Ulster Scots Committee	N	VC	2055	4,000		4,000		4,000					
Voluntary Contributions - Revenue Schemes								**236,651**					
Matching Funding ref Capital Schemes	B	VC		350,000		350,000		350,000					
TOTAL				4,062,363	(1,365,816)	2,696,547	746,403	586,651	375,521	364,278	291,312	242,382	90,000
													2,696,547
				CHECK		O.K.							

Rates support grant- Multi- Council Delegation with DOE Minister

Guildhall Derry/ Londonderry 11th November 2015 11.00am

Objectives of delegation/ Key messages

1 To demonstrate the importance of the Rates Support Grant to the 7 Councils with proven socio-economic and lower rateable values

- There is Multi-Council representation on the delegation representing almost 58% of NI population)
- The grant is required by Councils with proven socio-economic needs to ensure they can maintain parity of service provision with the more wealthy Councils.
- The 7 Councils in receipt of the grant rely heavily on this funding to varying degrees ranging from 2.09% to 7.02% of District Rates (Appendix 1) following the 2015/16 budget cuts.

2 To reinforce the rates impact that the original cut to the 2015/16 Rates Support Grant from £18.327m to £15.5m has had on the less wealthy Councils

- The value of cuts to individual Councils ranges from £174k to £618k with the direct impact on District Rates for the 7 Councils ranging from 0.38% to 1.3% **(Appendix 1)**.
- 4 Councils are not impacted at all.
- The top-slicing of budgets results in the Council with the greatest need being faced with the greatest cut.
- Cuts have negative impact on areas of social deprivation and create potential equality implications and a perceived lack of rural proofing.
- The Grant for 2015/16 (£15.5m) is almost 25% less than in 2009/10 (£20.497m)

3 Suggested way forward- Recurring baseline of £18.327m must be protected

- Welcome the Ministers in-year efforts to replenish the fund with the additional in-year allocation of £2.1m and request that efforts are continued to ensure the remaining £727k is secured in-year.
- The recurring baseline for 2016/17 must be the original level of £18.327m and this must be ring-fenced and protected for future years through legislative provision if necessary.
- Further cuts are not an option. If the grant is not ring-fenced and continues to be cut, then those Councils which are in receipt will become poorer and will very likely be forced to significantly increase their district rate, putting their ratepayers at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to other more affluent areas of Northern Ireland.

- **Reinforce the urgency of communication around 2016/17 budgets to enable Councils to take decisions in a timely and informed manner and to enable rates to be struck by the statutory deadline of 15th February.**

Background and further explanatory notes

What is the Rates Support Grant?

The Rates Support Grant is a vital source of funding for Councils with proven socio-economic needs to ensure they can maintain parity of service provision with the more wealthy Councils. The Grant is designed to provide additional finance to those Councils whose total rateable value, per head of population, falls below a standard determined by the Department. The Grant is not provided for expenditure needs but is aimed at assisting those Councils whose gross penny product i.e. wealth falls below (and in some cases significantly) the Northern Ireland Council average. The grant is distributed by applying a statutory formula to the baseline resources provided by DOE to target social need, by incorporating into the formula, factors which take account of socio-economic disadvantage.

Up to 2009/10, the Rates Support Grant for distribution to qualifying Councils was £20.497m and had remained in and around this baseline for many years. For 2010/11, Councils were advised of an initial £1million reduction and a subsequent further reduction of £1.17m, reducing the grant to £18.327m. **For 2015/16, the 7 Councils who are entitled to the Grant were advised of a further £2.827m (15.4%) reduction. The grant is now almost 25% less than in 2009/10.**

What Councils are entitled to Rates Support Grant?

7 of the new 11 Councils are entitled to Rates Support Grant at varying levels ranging from £3.389m to £953k as illustrated in Appendix 1. These Councils rely very heavily on this funding to provide comparable services with the more wealthy Councils. Furthermore, there is a strong argument that these Councils need to make additional investment to stimulate growth, address social needs and health inequalities.

Impact of cuts to Rates Support Grant?

As illustrated above, the grant is now almost 25% less than in 2009/10. The cut in 2015/16 represented a 15.4% reduction from an already reduced level. This 2015/16 reduction has had significant rates implications for the less wealthy Councils as highlighted in **Appendix 1. The direct impact on District Rates for the 7 Councils ranges from 0.38% to 1.3% with the value of cuts to individual Councils ranging from £174k to £618k.**

Top-slicing of budgets results in the Council with the greatest need being faced with the greatest cut. Obviously, the 4 more wealthy Councils who do not require support have not been impacted at all and can plan rates with much more certainty each year.

Furthermore, the trend over the past few years has been one of continual reduction. Coupled with the obvious financial challenges facing the Department and the Executive, this grant is obviously vulnerable meaning that cuts for 2016/17 and future years cannot be ruled out. This gives rise to significant uncertainty for those Councils who require the most.

Appendix 1 also highlights the potentially devastating impact that further reductions could have should this grant not be protected. For example, if the Rates Support Grant was removed in entirety, the Council who currently qualifies for the highest award as a percentage of rates raised could be forced to increase its District Rates by 7.02%. This would be in addition to a 1.3% impact already suffered following the 2015/16 cuts.

If the grant is not ring-fenced and continues to be cut, then those Councils which are in receipt will become poorer and will very likely be forced to increase their district rate, putting their ratepayers at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to other more affluent areas of Northern Ireland.

It is also important to highlight that an early analysis of transferring functions would indicate that the less wealthy Councils and those in receipt of rates support grant are those which are finding the greatest budgetary challenges and facing significant overspends in respect of the functions transferred.

The way forward?

It is understood that the cuts applied to the new Councils in 2015/16 were in-year cuts only and that the recurring baseline for 2016/17 is £18.327m. It is vital that this principle is established.

The recent announcement by the Minister that in-year savings in other areas has enabled £2.1m of the in-year shortfall to be reimbursed to the relevant Councils is to be welcomed. It is hoped that it will remain a priority for the Department to find the remaining in-year balance of £727k.

Going forward, as illustrated above, if the Rates Support Grant is not ring-fenced and continues to be cut, then those Councils which are in receipt will become poorer and will very likely be forced to increase their district rate, putting their ratepayers at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to other more affluent areas of Northern Ireland.

The Rates Support Grant needs to be adequately resourced and ring-fenced. This multi-Council delegation, which includes representation from all of the 7 impacted Councils, shows the importance and necessity of this support to each of these Councils. These 7 Councils represent almost 58% of the NI population.

It is strongly contended that any cuts to the Grant (both already applied and potential) is contrary to the policy objectives of this grant and should therefore be subject to equality impact assessment and rural proofing. In accordance with the s75 of the NI Act, Executive

budget challenges should not be passed onto ratepayers, in particular those of the less wealthy Councils with some Councils not being impacted at all.

It is also extremely important to point out the urgency of resolving the issues and clarifying entitlements for 2016/17 as soon as possible. Setting rates is already a challenging process for Councils following the Reform of Local Government, the expectations around efficiencies and the budgetary challenges faced by transferring functions and other Central Government budget cuts. In order to facilitate this process and enable Councils to take decisions in a timely and informed manner and to enable rates to be struck by the statutory deadline of 15th February, it is crucial that significant uncertainties are resolved as soon as possible and in a favourable manner.

Appendix 1

New Council Rates Support Grant allocations, impact of 2015/16 budget cuts and potential impact of future budget cuts

Council	Amount raised from rates	Rates Support Grant entitlement prior to 2015/16 budget reductions	Current rates support grant received following reductions applied in 2015/16	Current rates support grant as a % of rates i.e. Potential impact on rates should grant be reduced in entirety	Impact of 2015/16 cuts on District rates	
	£	£	£	£	£	%
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	58,324,941	4,007,664	3,389,469	5.81%	618,195	1.07%
Derry City & Strabane	48,406,972	3,643,389	3,081,384	6.37%	562,005	1.17%
Mid Ulster	34,188,838	2,839,561	2,401,549	7.02%	438,012	1.30%
Causeway Coast & Glens	41,214,660	2,546,171	2,153,416	5.22%	392,755	0.96%
Newry, Mourne & Down	47,913,348	2,535,851	2,144,688	4.48%	391,163	0.82%
Fermanagh & Omagh	30,489,829	1,626,508	1,375,614	4.51%	250,894	0.83%
Mid & East Antrim	45,666,242	1,127,855	953,880	2.09%	173,975	0.38%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	41,025,314	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Belfast City	148,207,653	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
North Down & Ards	43,724,894	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Antrim & Newtownabbey	46,223,674	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
TOTAL	585,386,365	18,327,000	15,500,000	2.65%	2,827,000	0.49%

Back to Agenda

DOE
Department of the Environment
www.doeni.gov.uk

Chief Executive of each District Council
Finance Officer of each District Council

Local Government Policy Division

Finance Branch
Level 4
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Town Parks
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

Telephone: 028 9082 3375

Email: jeff.glass@doeni.gov.uk

Your reference:
Our reference:

Date: 23rd October 2015

Dear Chief Executive/Finance Officer

RATES SUPPORT GRANT 2015/2016 – ADDITIONAL FUNDING

1. I refer to the announcement from the Environment Minister, Mark H Durkan, at the Partnership Panel meeting of 20 October 2015 and the recent press release concerning additional Rates Support Grant funding for Councils. You will be aware that the Rates Support Grant for 2015/16 was £15.5 million which the Minister has acknowledge is significantly less than the funding of £18.3 million provided in 2014/2015. This lesser, although still substantial, amount was as a result of the ongoing financial pressures across the Public Sector.

2. Minister Durkan, having looked at the priorities within his Department and in light of good financial management and savings resulting from the Voluntary Exit Scheme, is now in a position to provide what he regards as vital additional funds to local government. I am pleased to advise that the Minister has approved an additional £2.1 million Rates Support Grant to be allocated to the seven councils that qualified for the grant earlier this year. The amounts, which will shortly be paid to councils, are outlined in the attached Annex.

3. It is hoped that this funding will to some extent ease the financial difficulties councils have been facing, particularly in light of their enhanced role in the delivery of public services.

Yours faithfully

JEFF GLASS
Enc.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

RATES SUPPORT GRANT 2015/2016

Additional Funding

District Council	Original Rates Support Grant 2015/2016 - 15.5m	Illustrative Rates Support Grant 2015/2016 - 17.6m	Difference
Antrim and Newtownabbey	0	0	0
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	3,389,469	3,848,688	459,219
Belfast	0	0	0
Causeway Coast and Glens	2,153,416	2,445,169	291,753
Derry and Strabane	3,081,384	3,498,862	417,478
Fermanagh and Omagh	1,375,614	1,561,987	186,373
Lisburn and Castlereagh	0	0	0
Mid and East Antrim	953,880	1,083,116	129,236
Mid Ulster	2,401,549	2,726,920	325,371
Newry, Mourne and Down	2,144,688	2,435,258	290,570
North Down and Ards	0	0	0
Total	**15,500,000**	**17,600,000**	**2,100,000**

14/15 figure. (Combined DDC+NMDC) 2.603,038 (was a 17.6% cut on 14/15)

1% ≡ £500k Diff 167,780 (6.4% Dec)

on RATE $\frac{167k}{500k}$ = 0.33% on RATE

Report to: Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee – 12 November 2015

Subject: Appointment of Members to the Board of Carlingford Lough Commissioners

Date: 12 November 2015

Reporting Officer: Eddy Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance

Contact Officer : Eileen McParland, Democratic Services Manager

1.0 Purpose and Background:

The purpose of this report is to update members on the situation relating to appointment of members to the Board of Carlingford Lough Commissioners.

2.0 Key Issues:

2.1 The Chief Executive of Warrenpoint Harbour Authority has contacted the Council to advise they would now be willing to permit the Council to rotate its representatives on the Board of Carlingford Lough Commissioners.
2.2 A total of 2 positions are available for the term of Council.
2.3 Meetings are held 6 times per year and these are non-renumerated positions.
2.4 Members are asked to consider this updated advice and be in a position to make nominations for these positions at Council meeting on Monday 7 December 2015.

2.0 Resource Implication:

None

3.0 Appendices

None

Agenda Item:	Sister City/Twining Issues
Report to:	**Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee**
Subject:	*Grozny, Russia*
Date:	12 November 2015
Reporting Officer:	Eddy Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance
Contact Officer:	Eddy Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance

Decisions Required

- ***Agreement to continue discussions with Local Recycling Company in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council re: Provision of recycling facilities in the city of Grozny, Southern Russia.***
- ***To host a small deputation from Grozny in December 2015***

1.0 **Purpose & Background**

1.1

Newry Mourne and Down District Council have been approached by the Head of the City of Grozny to develop linkages on a number of issues.

- Development of a Recycling Plant in Grozny
- Development of student exchanges as part of Peace IV Programmes
- To send students from Grozny to attend Summer Camps in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

2.0 **Resource Implications**

2.1

- To host a reception for Grozny visitors in December 2015
- Officer time in liaising with local recycling providers re Development of Recycling Plant in Grozny

3.0 **Appendices**

3.1

None

Report to:	**Strategy, Policy and Resources**
Subject:	Social Investment Fund
Date:	12 November 2015
Reporting Officer:	Sonya Burns, Programmes Manager
Contact Officer(s):	Sonya Burns, Programmes Manager

Decisions Required

- Report is to for update and noting.

1.0 **Purpose & Background**

1.1 The Council is covered by two Social Investment Zones – Southern (legacy Newry and Mourne) and South Eastern (legacy Down). The projects which are being delivered by the Council are split as follows:

Southern Zone Revenue Project – Work It.
This project targets 160 participants from Super Output Areas (Newry, Lurgan, Portadown and Coalisland), to engage in a 42 week work placement. Simultaneously the participants complete training and 500 community projects. The delivery agent is Network Personnel and they are managed by the Strategic Programmes section. The group have been provided with an advance of £50,620 which is 50% of the participants wages for 6 months delivery. A Project Board meets monthly to review the progress of the project against set targets.

South Easter Zone Capital Projects
There were 3 capital projects clustered by the Zone for submission (Downpatrick Race Club, Ballyhornan and Kilcooley) for 3g pitches and facilities. At present this is at Priority 10, they have not been signed off and there is no certainty that there will be sufficient funding available to enable this cluster of projects to proceed.

2.0 **Key Issues**

2.1 There are potentially a number of issues:

- The amount of funding available from OFMDFM is not sufficient for all projects to proceed as per their submissions. Community expectation will have to be managed.
- The Finance section, of OFMDFM, is not efficient in payment of claims.

3.0 **Financial & Resource Implications**

3.1 Revenue projects – all eligible expenditure is claimable from OFMDFM.
Capital projects – the following commitments have been made by Council if these projects are approved:
Downpatrick Race Club - £150,000
Ballyhornan - £25,000

4.0 **Equality & Good Relations Implications**

4.1 There is an inclusion of equality and good relations within the submission and Economic

	Appraisals.
5.0	**Appendices**
▪ None.	

Report to:	***Strategy, Policy and Resources***
Subject:	*PEACE IV Programme*
Date:	*12 November 2015*
Reporting Officer:	*Sonya Burns, Programmes Manager*
Contact Officer(s):	*Sonya Burns, Programmes Manager*

Decisions Required

Report is for noting to update members on the progress of the PEACE IV programme.

1.0 **Purpose & Background**

1.1 This report will provide an update on the PEACE IV Programme 2014 – 2020. The plan was consulted on by SEUPB through 2 public consultation processes in 2012 and 2014. The eligible area will be Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. The ERDF programme value is €229m and up to 85% intervention rate. This new programme will have an alternative focus, as follows:

- Programmes will be more 'concentrated' and 'focused'
- They will be results orientated with clear measurable outputs.
- Non delivery could result in a financial penalty or non payment.
- There will be an enhanced focus on cross border value.
- PEACE can operate on a single jurisdiction basis where contribution to programme outputs and results can be demonstrated.

There have been 4 key themes agreed within the PEACE IV plan:

1. Shared Education
2. Children and young people
3. Shared space
4. Building positive relations

Council will have to produce and submit a PEACE IV Action Plan which should be designed to:
- Build on the positive experiences of the current programme;
- Adopt a strong partnership approach; and
- Complement other local government initiatives such as Community Planning.

The Action Plan will be 3 – 5 years in duration (2015-2021). The allocation will be based on Per Capita and Deprivation based on 100% funding (ERDF 85%). Of the four themes outlined above Council will have to produce results and outcomes across the following 3 themes:

1. Building positive relations at a local level
2. Shared space

	3. Children and young people. The application process will be in two stages totalling approximately 44 weeks combined however the overall process will be longer given the gap between stage 1 and stage 2. Therefore given there will be no approval from the Commission until December 2015 approximately, and then it could be assumed that the PEACE IV programme will not be ready for delivery until 2017.
2.0	**Key Issues**
2.1	Currently the following issues are identifiable: - No guidance provided yet on the dates for application submission - Awaiting final theme and budgets.
3.0	**Financial & Resource Implications**
3.1	Awaiting further details on the submission and resources to complete same.
4.0	**Equality & Good Relations Implications**
4.1	There will be an assessment undertaken at the stage of submission.
5.0	**Appendices**
▪ None.	

Report to:	**Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee**
Subject:	*Statutory Guidance for the Operation of Community Planning*
Date:	Thursday 12 November 2015
Reporting Officer:	Heather McKee, Assistant Director: Community Planning
Contact Officer:	Heather McKee, Assistant Director: Community Planning

Decisions Required

Noting

1.0	**Purpose & Background**
1.1	**Community Planning is the key over-arching partnership framework helping to coordinate other initiatives and partnerships**
2.0	**Key Issues**
	The guidance is intended as a means for assisting Councils and partners develop their community planning process. **Following feedback from Local Government on the draft guidance a additional paragraph at section 3.18 has been included outlining the Partnership Panel's intention to develop an engagement protocol to strengthen the relationship between central and local government.**
3.0	**Resource Implications**
4.0	**Appendices**

- **The Statutory Guidance for the Operation of Community Planning**

Department of the
Environment
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Our reference:
Date: 13 October 2015

Chief Executive of each council

Circular **LG 28/2015**

Dear Chief Executive

STATUTORY GUIDANCE FOR OPERATION OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

The Department has prepared the attached guidance to assist with the practical operation of the provisions of part 10 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act), in relation to arrangements for community planning.

This guidance is issued under section 111 of the Act.

Yours sincerely

Nichola Creagh

Enc

Department of the
Environment
www.doeni.gov.uk

Statutory Guidance

For The Operation of Community Planning

Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

October 2015

Contents

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Foreword

Local government in Northern Ireland is undergoing the biggest changes seen in over 40 years. The eleven new councils are now in place and they will be at the forefront of delivering a modernised local government. This will mean bringing decision making closer to communities and citizens, creating a stronger and more effective local democracy, and improving service delivery. Councils now have some powerful tools with which to shape their areas and communities. Integrating functions such as planning, urban regeneration, local economic development and local tourism with councils' existing functions, will allow for a more productive, joined-up approach which makes the best use of opportunities and available assets.

The economic challenges, both locally and globally, highlight the need for central and local government to reorganise and adapt how they take decisions and, most importantly, how they can bring decision-making closer to communities and citizens; create a stronger and more effective local democracy; and improve service delivery by influencing place shaping and facilitating greater integration. The effective use by councils of community planning is of central importance, since reform is not just about doing things differently – it's about doing things better. Reformed local government presents new challenges and opportunities. The new councils cover larger geographical areas, serving a bigger population base. They will also deliver significant new functions, including spatial planning, regeneration and community planning, and they will operate within a new governance framework. In moving forward, there will be major challenges and opportunities in relation to implementing both transition and transformation simultaneously and creating new fit-for-purpose organisations which can deliver against the following vision for local government as agreed by the NI Executive: **"… a strong, dynamic local government creating communities that are vibrant, healthy, prosperous, safe, sustainable and have the needs of all citizens at their core…"**

Local government reorganisation provides a real opportunity to redefine the role of councils and the services they provide, further enhancing the ability of councils to shape local places and meet local needs and priorities. Community planning aims to improve the connection between regional, local and neighbourhood level through partnership working and better use of all available resources, with a focus on collaboration between organisations for the benefit of all citizens accessing services. To do that successfully, councils will first need to establish community partnerships for their districts. I expect that through consideration of the guidance contained in this document, Northern Ireland's new councils will be able to take on their new challenges and become stronger, more efficient, delivering more effective services. They will be citizen focused, responding to the needs, aspirations and concerns of their communities. In partnership with central government and others, they will guide the future development of their areas.

Mark H Durkan MLA
Minister of the Environment

1. Introduction

1.1. Community Planning came into operation on 1st April 2015 as part of the full implementation of local government reform.

1.2. The new duty of community planning will require councils as the lead partner to be responsible for making arrangements for community planning in their areas. They will work with statutory bodies and their communities to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the well-being of an area, community cohesion and improving the quality of life of its citizens.

1.3. The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 provides the high level framework for the operation of community planning, and this guidance provides further detail on the implementation of the legislation.

1.4. Irrespective of the specific requirements set out in this guidance all organisations involved in community planning must have regard to their legal obligations and the potential impact on the community planning process.

2. Background

2.1. Underpinning the reform of local government is the Executive's vision of:**"…..a strong, dynamic local government creating communities that are vibrant, healthy, prosperous, safe, sustainable and have the needs of all citizens at their core."**

2.2. Central to the Executive's vision for the local government sector is the provision of high quality, efficient services that respond to the needs of people and continuously improve over time. Critical to the delivery of this objective will be an effective, statute-based community planning process led and facilitated by the new councils.

2.3. The objectives of local government reform include bringing decision making closer to communities and citizens, creating a stronger and more effective local democracy, and improving service delivery by influencing place shaping and facilitating greater integration. It will provide for more effective service delivery, by transferring functions from central to local government and giving councils some powerful tools with which to shape their areas and communities.

2.4. The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 provides the legislative framework for a modernised, strengthened and streamlined system of local government administered by 11 councils, and includes provisions for effective governance arrangements, an ethical standards framework, a modernised performance management framework, the introduction of community planning and a general power of competence.

2.5. The new councils will bring together a number of key functions such as planning, urban regeneration and community development, local economic development and local tourism, along with their existing responsibilities of providing services and facilities in relation to leisure, recreation, waste management, cemeteries, business and community projects and facilities, the regulation and licensing of activities relating to environmental health, consumer protection, building regulations and public safety, supporting the Policing and Community Safety Partnership, and promotion of culture, the arts, sports and tourism.

2.6. Linking service delivery, long term objectives of an area, and physical planning and regeneration will change the way areas are planned and will bring sustainable development into sharper focus. Social, economic and environmental issues, and the well-being of citizens, can all be considered together within the framework provided by the collaborative approach of community planning.

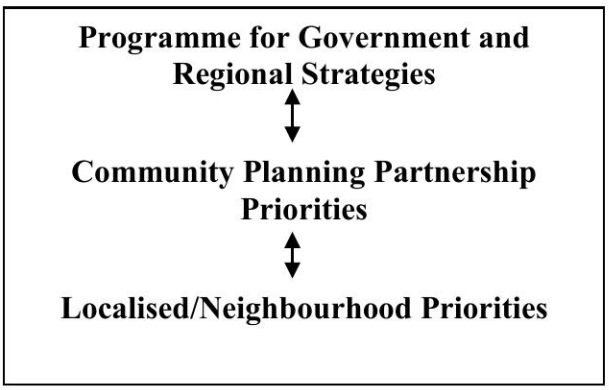
An Evolving Process

2.7. Community planning is an evolving process. As can be seen from Fig. 1 community planning is the key over-arching partnership framework helping to co-ordinate other initiatives and partnerships and where necessary acting to rationalise and simplify a cluttered landscape. It has the ability to improve the connection between national priorities and those at regional, local and neighbourhood levels.

2.8. Community planning should act as the key over-arching framework for other partnerships and initiatives at the regional, local and neighbourhood level rather than be seen as an additional or parallel process to the various strategies or partnership structures already in place. Existing networks and partnerships should be built upon where they are working well. Where they are not working well, community planning provides an opportunity for all agencies to consider how they can be improved.

2.9. Community planning partnerships bring together key participants, and so can act as a 'bridge' to link regional and local priorities and resources more effectively. This should be a three-way process whereby local community planning partnerships can influence regional direction, but also can help to co-ordinate the delivery of regional priorities, as set out in the Executive's Programme for Government, in a way that is sensitive to local needs and circumstances. Local or neighbourhood priorities should be considered when setting the priorities at the community planning partnership level.

Fig. 1



A Long Term Process

2.10. Community planning is not envisaged as a new mechanism or new initiative to deliver public services in its own right. As a process, it is a "means" to the "end" of delivering more responsive public services and improved outcomes. However, the process should not dominate the outcomes. The legislative basis for community planning will provide a solid platform but in many ways it represents the beginning of the real challenge for community planning - for the partnerships themselves and the bodies and agencies that comprise these partnerships. The necessary cultural changes will have a longer timescale. This guidance is intended to assist this process.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Community planning aims to improve the connection between regional, local and neighbourhood levels through partnership working and more integrated use of resources, with a focus on collaboration between organisations for the benefit of citizens.

3.2. Community planning places duties on councils, departments and community planning partners. The process provides a platform for the integration and planning of public sector services and investment. It is vital that the Community Planning Partnership shows strong and sustained shared leadership and commitment to delivering the vision set out in the community plan.

Duty on Councils

3.3 The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the council to **initiate, maintain, facilitate and participate** in community planning for its district. The council is the lead partner and is required to put in place a process where it works with bodies to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the well-being of its area, community cohesion and improving the quality of life of its citizens. As lead partner the council is responsible for making arrangements for community planning in its area.

3.4. The council as lead partner is responsible for:

- Facilitating and managing the process including putting in place appropriate governance and management structures;
- Ensuring that the commitments set out in the council equality scheme are applied in the development, implementation, monitoring and reviewing of the community plan.
- Working collaboratively with its community planning partners and identified support partners to reach consensus on the content of the community plan, and publishing the plan;
- Working with community planning partners and identified support partners to monitor and review the plan; and,
- Ensuring that community involvement is an integral part of the full community planning process.

3.5. Management of the community planning process is the responsibility of the council. The council manages the production of the community plan,

sets up a strategic community planning partnership in collaboration with their partners which will provide leadership to the process, and may set up other supporting structures such as thematic or local area partnerships that focus on addressing more specific detailed issues.

3.6. The production of a community plan depends on the council and its partners reaching consensus on the objectives and actions, and the responsibility of the council as lead partner is to work to build consensus among the partners, and produce the plan when the consensus has been reached. The council will have to make a judgement as to when this point has been reached. As lead partner the council must also put in place systems to monitor progress on the community plan and report to the public on progress.

3.7. It is the responsibility of the council to ensure that the needs of citizens are understood and are considered during the formulation and review of the community plan. The council should actively encourage local people and organisations to become involved in the community planning process, demonstrate the benefits of community planning, how it assists with delivering better outcomes for citizens and more efficient and effective service delivery, and report to them on progress. The council and its community planning partners should work to ensure that collective public consultations are carried out where possible to reduce confusion and consultation overload.

3.8. As the lead partner, the council should champion the process within their own organisation and work to integrate as fully as possible the functions and systems within their remit. They should work to build knowledge and capacity with all groups involved in their community planning process.

Duty on Community Planning Partners

3.9. The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires community planning partners to participate in community planning, to the extent that it is connected to their functions, and the partners must assist the council in carrying out its community planning duties.

3.10. The Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order 2015 will name the organisations that are required to participate in community planning.

3.11. Bringing together the key public sector organisations is a necessary part of an effective community planning process. Community planning partners will be involved at all stages of the process. They will work with councils to reach consensus on the long term objectives of the community plan and key objectives to be delivered upon, assist with monitoring and review of the plan, and seek participation of the community in carrying out their community planning duties.

3.12. Community planning partners work in partnership with the council on the following aspects:

- Development of the community plan;
- Delivery of assigned tasks identified in the community plan;
- Monitoring and review of the community plan; and,
- Seeking community participation in the community planning process, including production and review of the community plan.

3.13. While the council has responsibility for facilitating and managing the community planning process, the development of and delivery on the community plan is a shared task between all partners and the council. Community planning partners will be members of the council's community planning partnership and will attend the partnership meetings. Those attending the meetings will be expected to speak authoritatively for their organisations and commit them to agreed courses of action.

3.14. Partners will work collectively to identify the vision and long term objectives for the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. The further development of key themes, identification and delivery of actions is envisaged to be a shared task. It is expected that partners will take a lead role on delivering actions where they are appropriate to the responsibilities of their organisation. It is the responsibility of community planning partners and the council to reach consensus on the objectives and actions contained in the plan.

3.15. Community planning partners are effectively "champions" for the process. They are responsible for demonstrating the benefits of collaborative approach of community planning, and how it assists with delivering better outcomes for citizens and more efficient and effective service delivery. Partners should also encourage local people and organisations to become involved in the community planning process, which will influence decisions on the direction and policy of local service providers with which they interact.

3.16. Partners can use their learning through their role in community planning to gain a better understanding of local issues. This will enable them to consider the needs identified by various councils when developing policy and planning services at the regional level. They should actively seek to integrate community planning into their corporate and business planning regimes.

Duty on Departments

3.17. The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires that in exercising any function which might affect community planning, every Northern Ireland

department must promote and encourage community planning, and have regard to any implications of a community plan for the exercise of a department's functions.

3.18. To provide clarity to these requirements and to strengthen the links between central and local government the Partnership Panel for Northern Ireland has agreed to develop a generic engagement protocol that clearly establishes the nature of the relationship between central and local government. The precise terms of the protocol will be drafted collaboratively by central and local government and will aim to underpin the existing commitment from both sides to work together constructively to deliver improved outcomes for local people. The protocol is currently under development and is subject to Executive approval.

3.19. With councils now having a wider remit and greater role in delivering on commitments in the Programme for Government, departments will be working more closely with councils on the delivery of central government strategies and programmes.

3.20. The community planning process provides a platform for the integration and planning of public sector services and investment, with the focus being on tackling cross-cutting issues that require a collaborative approach for the benefit of citizens. Therefore, departments should engage with councils when developing their strategies and delivery structures on the relationship with community plans and community planning structures at the local level.

3.21. Departments should seek to integrate community planning outcomes into their corporate and business planning. They should learn from the local service providers for which they are responsible about how community planning assists with delivering better outcomes for citizens and more efficient and effective service delivery. Gaining a better understanding of local issues will positively influence their forward planning processes. It will enable them to consider the needs identified by various councils when developing policy and planning services at the regional level.

3.22. Within the context of the changing working environment between local and central government, more integrated working will be taking place on a number of fronts including the creation of the Partnership Panel. It is possible that departments which directly deliver services locally may be invited to participate in community planning at the local level, and it is for each department to consider the implications of this in consultation with local government. It is anticipated that departments will make every effort to respond positively to such requests. At the same time, councils should recognise that departments have responsibilities to their Ministers and that that is their first priority. However, taking into account Ministerial responsibilities, departments should ensure that community planning is included in corporate and business planning documents and reflected in their strategic planning structures.

The Community

3.23. The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the council and its community planning partners to seek the views of the community, encourage them to express their views, and take their views into account in the community planning process including those matters relevant to the statutory equality and good relations duties (i.e. presenting the equality and good relations screening/assessment with the proposals). The Community Planning Partnership should ensure they make full use, where possible and appropriate, of the statement of community involvement prepared for the local development plan process. The community planning process includes the production and review of the community plan.

3.24. The legislation reflects the Department's understanding of "community" in its widest sense. It states that the council must seek participation and views from:

- Residents in the district;
- Persons who are not resident but receive services in the district from the council or its community planning partners;
- Representatives of voluntary bodies whose activities benefit any part of the district;
- Representatives of businesses in the district;
- Other persons interested in the social, economic or environmental well-being of the area.

3.25. The wider community: The community has the opportunity to provide input on their views of the area and their needs, which will assist the council and its community planning partners with formulating the evidence base upon which decisions on the content of the community plan and its review can be based.

3.26. Through the community planning process the community can expect to be consulted and engaged on the social, environmental and economic issues of the planning and development of their area, and on the planning and delivery of services.

3.27. Community and voluntary sector: Community and voluntary organisations have a crucial role to play in improving the quality of life for local communities through their expertise in effectively engaging citizens, services users and potential users; through service design, commissioning, procurement and evaluation; through joint delivery partnerships; through contributing to a mixed economy of service provision and through engagement in scrutiny and review of services.

3.28. The sector is often best placed to reach and involve those sections of the community that the mainstream public sector may find hard to reach, and to access funding that is not available to public bodies. Specific efforts should be made to involve representatives from under-represented groups in the wider community planning structures, so that all section 75 groups have a voice in the process.

3.29. Community and voluntary organisations speaking on behalf of others in the community planning process should ensure that they have a fully representative and accountable structure that mandates them to do so.

3.30. Business: The private sector should be fully involved in the community planning process, as it is a significant user and supplier of local services, as well as a key provider of local employment. Business activity contributes both directly and indirectly to community prosperity and quality of life.

3.31. Councils and their partners should build on approaches to business involvement that have already been shown to work and should ensure that local businesses, economic development agencies, local chambers of commerce, trade union councils and other representative organisations are properly engaged in community planning.

Support Partners

3.32. It is recognised that there are a wide range of businesses including representatives of people carrying on businesses in the district, voluntary organisations, community and other groups which make vital contributions to promoting the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area and which may be involved in the process. These partners may have an interest and level of influence that is more locally or theme based, or have a particular skill that can assist with certain aspects of the community planning process.

3.33. Partnerships can invite other support partners to join their community planning process according to the priorities and needs of their particular area. These support partners may be organisations that can assist with the development and/or delivery of the community plan.

3.34. Partnerships should ensure that private sector interests are properly represented and should aim to include local business organisations as support partners.

3.35. Their role is on a voluntary basis, and the support partners should agree their role and extent to which they participate in the community planning process with the partnership. Their role will be similar to the statutory community planning partner's role, and they may be invited to join the strategic community planning partnership or a sub-group in relation to a particular theme or area, or to input at certain stages of the process due to their particular expertise, for example facilitation or community

engagement. A representative will be expected to attend the relevant meetings, speak authoritatively for their organisation and commit the organisation to agreed courses of action.

3.36. In determining support partners to participate in the community planning process partnerships should ensure they use a clear criterion that is reflective of the organisations role in the delivery of community planning outcomes. Partnerships may wish to consider drawing up an assessment tool to assist in such an assessment.

4. Partnership Structure and Governance

The Community Planning Partnership

4.1. It is for each council to decide upon an appropriate governance structure for its area. This could involve the establishment of a strategic partnership board. There are a variety of possible operating models for a strategic partnership, for example, it may have a broader membership with a consultative remit or it may have fewer partners with a narrower focus on delivering key outcomes. Membership of the strategic partnership is likely to involve elected members, council officials, statutory community planning partners and other key community stakeholders. It is likely the partnership board will consist of representation at a senior level within an organisation able to set the strategic direction for the local area.

4.2. The process will be led by this strategic Partnership, the purpose of which is to provide strategic direction and drive of the process, support, encourage and pursue joint working where it will mean better outcomes for citizens, based on ambitious joint planning and delivery of services.

4.3. Below the strategic Partnership there is the option of setting up other supporting structures such as thematic or local area partnerships that will focus on addressing more specific detailed and local issues. The support partners are likely to feature prominently at this level, where their interest and level of influence is more locally or theme based, or relevant to a particular stage of the community planning process.

4.4. There are some key issues that the council and its community planning partners may wish to consider when setting up the Partnership structure and its operation:

- **Ensure effective participation of all groups.** The council and its community planning partners will need to ensure opportunities for the full participation of all section 75 groups.

- **Optimise information and expertise from existing partnership structures to inform the Partnership:** There will already be many existing partnership structures in operation in the council district. Where groups are operating well it would be beneficial to establish links between existing structures and the community planning structure. There could be opportunities to integrate the new structure into the community planning structure model, to seek officials or elected representatives that provide dual representation in existing structures and within the community planning structure to optimise their expertise, and bring existing information to inform the evidence base for community planning. Existing Policing and Community Safety Partnerships are an obvious example of an already established partnership that could be incorporated within community planning, utilising key personnel and evidence base information.

- **Utilise existing partnerships to deliver on the community plan:** Existing partnerships that are already delivering successfully can be incorporated within the delivery structures and asked to deliver/lead on actions contained in the community plan. For example, there may be a health partnership that is already established and successfully delivering on health outcomes for the district. Actions contained within the community plan could be taken forward by the same partnership and added to their existing commitments.

- **Maintain an agreed and effective Partnership:** To ensure the Partnership achieves optimum impact it is necessary to keep the strategic Partnership and any supporting structure under review, and to allow the structure to evolve and be refined. Review of the structure could be undertaken at key stages of the process reflecting the Partnership's priorities, whether it is formulating the plan, delivering on actions, monitoring and evaluating performance, or conducting a review of the plan. Any changes should be agreed between the statutory partners. Over the longer term the Partnership can review the roles and responsibilities of existing partnerships that sit within the overall structure, and consider how rationalisation of existing partnerships can be achieved where they are not operating effectively.

- **Nominated personnel from participating organisations:** Those attending the meetings will be expected to speak authoritatively for their organisations and commit them to agreed courses of action. It is the responsibility of the statutory body or other organisation participating in the process to ensure it has appropriate representation at meetings. Representation can also change during the course of the process, depending on whether the focus of activity is to formulate the plan and agree to actions, or to deliver on actions where managerial responsibility for service delivery is important. The important issue is that the person attending meetings should have an influential senior role, be able to agree to targets and actions and ensure they are implemented.

- The Partnership should also **take into consideration other cross-cutting regional policies**. Partner organisations that are developing and delivering strategies that tackle particular themes will likely benefit from the platform that community planning provides. It can provide an opportunity to share information to inform the evidence base and policy development, gain a shared understanding of local issues, reduce duplication of effort, and identify opportunities to join up service delivery and planning. The Partnership Panel will also provide a forum for Ministers to highlight and discuss any new strategies likely to be of interest to community planning partnerships.

4.5. Managing and co-ordinating the process: The strategic Partnership should ensure that the development and implementation of community plans becomes firmly embedded into partners' managerial cultures, corporate, resource and business planning, and budgetary decisions. It should ensure that engagement is co-ordinated across the partnership

and, where appropriate, between organisations involved. A co-ordinated process for evidence collection should be established to underpin the development of plans and that analysis of this evidence is shared across and between organisations. Also, the experience of citizens accessing services should be sought with a view to solving problems and removing barriers to integrating delivery across sectors. Effective performance management arrangements should be put in place, including arrangements for scrutiny

5. The Partnership Panel

5.1. The Partnership Panel was established by the Executive under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 as part of the local government reform programme. Its aim is to improve co-ordination between Departments and the 11 new councils thereby helping to deliver better outcomes for local communities It is a strategic forum, where key decision makers from central and local government can come together to develop joined up solutions on tactical issues aimed at improving the delivery of local services. It is the Executive's view that joint policy development and better operational collaboration between both tiers of government, will help tackle the issues that really matter to local people. Working collectively, the Panel will be focused on harnessing the new challenges and new opportunities provided by the reform programme that will support local government in delivering results, particularly through programmes such as community planning.

5.2. The duties of the Panel may involve giving advice to any Northern Ireland department about matters affecting the exercise of any of its functions, making representations to any Northern Ireland department about any matters affecting, or of concern to, those involved in local government, and giving advice to those involved in local government. Whilst it will provide a forum for political discussion on matters of mutual interest and concern, its role will be advisory. Nevertheless, the Minister intends that the Panel will be productive in supporting the delivery of improved outcomes resulting from RPA, particularly in supporting delivery of the Programme for Government and the local government agenda.

6. The Community Planning Process

6.1. The purpose of community planning is to develop a long term strategy for the area and all its citizens based on a thorough analysis of needs and priorities, and opportunities for addressing them. This should generate a 10 to 15 year vision for improving social, economic and environmental wellbeing, and contributing to sustainable development.

6.2. The community planning process should achieve (see Figure 2):

- Development of a baseline of the existing conditions in the council area which includes an equality/good relations analysis or enables the Council to fulfil its equality scheme commitments to future monitoring requirements.
- An integrated view of the social, economic and environmental needs of the area in the context of regional, national and European policies and strategies, and taking into account communities and issues that extend into neighbouring council areas and jurisdictions;
- A long term vision for the future;
- A set of outcomes against which progress can be monitored and evaluated; and
- A clear focus on delivering in the short to medium term to achieve the long term vision.

Figure 2: The Process of Community Planning

Objectives

Provide a guide to the process that sets out the principles, objectives and guidelines for working on the comprehensive strategy for social, economic and environmental wellbeing of an area and its citizens.

Partnership & Community Involvement

Create a dialogue with people in other Government agencies and departments the locality, community / voluntary organisations, private sector; and set out the strategic, thematic and sectoral partnerships arrangements.

Vision

Set out a long term vision that:

- Promotes an outward focus on the needs of the community at large, its wellbeing and sustainable development
- Promote a holistic view of social, economic and environmental wellbeing and their interconnections
- Focuses attention on tackling causes with preventive or anticipatory measures
- Develops and monitors indicators of wellbeing together with "general heath" and service specific performance indicators
- Challenges or tests current services, policies and practice against their impact on current and future wellbeing
- Is evidence based

Action plan & Implementation

- Set out annual medium term (3 or 5 years) and long term aspirations (15-20 years and beyond) with clear targets and measures of success along with any equality/good relations assessment.
- Clarify the relationship to and between other statutory and non-statutory plans and processes including Best Value performance plans and seek to co-ordinate all consultation and involvement activities.
- Seeks to improve communications. Encourage clear responsibilities amongst various agencies towards the overall wellbeing of the area, co-ordinate contributions of individuals and organisations and ensure effective use of public resources.
- Link to regional and national, European and international strategies which support local wellbeing.
- Assess other plans and priorities against those set in the Community Strategy.

Monitoring & Review

Provide a clear review, monitoring and reporting process (in partnership with stakeholders) with evaluation of outcomes and recommendations for improvement or change to the community plan.

Community Involvement

6.3. The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the council and its community planning partners to seek the views of the community, encourage them to express their views, and take their views into account in the community planning process. The community planning process includes the production and review of the community plan.

6.4. The legislation reflects the Department's understanding of "community" in its widest sense. It states that the council must seek participation and views from:

- Residents in the district;
- Persons who are not resident but receive services in the district from the council or its community planning partners;
- Representatives of voluntary bodies whose activities benefit any part of the district;
- Representatives of businesses in the district;
- Other persons interested in the social, economic or environmental well-being of the area.

6.5. Transparency: The partnership structures needs to be clear about the purpose of engagement and the purpose of the community plan. The main aim of community engagement should be to improve the planning and delivery of services by making them more responsive to the needs and aspirations of communities. However, it is important to be realistic and honest with the community in that the community plan is not a tool to address all of the community's local issues. This will assist in keeping expectations about the process realistic and provides ongoing capacity building at the community level.

6.6. The partnership should operate in an open, democratic and accountable manner. Transparency in decision making will be assisted by feedback from the partnership after consultations, reassuring the community that they have been listened to and their views taken into account. Community bodies should also operate in an open and transparent and accountable manner. Organisations should be clear about how what communities of interest they represent, and those that they do not represent.

6.7. Inclusiveness: The community planning partnership should work to ensure that all section 75 groups have the opportunity to participate from the early stages of the process and have their needs and views taken into account. In seeking to engage with all sectors of the community, attention should be paid to engaging seldom heard groups that may not necessarily have their needs identified through the evidence base which provides information on a broad basis. In order to ensure equal opportunities, good relations and improvement of quality of life for all

citizens, views should be sought from all Section 75 groups. Practicalities such as venue accessibility, timing, transportation, methods of communication including the obligation to take account of the needs of speakers of other languages will be important considerations as will ensuring the obligation to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities is met. The voluntary and community sector will have information on the nature of the local community and, in particular, information on and routes to reaching seldom heard groups.

6.8. Although it is vital that the partnership engage fully with all groups in society and that they meet their commitments in relation to consultation and engagement set out in the council Equality Schemes as regards all section 75 groups they have, in light of specific government commitments, a particular responsibility to encourage and promote the role that can be played by children and young people in community planning. The Community Planning Partnership should seek to do this through reference to the structure set out in the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People's (NICCY) proposal for a Northern Ireland regional model of engagement.1 The Partnership should also consider an appropriate method of engagement to involve children and young people and should use a mechanism such as youth forums or other similar arrangements. [NICCY can provide partnerships with valuable advice and guidance in this area]

6.9. Partnerships should also have due regard to the need to promote the participation of people with disabilities in public life as part of their statutory disability duties.

6.10. Range of views: The Partnership should consider preparing an engagement strategy to ensure that they engage with a wide range of interests across all sectors of society from development to evaluation of the community plan. There is an often untapped pool of ideas, knowledge, skills, experience, energy and enthusiasm among individuals, groups and communities as a whole which, if realised, can be a real driver for change. A variety of methods should be employed to garner views from communities of place and interest to ensure the full range of perspectives and contributions can be accessed and included. Existing mechanisms, developed by the council and its community planning partners that have already been proved to be effective can be a starting point. A range of methods should be employed such as public meetings, workshops and focus groups, discussion forums and citizen's panels, web-based engagement, future search 'visioning' process, interactive displays and community questionnaires. The Partnership should consider the appropriateness of the method to the stage of the community planning process, the strengths and weaknesses of the method, and which sectors of society to which it will appeal. The Community Planning Toolkit provides information on a wide range of methods that can be employed

[1] For further information on NICCY's NI regional model of engagement and benefits for participation please follow the link - ***www.niccy.org/Participation/community-planning-***

and how to ensure the range of views are captured. **http://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/**

Identifying the Vision, Outcomes and Actions

6.11. A vision is a statement of purpose or intent that sets the overall direction for the area over the long term, and will drive the actions of the partnership in the short to medium term. The vision and outcomes identified should be high level, informed by a shared evidence base, and should set the context for local priorities and not be driven by them.

6.12. The community plan is a strategic planning tool that should be used to focus on long term district-wide issues where partners can collaboratively add value over the longer term. A community plan, due to its strategic nature, cannot realistically cover every issue that may be relevant to a local community. More localised issues should be addressed through other relevant themed or area-based strategies that sit within the framework of community planning. Also, there may be issues of critical importance locally that are either short term in nature or are wholly the remit of one particular organisation, and are not appropriate to be contained in the community plan. Rather, the emphasis should be on identifying within the plan the broad priorities and themes that require a long term solution and collaborative working across a number of organisations[2].

6.13. The general move in both local and central government is to use an outcomes based approach. The community plan should use such an approach.

6.14. As partners will be expected to take all reasonable steps to deliver on the actions assigned to them, it is important that the actions identified are practically deliverable by the organisations concerned. Therefore, it is of benefit to the representatives of councils, statutory partners and support partners to gain an understanding of the various roles, remits and responsibilities of their respective organisations including their legal duties, resource limitations and accountabilities to other parts of government as early as possible in the process. Partner organisations should also raise possible concerns about deliverability at an early stage. This will assist in formulating actions with those constraints in mind.

Creating a Baseline

6.15. The evidence base will provide a baseline upon which decisions can be made and against which progress can be monitored. Qualitative and quantitative information gathered should include:

[2] ECNI Advice Note: Setting outcome measures, March 2011

- Census information and statistics from NISRA on population patterns, housing, economy, health and well-being, crime etc and existing survey information.

- Scoping relevant central government and service provider strategies and priorities for the area, progress reports on these existing strategies and service delivery improvements.

- An assessment of the key characteristics and assets unique to the area eg. environment and natural resources, heritage and tourism destinations, retail and leisure, industry and IT, transportation, health and sport, education campuses etc.

6.16. The evidence base should be pooled and shared by all those involved in the community planning process including the council, its community planning partners, support partners, service providers in the area key community stakeholders and central government departments. A shared, solid and reliable evidence base based on objective need will assist the organisations and people involved reach a common understanding of issues affecting the area and assist with transparency in the decision-making process.

6.17. The aim is to provide a baseline upon which decisions can be made and against which progress can be monitored. A solid, reliable evidence base that community planning partners and the council can agree upon will assist with reaching consensus on the vision and outcomes for the area.

7. Key Issues to be Addressed

7.1. The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires that the community planning process identifies:

- The long term objectives for improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the district.
- The reference to social well-being includes promoting equality of opportunity (in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998) and without prejudice to this having regard to the desirability of promoting good relations.
- The reference to economic well-being includes tackling poverty, social exclusion and patterns of deprivation;
- The long term objectives for contributing to the achievement of sustainable development; and,
- The actions to be performed and functions to be exercised by the council and its community planning partners (including actions and functions related to the planning, provision and improvement of public services) for the purpose of meeting the objectives.

7.2. Social, economic and environmental well-being, sustainability, equality and good relations, and tackling poverty, social exclusion and deprivation are themes that permeate across central and local government policy and service provision, and therefore should be embedded in the community planning process. The following strategies, which provide guidance on these cross-cutting issues and are relevant to all sectors of society, represent fundamental considerations that should be tackled in an integrated way and reflected in the community plan appropriate to the circumstances of the individual local context.

Equality, Good Relations and Social Inclusion

7.3. Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 all public authorities have a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and without prejudice to this regard to the desirability of promoting, good relations. The Local Government (NI) Act 2014 explicitly makes reference to this duty in relation to community planning. Equality of opportunity and social inclusion should be embedded into all stages of the process along with the desirability of promoting good relations. The partners should consider how the promotion of good relations can be applied to all section 75 groups as community planning should reflect and respect the diversity in a particular area. Tackling longer term issues and problem areas will be assisted by the community planning process, which focuses on a long term view. It provides an opportunity to consider how equality and good relations can be addressed more cohesively through linking existing equality and good relations programmes with physical planning projects, economic development, tourism and leisure, within the framework of community planning.

7.4. The Community Planning Partnership should actively engage with the policies and strategies set out in Together: Building a United Community and consider how these might be enhanced and integrated into both the final Community Plan and the community planning process. As part of their commitment to promote equality and good relations Partnerships should actively consult with both the Equality Commission and the Community Relations Council throughout the development of the plan Partnership should also consider the inequalities identified in their audit of inequalities which will have been undertaken in order to inform section 75 action plans.

7.5. Community planning will also make a clear contribution to the development and delivery of social policy and partnerships should ensure they fully engage with the policies set out in the delivering social change agenda.

8. Sustainable Development

8.1. The Partnership should set out sustainable development and integration of social, economic and environmental priorities as a key principle of their community plans and should have regard to the Executive's sustainable development strategy in the development of their community plan.

9. Rural Proofing

9.1. The Partnership is encouraged to consider and take account of the needs of rural dwellers within the district in the development of its community plan. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has published guidance on rural proofing, which sets out the process. Partnerships should also be aware that DARD is progressing proposals for primary legislation within the 2011 -2016 Assembly mandate, subject to Executive agreement, which would place a statutory duty on councils to consider the needs of people living in rural areas when developing, revising or implementing strategies, policies or plans.

10. Spatial Planning

10.1. The Executive's spatial strategy is prepared under the Strategic Planning (NI) Order 1999 which states that the Department for Regional Development (DRD) is responsible for formulating a Regional Development Strategy 2035 for the long term development of Northern Ireland. Departments must have regard to the Regional Development Strategy in exercising any functions in relation to development.

Statutory Link between the Community Plan & the Local Development Plan

10.2. The local development plan system aims to move away from a narrow land use focus towards a 'place shaping' approach which incorporates a spatial analysis and visioning process. It provides a unique opportunity for the council to shape places for local communities which can be used by all and enable them to adopt a joined up approach, incorporating linkages to other functions such as regeneration, local economic development and local tourism, within the framework of community planning. Therefore, it provides the spatial strategy for the community plan, flowing from the vision for the council area and its communities, and linking public and private sector investment through the land use planning system. In preparing their local development plans councils are required to take account of both the Regional Development Strategy 2035 policy and advice contained in the guidance issued by the department (which will

include the Strategic Planning Policy Statement when published in final form) and their own current community plan. However there is no requirement to prepare a community plan in advance of the local development plan. If a community plan is prepared after a local development plan has been adopted, then councils should review and amend the local development plan as appropriate, to take account of the community plan.

10.3. The local development plan should fulfil the following functions:

- provide a 15-year framework to support the economic and social needs of the district in line with regional strategies and policies, while providing for the delivery of sustainable development;
- facilitate sustainable growth by co-ordinating public and private investment to encourage development where it can be of most benefit to the wellbeing of the community;
- allocate sufficient land to meet society's needs;
- provide an opportunity for all stakeholders, including the public, to have a say about where and how development within their local area should take place;
- provide a plan-led framework for rational and consistent decision-making by the public, private and community sectors and those affected by development proposals; and,
- deliver the spatial aspects of the council's current community plan.

10.4. Common to both the local development plan and community planning processes is that they aim to provide a long term vision/framework to support the social, economic and environmental needs of the area, require an evidence-based approach to decision-making, and seek the engagement of the community throughout the process. Councils are reminded that they have duties in relation to consultees as a result of equality scheme commitments. The following aspects of the local development plan process could assist/be co-ordinated with the preparation of the community plan:

- Community involvement and statutory consultees - the council must prepare a statement of community involvement [3] containing the strategy for how and when the community are to be involved in the local development plan process.
- The Statement of Community Involvement is a statement of the council's policies for actively involving the community from the outset in the making of the local development plan and in carrying out its development management functions. The Statement is a key tool in increasing awareness of the scope for community participation and involvement.

[3] SR 2015 No. 63 - The Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Effectively it is the how, where, when and by what means the council will engage / involve the community.

- In preparing this, the council can consider how this will align with community involvement in the community planning process, such as the early stages of shaping the vision and high level outcomes. The council is also required to engage early with a number of statutory consultees in the preparation of their local development plan in order to generate alternative strategies and options for the future development in the council district. The council must take account of any representations from statutory consultees in preparing the plan. This approach will provide councils with information for the evidence base, and ensure appropriate environmental considerations are taken into account throughout the plan preparation process. This information and expertise can feed into the evidence base, identification of the vision and outcomes and environmental considerations of the community plan. The council may wish to consider if representatives of these bodies should be included in the of the community plan.
- Sustainability appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – the purpose of the sustainability appraisal is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of plans and programmes such as the local development plan. It must be carried out from the outset and throughout the process, and will help to ensure that decisions are made that contribute to the objective of furthering sustainable development. The SEA process flows from the SEA Directive which aims to integrate environmental considerations into strategic decision making. The sustainability appraisal will assist with ensuring the spatial plan for the area is prepared, taking to account its wider context. It will use baseline data to inform the appraisal of the likely significant social, economic and environmental effects of implementing the local development plan, including reasonable alternatives, taking into account the evidence base. This information can also underpin the decisions on the vision and high level outcomes for the community planning process. The SA process extends to monitoring the implementation of the local development plan.
- Monitoring and review of the local development plan – after adoption, the plan must be monitored annually and reviewed every five years, or sooner if circumstances require it. The indicators by which the local development plan will be monitored should align with the high level vision, outcomes and actions contained in the community plan. Review of the community plan will assist in determining whether the local development plan also needs to be reviewed.

11. Collaborative Working Across Boundaries

11.1. While the council must produce a community plan for its area, it should take into consideration issues outside its boundaries, where they contribute to the social, environmental and economic well-being of the area and quality of life of its citizens. There may be services located

outside its boundary that are accessed by its citizens, or conversely there may be communities that lie outside a council boundary, including the Republic of Ireland, that access council services. Community planning partners and neighbouring councils should assist each other in providing relevant information to inform the community planning process. Neighbouring councils can also choose to work together to share resources, and where relevant, establish protocols for working together e.g. Memorandums of Understanding.

11.2. Councils are already working together on issues such as health, energy, IT, and environmental resources, which can be considered within the cohesive framework of community planning. The Framework for Co-operation –Spatial Strategies of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland identifies priority areas for co-operation on spatial planning issues, and states that a key factor in facilitating better joint working is more detailed and consistent information at the local level. It states that co-operation should take place at the regional level in the development and implementation of the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland and National Spatial Strategy for the Republic of Ireland, and at local authority level through incorporation of regional guidance into development plans, community plans and regeneration schemes, and cross border projects.

11.3. Reforms in the Republic of Ireland include the introduction of a similar process to community planning called “local and community planning”. While there are differences in the structures being set up and timeframes for their implementation, both systems being introduced position local government as the democratically accountable lead partner who will collaborate and co-ordinate with other public service providers to provide for economic, social and environmental well-being at the local level. Since both processes are in the early stages of development there is an opportunity for border councils to consider how they can achieve some alignment and establish mutually beneficial working structures and processes.

12. Production and Publication

12.1. The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the council to produce a community plan, once a degree of consensus has been reached between it and the community planning partners on the objectives of the district and the actions to be taken to achieve the objectives. The community plan must contain a description of the objectives and actions, and be produced and published as soon as reasonably practicable after a degree of consensus has been reached.

12.2. Reaching consensus: It is at this stage that the council will be required to make a judgement as to when a degree of consensus has been reached between the partners. The objective should be to develop a shared understanding of local needs, based firmly on the available evidence and the views and aspirations of the community. The objective is not to

accommodate the separate operational outlooks of individual partner organisations which should be captured in their own strategies, and it is not to reach agreement by negotiation. It is understood that consensus may take time to be reached, and that it not be possible or expected that complete consensus between all partners will be possible on every aspect. However, there should at least be consensus on the vision, outcomes and key actions as the document is the key strategic, long term plan for the local area.

12.3. The primary emphasis should be on building relationships and developing understanding between partners over the long term, and where agreement cannot be reached initially, then there is an opportunity to revisit an issue later when the community plan is reviewed.

12.4. Prior to publication, the council should ensure that the community planning partners agree to the content and format of the plan, and the council should publish the community plan as soon as possible after the plan has been agreed.

12.5. Content and publication: It is recommended that the first community plan for an area should be published within a maximum of two years of commencement of the community planning duty. The first community plan should be considered as an interim plan, as it is understood that it will take some time for councils' new powers and functions under local government reform to fully 'bed in' to their operational and governance structures and organisational culture. However, it is also important that the community planning process gains some traction within a reasonably short timeframe to ensure its strategic significance influences decisions on the operational and governance structures of the council. The council can use the monitoring and review procedures to amend the plan within a recommended two year timeframe after first publication (more information on monitoring and review in section 13 below.

12.6. The title page of the plan should clearly state what it contains, and that it is the duty of the council to publish a community plan for the area under Section 68 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. It should contain clear information on the evidence base and how the vision, outcomes and actions are derived from it, who is responsible for delivering on actions and when actions will be delivered to achieve the outcomes. The council may wish to consider publishing separate documents for different parts of their area/communities, but the strategy for the overall area should still remain clear.

12.7. The plan should be published in both paper and electronic forms, and made available in other formats when requested. The council should consider at the time of publication if the plan could usefully be publicised in other formats (such as Braille, large print, audio or summary form) or in other languages.

12.8. The plan should be widely accessible and the council should use a variety of means to publicise the plan. The council and its community planning partners should consider how to promote broad awareness of the plan to encourage community ownership and interest in its delivery and progress.

13. Monitoring, Review and Reporting

13.1. The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the council and its community planning partners to make arrangements to monitor progress against meeting the plan objectives, and the effectiveness of the actions taken for the purpose of meeting those objectives. The council must publish a statement once every two years on outcomes achieved and actions taken, and community planning partners must provide the council with relevant information to enable the council to do so. The first statement must be produced within two years of the community plan being published.

13.2. The Act also requires the council and its community planning partners, before the fourth anniversary of the publication of the community plan, to carry out a review of the plan.

13.3. The Partnership will need to agree what indicators they will use to measure progress on the outcomes, and what targets they will set themselves for improvement. They should also consider what information they need to collect for the purposes of monitoring their section 75 commitments.

13.4. The council must ensure that, along with its community planning partners, it monitors performance against the agreed objectives and actions contained in the plan. Where agreed actions are not being progressed, reasons for this should be reviewed with the partners and appropriate action taken to assist progress or amend the plan. The council is responsible for accountability to the public by publishing a statement on progress every 2 years.

13.5. In more detail, and as required by the Act, this means that:

- a community plan should include a set of actions which district councils and their partners publicly commit to carrying out over the short to medium term.
- those actions should be grounded in a full understanding both of priorities and actions that can be taken within a 10-15 year period and of the scope for local partners to realise them. These priorities and actions may be taken with a view to protecting or enhancing well-being over even longer timescales. That may involve difficult choices: all public bodies are subject to legal, policy and resource constraints on their freedom to act.

- district councils should develop appropriate improvement objectives accordingly. These will clearly contribute to the "strategic effectiveness" improvement aspect, but other aspects, in particular fairness and sustainability, may be particularly relevant.
- other public bodies should also integrate community planning actions into their business planning processes, by formulating appropriate objectives, in line with their existing (and continuing) different roles and accountabilities.
- delivery of those objectives should inform the continuing development of community planning. All partners should, individually and collectively, consider the delivery and relevance of community planning actions, as part of the process of monitoring implementation. If it becomes clear that one or more partners are unable to carry out community planning actions, or that those actions or the objectives to which they relate have become irrelevant or less important, partners should consider amending them.

Performance Improvement

13.6. Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the council to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in carrying out its functions. The council must have regard to the need to improve its performance in relation to strategic effectiveness, service quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability, efficiency and innovation.

13.7. There is a clear link between the community planning process and the council's performance improvement regime. Community planning focuses on achieving better outcomes for citizens accessing services, through the collaborative working of organisations to improve service delivery for the benefit of citizens. A successful community plan will consist of a long term vision for the area, underpinned by a set of outcomes identified for key themes, with clear accountability and interim performance measures. The community planning process should achieve better integration of public sector services and investment resulting in performance improvements for organisations involved.

13.8. The council is required to prepare an improvement plan containing improvement objectives, which includes the strategic objectives for 10 to 15 years ahead set out in the community plan. The community plan identifies long term outcomes using a solid, reliable evidence base as a baseline upon which decisions can be made and against which progress can be monitored. The council must annually monitor its performance and publicise the information. In order to measure performance against its strategic objectives, the council can consider setting short to medium term objectives through action plans or their existing corporate and business plans.

13.9. Community planning partners should also build into their corporate and business planning regimes their commitments contained in community plans.

13.10. Performance improvement and community planning should inform, and be informed by, each other. It is expected that that:

- improvement should take full and proper account of the strategic vision as set out in the community plan. This provides the frame within which many short-term improvement priorities should sit. Although there will be other such priorities which do not, either because they are too short-term or too confined to one organisation, they should at least not conflict with the community plan;

- community planning should be based both on an understanding of what appears reasonably deliverable by a district council and/or its partners, and on continual monitoring of how effective that delivery is. If and when it becomes clear, from shorter-term information, that community planning objectives are not deliverable or no longer relevant, those objectives should change; and

- the use of the new flexibilities and freedoms offered by the general power of competence should be influenced significantly by issues identified through the community planning process. Similarly, performance improvement considerations should influence a council's choices in using the general power of competence and how it engages with its community planning partners.

GLOSSARY

In this Guidance:

"**the 1972 Act**" means the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972;

"**the 2014 Act"** means the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014;

"**Councillor**" for the purposes of this Code means-

(a) any person who is elected to office within a council,

(b) any person chosen under section 11(4b) of the Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962 to fill a casual vacancy,

(c) any person treated as a non-voting member by section 21 of the 2014 Act, and

(d) any person who is not an elected representative as mentioned in section 32(4) of the 2014 Act;

"**council**" means the council of a local government district established in accordance with the Local Government (Boundaries) Act (Northern Ireland) 2008[4];

"**Chief Executive**", means a person appointed as clerk of a council; and

"**meeting**" means any meeting—

(a) of the relevant council or of a committee or sub-committee of the relevant council,

(b) of the executive of the relevant council or of a committee or sub-committee of the executive of the relevant council,

(c) of a joint committee or sub-committee of a joint committee which includes the relevant council, or

(d) where members or officers of the relevant council are present, including circumstances where a member of an executive or officer of the council, acting alone exercises a function of the council.

Report to:	**Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee**
Subject:	*Appointment of an Arbitrator*
Date:	12 November 2015
Reporting Officer:	Eddy Curtis, Director of Strategy, Policy and Performance
Contact Officer:	Eddy Curtis, Director of Strategy, Policy and Performance

Decisions Required

Appointment of an Arbitrator

1.0 **Purpose & Background**

1.1 The datahub was developed following a proposal submitted to the Department of Justice in 2010. This proposal was successful and Robert Shaw Community Logistics, now trading as Planning Palette, was supported to develop the Datahub and funding model.

The 'Datahub' was launched by the Minister of Justice, David Forde in July 2012.

Newry and Mourne District Council and 4 Partner organisations entered into a contract with Planning Palette and contributed to the running costs of the Datahub from 2012. This covered the costs to have their data analysed and mapped on the Datahub. These maps and reports showed shifting levels of draw on service from Council, PSNI, NIHE, NIFRS and SHSCT which assists partners collaborate to address local need.

The Datahub provision was extended to Down District Council as a Partner in 2014.

2.0 **Key Issues**

- As part of the original contract there was an allowance for a concluding payment to RSCL/Planning Palette to bring datahub to a conclusion in advance of going to formal tender.
- It is proposed that Quigg Golden, experts in procurement law, are appointed as arbitrators in this case.
- The result of the arbitration by Quigg Golden to be binding for both parties.

3.0 **Resource Implications**

Quigg Golden fee.

4.0 **Appendices**

None.