



December 12th, 2017

Notice Of Meeting

You are invited to attend the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting to be held on **Thursday, 14th December 2017 at 5:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire.**

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

Chair: Councillor T Hearty

Vice Chair: Councillor A McMurray

Members: Councillor P Byrne Councillor R Burgess

Councillor M Carr Councillor S Doran

Councillor C Enright Councillor D Hyland

Councillor O McMahon Councillor B Ó'Muirí

Councillor M Ruane Councillor M Savage

Councillor G Sharvin Councillor G Stokes


Councillor W Walker

Agenda

1.0 Apologies

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee held on 16 November 2017 (copy attached)

 [SPR-16112017.pdf](#)

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Local Development Plan

4.0 Local Development Plan Preparatory Studies - Paper 15: Strategic Settlement Evaluation (copy to follow)

 [SPR Report re LDP Paper 15 - Strategic Settlement Evaluation.pdf](#)

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 [LDP Paper 15 - Strategic Settlement Evaluation.pdf](#)

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Performance

5.0 Improvement Audit and Assessment Report 2017-2018 (copy attached)

 [Cover Report Improvement Audit and Assessment.pdf](#)

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 [Appendix 1 Cover Letter from NIAO.pdf](#)

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 [Appendix 2 S95 Report for NMDDC.pdf](#)

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 [Appendix 3 Audit Certificate.pdf](#)

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Corporate Services - Democratic Services

6.0 Minutes of Elected Member Development Working Group held on 4 December 2016 (copy attached)

 [EMDWG.pdf](#)

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 [EMDWG appx 2.pdf](#)


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


7.0 CCTV - SPWG (copy attached)

 *CCTV Report 1.pdf*

Not included

 *Appendix 1 - CCTV Report.pdf*

Not included

 *Appendix 2 CCTV.pdf*

Not included

8.0 Surplus Land at Forkill (copy attached)


 *Surplus land Forkhill.pdf*

Not included

9.0 In-Year Budget Reallocation (copy to follow)

Ken

10.0 Fire Paint at Downpatrick Leisure Centre (copy to follow)

 *SP&R Report DLC 14 December 2017.pdf*

Not included

11.0 Complaints (copy to follow)

G McBride

Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews	terry.andrews@nmandd.org
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Cllr Patrick Brown	patrick.brown@nmandd.org
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ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – THURSDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2016 –

ITEMS STILL IN PROGRESS OR ON-GOING.

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2015					
SPR/210/2016	Derelict Site- Daisy Hill, Newry	<p>Agreed to:</p> <p>Declare the land as surplus.</p> <p>Request LPS to provide a current market valuation and a recommendation on the most appropriate way to dispose of the land.</p>	K Scullion	Matter with Estates Department And further instructions awaited.	

ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – THURSDAY 13 OCTOBER 2016 – ITEMS STILL IN PROGRESS OR ON-GOING.

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2015					
SPR/236/2016	Right of Way Proposal at Ballyedmond, Killowen, Rostrevor	<p>It was agreed to accept the officer's recommendations as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the details of the proposed Killowen Coastal Path around the Big Moat at Ballyedmond as per the presentation at the meeting, ie. the design drawings and technical specification. • A joint application for Planning Permission will be submitted by the Ballyedmond Estate and the Council for the creation of the proposed Coastal Path as per the approved details. 	C Mallon	<p>On-going.</p> <p><i>Ballyedmond Estates Consultants updating the Ecological Impact Assessments and collating additional information. This matter is on-going.</i></p>	

ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2016 – ITEMS STILL IN PROGRESS OR ON-GOING.

SPR/250/2016	Disposal of Land at Carnbane Road, Newry beside Carnbane Playing Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to express an interest in the disposal of land at Carnbane Road, Newry as this land is important for the future management and development of Carnbane Playing Fields and the land is under Council control as present. The acquisition will also resolve any discrepancies in the Council boundary. • Council to seek a transfer at nominal value in the first instance. • If Council is successful in acquiring this land, the Council agree to re-imburse NIE for any costs incurred in the relocation of their equipment on this site in the event of development and also agree to enter into a Way leave Agreement with NIE for the equipment. • Easements may also be required for Transport NI, BT and NI Water. 	L Moore	Council interest withdrawn.	Y
SPR/251/2016	Disposal of Land at Sugar Island, Newry	<p>Council to express an interest in the disposal of land at Sugar Island, Newry.</p> <p>Council to seek a transfer at nominal value in the first instance.</p>	B Magill	Acquisition in progress.	Y
SPR/257/2016	Peace IV	Application to be submitted to Shared Spaces and Services funding call for the John Doyle Peace Centre.	J McCabe	Economic Appraisal and assessment on-going.	
SPR/282/2016	Correspondence from the Department for Communities Regeneration Bill	Council to write to the Minister for Communities asking him to reconsider the decision not to progress the Regeneration Bill.	L Hannaway	To be completed once a Minister for Communities is in place.	

ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER 2017

SPR/181/2017	Recruitment of RTS Director	Further report to be presented to SPR Committee in December 2017.	L Hannaway.	Deferred to January SPR Committee Meeting.	On-going
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ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2017

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SPR/186/2017	Presentation of 2018 Annual Report/NMD Connect	<p>Annual Report and NMD Connect to be combined into one document for production in February 2018, and posted on the Council's website with a limited print run of 1,000. The printed copies to be distributed in Council buildings and areas of high footfall throughout the district, with the document being available in Irish as a pdf on the website.</p> <p>Agreed that the initial print run be extended if required, with an updated report being presented to Committee for information.</p>	R Mackin	Agreed.	Y
SPR/187/2017	Proposals for the Establishment of an Irish Language Bursary Scheme and a Financial Scheme	<p>Agreed that the following be established for the 2018/19 financial year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Irish Language Bursary Scheme. • A Financial Assistance Scheme with 2 	R Mackin	Agreed.	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
		specific themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Irish Language community renewal and development. ➤ Positively engaging the Irish Language. 			
SPR/188/2017	Response to Consultation on Heritage Lottery Fund Draft Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan	Agreed to approve draft response to the Heritage Lottery Fund draft Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan (2017-2022) for submission by 5 January 2018.	R Mackin	Agreed.	Y
SPR/189/2017	Operating Protocol for Audio Recording of Council and Committee Meetings	Agreed to approve the recommended operating protocol for audio recording of Council and Committee meetings.	L Hannaway	Agreed.	Y
SPR/190/2017	Mid Year Progress Report – Performance Improvement Plan 2017-18	Agreed – Mid-Year Progress Report – Performance Improvement Plan 2017/18. Agreed that the complaints figure would be provided to SPR Committee on a quarterly basis going forward.	J McBride	Agreed. Will be published in the public domain following Full Council approval in December 2017	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SPR/192/2017	Newry Mourne and Down Council Seal	Agreed to purchase 2 new text only seals in the name of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.	A Robb.	Approved.	Y
SPR/194/2017	Estates Asset Management Policy for Newry Mourne and Down District Council	Agreed to approve the Estates Asset Management Policy for the management of Property Assets under the Council ownership and to approve the phasing of the information gathering and estates needs by DEA, with the Newry DEA being completed first.	C Mallon.	Approved.	Y
SPR/195/2017	Properties of Murphy's Trust, Hill Street, Newry	Agreed – Council to proceed to obtain a full condition survey of properties in Newry, being offered to Council as a gift by the Murphy Trust, before taking any further decision on acceptance.	D Carville	Approved.	Y
SPR/196/2017	Motion regarding the Development of a 15 Acre Park at Albert Basin, Newry	<p>Agreed :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council confirms its commitment to a full, 15-acre community park project on the Albert Basin site in Newry. The Council recognises that the Albert Basin site was given to the people of Newry in 1986 and that a commitment was given at that time to develop it as a recreation and amenity area for the generations of the future. It also recognises 	L Hannaway.	Approved.	Y

		<p>the work of community activists in presenting their plans for the park through a petition with over 10,000 signatures.</p> <p>➤ Council commits to delivering a park in parallel with other capital works projects in Newry within the next Council term. The Council shall within 3 months establish a task and finish group reporting to the Capital Projects Working Group, consisting of elected members, community representatives and a dedicated Council officer to establish plans to move the Albert Basin park project forward and investigate funding options.</p>			
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ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2015

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SPR/197/2017	Management Accounts to 30 September 2017	Agreed to note the Management Accounts for the first 6 months of the 2017-18 financial year; the 6 months ending 30 September 2017.	D Carville	Noted.	Y
SPR/198/2017	Half Year Treasury Report	Noted.	K Montgomery	Noted.	Y

SPR/199/2017	Forkhill GAC Waive of Deed of Charge	Agreed to Council releasing a first ranking charge and accepting a second ranking charge on the lands of Peadar O'Doirnin GAC, Forkhill.	D Carville	Approved.	Y
SPR/200/2017	Land at Carnbane Rd, Newry	Agreed to withdraw the Council's registered interest in the land offered as surplus at Carnbane, Newry by the Department for Infrastructure.	D Carville.	Approved.	Y
SPR/201/2017	Public Space and Facilities CCTV	Special Meeting of the SPP Working Group to be convened to which all Councillors to be invited and any additional available information on options for a way forward to be provided to the Working Group with a focus on Option 3.	J McBride	Approved. SPP WG Meeting held 27.11.2017.	Y
SPR/202/2017	Noted Taking in Closed Session	Agreed to note the procedures for record keeping of Council and Committee proceedings when matters of a confidential nature are being discussed.	L Hannaway	Noted.	Y
SPR/203/2017	Proposed Lease – Site at the Former Old Gasworks Site, Newry – To Trustees of Bunscoil an luir	Agreed to proceed to enter into a further 5 year lease agreement with Bunscoil an luir for property at former Old Gasworks site, Newry, subject to rental valuation from Land and Property Services and completion of all legal formalities.	A Robb.	Approved.	Y

SPR/204/2017	Revaluation of Assets for Balance Sheet Purposes.	<p>Approved –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council engage Land and Property Services (LPS) to undertake valuations of its land and buildings for the 2017/18 year under a Direct Award Contract. Officers work collaboratively with other Councils, via ALGFO to enter into a formal contract with LPS for valuation services commencing 2018. 	D Carville	Approved.	Y
SPR/205/2017	Car Parking at the Closed Newry Sports Centre.	Approved - recommendations outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the Officer's report relating to car parking arrangements at the former Newry Sports Centre, Patrick Street, Newry and other potential parking facilities under the control of the Council in the area of the Council Offices, Monaghan Row, Newry, and that the Southern Area Health Trust be included in the list of parties to be approached in relation to all of the car parks referred to in the report.	C Mallon	Approved.	Y
SPR/207/2017	Strategic Projects Working Group Action Sheet and Minute	<p>Noted - content of the action sheet of the Strategic Projects Working Group meeting held on 17 October 2017, including the approval of the detail listed in the actions taken/progress to date column and recommendations relating to the removal/retention of matters on the action sheet.</p> <p>Also agreed that the minute relating to the motion on development of a park on Albert Basin lands</p>	Democratic Services	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Approved.</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>

		be amended to read: "Councillor Savage stated that Council needed to set strategic direction; however this could only be done when dealt with at the proper Committee. Following this, the scoping work required would be undertaken			
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Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 December 2017
Subject:	Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan Preparatory Studies Paper 15: Strategic Settlement Hierarchy
Reporting Officer:	Anthony McKay, Chief Planning Officer
Contact Officer:	Andrew Hay, Principal Planning Officer

Decisions required:

Note the content of this report.

1.0 Purpose and Background:

- 1.1 A programme of preparatory work is being undertaken as part of the Local Development Plan (LDP) process. Preparatory studies are essential in providing the evidence base for preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP). A reliable and comprehensive evidence base is vital to informing and justifying the 'soundness' of the LDP documents (Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan) and to show how planning policies and proposals help to achieve the social, economic and environmental objectives for the plan area.
- 1.2 'Paper 15: Strategic Settlement Hierarchy' introduces members to the strategic evaluation of the 88 settlements currently designated in Newry, Mourne and Down; as identified in the existing development plans that apply to the District (i.e. the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015[ADAP] and the Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 [BNMAP]). The evaluation exercise examines the role and position of each settlement within the existing settlement hierarchies, and in reviewing their classification, informs how they should be classified in the proposed new settlement hierarchy for the Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan. The exercise also identifies other locations for consideration as potential new small settlements.
- 1.3 Both the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) set out the need for Local Development Plans to establish a settlement hierarchy which will aid the promotion of sustainable development. The settlement hierarchy will inform the future distribution of development across the District.
- 1.4 Members will recall that 'Paper 1 (2nd Revision): Population and Growth – Settlement Hierarchy (presented to the SPR Committee 15/10/15), discussed the need to re-examine the settlement hierarchy for the District and to identify if any settlements need to be reclassified based on their function, services and population.
- 1.5 Members will also recall that the settlement hierarchy was considered at the recent LDP Member Workshop 1: Spatial Growth Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy, and Land Allocation, held on 3/10/17. In consideration of the settlement hierarchy and the associated options, Members unanimously agreed "to re-examine the existing settlement hierarchy in order to consider if any settlement should be reclassified or declassified while also considering the potential for identifying a number of new small settlements". The feedback from this Member Workshop has informed this paper.

1.6	<p>The paper provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of the regional policy context for future physical development across a settlement hierarchy. • An overview of the existing settlement hierarchies provided in ADAP and BNMAP. • An evaluation of the existing settlement hierarchy in the context of the 'Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure Wheel'; and the 'Housing Evaluation Framework' as set out in the RDS. • A proposed settlement hierarchy for the District taking account of the settlement evaluation.
1.7	Members are asked to note the content of this report, and have regard to the findings of the paper and the proposed settlement hierarchy.
2.0	Key issues:
2.1	Each of the District's 88 existing settlements has been appraised and evaluated against the 2011 Census data, the six tests of the 'Housing Evaluation Framework', and the 'Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure Wheel' as outlined in the RDS, together with the information detailed within the NISRA document 'Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements'. Encompassing this information has enabled an overview of the services, facilities, physical infrastructure and environmental characteristics of each settlement to be compiled. To date the evaluation has comprised mainly of desk-top research with further detailed survey work to be completed as part of the plan process.
2.2	<p>Following this evaluation, a proposed settlement hierarchy has been compiled. The proposed settlement hierarchy within the LDP contains four tiers. Newry City and the main town of Downpatrick are proposed to be located within Tier 1 and to be the locations where development will be focused. The main hubs are then to be supported by the smaller towns, villages and small settlements which have been identified as local centres serving the needs of the rural hinterland. The proposed 4 tiers are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tier 1: City and Main town - Tier 2: Local and Small towns - Tier 3: Villages - Tier 4: Small Settlements
2.3	<p>The alignment and evaluation of the extant Area Plan hierarchies has resulted in the proposed reclassification of some settlements. Of the 88 settlements within the existing hierarchy the majority of settlements have remained within their existing classification. The evaluation confirms Newry City and Downpatrick as the main hubs within the District taking into account their level of service provision, potential for growth and population size. Other recommendations proposed within the settlement hierarchy are for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton to be reclassified from Tier 2 to Tier 3, • Saintfield, Killyleagh, Castewellan, Bessbrook to be reclassified from Tier 3 to Tier 2, • Ballyholland, The Spa, Shrigley, and Attical to be reclassified from Tier 3 to Tier 4, • Warrenpoint/Burren to be considered as separate settlements within the settlement hierarchy, with Warrenpoint retained in Tier 2, and Burren included in Tier 3.
2.4	The evaluation exercise also identifies other locations for assessment and consideration as potential new small settlements.
2.5	The settlement evaluation exercise and the proposed settlement hierarchy will inform the preparation of the LDP.

3.0	Recommendations:
3.1	Members are requested to note the content of this report and have regard to the findings of the paper and the proposed settlement hierarchy.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	N/A
5.0	Equality and good relations implications:
5.1	N/A
6.0	Appendices
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper 15: Strategic Settlement Hierarchy



Comhairle Ceantair
**an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin**
**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

Local Development Plan Preparatory Studies

Paper 15: Strategic Settlement Evaluation

December 2017

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Existing Settlement Hierarchy and Populations as per current Area Plans

Appendix B: Proposed Settlement Hierarchy and Populations for Newry, Mourne & Down District

Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of this paper is to introduce members to the strategic evaluation of the 88 settlements currently designated within Newry, Mourne and Down: as identified in the existing development plans that apply to the District (Ards & Down Area Plan 2015 [ADAP] and the Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 [BNMAP]). The evaluation exercise examines the role and position of each settlement within the existing settlement hierarchies, and in reviewing their classification, informs how they should be classified in the proposed new settlement hierarchy for the Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan. The exercise also identifies other locations for consideration as potential new small settlements.

One of the key functions of the new Local Development Plan (LDP) is to determine the role of settlements across the District by taking account of regional guidance detailed within the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) together with local circumstances. In doing so this will guide development proposals appropriate to a settlements role and function within the settlement hierarchy.

Content Overview

The paper provides:-

- i. A summary of the regional policy context for future physical development across a settlement hierarchy;
- ii. An overview of the existing settlement hierarchies provided in the ADAP 2015 and the BNMAP 2015,
- iii. An evaluation of the existing settlement hierarchy in the context of the Housing Evaluation Framework and the Hierarchy of Settlements & Related Infrastructure Wheel as set out in the RDS, and
- iv. A proposed settlement hierarchy for Newry, Mourne & Down District Council taking account of the settlement evaluation.

Recommendation

That members have regard to the findings of this paper and consider the position of settlements in the proposed new hierarchy.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This paper is the latest in a series of Position Papers being presented to the Members in building the evidence base for the new Newry, Mourne & Down LDP.

1.2 The strategic policy context for the settlement hierarchy is provided by the RDS and the SPPS. The RDS introduced a framework for the future physical development of the Region by providing an overarching strategic framework aimed at achieving balanced and sustainable development across the region through the implementation of a spatial development strategy which is designed to reinforce and strengthen the hubs, corridors and gateways of Northern Ireland. The main themes of this strategy centre around protecting and enhancing the environment while promoting a strong spatially based economy, promoting a healthy living environment and creating and maintaining an inclusive society.

1.3 Paper 1 (2nd Revision) 'Population and Growth – Settlement Hierarchy' which was presented to Council in October 2015 discussed the need to re-examine the settlement hierarchy for the District and to identify if any settlements need to be re-classified based on their function, services and population.

1.4 In order to assist in the LDP preparatory process, Member Workshops were held in October 2017 this included Workshop 1 which addressed the Spatial Growth Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy and Land Allocation. In consideration of the settlement hierarchy and the associated options, Members unanimously agreed 're-examine the existing settlement hierarchy in order to consider if any settlement should be reclassified or declassified while also considering the potential for identifying a number of new small settlements'. The feedback from the Members Workshop has informed this paper.

1.5 The settlement hierarchy will help to decide the location of future development in the District and the broad proportion of the housing allocation that is appropriate for each tier, ensuring that the scale of any new development planned through the LDP is appropriate for the particular settlement and that it is adequately supported by physical infrastructure and services.

1.6 The proposed settlement hierarchy recommends the retention of the majority of the existing settlement classifications with a small number being identified for possible reclassification. It is envisaged that the implementation of this new hierarchy will unify the existing hierarchies while bringing about cohesion to the District.

2.0 Regional Policy Context

(a) The Regional Development Strategy

2.1 The regional policy context is provided by the RDS 2035 which presents regional guidance under three sustainable development strands which are economic, social and environmental. The RDS 2035 Spatial Framework shown in Diagram 1 is therefore aimed at achieving sustainable development. In providing for the future physical development of the region, it identifies a hierarchy of settlements based on main hubs, local hubs and a strong rural community living either in small towns, villages, small settlements or in the open countryside.

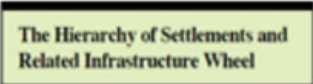
Diagram 1: RDS 2035 Spatial Framework for NI



2.2 Within the RDS Newry and Downpatrick have both been recognised as main hubs. In the delivery of services and functions, the RDS also acknowledges that these settlements have also the potential to cluster with Warrenpoint and Newcastle respectively. Newry is also identified as a gateway due to its strategic location along the Belfast-Dublin corridor. For the rural area outside of the main and local hubs, the spatial framework guidance is to sustain the rural communities living in smaller settlements (small towns, village and small rural settlements) and the open countryside while striving to improve accessibility for rural communities.

2.3 To aid this process the RDS provides a Hierarchy of Settlement and Related Infrastructure Wheel (see Diagram 2). This outlines the patterns of service provision that are likely to be appropriate at different spatial levels including villages, smaller towns, regional towns and principal cities. This model also recognises the strong relationship between settlement size and the levels of service that can be supported.

Diagram 2: The Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure Wheel



2.4 In doing so the RDS recognises that

- Settlements often provide either a greater or lesser range of services and facilities than the core population may dictate. It is not appropriate therefore to consider settlement or urban population alone in classifying service settlements within any district – the population of rural hinterlands can also support services in urban centres,
- Service centres tend to be hierarchical, with a large number of centres providing a smaller range of services and facilities, and a smaller number of centres providing a wider range. Each class of settlement provides services lower down in the hierarchy; and
- Access to services and facilities is important. Creating a critical mass to support a level of services raises challenges for service providers in meeting the needs of spatially dispersed populations.

2.5 To further assist in the creation of a settlement hierarchy and in particular the allocation of housing land, the RDS also provided a broad evaluation framework which takes account of the varying capacities of settlements based on the following 6 tests as outlined in Diagram 3.

Diagram 3: Housing Evaluation Framework

Diagram 3 - Housing Evaluation Framework	
1. Resource Test	Studies should be carried out to assess and detail the existence of community assets and physical infrastructure such as water, waste and sewage, including spare capacity.
2. Environmental Capacity Test	An assessment of the environmental assets of the settlement, the potential of flooding from rivers, the sea or surface water run-off and its potential to accommodate future outward growth without significant environmental degradation should be made.
3. Transport Test	Studies should be carried out to assess the potential for integrating land use and public transport and walking and cycling routes to help reduce reliance on the car.
4. Economic Development Test	The potential to facilitate an appropriate housing and jobs balance and to unlock any major strategic development opportunities should be assessed and detailed.
5. Urban & Rural Character Test	Assessment should be made of the potential to maintain a sense of place, and to integrate new development in a way that does not detract from the character and identity of the settlement.
6. Community Services Test	The potential to underpin and, where necessary, reinforce the community service role and function of the settlement should be assessed and detailed.

2.6 The broad evaluation framework essentially provides an overview of the services, facilities, physical infrastructure, constraints and environmental characteristics of each settlement.

2.7 Settlement Appraisal Reports are being produced for each settlement. Each of these reports incorporates the following information:

- a brief overview of the settlement including location, urban form, historical context, population level and number of households
- a consideration of the six tests in the RDS evaluation framework; and
- summary of potential constraints affecting settlement expansion capacity.

(b) Strategic Spatial Strategy for Newry, Mourne & Down District

2.8 A key part of the LDP will be its spatial strategy, consisting of the new settlement hierarchy and transport corridors along with the main environmental and infrastructural features. The spatial strategy will determine where planned growth will be directed, balanced with the priority areas for environmental protection and enhancement. The LDP's spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy should therefore take account of the guidance set out within the RDS and the SPPS, namely

- Newry as a main hub, gateway to the south and the potential to cluster with Warrenpoint in terms of the delivery of services and functions,
- Downpatrick as a main hub and the potential to cluster within Newcastle in terms of the delivery of services and functions,
- Rural communities to be sustained, living in small towns, villages and small rural settlements, as well as the open countryside.

(c) Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

2.9 The SPPS contains little information in relation to the identification of a settlement hierarchy. Rather, it focuses on settlements and the need for options for planned growth in major settlements in the LDP's Preferred Options Paper, the need to bring previously developed land forward for re-development to assist in regeneration, creating more attractive environments and reducing the use of greenfield land. It also highlights the importance of protecting existing areas of open space to promote wellbeing through facilitating play and sport.

(d) Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements

2.10 In March 2015 NISRA published its 'Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements' report. Within the review the original population thresholds used in the 2005 publication were initially retained as a starting point for a new classification of settlements table. However following on from the 2011 Census information being released this information was reviewed and updated with some amendments being made to the classifications in terms of thresholds for each tier in the hierarchy. This was deemed appropriate as Northern Ireland's population has increased by approximately 7% between 2001 and 2011 and therefore some of the classifications should be amended accordingly to represent the uplift and these are outlined below.

- Band A – Belfast City
- Band B – Derry City

- Band C – Large Towns with a population of 18,000+
- Band D – Medium Towns with a population between 10,000 and less than 18,000
- Band E – Small Towns with a population between 5,000 and 9,999
- Band F – Intermediate Settlements with a population between 2,500 and 4,999
- Band G – Villages with a population of between 1,000 and 2,449
- Band H – Settlements less than 1,000

3.0 Existing Local Area Plans Context

3.1 The two existing Area Plans were both prepared under the guidance of the RDS and were found to be in general conformity. They remain as the extant development plans for the District until they are replaced by the new LDP. Both plans established a settlement hierarchy upon which future development or growth was to be based. The approach taken in developing the settlement hierarchies within both plans was comparable. A four tier system was adopted within the BNMAP to accommodate Newry City while the ADAP settlement hierarchy consisted of a 3 tier system. Both plans have incorporated similar terminology when describing the different tiers of development.

3.2 With regards to the settlement hierarchy within the BNMAP, Newry was identified as a city, Crossmaglen, Kilkeel, Newtownhamilton and Warrenpoint/Burren were designated as towns while a further 14 villages and 30 small settlements were designated equating to a total of 49 settlements.

3.3 In the ADAP, 3 towns were designated, Ballynahinch, Newcastle and Downpatrick, along with 14 villages and 22 small settlements equating to a total of 39 settlements.

4.0 Settlement Evaluation Methodology

4.1 Each existing settlement has been appraised and evaluated against the 2011 Census data, the six tests of the 'Housing Evaluation Framework', and the 'Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure Wheel' as outlined in the RDS, together with the information detailed within the NISRA document 'Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements'. Encompassing all of this information has enabled an overview of the services, facilities, physical infrastructure and environmental characteristics of each settlement to be compiled. To date the evaluation has comprised mainly of desk-top research with further detailed survey work to be completed during the plan process.

4.2 The alignment and evaluation of the extant Area Plan hierarchies has resulted in the proposed reclassification of certain settlements. It is proposed that the majority of settlements will remain unchanged but some locations have experienced change which may justify movement within the hierarchy.

4.3 Following this evaluation a proposed settlement hierarchy has been compiled and included within Appendix 2. Newry City and the main town of Downpatrick are proposed to be located within Tier 1 and to be the locations where development will be focused. The main hubs are then to

be supported by the smaller towns, villages and small settlements which have been identified as local centres serving the needs of the rural hinterland. The proposed settlement hierarchy within the LDP therefore contains four tiers with each tier receiving a proportion of development based on their hierarchical position, infrastructure and environmental considerations. The proposed 4 tiers are;

- Tier 1: City and Main town
- Tier 2: Local and Small towns
- Tier 3: Villages
- Tier 4: Small settlements

Tier 1: City and Main Town

4.4 The settlement evaluation has identified and confirmed Tier 1 as Newry City along with Downpatrick as the main town within the District. This corresponds with the RDS in that both settlements have been identified as main hubs based on their level of service provision, potential for employment, population size and other spatial guidance.

4.5 Newry is strategically located on the Belfast-Dublin corridor allowing for future development to consolidate its acknowledged role in the RDS as a Gateway. Downpatrick will remain as the Districts main town which reflects its status within the RDS as a main hub located within eastern portion of the District.

Tier 2: Local and Small towns

4.6 The second tier within the hierarchy is local/small towns which takes account of the locally important larger settlements throughout the District. Population size alone should not dictate the position of a settlement in the hierarchy but should be assessed alongside the range of facilities provided within a settlement and the ability to serve the surrounding hinterland. It is also apparent that there is a clear disparity between classifications when some settlements are considered against different criteria detailed within numerous documents including the RDS, the NISRA 'Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements' (March 2015). An example of where this is clearly evident is seen in how Newtownhamilton is considered within these documents. Within the NISRA 'Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements' (March 2015) Newtownhamilton falls within Band H – Populations of less than 1,000 while it is designated as a 'town' within the BNMAP 2015.

4.7 As detailed within the associated text within the RDS for the Hierarchy of Settlements and related Infrastructure Wheel it is evident that the settlements which provide a broad range of facilities have the ability to draw from a significant catchment within their surrounding rural hinterland and this is apparent when considering the aforementioned settlements of Newtownhamilton and Crossmaglen. It is however felt that although these settlements contain a significant number of services their relatively small populations of 800 and 1608 respectively do not justify them being classified as local/small towns. Discussions around these two settlements was held at the Members Workshop in October 2017 and a number of Councillors were in agreement with this proposed reclassification.

4.8 At the Members workshop concerns were also raised with regards to a number of the larger, mainly peripheral villages within the settlement hierarchy which are perceived within the local communities as being 'local towns' due to the large hinterlands that they serve. Therefore taking this into consideration and on further analysis of the service level provision, the population size and the spatial guidance within the RDS it has been recommended that these self-sufficient settlements of Saintfield (3406), Killyleagh (2928), Castlewellan (2792) and Bessbrook (2739) be reclassified to local/small towns.

4.9 By realigning the aforementioned settlements Tier 2 would include 8 settlements ranging in population size from 2739 to 7743. This would therefore create a more streamlined Tier 2 with a significant reduction in the difference of populations between the smallest and largest settlements with the reclassification of Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton to Tier 3.

Tier 3: Villages

4.10 Alongside the proposed addition of Newtownhamilton and Crossmaglen to the third tier of the hierarchy it is recommended that the majority of villages classified within the previous plans will remain as such within the new LDP. It was however deemed appropriate that a full evaluation of each settlement was undertaken at this time within the plan process again involving the level of service provision alongside population thresholds.

4.11 Villages are generally quite sustainable and self-sufficient, characterised by a cluster of services such as a primary school, local shop(s), varied community facilities and a play area clustered around a well-defined core with the ability to serve the immediate community. Within the proposed hierarchy this tier has seen a reduction in the number of villages from 28 to 22 due to a number being reclassified to either a small/local town or small settlement.

4.12 It is however apparent that for the 22 settlements remaining as villages, the range of facilities can vary significantly between one village and another. This may be partially due to the rationalisation of services alongside the way in which many services are accessed which in turn has led to a number of facilities such as banks and post offices which were traditionally associated with villages being no longer found in a considerable number of settlements.

4.13 Some of the larger settlements currently designated as villages are urban in character, accommodating important local businesses and provide a range of shops and services whilst others act more so as 'dormitory' settlements. This may be partially due to their proximity to the larger settlements, an example of which may include Annsborough where the majority of services and facilities are located in the larger neighbouring settlement of Castlewellan.

4.14 At the Members workshops debate surrounded whether Rostrevor should remain as a village or be reclassified to a local/small town due to its comparable population with Saintfield, Killyleagh, Castlewellan and Bessbrook. Whilst it is accepted that Rostrevor has a population similar to that of the four settlements proposed to be reclassified to local/small towns, it is considered that the settlement population associated with a settlement in isolation should not dictate the positions of a settlement within the hierarchy.

4.15 Rostrevor is located approximately 1.6 km to the east of Warrenpoint town which provides a full range of services and facilities and benefits from strong transportation links including Warrenpoint Harbour. It is believed that Rostrevor's close proximity to this long established town together with topographical issues, its identification as a significant flood risk area and a significant number of environmental designations may have played a part in stifling Rostrevor's growth. It is felt that the reclassification of Rostrevor maybe to the detriment of both settlements by creating additional competition between the settlements in attracting new businesses and services. It should also be considered as to whether increasing the status of Rostrevor to a town may be to the detriment of the area as a tourist destination by diluting the environmental setting associated with Kilbroney Park and the Fairy Glen. For these reasons it is therefore recommended that Rostrevor remains within the village tier of the hierarchy.

4.16 The proposed settlement hierarchy has also highlighted the possibility of separating Warrenpoint and Burren as their current coalescence has raised concerns with members of the local community whilst also being highlighted at the Members workshops. In spatial terms Burren is located approximately 0.9km from Warrenpoint with sporadic development located at a number of junctions/nodes between these settlements. Although these settlements are currently separated by a considerable amount of land it should be noted that this may diminish

over time as a significant portion of these lands have been zoned within the BNMAP for housing lands.

4.17 Consideration must also be given to the service provision and population figures of Burren on its own merits and whether it is more in keeping with a suburban extension to the larger urban area of Warrenpoint. Currently Burren has both a population (estimated) and service provision which would warrant its classification as a village. It should however be highlighted that separating these settlements may have certain repercussions for Burren with regards to the proportional share of housing it may be allocated within the LDP in terms of future growth.

Tier 4: Small settlements

4.18 The fourth tier on the proposed settlement hierarchy is defined as 'small settlements'. These are normally characterised by a small grouping of dwellings displaying an obvious sense of cohesion with one or more community facilities.

4.19 It is apparent that there are a significant number of small settlements within the District with the proposed new hierarchy identifying 56. Within this small settlement grouping, 15 are identified as multi-nodal with services and populations separated across of number of clusters of development while 13 of the existing small settlements have populations of less than 50 with a number appearing to have no service provision included within them.

4.20 Taking into account the level of service provision, the population size and the spatial guidance with the RDS the following settlements have been recommended to be reclassified from villages to small settlements.

- Ballyholland (664)
- The Spa (583)
- Shrigley (437)
- Attical (171)

4.21 Ballyholland consists mainly of housing developments with very limited local supporting services. Its limited facilities and pattern of development has therefore eroded any village character that may have previously existed. It is acknowledged that Ballyholland does however have a distinct identity and there remains an important wedge of land separating it from Newry. It is therefore recommended that Ballyholland be reclassified to a small settlement.

4.22 Similar to Ballyholland, The Spa consists of a considerable number of housing developments, which may be associated with it being located within the Belfast commuter belt. It does however have a limited service provision and would appear to rely heavily on its larger neighbouring settlement of Ballynahinch for a number of key services.

4.23 Shrigley, is located approximately 0.3km to the north-west of Killyleagh and relies heavily on this neighbouring settlement for the majority of all basic services requirements. It is recognised that the settlement contains a play park and a number of industrial units but does not contain any of the facilities or services such as a local convenience store to allow it to remain self-sufficient and for these reasons it is suggested that Shrigley be reclassified to a small settlement.

4.24 It is accepted that these settlements may have experienced proportionately high levels of housing growth but when they are assessed against the evaluation tools, there appears to be limited service provision within the settlements instead they continue to rely heavily on neighbouring settlements for the majority of services and facilities.

4.25 This review has also suggested that Attical be reclassified as a small settlement within the settlement hierarchy. Within the 2011 Census, Attical was detailed as having a population of 171 leaving it as the smallest village within the existing hierarchy. It is therefore recommended that due to its limited population, which appears to be more comparable with the settlements within the small settlement tier, together with the fact that it does not meet all of the criteria necessary for a village under the RDS Settlement Hierarchy Classification that it should be reclassified to a small settlement.

4.26 Spatial analysis and recent development locations have also queried the merits of certain settlements remaining within the hierarchy. Within this process consideration should also be given as to whether it may be appropriate to declassify some of the existing small settlements and assess whether their inclusion within the hierarchy is offering any additional benefits to the locality.

4.27 Within the existing Area Plans 15 of the 52 small settlements are multi-nodal, 10 being located within the BNMAP portion and 5 within the ADAP section of the District. This style of settlement pattern may lead to development being sparsely located across a considerable distance within the open countryside and therefore further work will be undertaken to assess whether all these nodes warrant retention within the small settlement tier. It must also be taken into consideration that removal of a settlement from the hierarchy into the open countryside would represent a significant change in the policy direction.

4.28 Through the remit of the LDP there is also the opportunity to designate new small settlements if deemed necessary or appropriate. This

will allow the alignment of standards across the District while providing enhanced development opportunities in the rural area. A criteria has been developed to consider whether it may be appropriate to designate any additional settlements and this is detailed below:

- A concentration of dwellings
- Social and/or commercial facilities and services
- Nucleated form and sense of place
- Distance to and from adjacent settlements
- Awareness of a community identity

4.29 The following locations were identified through a District wide map search, local knowledge and a desktop exercise which has identified established groupings of development with some form of associated community/social facilities. These locations have been included to allow further discussion as to whether they should be considered as potential new small settlements when assessed against the criteria detailed above. It should be noted that this list may not be exhaustive.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| - Annadorn | - Aughlisnafin |
| - Ballinran | - Ballsmill |
| - Ballyedmond | - Bishops Court |
| - Cabra | - Clontafleece |
| - Corcheechy Road/Donaghmore | - Cranfield |
| - Edendariff | - Gargarry |
| - Lisnalee/Kingsmill | - Lissummon |
| - Listooder | - Minerstown |
| - Mountainhouse | - New Line |
| - Raffrey | - Saint Pious Hill |
| - Shinn | - Tullydonnell |

4.30 There will be further opportunity for other representations to be submitted, now and also at POP consultation stage in the LDP process.

Dispersed Rural Communities

4.31 While reference is made to Dispersed Rural Communities (DRCs) within the Planning Policy Statement 21 – Sustainable Development in the Countryside the SPPS has not made any reference to them. There are currently no DRCs within the District and there is no requirement for the Council to designate these within the LDP.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The alignment and strategic evaluation of the extant Area Plan hierarchies has resulted in the proposed reclassification of certain settlements. The majority of settlements are proposed to remain unchanged but some locations have experienced either positive or negative development growth which may justify movement within the hierarchy. Within this assessment it is evident that settlements often provide a greater or lesser range of services than the core population may dictate and it was therefore not appropriate to consider ‘urban’ populations alone in classifying settlements within the District; it is also necessary to consider the level of services provided and the wider population of the rural hinterlands they serve.

5.2 Of the 88 settlements within the existing hierarchy the majority of settlements have remained within their existing classification. The evaluation confirms Newry City and Downpatrick as the main hubs within the District taking into account their level of service provision, potential for growth and population size. Other recommendations proposed within the settlement hierarchy are for:

- Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton to be reclassified from Tier 2 to Tier 3,
- Saintfield, Killyleagh, Castewellan, Bessbrook to be reclassified from Tier 3 to Tier 2,
- Ballyholland, The Spa, Shrigley, and Attical to be reclassified from Tier 3 to Tier 4,
- Warrenpoint/Burren to be considered as separate settlements within the settlement hierarchy, with Warrenpoint retained in Tier 2, and Burren included in Tier 3.

Other locations for assessment as potential new small settlements will be considered as part of the evaluation exercise.

5.3 The settlement evaluation exercise and the proposed settlement hierarchy will inform the preparation of the LDP.

Appendix A: Existing Settlement Hierarchy and Populations as per current Area Plans.

Settlement Hierarchy	Newry & Mourne Settlement Populations		
Tier 1 -City & Main Town	Newry (26,893)		
	Downpatrick (10,874)		
Tier 2 - Local & Small Towns	Newcastle (7,743)	Ballynahinch (5,715)	
	Warrenpoint/Burren (8,721)	Crossmaglen (1,608)	
	Kilkeel (6,521)	Newtownhamilton (800)	
Tier 3 -Villages	Saintfield (3,406)	Drumaness (1,344)	Forkhill (498)
	Killyleagh (2,928)	Camrough (1,081)	Strangford (495)
	Castlewellan (2,792)	Mayobridge (1,068)	Jonesborough (465)
	Rostrevor (2,788)	Killough (843)	Ballykinlar (447)
	Bessbrook (2,739)	Meigh (770)	Shrigley (437)
	Crossgar (1,892)	Annsborough (767)	Cullyhanna (326)
	Annalong (1,796)	Ballyholland (664)	Clough (279)
	Hilltown (1,698)	Mullaghbane (596)	Attical (171)
	Ardglass (1,643)	The Spa (583)	
	Dundrum (1,551)	Ballymartin (506)	
Tier 4 - Small Settlements	Darragh Cross (490)	Maghera (211)	Saul (97)
	Newtowncloghue (457)	Burrenbridge (199)	Ballymadeerfy (69)
	Ballyhornan (369)	Kilclief (191)	Coney Island (57)
	Belleek (375)	Clonvaraghan (186)	Altnamacken ***
	Whitecross (352)	Drummaroad (183)	Ballymoyer ***
	Drumintee (337)	Lislea (180)	Ballyward ***

Settlement Hierarchy	Newry & Mourne Settlement Populations		
	Kilcoo (335)	Ballynoe (169)	Carrickinab ***
	Sheeptown (333)	Glassdrumman, Co Armagh (165)	Chapelstown ***
	Annacloy (318)	Dunnaval/Ballyardle (161)	Dechomet ***
	Raholp (315)	Glen (147)	Derryboye ***
	Kilmore (310)	Longstone (147)	Dorsey ***
	Bryansford (306)	Barnmeen (136)	Drumaghlis ***
	Lurganare (294)	Ballyalton (132)	Finnis ***
	Seaforde (263)	Mullaghglass (125)	Greencastle ***
	Cullaville (232)	Leitrim (121)	Jerretspass ***
	Killowen (230)	Silverbridge (112)	Tullyherron ***
	Creggan (227)	Glassdrumman/Mullartown (110)	
	Loughinisland (218)	Kileen (108)	

Source: Headcount and Household Estimates for Settlements in Northern Ireland published 26/03/2015 <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/census/2011/results/settlements.html>

*** Output has been confined to those settlements exceeding the thresholds of 20 or more households and 50 or more usual residents.

Total Population of Newry, Mourne & Down District Council area 2011 - 171,533

Total Population of Down District Council area 2011 - 69,731

Total Population of Newry & Mourne District Council area 2011 - 99,480

Source: (Northern Ireland Census 2011 Key Statistics Summary Report September 2014)

Appendix B: Proposed Settlement Hierarchy and Populations for NMD District.

Settlement Hierarchy	Newry & Mourne Settlement Populations		
Tier 1 -City & Main Town	Newry (26,893)		
	Downpatrick (10,874)		
Tier 2 - Local & Small Towns	Newcastle (7,743)		
	Warrenpoint (7,475)		
	Kilkeel (6,521)		
	Ballynahinch (5,715)		
	Saintfield (3,406)		
	Killyleagh (2,928)		
	Castlewellan (2,792)		
Tier 3 -Villages	Bessbrook (2,739)		
	Rostrevor (2,788)	Mayobridge (1,068)	Ballykinler (447)
	Crossgar (1,892)	Killough (843)	Cullyhanna (326)
	Annalong (1,796)	Newtownhamilton (800)	Clough (279)
	Hilltown (1,698)	Meigh (770)	
	Ardglass (1,643)	Annsborough (767)	
	Crossmaglen (1,608)	Mullaghbane (596)	
	Dundrum (1,551)	Ballymartin (506)	
	Drumaness (1,344)	Forkhill (498)	
	Burren (1,246)	Strangford (495)	

Settlement Hierarchy	Newry & Mourne Settlement Populations		
	Camlough (1,081)	Jonesborough (465)	
Tier 4 - Small Settlements	Ballyholland (664)	Creggan (227)	Glassdrumman/Mulartown (110)
	The Spa (583)	Loughinisland (218)	Kileen (108)
	Darragh Cross (490)	Maghera (211)	Saul (97)
	Newtowncloghoge (457)	Burrenbridge (199)	Ballymaderrfy (69)
	Shrigley (437)	Kilclief (191)	Coney Island (57)
	Ballyhornan (369)	Clonvaraghan (186)	Altnamacken ***
	Belleek (375)	Drumaroad (183)	Ballymoyer***
	Whitecross (352)	Lislea (180)	Ballyward ***
	Drumintee (337)	Attical (171)	Carrickinab ***
	Kilcoo (335)	Ballynoe (169)	Chapeltown***
		Glassdrumman, Co. Armagh (165)	Dechomet ***
	Sheeptown (333)		
	Annacloy (318)	Dunnaval/Ballyardle (161)	Derryboye ***
	Raholp (315)	Glen (147)	Dorsey ***
	Kilmore (310)	Longstone (147)	Drumaghliis***
	Bryansford (306)	Barnmeen (136)	Finnis***
	Lurganare(294)	Ballyalton (132)	Greencastle ***
	Seaforde (263)	Mullaghglass(125)	Jerrettspass ***
	Cullaville (232)	Leitrim (121)	Tullyherron***
	Killowen (230)	Silverbridge (112)	

Source: Same as Appendix A

Key



Reclassification of settlement to higher tier



Reclassification of settlement to lower tier

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 December 2017
Subject:	Improvement Audit and Assessment Report 2017-18
Reporting Officer:	Johnny McBride - Assistant Director: Community Planning and Performance
Contact Officer:	Kate Bingham - Head of Performance and Improvement

Decisions Required:	
Members are asked to note the contents of the report, consider and agree:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Improvement Audit and Assessment Report 2017-18, including the proposals for improvement. 	
1.0	<u>Purpose and Background</u>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the key findings from the recent Improvement Audit and Assessment which was carried out by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) on behalf of the Local Government Auditor (LGA). This audit and assessment underpins the general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions, which has been placed on Councils through The Local Government (NI) Act (2014). A copy of the report is attached at Appendix 2 .
1.2	As part of the Improvement Audit and Assessment, the LGA has put forward a number of proposals for improvement which may assist the Council in meeting its performance improvement responsibilities in future years. Whilst these are not formal recommendations, future Improvement Audit and Assessments will take into account the Council's progress in implementing the proposals for improvement.
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	<u>Certificate of Compliance</u>
2.2	The LGA has certified that the Council has discharged its performance improvement and reporting duties under Part 12 of the Act, and has acted in accordance with the Guidance issued by the Department for Communities (DfC). The LGA is proposing an unqualified audit and assessment opinion, with no statutory recommendations being made to the Department. A certificate of compliance has been issued.
2.3	The findings from the Improvement Audit and Assessment report are categorised across seven thematic areas and can be summarised as follows: <u>General duty to improve</u>

	<p>The LGA confirmed that the Council's arrangements to secure continuous improvement are becoming more established and that action had been taken to address the issues raised in the 2016-17 report, which have either been implemented or are being progressed towards full implementation. The following proposals for improvement have been recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Council should prioritise the development of its electronic performance management system to enable the performance of all functions and services to be measured, to support the identification of those areas which would benefit most from improvement. ii. The Council should take steps to further develop, establish and embed all elements which underpin its Business Planning and Performance Management Framework more fully across the organisation and each of its Directorates. This should ensure that corporate priorities and performance improvement objectives are effectively cascaded to all employees.
2.4	<p><u>Governance arrangements</u></p> <p>The LGA has recognised that, whilst the Council's governance arrangements continue to develop, the roles of both the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee in managing performance could be enhanced. Action has been taken to address a number of the issues raised in the 2016-17 report, some of which have not yet been implemented. The following proposal for improvement has been recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Council needs to ensure that its Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee is subjecting the Council's priorities, improvement objectives, activities, projects, risks and performance to appropriate scrutiny, challenge and evaluation, and that this is monitored by the Audit Committee. To this end, officers must provide the relevant committees with appropriate and timely information in relation to the delivery of the improvement objectives.
2.5	<p><u>Improvement objectives</u></p> <p>The LGA confirmed that the Council's improvement objectives are aligned to the Community Plan, cover a broad range of projects and are focused on delivering positive outcomes for citizens. The Council has taken action to address a number of issues raised in the 2016-17 report, which have been implemented or are being progressed towards full implementation. The following proposals for improvement have been recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Council should further enhance staff awareness of performance improvement across each Council Directorate, with a view to ensuring that all aspects of performance improvement objectives set become embedded within day to day service provision. ii. The Council should continue to focus on the development and appropriate use of baseline performance data and information within the existing data management system going forward, and set standards for achievement which

	are both challenging and realistic.
2.6	<p><u>Consultation</u></p> <p>The LGA confirmed that the Council has met its statutory duty to consult on improvement objectives and has taken action to implement all proposals for improvement in the 2016-17 report. No further proposals for improvement have been recommended.</p>
2.7	<p><u>Improvement plan</u></p> <p>The LGA confirmed that the level of detail outlined in the Performance Improvement Plan 2017-18 has enhanced the transparency and meaningfulness of the Council's commitment to continuously improve its functions. Whilst no further proposals for improvement have been recommended, the LGA raised a concern regarding ease of access to the Performance Improvement Plan on the Council's website in the 2016-17 report. This issue has not yet been addressed and may potentially limit access to the Plan by citizens and other stakeholders.</p>
2.8	<p><u>Arrangements to improve</u></p> <p>The LGA confirmed that the Council has strengthened its arrangements to secure continuous improvement and delivered measurable improvements during 2016-17. Performance improvement objectives are supported by project management documentation, and arrangements to deliver these objectives have been put in place. Whilst the LGA is unable to determine the likelihood or extent of future improvement activity until a track record of continuous improvement can be demonstrated, it is anticipated that the Council will meet its responsibility to continuously improve over the next few years, as performance improvement arrangements mature and strengthen.</p>
2.9	<p><u>Collection, use and publication of performance Information</u></p> <p>In relation to the collection and use of performance information, the LGA recognises that the Council used a broad range of statutory and local performance indicators to monitor performance, track progress against targets, highlight trends over time and carry out comparisons with other Councils. As the Council's performance management arrangements become more embedded, this will enhance scrutiny and inform decision making around performance improvement and the ongoing development of improvement objectives. The following proposals for improvement have been recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Council should continue to develop and embed its performance management framework and establish a performance management system as a priority. ii. The Council should continue working with other Councils and the Department to agree a suite of self-imposed indicators and standards. This will enable

	<p>meaningful comparisons to be made and published in line with its statutory responsibility.</p> <p>In relation to the publication of performance information, the LGA confirmed that citizens and stakeholders have benefited from the transparent approach used to report performance information through the 2016-17 self-assessment. The following proposal for improvement has been recommended:</p> <p>iii. The Council should enhance the transparency of future self-assessments, that these, along with other Council performance information, should be clearly signposted on easily accessible on its website.</p>
3.0	<u>Recommendations</u>
3.1	<p>To consider and agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Improvement Audit and Assessment Report 2017-18
4.0	<u>Resource Implications</u>
4.1	<p>There are no resource implications contained within this report. However accepting the proposals for improvement may result in additional resource implications for the Council. Examples include the implementation of an electronic performance management system and delivery of performance improvement training, both of which should be integrated into future programmes of work for the Council.</p>
5.0	<u>Next Steps</u>
5.1	<p>The Improvement Audit and Assessment Report will be made available on the NIAO and NMDDC websites in due course.</p> <p>If accepted, progress in implementing the proposals for improvement will be monitored and reported through the Assessment of Performance 2017-18.</p>
6.0	<u>Equality & Good Relations Implications</u>
6.1	<p>There are no equality and good relations implications arising from this report.</p>
7.0	<u>Appendices</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 1 – Cover Letter from NIAO Appendix 2 – Improvement Audit and Assessment Report 2017-18 for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Appendix 3 – Audit Certificate



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Mr Liam Hannaway
Chief Financial Officer
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Monaghan Row
Newry
BT35 8DJ

30 November 2017

Dear Liam

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council: section 95 of the Local Government Act 2014

Improvement audit and Assessment - Audit and Assessment Report

I am writing to let you know that the Local Government Auditor has now certified the improvement audit and assessment at the Council with a standard, unqualified opinion.

Please find attached a copy of our final audit and assessment report, a draft of which you have already seen. This sets out the findings and conclusions from our work and it includes the audit and assessment certificate as an annex. I also attach a scanned copy of the original certificate signed by the Local Government Auditor.

A copy of the attached report will also be issued to the Department for Communities by the end of November as the legislation requires.

I would take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for the assistance and co-operation received throughout the audit.

Yours sincerely

Neil Gray
Director



Northern Ireland Audit Office

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Our purpose...

Promoting better use of public money, through independent professional scrutiny, underpinned by our commitment to:

- Integrity
- Equality
- Openness
- Innovation

To make a difference for the people of Northern Ireland.

The Department for Communities, with the consent of the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland, has designated Mrs Louise Mason as the Local Government Auditor. She, and the Northern Ireland Audit Office, are totally independent of Local Government. She certifies the accounts of all Local Government bodies in Northern Ireland and is also responsible for councils' performance improvement audits and assessments.

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NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT REPORT 2017-18

A REPORT TO THE COUNCIL AND THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES UNDER SECTION 95 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (NORTHERN IRELAND) ACT 2014

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Section 1

Introduction and status of this report

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Introduction

- 1.1 Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) sets out that all councils are under a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. It sets out a number of council responsibilities under a performance framework. It also sets out key responsibilities for the Local Government Auditor. The Department for Communities (the Department) has published 'Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement 2016' (the Guidance) which councils and the Local Government Auditor have to follow.

The improvement audit

- 1.2 Each year the Local Government Auditor has to report whether each council has discharged its duties in relation to improvement planning, the publication of improvement information and the extent to which each council has acted in accordance with the Department's Guidance. The Local Government Auditor's procedures to do so are called "improvement audits".

The improvement assessment

- 1.3 The Local Government Auditor also has to assess annually whether a council is likely to make the required arrangements to secure continuous improvement in that year. This is called the "improvement assessment". The Local Government Auditor also has the discretion to assess and report whether a council is likely to comply with these arrangements in future years (see paragraph 2.5).
- 1.4 Improvement audits and improvement assessments are undertaken in accordance with the Local Government Auditor's statutory responsibilities¹ and the Department's Guidance. They are planned and conducted in accordance with the performance improvement Audit Strategy issued by the Local Government Auditor to councils, her Code of Audit Practice for Local Government Bodies in Northern Ireland and the Statement of Responsibilities.

Status of this report

- 1.5 This report has been produced by staff of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (the NIAO) on behalf of the Local Government Auditor in discharging her duties under section 95 of the Act. It certifies that she has carried out an improvement audit and improvement assessment for 2017-18 and states whether, as a result, she believes that the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (the Council) has discharged its performance improvement duties.
- 1.6 This report has been prepared for the sole use of the Department and the Council. The Local Government Auditor and NIAO do not accept responsibility to any third party for losses arising from reliance being placed on this report.

¹ Sections 93 and 94 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

Section 1

Introduction and status of this report

Other performance improvement reports by the Local Government Auditor

The Annual Improvement Report on the Council

- 1.7 The Act requires the Local Government Auditor to summarise all of her work carried out (in relation to her responsibilities under the Act) at the Council, in an “annual improvement report”. This will be published on the NIAO website in due course, making it publicly available.

Special inspections and statutory recommendations

- 1.8 The Local Government Auditor may also, in some circumstances, carry out special inspections which will be reported to the Council and the Department, and which she may publish, or make statutory recommendations.

Section 2

Matters required to be reported on

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Matters required to be reported on

Improvement audit and improvement assessment

- 2.1 The Local Government Auditor's audit opinions in relation to the improvement audit and her improvement assessment are in the Annex to this report.
- 2.2 In the Annex, the Local Government Auditor certifies that she has performed the improvement audit and improvement assessment for the Council and that, as a result of this work, she is satisfied that the Council has discharged its statutory performance improvement and reporting duties and that it acted in accordance with the Guidance.
- 2.3 She also reports that, as 2017-18 was the second year in which councils were required to implement the new performance improvement framework, the Council's arrangements to secure continuous improvement are, as is to be expected, still in various stages of development and implementation. The Council is strengthening its arrangements to secure continuous improvement, and delivered measurable improvements to its services in 2016-17. However, until the Council's arrangements mature and it can demonstrate a track record of continuous improvement the Local Government Auditor is unable to determine, the extent to which improvements will be made.
- 2.4 The Local Government Auditor anticipates that the Council should be able to demonstrate that it is meeting its responsibility to continuously improve over the next couple of years, with the benefit of mature performance improvement arrangements, particularly in relation to the collection and use of data.
- 2.5 The Local Government Auditor has decided at present not to perform the discretionary assessments of whether councils in Northern Ireland are likely to comply with the requirements in future years. She will keep this decision under review as the new framework establishes itself and the track records of councils accumulate.

Special inspections and statutory recommendations

- 2.6 No special inspections or statutory recommendations were required at the Council this year.

Other matters

- 2.7 Whilst the Local Government Auditor has no statutory recommendations to make and there is no requirement for a special inspection this year there are some areas which could be developed. These are set out under Section 3 'Key audit and assessment findings' of this report.

Section 3

Key audit and assessment findings

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Key audit and assessment findings

- 3.1 This section outlines observations arising from the thematic areas of the Council's audit and assessment. Some findings, where relevant, give rise to proposals for improvement. These are not formal recommendations, which are more significant matters which require action to be taken by the Council in order to comply with the Act or Guidance.
- 3.2 Proposals for improvement include matters which, if accepted, will assist the Council to meet its performance improvement responsibilities. The Local Government Auditor believes that agreed proposals to the Council, should be implemented and will follow them up in subsequent years.
- 3.3 Our procedures were limited to those considered necessary for the effective performance of the audit and assessment. Therefore, the Local Government Auditor's observations should not be regarded as a comprehensive statement of all weaknesses which exist, or all improvements which could be made.
- 3.4 Each year we review progress the Council has made on these findings and it is recommended that the Council's Audit Committee should monitor and track their progress.

Index of key findings

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Section 3

Key audit and assessment findings

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1. General duty to improve

The Council is required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of all of its functions. These arrangements should enable the Council to understand local needs and priorities, collect performance data and, as a result, use this information to identify and prioritise those functions which will benefit most from improvement. This will enable it to select its improvement objectives and in turn, make best use of its resources and capacity to deliver outcomes.

The Council's arrangements were constructed within the seven relevant criteria set out in legislation and the current functions prioritised and selected for improvement are aligned to its strategic corporate objectives and its recently published Community Plan. The prioritised functions are Leisure, Health and Wellbeing; Economic Development; Tourism and Culture; Urban and Rural Regeneration; Waste Management and Planning and Community Engagement.

The Council engaged with the public through its community planning process, using a variety of meeting formats to strengthen its understanding of community needs. This process fed into its arrangements to secure continuous improvement and has enabled the Council to build and develop its arrangements. The Council's general duty to improve is therefore linked clearly to its community planning outcomes.

The Council's arrangements to secure continuous improvement are becoming more established and continue to be developed. For example, the Council is rolling out and implementing its 'Business Planning and Performance Management Framework' across the organisation, which will be supported by a performance improvement policy and a performance management system. The process by which functions are prioritised and selected continues to develop. Continued consultation and engagement with all stakeholders, together with increased collection and use of a range of performance information and measures, will help inform which functions could benefit most from improvement. In turn, this should assist in delivering measurable and visible outcomes for its citizens.

As the Council's arrangements to meet its general duty develop and mature it is important that in the interests of greater openness and transparency, there is a logical evidence base and documented process to support the general duty to improve and its selection of priority areas for improvement.

The Council has taken action to address a number of issues raised by the Local Government Auditor in last year's report. These have either been implemented or, given their nature, are still being progressed towards full implementation.

To assist the Council we recommend the following proposals for improvement:

- the Council should prioritise the development of its performance management system to enable the performance of all its functions and services to be measured, to support the identification of those areas which would benefit most from improvement; and
- the Council should take steps to further develop establish and embed all elements which underpin its Business Planning and Performance Management Framework more fully across the organisation and each of its Directorates. This should ensure that corporate priorities and performance improvement objectives are effectively cascaded to all employees.

Section 3

Key audit and assessment findings

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2. Governance Arrangements

It is important the Council's governance arrangements support robust and effective decision-making and oversight in relation to its statutory responsibility to have arrangements in place to secure continuous improvement in its functions. Last year, the Council established governance arrangements to assist it in meeting its performance improvement responsibilities. Whilst these are continuing to develop, there is still room for further enhancement, particularly in relation to the level of scrutiny performed by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and the oversight and monitoring role of the Audit Committee.

The Council assigned overall responsibility for oversight of its performance improvement framework to the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee. Whilst there is evidence to show that performance is scrutinised at a strategic level by this Committee, the focus has been on key milestone approvals, such as performance improvement objectives, the Performance Improvement Plan, and the outcomes against the Council's statutory and self-imposed performance indicators. Performance improvement is also scrutinised at the operational level, being routinely reported through functional Committees.

The Council's Audit Committee has responsibility to ensure that arrangements for good governance are in place and operating effectively. The extent of oversight and monitoring of Council performance by the Audit Committee during the year could be developed further. Last year the Local Government Auditor indicated the oversight role of the Council's Audit Committee on the Council's statutory responsibility to have arrangements in place to secure continuous improvement in its functions. The Audit Committee needs to be assured that the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and the Senior Management Team are subjecting the Council's priorities, improvement objectives, projects, risks and performance to appropriate scrutiny, challenge and evaluation.

Whilst the Council has taken action to address a number of issues raised by the Local Government Auditor in last year's report, not all of these have been fully implemented. For example, full roles and responsibilities relating to performance improvement are not included in Audit Committee terms of reference, nor is performance improvement a more regular item on the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee's agenda.

To assist the Council we recommend the following proposal for improvement:

- The Council needs to ensure that its Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee is subjecting the Council's priorities, improvement objectives, activities, projects, risks and performance to appropriate scrutiny, challenge and evaluation, and that this is monitored by the Audit Committee. To this end, officers must provide the relevant committees with appropriate and timely information in relation to the delivery of the improvement objectives.

Section 3

Key audit and assessment findings

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3. Improvement Objectives

The Council is required to establish improvement objectives each year and we assess these in line with legislation and supporting statutory guidance. Councils are expected to determine their own priorities for improvement based on a thorough understanding of the communities they serve. Improvement, in the context of the legislation, means more than just quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or the internal effectiveness of an organisation. It should mean activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities. It also requires improvement objectives to be legitimate, clear, robust and deliverable.

The Council has selected five improvement objectives, with details of these published in its Performance Improvement Plan. These objectives are closely aligned to the functions the Council has chosen to improve and, in turn, to the strategic community objectives set out in the '*Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down to 2030*'. The objectives cover a broad range of projects, recognising the need to improve internal arrangements, as well as to ensure positive outcomes for citizens. In this respect, we consider that they are legitimate and clear.

The objectives are supported with high-level underlying information setting out how each one is to be achieved in the form of an overview of the 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success', alongside the intended 'outcomes for local communities and stakeholders'. In some cases, objectives have been set at a strategic level, which will require a number of years to deliver. This is acceptable, given that interim targets have also been incorporated within the 'measures of success' to allow for the achievement of any demonstrable improvements arising from supporting projects which can be measured in the short-term.

Three years into the performance improvement framework, there is clear recognition by the Council, in the formulation of its improvement objectives, of the importance of obtaining baseline performance data and information, against which future improvement can be demonstrated or measured. Appropriate use of its data management system and fully embedding this approach within its service provision will be critical to the Council measuring future improvements.

Last year's improvement objectives were reconfigured and/or realigned within the 2017-18 Performance Improvement Plan to strategically fit with the Council's Community Plan, which was a new requirement for this year. This is acceptable in what is the final phased year of the framework.

The Council has taken action to address a number of issues raised by the Local Government Auditor in last year's report. These have either been implemented or, given their nature, are still being progressed towards full implementation.

To assist the Council, we recommend the following proposals for improvement:

- the Council should further enhance staff awareness of performance improvement across each Council Directorate, with a view to ensuring that all aspects of the performance improvement objectives set become embedded within day-to-day service provision; and
- the Council should continue to focus on the development and appropriate use of baseline performance data and information within the existing data management system going forward, and set standards for achievement which are both challenging and realistic.

Section 3

Key audit and assessment findings

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4. Consultation

We looked at how well the Council involved local people and those that work with and for it, in deciding its priorities for improvement. The Council conducted extensive consultation during its community planning and corporate planning processes to identify and understand community needs. This consultation and engagement activity, along with other previous research undertaken, then informed the development of the 2017-18 improvement objectives.

An eight week consultation and engagement process facilitated by the Council was undertaken, during which meetings were held with staff; elected representatives; Community and Voluntary Groups; local businesses; representative business organisations, along with Section 75 and statutory consultees, using a variety of settings. The Council also placed advertisements in local newspapers; consultation details were available on its website; hard copy documentation and the survey document was made available in the public reception area of the Council's offices and the Ethnic Minority Support Centre, and social media channels were also utilised.

Most issues of importance to people were covered in the Council's draft improvement objectives. A Consultation and Engagement Report prepared following the consultation exercise noted that almost all respondents agreed with the objectives as originally proposed. Other methods of engagement included:

- The council providing its citizens and stakeholders with an opportunity to propose new improvement objectives during the year via its Plan and its website;
- Briefings by the Chief Executive to staff about the Council's future performance improvement plans to promote understanding; and
- Staff with performance improvement responsibilities meeting with colleagues throughout the organisation to emphasise the general duty to improve, and to engage with them in the development of improvement objectives going forward.

The Council has met its statutory duty to consult on its improvement objectives.

Areas currently under development include a consultee database to facilitate further two-way dialogue which will operate alongside existing communication mechanisms with the different stakeholder groups, and a Consultation and Engagement Framework which will be used with key stakeholders to facilitate future discussions.

It is the Council's responsibility to promote and encourage its citizens and stakeholders to engage with it. In last year's report we shared a number of good practice methods for raising the public profile of the concept of performance improvement along with ways to improve the consultation process, which if adopted, should encourage more citizens and stakeholders to participate in future consultations. The Council has taken action to implement these proposals.

Section 3

Key audit and assessment findings

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5. Improvement Plan

The Council published its '*2017-18 Performance Improvement Plan*' in June 2017, and this is available in electronic format on the Council's website in both full and summary formats. The Plan contains a high-level description of the Council's plan for discharging its general duty to deliver continuous improvement and includes its five improvement objectives. It highlights the high-level key actions which the Council intends to carry out in order to achieve each of its objectives, alongside supporting actions, and measures of success and intended outcomes for local communities and stakeholders. The Plan also sets out how and why the improvement objectives were selected; a statement on the consultation process used and the ways in which citizens and other stakeholders may propose new objectives during the year. In addition, a summary version of the Plan was developed, emailed to consultees and other stakeholders, placed on the website and advertised through social media. This level of detail has enhanced the transparency and meaningfulness of the Council's commitment to continuously improve its functions.

Whilst the Council has selected and published a number of local (non-statutory) indicators and standards to measure the success of its improvement objectives, it has not yet published any local indicators and standards in relation to its wider general duty. This is necessary so that it can demonstrate to citizens and stakeholders its commitment to continuously improving all of its functions, and facilitate wider comparisons with other councils. It is hoped that with the development of a performance management system the Council will develop and publish a suite of local indicators reflective of all functions and its general duty to improve.

Good practice suggests that the Council should provide a rationale within its improvement plan for any prior year improvement objectives which have not been brought forward. The Council should also continue to monitor any ongoing improvement delivered by prior year short term improvement objectives and projects (that is, those lasting only one year) as part of its duty to continuously improve. This may be done corporately through the performance management framework and does not necessarily require publication in the Improvement Plan or the Annual Report.

Last year the Local Government Auditor raised a concern about ease of access to the Council's plan from its website. This matter has not yet been addressed and whilst the plan is available in other formats, including social media, the ongoing absence of a search function on the website continues to potentially limit access to the Plan by citizens and other stakeholders.

Section 3

Key audit and assessment findings

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6. Arrangements to improve

The Council is required to establish arrangements to deliver on its improvement objectives each year. The Department for Communities' guidance states that the Council should be able to understand and demonstrate the impact of its arrangements for continuous improvement on the outcomes for citizens.

Each improvement objective is supported by a project development plan led at Director level and supported by a team. Each plan contains a number of underlying projects, which are further supported by key project management documentation, including delivery plans and resourced budgets. Whilst arrangements are in place to deliver its improvement objectives, it is too early in the annual performance improvement cycle to determine the likelihood or extent of any improvement which will be delivered for two key reasons:

- improvement objectives are in the early stages of delivery; and
- the Council does not yet have an audited track record of improvement, which covers more than one year.

Section 3

Key audit and assessment findings

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7. Collection, use and publication of performance information

The collection, use and publication of performance information is critical within the performance improvement framework. It enables the Council to measure and evaluate improvement, assists in the identification of priority areas, facilitates comparison and benchmarking and supports the communication of outcomes and progress with its citizens and other stakeholders.

The Council had additional responsibilities this year specifically, in relation to carrying out a self-assessment of its performance in 2016-17 and reporting this by 30 September 2017.

The type of information required to be collected, used and reported falls under three key areas:

- the general duty to improve – reflected by local, non-statutory performance indicators and standards;
- the improvement objectives – with specific associated performance measures and indicators; and
- statutory indicators and standards.

In relation to local performance indicators and standards, the Council is now also required to make year on year internal comparisons to measure its performance and demonstrate the extent of any improvement, both in relation to its general duty for continuous improvement across all of its functions, and any standards and indicators in relation to its individual improvement objectives. In relation to those local performance indicators and standards associated with the general duty, councils should make comparisons with other councils, where it is reasonably practicable to do so.

Some councils have told us that they are unclear as to the purpose or extent of the collection, use and reporting of local performance information. Clearly, some aspects of this responsibility would benefit from additional clarity and formal guidance from the Department for Communities. This would enhance councils' current understanding of the legislation's requirements and also the Department for Communities' expectations of councils.

The Local Government Auditor's interpretation of this part of the legislation currently is that:

- a council is expected to select a small range of local indicators and to set associated standards across its functions, with baselines and targets established for improvement. This will help to identify its improvement priorities and objectives, and will be required to fully meet its responsibility to collect and use information in relation to the general duty to improve across all of its functions;
- in relation to local performance indicators and standards, a council must publish the results of its performance and provide a year on year comparison within its annual self-assessment report; and
- in relation to comparisons with other councils, the Council must continue to work with the Department for Communities and the other councils to agree a suite of local indicators to facilitate comparison. Until this is agreed and implemented, it will not be practicable to publish meaningful comparisons.

Section 3

Key audit and assessment findings

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This was the first year that councils have been required to meet this responsibility. The Local Government Auditor's current view is that, to encourage councils to comply fully and to allow more time for the framework to mature, she will not issue any statutory recommendations in relation to this matter this year. Instead 'proposals for improvement' will be used to highlight any matters of non-compliance. If not addressed by councils, these may then become statutory recommendations next year.

Performance information

The Council does not yet have a comprehensive performance management system aligned to its Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, which is fully embedded across all of its functions. Development work is, however, underway to address this.

In relation to the collection and use of information the Council has a number of statutory and local indicators and standards in place, along with a range of corporate indicators across a range of functions and at individual project delivery level. This has facilitated the monitoring of performance in a number of ways, for example tracking against targets; highlighting trends over time and, where possible, drawing out comparisons with other Councils' performance. The data and information sources drawn on by the Council are broad-ranging, qualitative and quantitative in nature.

As the performance management framework becomes more fully embedded within the Council and a performance management system is put in place, we would expect these to further enhance scrutiny and inform its decision-making on performance improvement and the ongoing development of improvement objectives.

The Council is liaising with other councils and the Department for Communities to agree a range of local performance indicators to facilitate effective comparison. However, this collaborative work is at a very early stage of development and it is too early to draw any conclusions about the extent to which this will benefit the Council.

The Local Government Auditor is encouraging all councils and the Department to agree a suite of local performance indicators to facilitate effective comparisons as soon as practicable.

The Local Government Auditor makes the following proposals for improvement to enhance the collection and use of information:

- the Council should continue to develop and embed its performance management framework and establish a performance management system as a priority; and
- the Council should continue working with other councils and the Department to agree a suite of self-imposed indicators and standards. This will enable meaningful comparisons to be made and published in line with its statutory responsibility.

Section 3

Key audit and assessment findings

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Publication of performance information

The Council is required each year to publish a report, or reports, which includes a self-assessment of its performance during a financial year:

- in discharging its general duty to improve;
- in meeting its improvement objectives for that year;
- by reference to its local and statutory performance indicators; and
- meeting its local and statutory performance standards.

In addition, the Council's assessment of its performance and its published report should include a comparison of its performance with previous years and, where reasonably practicable, with other councils.

The key purpose of the report is to show citizens, and other stakeholders how the Council is discharging its duty under legislation to secure continuous improvement as set out in its 2016-17 Improvement Plan. It enables the Council to communicate progress against its improvement objectives and to highlight what visible improvements it has made to its functions and services.

In September 2017, the Council published its 'Assessment of Performance 2016-17' report. It focused on performance on projects which supported the Council's 2016-17 improvement objectives and includes a section on its performance in relation to the statutory indicators, as well as comparisons against other councils in Northern Ireland. The report was further promoted through, for example, a press release and interview.

The Council's approach to its 2016-17 self-assessment reporting is transparent and its report sets out its improvement objectives and detailed progress with associated 'key actions' and 'measures of success' (targets); wide-ranging comparators and further supporting evidence. Also included are high-level summaries around overall performance and the general duty to improve. Taking the self-assessment report as a whole, citizens and other stakeholders have the benefit of increased transparency from the Council's reporting of outcomes around performance improvement for 2016-17.

The Local Government Auditor has made a number of observations and good practice suggestions for consideration in future self-assessment reports which will be shared with councils as a separate publication later in the year. If adopted, these might further enhance the transparency of councils' performance improvement to citizens and stakeholders.

The Local Government Auditor makes a proposal for improvement to enhance the transparency of future self-assessments, that these, along with other Council performance improvement information, should be clearly signposted and easily accessible on its website.

Section 4

Other matters

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Statement on personal data

- 4.1 During the course of the audit and assessment we may have access to personal data to support our audit testing. We have established processes to hold this data securely within encrypted files and to destroy it where relevant at the conclusion of our audit. We can confirm that we have discharged those responsibilities communicated to you in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Independence, integrity and objectivity of auditors

- 4.2 The NIAO's policy to ensure independence, integrity and objectivity of our auditors was set out in our Audit Strategy. Overall, the threat to the audit arising from issues affecting our independence, integrity and objectivity is low, and the safeguards in place ensure that the likelihood of any impact is low.
- 4.3 We have complied with APB Ethical Standards and, in our professional judgement, we are independent and our objectivity is not compromised. There are no relationships between NIAO and the Council that we consider to bear on our objectivity and independence.

Complaints procedure

- 4.4 NIAO seeks to ensure that, when carrying out its audit work, it complies with the principles developed by the Public Audit Forum in its paper "What Public Sector Bodies can expect from their Auditors".
- 4.5 NIAO also wishes to gauge public sector bodies' perceptions of its audit processes in order to promote continuous improvement. In particular, it undertakes to act quickly on any complaint and ensure that the underlying causes of problems are addressed to prevent them recurring. In the first instance, complaints can be addressed to the member of the Directorate responsible for the audit within which the concern has been raised.
- 4.6 Failing resolution of the problem to the satisfaction of the complainant, the Chief Executive of the Council can then write directly to the Local Government Auditor who will ensure that a further review of the case will be undertaken.

ANNEX

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Audit and assessment of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's performance improvement arrangements

Certificate of Compliance

I certify that I have audited Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's (the Council) assessment of its performance for 2016-17 and its 2017-18 improvement plan in accordance with section 93 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) and the Code of Audit Practice for local government bodies.

I also certify that I have performed an improvement assessment for 2017-18 at the Council in accordance with section 94 of the Act and the Code of Audit Practice.

This is a report to comply with the requirement of section 95(2) of the Act.

Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Local Government Auditor

Under the Act, the Council has a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions and to set improvement objectives for each financial year. The Council is required to gather information to assess improvements in its services and to issue a report annually on its performance against indicators and standards which it has set itself or which have been set for it by Government departments.

The Act requires the Council to publish a self-assessment before 30 September in the financial year following that to which the information relates, or by any other such date as the Department for Communities (the Department) may specify by order. The Act also requires that the Council has regard to any guidance issued by the Department in publishing its assessment.

As the Council's auditor, I am required by the Act to determine and report each year on whether:

- The Council has discharged its duties in relation to improvement planning, published the required improvement information and the extent to which the Council has acted in accordance with the Department's Guidance in relation to those duties; and
- The Council is likely to comply with the requirement to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its duties.

Scope of the audit and assessment

For the audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information or whether the improvement plan published by the Council can be achieved. My audits of the Council's improvement plan and assessment of performance, therefore, comprised a review of the Council's publications to ascertain whether they included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the documents complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing them.

For the improvement assessment I am required to form a view on whether the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act. My assessment of the Council's improvement responsibilities and arrangements, therefore, comprised a review of certain improvement arrangements within the Council, along with information gathered from my improvement audit.

ANNEX

56

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 93 to 95 of the Act cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.

Audit opinion

Improvement planning and publication of improvement information

As a result of my audit, I believe the Council has discharged its duties in connection with (1) improvement planning and (2) publication of improvement information in accordance with section 92 the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.

Improvement assessment

As a result of my assessment, I believe the Council has as far as possible discharged its duties under Part 12 of the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.

2017-18 was the second year in which councils were required to implement the new performance improvement framework. The Council's arrangements to secure continuous improvement, as is to be expected, are still in various stages of development and implementation. The Council is strengthening its arrangements to secure continuous improvement, and has delivered some measurable improvements to its services in 2016-17. However, until the Council's arrangements further develop and begin to mature and it can demonstrate a track record of ongoing improvement in relation to the framework, I am unable to determine, the extent to which improvements will be made.

I have not conducted an assessment to determine whether the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act in subsequent financial years. I will keep the need for this under review as arrangements become more fully established.

Other matters

I have no recommendations to make under section 95 (2) of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014.

I am not minded to carry out a special inspection under section 95 (2) of the Act.

Louise Mason

LOUISE MASON
Local Government Auditor
NI Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

30 November 2017

Audit and assessment of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's performance improvement arrangements

Certificate of Compliance

I certify that I have audited Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's (the Council) assessment of its performance for 2016-17 and its 2017-18 improvement plan in accordance with section 93 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) and the Code of Audit Practice for local government bodies.

I also certify that I have performed an improvement assessment for 2017-18 at the Council in accordance with section 94 of the Act and the Code of Audit Practice.

This is a report to comply with the requirement of section 95(2) of the Act.

Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Local Government Auditor

Under the Act, the Council has a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions and to set improvement objectives for each financial year. The Council is required to gather information to assess improvements in its services and to issue a report annually on its performance against indicators and standards which it has set itself or which have been set for it by Government departments.

The Act requires the Council to publish a self-assessment before 30 September in the financial year following that to which the information relates, or by any other such date as the Department for Communities (the Department) may specify by order. The Act also requires that the Council has regard to any guidance issued by the Department in publishing its assessment.

As the Council's auditor, I am required by the Act to determine and report each year on whether:

- The Council has discharged its duties in relation to improvement planning, published the required improvement information and the extent to which the Council has acted in accordance with the Department's Guidance in relation to those duties; and
- The Council is likely to comply with the requirement to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its duties.

Scope of the audit and assessment

For the audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information or whether the improvement plan published by the Council can be achieved. My audits of the Council's improvement plan and assessment of performance, therefore, comprised a review of the Council's publications to ascertain whether they included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the documents complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing them.

For the improvement assessment I am required to form a view on whether the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act. My assessment of the Council's improvement responsibilities and arrangements, therefore, comprised a review of certain improvement arrangements within the Council, along with information gathered from my improvement audit.

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 93 to 95 of the Act cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.

Audit opinion

Improvement planning and publication of improvement information

As a result of my audit, I believe the Council has discharged its duties in connection with (1) improvement planning and (2) publication of improvement information in accordance with section 92 the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.

Improvement assessment

As a result of my assessment, I believe the Council has as far as possible discharged its duties under Part 12 of the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.

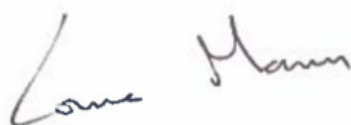
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I have not conducted an assessment to determine whether the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act in subsequent financial years. I will keep the need for this under review as arrangements become more fully established.

Other matters

I have no recommendations to make under section 95 (2) of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014.

I am not minded to carry out a special inspection under section 95 (2) of the Act.



LOUISE MASON
Local Government Auditor
NI Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

30 November 2017

Newry Mourne & Down District Council

Report of Elected Member Development Working Group Meeting held on Monday 4 December 2017 at 3.00 pm, in Meeting Room 1, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick

In the Chair: Councillor H Harvey

In attendance: Councillor T Andrews
Councillor R Burgess (deputising for Councillor Taylor)
Councillor C Casey

Officials in attendance: Ms C Miskelly, Assistant Director Human Resources
Ms E McParland Democratic Services Manager
Ms S Kieran Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: Mr D McCallum, Nilga
Ms F Douglas, Nilga

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor M Ruane and Councillor D Taylor. It was noted Councillor R Burgess was deputising for Councillor D Taylor.

UPDATE RE: E LEARNING

Ms E McParland, Democratic Services Officer advised the e-learning project and the Members would be updated on progress.

PRESENTATION BY NILGA ON THE FINDINGS OF A SCOPING AND ANALYSIS EXERCISE TO IMPLEMENT A REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Councillor H Harvey welcomed Mr D McCallum and F Douglas from Nilga to the meeting.

A presentation took place and the following points were raised:

- Why will the training programme outlined by Nilga only be provided on a yearly basis and not by way of a 4 year term.

- Will Councillors be able to get a recognised qualification after completing certain training.
- The role of Councillors has significantly changed in Northern Ireland due to RPA and it is reassuring to know that Nilga will continue to develop Elected Member Training.
- Will The Regional Training Programme be provided by both NILGA and the Local Government Training Group?

Response

- The Training programme will only be provided on a yearly basis as Nilga's budgets run from one financial year to the next.
- Within the training programme there will be an opportunity for Councillors to achieve an ILM Award or Certificate in Leadership and Management, which will be tailored to leadership in a political environment.
- The training will be overseen by Nilga and the Local Government Training Group. A pilot scheme of training will be operational from late 2017 to mid-2019.

AGREED:

It was agreed to note the scoping and analysis exercise on implementation of Regional Programme for Elected Member Development. (copy of Executive summary and recommendations attached – appendix 1)

TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR COUNCILLORS

Noted: Mrs E McParland, Democratic Services Manager outlined future training sessions arranged for Councillors on the following topics:

- **Media awareness – 26 January 2018**
- **Code of Conduct – date to be confirmed**
- **GDPR – date to be confirmed**
- **Language and culture awareness training – 9 February 2018**

Members have been issued with hold the date notices for confirmed dates.

INVITATION FROM NILGA FOR COUNCIL TO PARTICPATE IN THE NILGA MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE GROUP

Read: Letter dated 6 November 2017 from Ald Stephen Martin, Chair of NILGA Elected Member Development Working Group inviting the Council to nominate a representative from Council's Elected Member Development Steering Group to Nilga's Regional Elected Member Development Working Group.

Agreed: To nominate Councillor Harry Harvey to represent the Council at meetings of the NILGA Member Development and Workforce Group (subject to consideration by SPR Committee and formal ratification by Council).

NILGA ELECTED MEMBER REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR PERIOD JANUARY TO MAY 2018

Read: Details of Nilga Elected Member Regional Programme for January-May 2018

AGREED: It was agreed to note the above programme (attached – appendix 2).

DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

AGREED: The next meeting of the Elected Member Development Working Group to be scheduled in March 2018.

The meeting concluded at 3.55 pm

App
Hank

**DOROTHY MCKEE
CONSULTING**

**Scoping and Analysis Exercise to
Implement a Regional Programme for
Elected Member Development on behalf of
the Northern Ireland Local Government
Association (NILGA)**

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Executive Summary

Dorothy McKee Consulting was commissioned by NILGA in July 2017 to carry out a scoping and analysis exercise to validate a regional programme for elected member development. The aim of the scoping and analysis exercise as outlined was to gain independent, specialist verification of the approach, added value, potential uptake, context and outcomes of NILGA's Regional Framework, which is designed to run from now until the end of the 2019 electoral mandate.

The Programme's first (pilot) phase is timetabled from late 2017 until May 2019. The schedule should enable specific programmes of learning and development to be delivered linked to the skills sets and competencies required for the ever-changing roles councillors in Northern Ireland now fulfil.

A Regional Core Programme for elected members for the period June 2017 – May 2019 exists and approved by NILGA, SOLACE with support from the Local Government Training Group. This exercise was commissioned to ensure the Regional Programme adopts the national "21st Century Councillor" approach, expands and adds value to the current offer.

Analysis was undertaken of the current and proposed councillor learning and development interventions regionally based and in each council and regionally based, through interviews and desk research. An analysis of accredited and non-accredited learning and development interventions delivered in other jurisdictions was also completed.

Accreditation options were explored through interviews with accrediting bodies.

A representative sample of councillors across the 11 councils in Northern Ireland were contacted to provide their feedback on the training and development provided to date and their thoughts on adopting the "21st Century Councillor" concept and competency framework for councillors.

General themes arising from the desk research and interviews are as follows:

- There is strong support for development that enables councillors to take a more strategic role and several councils have taken this approach to the delivery of their in-house programmes and designed them around the key strategic issues in their vision for the area and corporate plan;
- The vast majority of councillor development undertaken to date and planned over the next number of months is in relation to core skills (practical based and core skills knowledge based) and there is considerable overlap in terms of the subjects covered across councils;

- Two of the councils surveyed, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon and Belfast, have engaged the LGA and NW Employers – both formally linked to NILGA's Charter and associated policy and training work - to develop and deliver in-house leadership development programmes;
- There is clear support for workshops on collaborative and/or partnership working basis across and between councils on issues of strategic concern such as: Brexit; Welfare Reform; Community Planning; Shared Services and different models of service delivery and Waste Management and Environmental issues;
- That VFM and quality provision could be achieved through better collaboration between councils and the delivery of a regional programme managed by NILGA. In essence, this view offers added value in terms of the Shared Services culture now developing in NI Local Government, supported in policy terms by both NILGA and SOLACE;
- There is interest in vocational and academic accreditation that is "light touch", flexible in terms of delivery methods and not assessed through a high level of written assignments;
- The majority of those surveyed identified level 5, or Foundation Degree/HND level as the most appropriate level for accredited programmes;
- There is interest in sub-regional events and some councils are already working together on tourism and economic development, Waste Management and infrastructure;
- There is support for the implementation of coaching and or mentoring to be established on a regional basis;
- There is still difficulty in getting councillors to attend development sessions and this is attributed to their very busy schedules, as well as a largely "design & list a series of training courses" approach to their needs rather than taking a Learning and Development Vision and Ethos approach, designing the delivery around the Northern Ireland councillor's working environment;
- Travel is not seen as an issue for most councillors though it was stated that councillors in the North West and Belfast would not typically travel to venues outside their council area; though it was confirmed by NILGA that this has not always been their experience in the past;
- Courses delivered at the weekend and on residential basis were not in general welcomed;

- There is interest in workbooks (electronically accessible as well as Hard Copy) being developed and additional online resources being developed similar to those already developed by the LGA;
- E-learning is supported but is only considered relevant for certain topics and a need was identified to support learning delivered in this way with face to face delivery – great desire has been expressed for E-learning being counterbalanced by collegiate learning - coming together as elected members, and gaining face to face knowledge through interaction (subject to diary constraints). It is recommended that E-Learning includes wiki's, Blogs, podcasts, Ted Talks, Skype and discussion forums;
- Further provision is needed on land use planning to build the councillors confidence in the decision making process and it was considered useful if this provision could be linked to an Accreditation Award;
- Good practice in terms of PDP's and the skills framework should be further explored to showcase evidence of good practice;
- In the consultation with councillors on "how they like to learn" it was stated that learning from others and with other councillors in short, relevant sessions on issues that were of importance to them were best - action learning was additionally identified as a useful approach to their development;
- A need has been identified to provide case studies and good practice examples that support councils with Charter and Charter Plus and an interest in support for personal development planning delivered by other councillors – a pool of experienced councillors has been drawn together already by NILGA. One council is particularly well developed and progressed in this regard and opportunities for showcasing their experiential learning should be explored.

Recommendations

1. It is **recommended** that the Regional Programme is taken forward as a corporate priority for the sector, with governance, resources and design being overseen by NILGA and the Local Government Training Group.

A more detailed Regional Programme of activity for member development for the first (pilot) phase, which runs from late 2017 to mid-2019, is included in the report.

2. It is **recommended** that Local Development Planning learning is primarily focussed on increasing elected members decision making capability and confidence. An endorsed award approach is **further recommended** where ILM Certificates can be awarded for attendance at quality assured events and no formal assessment is required, with NILGA being ideally placed as a centre for coordination and delivery.
3. There was evidence through the research that councils are working together regionally and sub regionally on tourism and economic development, waste management, infrastructure and City / Region Deals. It is **recommended** that these should be explored as an important and existing foundation for delivery of the NILGA Regional Programme on a sub-regional roll out basis.
4. It is **recommended** that common areas of interest and topics of relevance to the concept of the 21st councillor are delivered through short workshops and Masterclasses that are run at different times and locations to fit in with councillors already heavy commitments. This is a form of awareness and development that NILGA already does and which has drawn good attendance – it should now be developed with formal attendance and records of participation retained and disseminated as part of the strategic outcomes desired.
5. A continuous learning and development approach is **recommended** to address the lack of prioritisation and commitment amongst councillors in focussing on and investing in their continuous learning and development. Again, NILGA is well placed as a centre for co-ordinating and delivering learning and development options to bring about this cultural shift, with requisite support from LGTG and its new governance.
6. Areas of duplication and areas of common interest that could be delivered / procured / co-ordinated regionally have been identified through this research. It is **recommended** that suppliers are procured through NILGA working with councils in the future to achieve VFM and quality assurance in terms of delivery. NILGA therefore has a key role to provide the framework to co-ordinate the learning and in part deliver it.

7. It is **recommended** that the delivery of vocational and academic accreditation for councillors needs to be contextualised to reflect a focus on the leadership of people and places and aligned to the ever-changing role of the councillor, which should be flexible in terms of delivery methods and not assessed through a high level of written assessment. Where possible a portfolio based assessment should be used and councillors assessed on practical activities they are engaged in.
8. It is **recommended** that accredited programmes are developed to provide councillors with a foundation for achievement of further academic qualifications that would support their career development once their term of office is completed. Accredited provision should be explored for attendance (see above, point 4, page 6) at workshops and Master classes through providing Development Awards at level 5 for vocational and academic programmes in the first instance.
9. It is **recommended** that regional/sub regional workshops and Masterclasses are supplemented with a mentoring programme for councillors managed by NILGA on behalf of councils. The establishment of coaching (beyond the purposeful but more informal mentoring) on a regional basis could be explored at a later stage through collaboration with the LGA network of which NILGA is a part.
10. There was evidence that action learning is widely used as a method of delivery for councillors in other jurisdictions and it is **recommended** that this is maintained as a key mechanism for member development in the Regional Programme.
11. Regarding E-learning it is **recommended** in the short-term it should be used to support information provided on a face to face basis and for refresher sessions. Moving forward however, it is **recommended** consideration should be given to how E-learning could be used to promote networking and the development of learning communities. A range of interactive E-learning tools and techniques could be used to support the 21st century councillor concept and new approaches to civic and political leadership. The use of E-learning as part of the regional accredited and non-accredited provision for councillors would enhance flexibility and reduce the time needed for travel and for delivery in workshop sessions*.

**NILGA believes strongly that any procurement of a future E-learning portal should be deferred until a vigorous "refresh" of the procurement terms of reference occurs and that the depth and breadth of NILGA's work to date forms part of this process.*



NILGA Regional Programme Model Timetable

McKee Report Themes	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Sep 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19
Accredited Provision Options			Leadership Programme (Evaluation)	Leadership Programme (Evaluation)	Leadership Programme (Delivery)	Leadership Programme (Delivery)	Leadership Programme (Delivery)	Leadership Programme (Delivery)	Leadership Programme (Delivery)	Leadership Programme (Delivery)	Leadership Programme (Delivery)	Leadership Programme (Delivery)	Leadership Programme (TBC)	Leadership Programme (TBC)	Leadership Programme (TBC)
	Local Planning Programme (Design)	Local Planning Programme (Design)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)	Local Planning Programme (Delivery)
Master classes		Scrutiny and Challenge		Partnership Working	Brexit – Preparation and risks	Resilience, Social Media and Wider Comms	Growth Investment and Planning / General Power of Competence		Working Across Boundaries			Resilience, Social Media and Wider Comms			
Network Events	Role of Councils in Place Making (Planning)	Collaborative Working, Co production (Community Planning)	Collaboration - Working across Boundaries (Planning)				Community Planning	Open Council NILGA Conference					Community Planning		
		Brexit Summit													
Ongoing Programmes to Support in House Delivery	Chairing Skills								Chairing Skills	Finance / Setting the Rates	Finance / Setting the Rates				
On-line											Induction (Design)	Induction (Design)	Induction (Design)	Induction (Design)	Induction
Sub Regional Development			Brexit Issues (Border Counties)					Coastal Adaptation and Assets			Assets and the Economy			Brexit Update Sub - Regionally	
Workshops		Code of Conduct	The role of Learning and development in Personal Effectiveness and the Leadership of change			Open Council		The Future Policy Agenda for Public Services	Shared Services and New Models of Service Delivery	Devolution	Induction (Design)	Induction (Design)	Induction (Design)	Induction (Design)	Induction
		Devolution Awareness													

appropriate