



December 14th, 2022

Notice of Meeting

You are requested to attend the **Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee 2022-23** to be held on **Thursday, 15th December 2022 at 6:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre**

Committee Membership 2022 - 2023

Chairperson - Councillor O Hanlon

Deputy Chairperson - Councillor R Howell

Councillor P Byrne

Councillor H Gallagher

Councillor M Gibbons

Councillor G Hanna

Councillor A Lewis

Councillor O Magennis

Councillor A McMurray

Councillor D Murphy

Councillor B Ó Muirí

Councillor M Rice

Councillor G Sharvin

Councillor D Taylor

Councillor J Trainor

Agenda

1.0 Introduction and Apologies

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from SPR Committee Meeting held on 17 November 2022

 *Action Sheet arising from 17 November 2022.pdf*

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For Discussion/Decision

4.0 Notice of Motion - Social Model of Disability

 *Notice of Motion Social Model of Disability.pdf*

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5.0 Statutory duty compliance: A) Draft Equality Action Plan 2023-2027 B) Draft Disability Action Plan 2023-2027

 *Report on draft Equality Action Plan 2023-2027 and draft Disability Action Plan 2023-2027_.pdf*

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 *Appendix I - Draft Equality Action Plan 2023-2027.pdf*

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 *Appendix II - Draft Disability Action Plan 2023-2027.pdf*

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6.0 Draft Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027

 *Report on Draft Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027.pdf*

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 *Aguisin 1 - Dreacht-Straiteis na Gaeilge 2023 -2027_.pdf*

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 *Appendix I - Draft Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027.pdf*

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7.0 Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment 2022-23

 *SPR Cover Report Improvement Audit and Assessment 2022-23.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 - Correspondence to the Chief Executive.pdf*

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 *Appendix 2 - NMD Final s95 report 22-23.pdf*

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 *Appendix 3 - NMD Audit Certificate.pdf*


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8.0 Business Case – Internal Audit Provision

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

 ***Business Case Internal Audit Provision.pdf***

Not included

 ***Full Business Case - 100k - 500k - Internal Audit 2022.pdf***

Not included

9.0 Castlewellan Forest Park

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

 ***Castlewellan Forest Park.pdf***

Not included

10.0 Castlewellan Forest Park - “Re-Rooting our Past in our Future project

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

 ***Castlewellan Forest Park - Re-Rooting our Past in our Future project.pdf***

Not included

11.0 Lease of lands at Ballynoe Road, Downpatrick

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 ***2a SPR Report - 15 December 22 - Proposed Lease of lands at Ballynoe Road Downpatrick.pdf***

Not included




 ***2b Map - Ballynoe Rd_.pdf***

Not included

12.0 Proposed Assignment of Lease dated 4th November 2013 by Trustees of Crossmaglen Rangers GFC




This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person

and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 1a Request to Assign Lease By Crossmaglen GFC.PDF	Not included
 1b Copy Lease 4th Nov 2013.pdf	Not included
 1c Letter from McShanes 25th Nov 2022.pdf	Not included



13.0 Ardglass Rowing Club

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

 3a SPR Report - 15.12.22 - Ardglass Rowing Club.pdf	Not included
 3b November Committee Report - Ardglass Rowing Club.pdf	Not included
 3c Appendix 2 Land at Phennick Marina Carpark.pdf	Not included

14.0 Newry City Centre Regeneration – Funding Agreement

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

 Newry City Centre Regeneration Funding Agreement.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 1 Draft Funding Agreement NCCR.pdf	Not included

FOR NOTING Items deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014

15.0 Roving Reporter' Pilot – Evaluation Report

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

 28 15.12.22 Roving Reporter Pilot Evaluation.pdf	Not included
 28 15.12.22 Appendix 1 Roving Reporter Media Statistics.pdf	Not included
 28 15.12.22 Appendix 2 Roving Reporter NMDDC Social Media Statistics.pdf	Not included

16.0 Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet - 16 November 2022 & 7 December 2022

 *SFWG Action Sheet 16.11.22.pdf*

Not included

 *SFWG Action Sheet 7.12.22 (003).pdf*

Not included

For Noting

17.0 Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting held 1st December 2022

 *Minutes of Newry CCR PB Meeting 01.12.2022.pdf*

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Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Mr Alan Beggs

Mr Caolain Boyd

Cllr Jim Brennan

Cllr Robert Burgess

Cllr Pete Byrne

Mr Gerard Byrne

Cllr Charlie Casey

Mr Andrew Cassells

Cllr William Clarke

Mrs Linda Cummins

Cllr Dermot Curran

Cllr Laura Devlin

Ms Louise Dillon

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Aoife Finnegan

Ms Joanne Fleming

Cllr Hugh Gallagher

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Cllr Valerie Harte

Cllr Roisin Howell

Ms Catherine Hughes

Miss Veronica Keegan

Mrs Josephine Kelly

Mrs Sheila Kieran

Cllr Mickey Larkin

Cllr David Lee-Surginor

Cllr Alan Lewis

Mr Michael Lipsett

Mrs Regina Mackin

Cllr Oonagh Magennis

Mr Conor Mallon

Cllr Gavin Malone

Colette McAteer

Cllr Declan McAteer

Cllr Leeanne McEvoy

Jonathan McGilly

Cllr Harold McKee

Patricia McKeever

Cllr Karen McKevitt

Cllr Andrew McMurray
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Catrina Miskelly
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Mr Colin Moffett
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Cllr Yvonne Moore
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Cllr Roisin Mulgrew
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Cllr Declan Murphy
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Cllr Barra Ó Muirí
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Mr Fearghal O'Connor
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Cllr Gerry O'Hare
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Cllr Kathryn Owen
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Cllr Henry Reilly
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Cllr Michael Rice
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Ms Alison Robb
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Cllr Michael Ruane
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Cllr Michael Savage
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Cllr Gareth Sharvin
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Donna Starkey
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Cllr Gary Stokes
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Sarah Taggart
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Cllr David Taylor
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Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly
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Cllr John Trainor
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Mrs Marie Ward
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ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER 2022

Minute Ref:	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Action taken/Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SPR/150/2022	Request by Councillor Murphy	<p>On a local level Council were investigating 'Warm Banks' using own facilities to encourage people to visit them for heat etc. and a report would follow imminently around that specific issue.</p> <p>The Chief Executive highlighted that Community Planning structures and the Strategic Stakeholder Forum Group had been strengthened as a result of Council's response during Covid and a survey had been undertaken to see what support and help could be provided, the results of which were imminent and would be brought back through the relevant committees demonstrating the various ways they can help.</p>	M Ward	Report scheduled at AHC meeting 21 st November.	Y

ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2022

SPR/162/2022	Action Sheet arising from SPR meeting on Thursday 13 October 2022	It was agreed to approve the action sheet from the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 13 October 2022.	J Kelly	Approved	Y
SPR/163/2022	Revised Planning Retention and Disposal	It was agreed that Elected Members approve the revised Planning Retention and Disposal Schedule.	A Robb	Approved	Y

SPR/164/2022	Mid-Year Assessments of Directorate Business Plans	It was agreed that Elected Members approve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-Year Assessment of the Chief Executive's Department Business Plan 2022-23 • Mid-Year Assessment of the Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2022-23 	M Ward	Approved	Y
SPR/165/2022	Mid-Year Assessment – Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23	It was agreed Elected Members approve the Mid-Year Assessment and Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23.	G Byrne	Approved	Y
ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014					
SPR/166/2022	Strategic Review of Museums Service	It was agreed that Elected Members approve the recommendations included in the Strategic Review of Council's Museums Service as set out in this report. It was also agreed that Elected Members approve that the report would be made public once finalized.	C Mallon	Approved	Y
SPR/167/2022	Newry City Centre Regeneration – BRCD Contract for Funding	It was agreed that Elected Members approve the contents of the report, the Contract for funding as per the officer's report and approve the signing of the Contract for Funding between the Department for Communities and Belfast City Council in respect of the Newry City Centre Regeneration Projects	C Mallon	Approved	Y

SPR/168/2022	Newry City Park Project – Outline Business Case.	It was agreed that Elected Members approve to underwrite any additional financial cost for the Newry City Park Project over and above the funding currently ringfenced for the project.	P Tamati	Approved	Y
SPR/169/2022	Lease of lands at St Anne's Park, Mayobridge	It was agreed that Elected Members approve to enter into a Lease with the club noted in the report in respect of the lands at St Anne's Park, Mayobridge as outlined in blue on the map for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent subject to Departmental Consent.	F O'Connor	Approved	Y
SPR/170/2022	Lease of lands at Glen Hill Recreation Area, Newry	It was agreed Elected Members approve to enter into a Lease with the club noted in the report in respect of The lands known as Glen Hill Recreation Area, Newry as outlined in red on the map for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent subject to Departmental Consent.	F O'Connor	Approved	Y
SPR/171/2022	Renewal of Lease of Unit 2 The Square, Warrenpoint.	It was agreed Elected Members approve to proceed with option C: Not to renew the Lease to 26 Extreme and that Council Officers market the Unit either via Council's agents or an Expression of Interest Process.	F O'Connor	Approved	Y
SPR/172/2022	Commercial Unit at Market Square, Newry	It was agreed Elected Members approve to a 5-year Lease of the subject premises to the successful bidder, at an annual rent as per officer's report plus rates and standard terms and conditions of lease.	F O'Connor	Approved	Y
SPR/173/2022	Request for Easement over Council lands at North Promenade, Newcastle	It was agreed Elected Members approve the grant of a licence for works and easement on Council lands as set-out in the report subject to a valuation and payment by the developer of all ancillary costs including legal and valuation fees.	F O'Connor	Approved	Y

SPR/174/2022	Provision of Occupational Health Tender	It was agreed Elected Members the commencement of tender process, for the supply of Occupational Health Services for a two year period, with the option to extend (by mutual agreement) up to a maximum of four years.	P Preen	Approved	Y
SPR/175/2022	Ardglass Rowing Club	It was agreed Elected Members approve to defer the decision until next month's SPR Committee to allow officers to engage with the group to explain the rationale regarding Council's leasing policies and procedures.	F O'Connor	On-going	N
FOR NOTING – This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014					
SPR/176/2022	Management Accounts – 2022/23, Quarter 2	It was agreed to note the 2022-23 Quarter 2 (period ending 30 th September 2022) Management Accounts update.	J Kelly	Noted	Y
SPR/177/2022	Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet – 12 October 2022 & 25 October 2022	It was agreed to note the Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet – 12 October 2022 & 25 October 2022.	J kelly	Noted	Y
FOR NOTING					

SPR/178/2022	Sickness Absence	<p>It was agreed Elected Members note the contents of the report and the following measures in relation to sickness absence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASM have provided satisfactory assurance in relation to the Managing Attendance Procedure and the controls in place to manage sickness absence. • Absence data is analysed and reported on a quarterly basis to both the Senior and Corporate Management Teams to identify opportunities for targeted interventions. • Sickness Absence forms part of the Corporate Risk Register and performance monitored on the Corporate Dashboard. 	P Preen	Noted	Y
SPR/179/2022	Minutes of Newry CCR PB Meeting – 06 October 2022	<p>It was agreed Elected Members note the Minutes of Newry CCR PB Meeting – 06 October 2022.</p>	C Mallon	Noted	Y

END

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 December 2022
Subject:	Notice of Motion – Social Model of Disability
Reporting Officer:	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy
Contact Officers:	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy Suzanne Rice, Corporate Policy and Equality Officer

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:

For decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>The following Notice of Motion – Social Model of Disability (C/181/2022) was referred to the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"This Council recognises that; many forms of disability, including for example impairments of mobility, vision, hearing, communication, neurological issues, mental health issues, neurodiversity, learning disability and chronic illness can impact people's ability to access our services. It has a duty to ensure that every service and facility is fully accessible, providing access to resources and services that remove barriers. This council, therefore, agrees to promote a Social Model of Disability, which says that people with impairments are 'disabled' by the barriers operating in society which excludes and discriminate against them. Further, commits to working with local businesses, community and service providers to ensure facilities and services are accessible for everyone and will ensure that any new service or facility is developed using a co-design approach with disability organisations and local groups".</i>
1.2	<p>Relevant legislation</p> <p>The primary disability related anti-discrimination legislation is the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; and the main amending/supplementary laws are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Discrimination (Meaning of Disability) Regulations (NI) 1996 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2004 Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 <p>In addition, as a public authority, the Council must develop, design and deliver its services in line with its statutory equality and disability duties as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the) Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006

1.3	<p>Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998</p> <p>Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires Council to comply with two statutory duties:</p> <p>Section 75 (1)</p> <p>In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation • men and women generally • persons with a disability and persons without • persons with dependents and persons without. <p>Section 75 (2)</p> <p>In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.</p>
1.4	<p>To fulfil its Section 75 statutory duties the Council has developed an Equality Scheme, and an associated Equality Action Plan, which outlines corporate responsibilities, legal commitments and specific actions, including those related to consultation, training, equality screening and equality impact assessment.</p>
1.5	<p>Disability statutory duties</p> <p>Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the) Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires the Council, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and • to encourage participation by disabled people in public life. <p>It is a requirement of the above legislation that Council has a Disability Action Plan showing how it proposes to fulfil the disability duties.</p>
2.0	<p>Key issues</p>
2.1	<p>The Social Model of Disability notice of motion reflects Council's corporate Section 75 and Disability Duties responsibilities, and commitments and positive actions set out within our Equality Scheme, Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan.</p> <p>In relation to our Section 75 statutory duties, Chapter 6 of Council's Equality Scheme sets out Council's commitment to <i>"Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide"</i>.</p> <p>In addition, when implementing environmental improvement schemes Council engages and consults with a broad range of disability group stakeholders.</p>

	<p>The draft Equality Action Plan 2023-2027 and Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 tabled for consideration at the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 15 December 2022 contain positive actions related to realising the broad context of the notice of motion.</p> <p>For example, the draft Equality Action Plan 2023-2027 contains the following positive actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of Council facilities to ensure they are accessible to all members of the community • To maintain the Shop Mobility Scheme delivered by the Newcastle Centre • Develop the corporate website ensuring it meets all accessibility requirements • To review and refresh Council's Consultation and Engagement Framework • All current and new policies are equality screened before council approval and implementation • Continue to facilitate reasonable adjustments within the workplace
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	Members are asked to consider the Notice of Motion – Social Model of Disability noting the content of this report which confirms the motion broadly reflects Council's corporate Section 75 and Disability Duties responsibilities, and commitments and positive actions set out within Council's Equality Scheme, Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Not applicable.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>

5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p>
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Equality Scheme • Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 • Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the) Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 • NMDDC Equality Action Plan • NMDDC Disability Action Plan

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 December 2022
Subject:	Statutory duty compliance: A) Draft Equality Action Plan 2023-2027 B) Draft Disability Action Plan 2023-2027
Reporting Officer:	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy
Contact Officers:	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy Suzanne Rice, Corporate Policy and Equality Officer

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:

For decision	X	For noting only
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>Members are asked to consider and agree the following:</p> <p>A) draft Equality Action Plan 2023–2027 (Appendix I) B) draft Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 (Appendix II)</p> <p>Further to this both draft action plans will proceed to twelve-week public consultation.</p>
1.2	<p>Draft Equality Action Plan 2023-2027</p> <p>To fulfil its Section 75 statutory duties, the Council has developed an Equality Scheme which has been approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. It outlines corporate responsibilities, legal commitments and specific actions, and Council must provide an Annual Report on Progress to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland by 31 August each year.</p> <p>As set out within Section 2 of Council’s Equality Scheme, Council is required to develop an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This will enable Council to identify potential functional areas for further or better discharge of its Section 75 statutory duties and inform its key strategic actions.</p> <p>The attached draft Equality Action Plan 2023–2027 (Appendix I), circulated to the Council’s Corporate Management Team for comment and considered by Council’s Senior Management Team, builds upon Council’s action plan for the period 2020-2023.</p>
1.3	<p>The draft equality action plan recommends key areas of activity and details positive actions relevant to Council’s functions. The positive action measures have been set out under the five principles of the Local Government Staff Commission’s Equality and Diversity in Local Councils Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle 1: Ensuring we work in a non-discriminatory environment, promote equality, and model best practice in equality and good relations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle 2: Ensuring all our decisions are based on evidence to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations • Principle 3: Providing access to services, facilities and information • Principle 4: Recruiting and employing people fairly • Principle 5: Responding to and learning from complaints and incidents in a positive and pro-active way
1.4	<p>Draft Disability Action Plan 2023-2027</p> <p>Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the) Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires the Council, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and • to encourage participation by disabled people in public life. <p>It is a requirement of the above legislation that Council has a plan showing how the public authority proposes to fulfil the disability duties. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland recommends that public authorities consult on their plans before they submit them.</p>
1.5	<p>The attached draft Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 (Appendix II) builds upon Council's previous disability action plan for the period 2020-2023.</p> <p>The draft plan, circulated to the Council's Corporate Management Team for comment and considered by Council's Senior Management Team, sets out the Council's commitment to fulfil the statutory disability duties, and relevant action measures on how Council intends to improve the quality of life for all people with disabilities who live in, work in or visit our district.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	<p>Further to consideration and agreement of the draft Equality Action Plan 2023-2027 and draft Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 at the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 15 December 2022 (and approval of the December 2022 SPR Report at Council's Monthly Meeting on 9 January 2023) the following is proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12-week public consultation on both draft plans. • It is proposed to combine this consultation with consultation to be undertaken in relation to Council's draft Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027. • Finalised Equality Action Plan 2023-2027 and Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 tabled for consideration at a future Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and adoption by Council. • Adopted Equality Action Plan 2023-2027 and Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 forwarded to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>Members are asked to consider and agree the following:</p> <p>A) draft Equality Action Plan 2023-2027 B) draft Disability Action Plan 2023-2027</p>

	Further to this both draft action plans will proceed to twelve-week public consultation.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	<p>Both of the draft action plans designate specific responsibilities for the proposed positive action measures.</p> <p>While there is potential for implementation to have an impact in terms of physical (time) and financial resources, it should be noted that Council has a corporate statutory responsibility to develop, implement and report annually upon said plans to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.</p>
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service

	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	Appendices
	<p>Appendix I: Draft Equality Action Plan 2023-2027</p> <p>Appendix II: Draft Disability Action Plan 2023-2027</p>
8.0	Background Documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Equality Scheme• Section 75 of the NI Act 1998• Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the) Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006

Plean Gníomhaíochta um Chomhionannas 2023-2027

Equality Action Plan 2023-2027



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

Foreword

Welcome to the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Action Plan 2023-2028. This plan sets out the Council's commitment to ensuring it fulfils its statutory obligation regarding Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Section 75 (1) states that public authorities in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity

- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, material status or sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Between persons with dependents and person without.

Section 75 (2) states that public authorities in carrying out its functions relation to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial groups.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to the fulfilment of its Equality duties in all parts of its organisation and this action plan sets out how it intends to do so.

Councillor Michael Savage
Chairperson of Newry, Mourne
and Down District Council

Marie Ward
Chief Executive of Newry,
Mourne and Down District Council

Equality and Diversity Framework

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Action Plan is set within the context of the Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland's Equality and Diversity Framework.

The framework outlines five key principles which assist Council to meet its equality and diversity obligations.

The 5 principles are as follows:

Principle 1: Ensuring we work in a non- discriminatory environment, promote equality, and model best practice in equality and good relations

It is everyone's responsibility to:

- Treat everyone equally and with dignity and respect
- Think about how our actions affect others
- Help people change for the better through example by challenging unacceptable behaviour and language
- Be knowledgeable by taking personal responsibility for training around equality and diversity and good relations (mandatory training for all elected members, Council staff and managers in place)

Principle 2: Ensuring all our decisions are based on evidence to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations

We will:

- Ensure that all policies, projects and programmes of work are screened and where appropriate, impact assessed
- Publish all screening outcomes including any mitigation or alternative policies considered
- Involve the customers of the council, trade unions, business sector and voluntary and community sector on an on- basis to assist us in the review and development of existing and new policies

Principle 3: Providing access to services, facilities and information

We will take steps to improve access to services, facilities and information and to be open about what we can and cannot do:

We will:

- Involve customers and stakeholders in the design, prioritisation and review of services
- Monitor and review services regularly to identify any under-representation or discrimination
- Make sure information is accessible using Plain English and other accessibility standards
- Provide alternative formats, translations and interpreters when needed
- Make sure buildings are accessible and welcoming to all
- Make sure meetings and events are easy to access

Principle 4: Recruiting and employing people fairly

The Council will make sure that we provide equality of opportunity to all in employment.

We will:

- Use non-discriminatory job criteria
- Take positive action to ensure a diverse workforce
- Apply fair selection procedures
- Monitor and review employment practice
- Make reasonable adjustments
- Support staff through appropriate networks

Principle 5: Responding to and learning from complaints and incidents in a positive and proactive way

Everyone has a right to complain about discrimination and harassment in good faith, without being victimised at any time.

We will:

- Handle complaints and grievances properly
- Resolve matters positively
- Respond to incidents of prejudice or hate crime

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Action Plan 2023-2027 has been developed to ensure all the proposed positive actions identified are related to the five principles of The Local Government Staff Commission's Equality and Diversity framework.

Equality Action Plan 2023-2027					
Principle 1: Ensuring we work in a non-discriminatory environment, promote equality and model of best practice in equality and good relations					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations Statutory Duty Compliance	To continue to develop an understanding of the Council's duty to promote Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations	Develop an Equality and Good Relations training programme and guidance for staff and elected members to embed an Equality and Good Relations culture and ethos across the organisation	Number of training sessions/programmes delivered.	Corporate Services	Ongoing
			Attendance figures of elected members participating in Equality and Good Relations training programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Policy Human Resources (Learning and Development) 	
			Attendance figures of staff participating in Equality and Good Relations training programmes	Active and Healthy Communities	
		Examples of training programmes will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality Scheme and Section 75 statutory duties Disability Duties 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality screening Consultation and engagement Policy development Good Relations Disability awareness 	<p>Evaluation and feedback from staff and elected members</p>		
	<p>To integrate objectives and targets relating to the Section 75 statutory duties into Council's Departmental and Business plans.</p>	<p>Council has considered all S75 categories in the development of Corporate Strategic and Operational business plans</p> <p>Review of Corporate Reporting template which will map Officers' consideration of Section 75 in Council decision-making</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Improvement Corporate Planning and Policy (Corporate Policy) 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Bi-annually (April & October)</p>	

		To utilise the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group as a facilitated discussion forum for Elected Members to address contentious and sensitive issues	Number of meetings of the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group held	Chief Executive Office Corporate Policy	Ongoing
		Information on Equality and Good Relations for new staff	Number of induction sessions held	Human Resources Corporate Policy	Ongoing
		Council 'light up' civic buildings on recognised days to support and raise awareness of equality / disability related issues	Number of times a civic building is 'lit up'	Chief Executive Office	4 events per year

		To promote the role of the Council's Diversity Ambassadors	Number of people who engage with Diversity Ambassadors	Corporate Policy	October 2023
		Implementation of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan	Number of participants in Good Relations funded programmes Quarterly and annual reports to The Executive Office Number of people accessing the services of the Ethnic Minority Support Centre	Active and Healthy Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none">Community Engagement	Ongoing Annually & Quarterly Annually (August)

Principle 2: Ensuring all our decisions are based on evidence to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality and good relations					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
Equality Screening	To ensure that all policies and procedures are equality screened, i.e. to assess the likely impact of the policy on the promotion of Equality of Opportunity and/or Good Relations	All current and new policies are screened before council approval and implementation	Quarterly policy screening reports tabled at SPR Committee	All Directorates Corporate Policy	Quarterly
			Annual report produced for Equality Commission NI		Annually (August)
			Reports uploaded to council website and forwarded to equality consultee listing		Quarterly
		Guidance and support to staff on policy screening process	Number of screening training sessions provided per year	Corporate Policy	Ongoing Minimum of one

		Training provided for staff on the policy screening process			dedicated training course / year
		To promote and raise awareness of the Council's Policy Development Framework	Policy Development Framework communicated to staff biannually	Corporate Policy	Ongoing
		To promote and raise awareness of the Council's Guidance for reviewing Council policies	Guidance on policy reviews communicated to staff biannually	Corporate Policy	Ongoing
Effective Consultation and Engagement in line with Section 75 principles	To provide corporate guidance and establish a robust process for consultation and engagement	To review and refresh Council's Consultation & Engagement Framework	Production of a toolkit	Corporate Policy Evidence and Research	March 2024
		Review Equality consultee list annually	Updated Equality consultee list	Corporate Policy	Annually (As per Equality Scheme – September each year)

Principle 3: Providing access to services, facilities and information					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timescale
Monitoring	To have relevant Section 75 data available	Directorates to establish a system to collate relevant Section 75 data	Appropriate and relevant up to date data available to determine effectiveness of service provision	All Directorates Corporate Policy Evidence and Research	Ongoing To review data annually (April)
Access to information	Information on council services is accessible to all parts of the community	Develop the corporate website ensuring it meets all accessibility requirements	Availability of an accessible corporate website	Corporate Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Planning and Policy (Corporate Comms and Marketing) 	October 2025

Access to services and facilities	Services and facilities are accessible to all parts of the community	Review of council facilities to ensure they are accessible to all members of the community	Percentage of Council owned facilities meeting the requirements of the 'Every Customer Counts' accessibility checklist	All Directorates	Annually (April)
		To maintain Shop Mobility Scheme delivered by the Newcastle Centre	Numbers of people using service	Active and Healthy Communities	Ongoing

Principle 4: Recruiting and employing people fairly					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timescale
Workforce diversity	To ensure that Council provides Equality of Opportunity to all in employment	Integration of Section 75 statutory duties within job descriptions		Corporate Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Resources 	Ongoing
		Workforce monitoring related to Article 55 Reviews	Annual report to ECNI Submission of three yearly Article 55 Report to ECNI	Corporate Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Resources 	Annually To report every 3 years
		Research, evaluate and monitor under representation of Section 75 categories within the workplace through analysing recruitment and selection data and the	Relevant section 75 workforce data	Corporate Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Resources Corporate Policy 	September 2023 / Ongoing

		current workforce profile	Chief Executive Office	
		Continue to facilitate requests for reasonable adjustments within the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Evidence and Research	
		Number and type of requests for reasonable adjustments	All Directorates in conjunction with Safety, Health & Emergency Planning Section	Ongoing

Principle 5: Responding to and learning from complaints and incidents in a positive and proactive way					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timescale
Support, advice, guidance and assistance	Complaints are addressed in a positive manner and realistic timeframe	Implementation of Council's Complaint Processes	Number of complaints	Corporate Services • Administration and Customer Services	Ongoing Annually (As per Equality Scheme – August)
			Number of Section 75 complaints	Corporate Policy	
	Ensure people with a disability can access the Council's complaints/ comments procedure	Provide a range of accessible formats for people to forward complaints/comments to Council	Number of requests for accessible formats	Corporate Services • Administration and Customer Services Corporate Policy	Ongoing

How the Equality Action Plan will be published

Following consultation and submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, this plan will be available by contacting:

Suzanne Rice
Corporate Policy and Equality Officer
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Monaghan Row,
Newry
BT35 8DJ
Telephone: 0300 013 2233
suzanne.rice@nmandd.org

The plan will be available in alternative formats upon request.

Plean Gníomhaíochta um Dhaoine faoi Mhíchumas 2023-2027

Disability Action Plan 2023-2027



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

**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

Foreword

Welcome to the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Disability Action Plan for 2023-2027 which sets out how we as a Council intend to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities who live in, work or visit our district.

This is Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's third Disability Action Plan, and it has been designed to ensure that Council fulfils its statutory obligations in compliance with section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006).

The Disability Discrimination Act places duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

This plan outlines the actions and processes which we as a Council will undertake to ensure issues facing people with disabilities and their carers are effectively mainstreamed within Council decisions and service delivery.

Councillor Michael Savage

Chairperson of Newry, Mourne and Down
District Council

Marie Ward

Chief Executive

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires the Council in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
 - encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- 1.2 Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a Disability Action Plan which outlines how Council will fulfil its duties in relations to its functions.
- 1.3 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's commitment is detailed in the Disability Action Plan in this report. It outlines the following:
- the issue to be addressed
 - the outcome wanted
 - the positive action to be undertaken
 - the measure which will determine success
 - the department responsible for addressing the issue and
 - the anticipated timeframe for action

2. The Role of Council and its functions

- 2.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is the third largest Local Government Authority in Northern Ireland. With an electorate of 182,073 it covers South Armagh and parts of County Down. It incorporates two areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has an extensive coastline stretching from Strangford Lough to Carlingford Lough and borders the counties of Louth and Monaghan in the Republic of Ireland.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has 41 Elected Members representing the following 7 District Electoral Areas:

- Crotlieve
 - Downpatrick
 - Newry
 - Rowallane
 - Slieve Croob
 - Slieve Gullion
 - The Mournes
- 2.2 Elected Members provide civic and political leadership and oversee the day to day running of the Council, representing the interests of their constituents

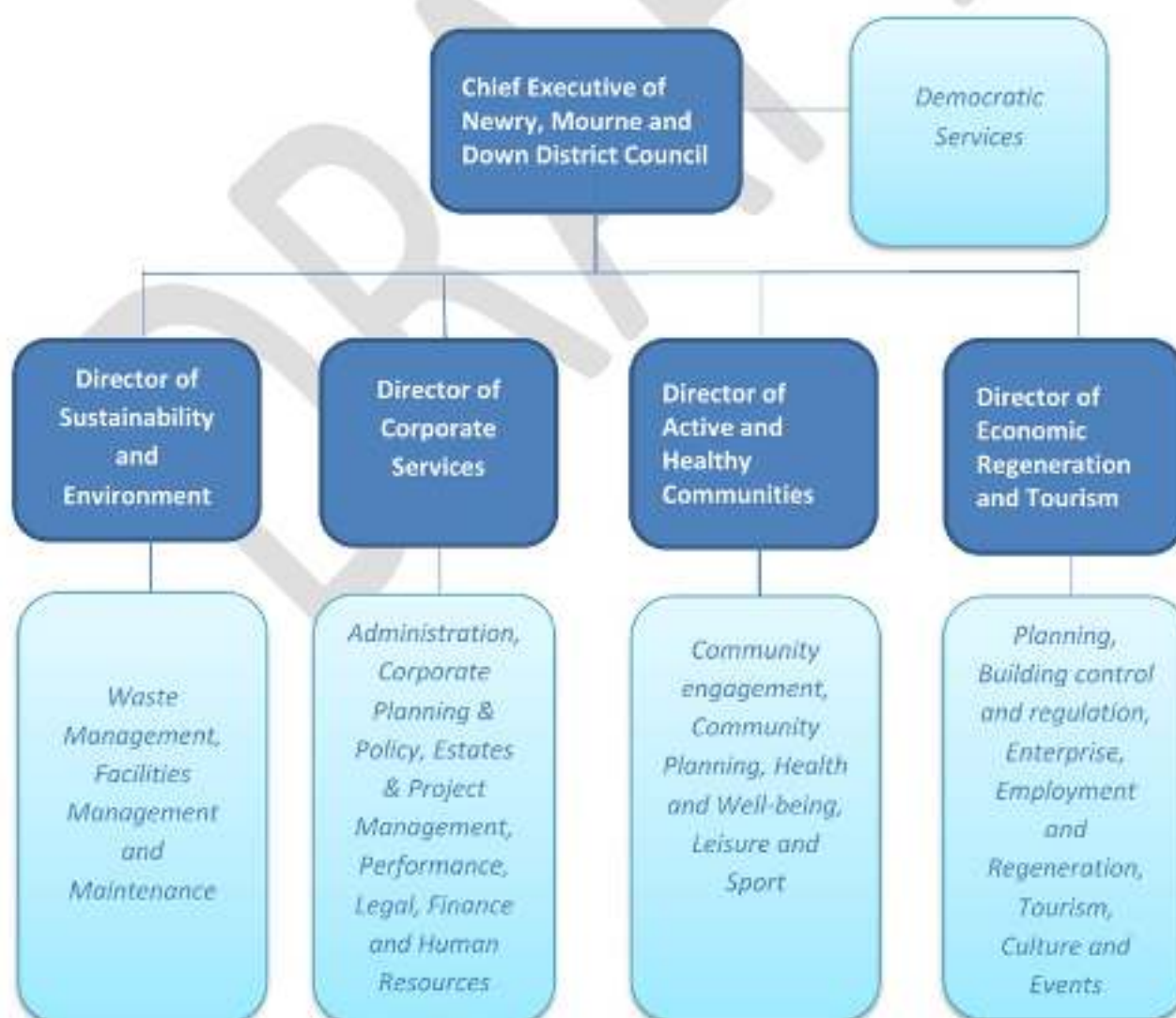
and ensure the views of people across Newry, Mourne and Down are reflected in the Council's decisions and how services are delivered.

- 2.3 In addition to the Council's Monthly meeting, the business of Council is conducted across 4 Directorates and their four committee meetings each month. These directorates are:

- Economic Regeneration and Tourism
- Active and Healthy Communities
- Sustainability and Environment
- Corporate Services

- 2.4 The structure, functions and responsibilities of each directorate are detailed in the following diagram.

1. Council structure



3. Public life positions for which the Council has responsibility

- 3.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has responsibility for a number of public life positions on council committees.

Examples of these include:

- Peace Plus Partnership
- District Electoral Area Forums
- Brexit Forum
- Policing and Community Safety Partnership
- Sustainable Development and Climate Change Forum

- 3.2 The Council also appoints Elected Members to external organisations.

Examples of these include:

- APSE NI Executive Board
- Warrenpoint Harbour Authority
- Community Planning Partnership
- Local Government Partnership on Traveller issues
- Ring of Gullion AONB Management Board

4. The Council's commitment to the effective implementation of the disability action plan

- 4.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the plan in all parts of the organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Elected Members, and with the Chief Executive who will be responsible for the implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the Council complies with our disability duties.
- 4.2 As part of its corporate planning process, the Council has identified the promotion of equality of opportunity and incorporating disability duties as part of its corporate plan. These will be reflected at all levels of strategic planning within the Council including individual staff objectives and business plans. Progress on meeting objectives, including those relating to the disability duties will be monitored and reported upon at the most senior level within the organisation. The Corporate Policy and Equality Officer will monitor and report on this annually. A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the disability duties will be included in the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

5. Internal Arrangements

- 5.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has 41 Elected Members. They meet monthly in full session and frequently in committees and sub-committees.
- 5.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the Council's four Directorates through the Senior Management Team.
- 5.3 The Council is committed to fulfilling the statutory responsibilities contained in its Disability Action Plan in all parts of the organisation. The Council's Corporate Policy Section, located within the Corporate Planning and Policy Department of the Corporate Services Directorate, provides specialist support and advice to Council and Officers on matters relating to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations, disability duties, policy development and rural needs. The Corporate Planning and Policy Department is led by the Assistant Director of Corporate Planning and Policy. The Head of Corporate Policy will ensure the implementation of the actions in the Disability Action Plan, and the Corporate Policy and Equality Officer will be the main point of contact.

6. Effective Engagement

- 6.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to engaging effectively with relevant groups in the implementation, monitoring and review of this plan. This will be undertaken through meetings with key stakeholders and advertising through the Council's social media and the local press.

7. Annual Report

- 7.1 The Council will prepare an annual report on the implementation of its Disability Action Plan. The annual report will be included as part of the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of the Equality Scheme. This will be made available on the Council's website.

8. Five Year Review

- 8.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will carry out a five-year review of its plan, in consultation with the Equality Commission for NI.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to carrying out meaningful consultation in the development and review of its Disability Action Plan. Council are keen to bring about change for people with disabilities and their carers by proactively taking measures in response to the disability Duties. Council would therefore like to ensure the involvement of people who

have disabilities and those who care for people with a disability in the development of the plan.

- 9.2 Consultation on the Disability Action Plan is on-going via engagement with key stakeholders and service users. Comments and suggestions on the plan are welcomed at any time.
- 9.3 The Council has sought to ensure the involvement of people with disabilities by consulting with representative groups at both regional and local levels, as well as talking to, and meeting with individuals with a disability or carers.
- 9.4 The Council will consult regularly with a range of local and regional groups of people with disabilities and those representing them. This includes Action Mental Health, Employers for Disability NI, IMTAC, Autism NI, Cedar Foundation and Disability Sports NI.
- 9.5 The draft plan will be advertised on the council's website, newspapers and through social where comments will be sought from individuals and organisations.
- 9.6 Barriers to consultation continue to be removed by ensuring accessibility of documents in appropriate formats. To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where an exact request cannot be met, we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided. Consideration is given to how best to communicate information to young disabled people as well as considering additional dimensions such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief.

10. Action Measures

- 10.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has completed several actions which positively promote attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life. These include:
 - Activity Liaison Officer – Role is to provide participation opportunities for people with disabilities in sport and recreation to include participation in the arts and all other council activities;
 - Employee opportunities in conjunction with USEL;
 - All interviewers participating in the Council's recruitment and selection process are aware of disability duties;
 - All current and proposed policies are screened in accordance with the Council's Equality Scheme to ensure that they do not have adverse impact on any of the nine equality categories;
 - Autism Friendly initiatives in Council facilities and events;
 - Delivery of Shop Mobility Scheme in Newcastle;
 - Provision of an assisted bin collections.

11. Timeframe for the implementation for the Action Measures

- 11.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Councils revised Disability Action Plan is for the period 2023 to 2027.

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Disability Action Plan					
Awareness & Understanding					
ISSUE	OUTCOME	POSITIVE ACTION	MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
Disability Awareness and Training	To continue to embed an understanding of the council's due regard duty with regards to Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the) Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006	<p>Develop a Disability Awareness training programme for all staff and elected members to ensure that council is aware of its responsibilities under the legislation</p> <p>Examples of training programmes will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Duties Disability Awareness, Autism Friendly, Dementia Friendly, Brain Injury Awareness <p>Appropriate and relevant training on disability duties for officers participating</p>	<p>Number of training sessions/programmes delivered</p> <p>Attendance figures of elected members participating in the Disability Awareness Training</p> <p>Attendance figures of staff participating in the Disability Awareness Training</p> <p>Evaluation and feedback from staff and elected members.</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Policy Learning and Development <p>SMT</p> <p>Chief Executive Office</p>	Ongoing and reviewed annually

		recruitment and selection panels Continue to provide disability awareness induction training to new staff Relates to both Disability Duties	Monitor the impact of the training programme on service delivery.		
		All policy makers within Council to take into consideration the disability duties when proposing or revising policy Relates to Disability Duty 1	All new and revised policies will ensure compliance with disability duties.	SMT Council Officers	Ongoing
Engagement					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
Engagement	Continue to engage with disability organisations	Corporate Policy to engage organisations and investigate opportunities to undertake collaborative working	New initiatives undertaken	Corporate Policy	Ongoing

		Relates to both Disability Duties			
		Continue to provide employment opportunities/work placements for people with disabilities	Number of people employed	Human Resources	Ongoing
		Relates to Disability Duty 2			
Promotion					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timescale
Positive Promotion	Raise the profile of Council's Diversity Ambassadors	To undertake a PR campaign internally and externally to promote the role of and assistance given by the Council's Diversity Ambassadors	Number of people who engage with Diversity Ambassadors	Diversity Ambassadors Council Officers Elected members	October 2023
		Relates to Disability Duty 1			

	Continue to raise awareness and positively promote disability	District Electoral Area Forums to host events supporting residents and organisations Relates to both Disability Duties	Number of events held	DEA Officers	Ongoing and reviewed annually
		Chairperson of Council continue to support charities as part of their annual programme Relates to Disability Duty 1	Number of charities supported	Chief Executive Office Chairperson	Annually
		Council continues to 'light up' civic buildings on recognised days which support and raise awareness of disability related issues Relates to Disability Duty 1	Number of times civic building is 'lit'	Chief Executive Office	4 events per year

		Continue the Promotion of Newcastle as 'Autism Friendly' Relates to both Disability Duties	Increase in the number of businesses signed up to the initiative	Economic Regeneration and Tourism	Ongoing
		To maintain the Shop Mobility Scheme delivered by the Newcastle Centre Relates to both Disability Duties	Numbers of people using the service	Active and Healthy Communities	Ongoing
Access					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timescale
Access to information	Information on council services is accessible to all parts of the community	Production of a corporate 'Making Information Accessible' Guide for staff Relates to Disability Duty 1	Number of council publications available in a variety of formats Number of requests for information in alternative formats	Corporate Policy	June 2024

		<p>'Making Information Accessible' training sessions to be delivered across Council</p> <p>Relates to Disability Duty 1</p>	<p>Number of Council officials participating in 'Making Information Accessible' training sessions</p>	<p>Corporate Policy</p>	<p>October 2024</p>
		<p>DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY</p> <p>Develop the corporate website ensuring it meets all accessibility requirements</p> <p>Relates to Disability duty 1</p>	<p>Availability of an accessible corporate website</p> <p>Accessibility Statement on Website</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Communications and Marketing 	<p>October 2025</p>
		<p>Providing accessibility information</p> <p>Information provided on accessibility of buildings and events made available on Council website</p> <p>Relates to both Disability Duties</p>	<p>Information available on website</p>	<p>All Directorates</p>	<p>April 2024</p>

Access to services and facilities	Services and facilities are accessible all parts of the community	Ensuring our new buildings shall be fully compliant with the Building Regulations and DDA compliant Relates to both Disability Duties	Building of a new Civic Centre and new Theatre and Conference Centre in Newry.	Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Directorate	December 2025
		Review of council facilities to ensure they are accessible to all members of the community Relates to both Disability Duties Council to meet the requirement of the Equality Commission's 'Every Customer Counts' initiative Relates to both Disability Duties	Percentage of Council owned facilities meeting the requirements of the 'Every Customer Counts' accessibility checklist	All Directorates	Annually - April
		Continue to provide Autism Friendly programmes in Council facilities and events.	Number of people participating in programmes and events	All Directorates	Ongoing

		Relates to both Disability Duties				
		Review and promote the usage of the Council's Buddy Card Scheme.	Number of people availing of initiative	Active and Healthy Communities	June - Annually	
		Relates to both Disability Duties				
Complaints	Ensure people with a disability can access the Council's complaints/ comments procedure	Provide a range of accessible formats available to make a complaint re council services Relates to Disability Duty 1	Number of complaints Number of complaints referencing disability issues	Corporate Services – Administration and Customer Services Corporate Policy	Ongoing June – Annually	

Workforce					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timescale
Workforce diversity	To better understand workforce profile	Investigate the opportunity for engagement between Corporate Policy and HR to develop a Section 75 workforce profile and identify number of employees of Council with disabilities Relates to Disability Duty 1	Relevant section 75 workforce data	Corporate Services – HR and Corporate Policy	Ongoing
		Continue to facilitate requests for reasonable adjustments within the workplace Relates to both Disability Duties	Number and type of requests for reasonable adjustments	All Directorates in conjunction with Safety, Health and Emergency Planning Section	June – Annually

13. How the Disability Action Plan will be published

- 13.1 Following submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, this plan will be available by contacting:

Suzanne Rice
Corporate Policy and Equality Officer
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council,
Monaghan Row,
Newry
BT35 8DJ
Telephone: 0300 013 2233
suzanne.rice@nmandd.org

The availability of the Disability Action Plan will be advertised in all local papers in the district as well in council's social media, and can be accessed on the Council's website at:

www.newrymournedown.org

- 13.2 In accordance with Council's Equality Scheme, the plan will also be available in alternative formats upon request, where reasonably practicable. Where an exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.
- 13.3 The Council acknowledge individuals may experience different barriers according to their impairment, and through our ongoing work with people with disabilities, representative groups and carers will ensure appropriate ways to communicate the Plan.
- 13.4 The Plan will be highlighted through press releases, on social media, through email and meeting directly with disability organisations, representative groups and individuals.
- 13.5 In accordance with the Council's Bilingualism Policy, the Plan will be available in the Irish Language upon request. Consideration will also be given to requests to produce the Plan for people who speak a minority language.
- 13.6 In addition, employees will be made aware of the Disability Action Plan and how their duties and responsibilities assist the Council meet its obligations.

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 December 2022
Subject:	Draft Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027
Reporting Officer:	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy
Contact Officers:	Louise Smith, Irish Language Unit Manager

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	X	For noting only	
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>Building upon our Irish Language Strategy 2020-2023, a draft Irish Language Strategy has been prepared for the period 2023-2027 which sets out how the Council will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase the use of Irish language within its functions; • facilitate the use of the Irish language when communicating with the public and relevant stakeholders; and • promote and encourage the development of the Irish language across the Council area.
1.2	<p>With regards to the Irish Language Strategy the draft strategy sets out a twofold mission and vision as follows:</p> <p>Mission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To mainstream the use of Irish Language in the internal administration of Council, and in its dealings with other public bodies and the community.</i> • <i>To embed equality of opportunity standards, address barriers of access to information and services, promote the development of the Irish Language, and to give leadership in meeting the evidenced needs of existing and emerging Irish language communities within the District.</i> <p>Vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To establish a sustainable environment which supports and enables the use and development of the Irish language in public, personal, economic and community life.</i>
1.3	<p>The two strategic objectives within the draft Irish Language Strategy 2020-2023 are as follows:</p> <p>Strategic Objective 1: To facilitate, enable and encourage the development of the Irish Language within Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the District.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 2: To effectively engage with the Irish Language Community to strengthen community capacity, encourage collaboration, co-operation and identify appropriate funding opportunities.</p>

1.4	<p>The associated action plan to deliver upon the two strategic objectives sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive actions: the detail and anticipated scale of the action. • Performance Measures: demonstrating how effectively the strategy is achieving its anticipated outcomes. • Outcomes: what will change as a result of the proposed action. • Responsibility: identifies the relevant responsibility in relation to a given action. • Timeframes: when the action will be delivered.
2.0	Key issues
2.1	<p>The draft Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027 was considered at the CMT meeting on 13 October 2022, SMT meeting on 2 November 2022 and Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group on 9 November 2022.</p> <p>Further to consideration the following is proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12-week public consultation. • Finalised Irish Language Strategy tabled for consideration and adoption by Council.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To agree the draft Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027 for 12-week public consultation.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	<p>It is essential that appropriate and adequate resources are in place to ensure delivery upon the Council's Bilingualism Policy and actions outlined in the Irish Language Strategy.</p> <p>The Irish Language Unit structure has three Officers; Irish Language Unit Manager, Irish Language Officer (Community Liaison) and Irish Language Officer (Development), with an allocated budget, including an Irish Language Bursary Scheme and Financial Assistance programme, and no further additional financial or resources implications are anticipated at this stage.</p> <p>While it is envisaged the proposed strategy will be delivered within the current resources, physical and financial resources issues will be kept under review as the Irish Language Strategy 2023-20237 is implemented.</p>
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

	<p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p> <p>Appendix I: Dréacht-Straitéis na Gaeilge 2023-2027</p> <p>Appendix I: Draft Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027</p>
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p> <p>N/A</p>

Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin

Straitéis na Gaeilge 2023-2027

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027



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1. Intreoir

Aithníonn Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin gurb í dlúthchuid lárnach de chreatlach cultúrtha, oidhreacht agus féiniúlachta, an Ghaeilge. Tá pobal Gaeilge láidir, méadaítheach, ina chónaí, ag obair, ar chuairt, agus ag bualadh le chéile i gceantar na Comhairle.

Tá an Chomhairle fós tiomanta de na cuspóirí leagtha amach i bPolasaí Dátheangachais na Comhairle agus cuireadh na struchtúir riachtanacha i bhfeidhm le cinntiú go mbeidh rath agus bláth inbhuanaithe ar an Ghaeilge agus ar an Ghaelphobal.

Ag tógáil ar Straitéis na Gaeilge 2020-2023, tá Straitéis na Gaeilge forbartha againn don tréimhse 2023-2027 a leagann amach cad é mar a leanfaidh an Chomhairle:

- ag méadú ar an Ghaeilge atá in úsáid i gcomhlíonadh a cuid feidhmeanna
- an Ghaeilge a úsáid ina cuid cumarsáide leis an phobal agus le páirtithe leasmhara agus
- An Ghaeilge a fhorbairt, a chur chun cinn agus a chothú fud fad an cheantair.

2. An Creatchlár Straitéiseach – misean, fíis agus luachanna

Tá misean na Comhairle i ndá chuid:

- *Comhshaol tacúil a chruthú do ghnáth-úsáid na Gaeilge i riarachán inmheánach na Comhairle agus ina cuid oibre le comhlachtaí poiblí agus an pobal iad féin.*
- *Caighdeáin chothromaíocht deiseanna a neadú, dul i ngleic le constaicí maidir le heolas agus seirbhísí, forbairt na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn, agus ceannasaíocht a ghríosú le freastail ar riachtanais léirithe de chuid na pobail Gaeilge atá ann, chomh maith leo siúd atá ag teacht chun cinn.*

Is í fíis na Comhairle do Straitéis na Gaeilge 2023-2027 ná:

- *Comhshaol tacúil inbhuanaithe a chruthú d'úsáid agus d'athghiniúint na Gaeilge sa saol poiblí, pearsanta, eacnamaíochta agus pobail.*

Ar mhaithe le na cuspóirí seo a bhaint amach, glacann muid treoir ó na cúig bunluachanna atá i bPlean Corparáide na Comhairle 2023-2027:

- **Comhoibriú:** Oibreoidh muid i gcomhpháirtíocht le daoine eile
- **Freagrúil:** Éisteach muid le dearcaí achan duine agus freagróidh muid go hoscailte agus go dearfach iad

- **Comhpháirtíocht:** Oibreoidh muid i gcomhpháirtíocht le cónaitheoirí agus baill foirne le riachtanais a mheas agus ár gcuid seirbhísí a fheabhsú
- **Inmharthanacht:** Cuirfidh muid cruth nua-aimseartha agus athrú ar bhonn ar ár seirbhísí chun an ceantar a fhorbairt don ghlúin seo agus don chéad ghlúin eile; agus,
- **Trédhearcach:** Déanfaidh muid ár gcinnithe agus leithdháileadh acmhainní go hoscailte agus tiocfaidh an t-eolas ó fhianaise neamh-chlaonta.

3. Cuspóirí Straitéiseacha

Is iad an dá chuspóir de chuid Straitéis na Gaeilge 2023-2027 ná:

Cuspóir Straitéiseach a 1: Forbairt na Gaeilge laistigh de Chomhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin agus an ceantair é féin a éascú, a chumasú agus a spreagadh.

Cuspóir Straitéiseach a 2: Teagmháil éifeachtúil a dhéanamh le Pobal na Gaeilge chun ábaltacht an phobail a neartú, comhoibriú agus comhpháirtíocht a spreagadh agus deiseanna maoinithe a aithint.

4. Creat an tSoláthair

4.1 Cuireann an Plean Gnímh in iúl cad é mar a bhainfidh muid an dá chuspóir straitéiseach amach:

- **Gníomhartha dearfacha:** na mionsonraí agus scála na ngníomhartha
- **Measúnú feidhmíochta:** Ag léiriú a éifeachtaí is atá an straitéis ag baint amach na spriocanna atá leagtha amach
- **Torthaí:** Na hathruithe a tharlóidh mar thoradh ar an phlean
- **Freagracht:** Cé atá freagrach as an ghníomh a chur i gcrích
- **Amscála:** Cén uair a chuirfear an gníomh i gcroch

Oibríonn na gníomhartha i dtaca le Plean Corparáide na Comhairle, agus an Polasaí Dátheangachais le húsáid na Gaeilge agus an Bhéarla i gceantar na Comhairle a éascú agus a spreagadh trí:

- Méadú de réir a chéile ar rochtain bainteach le seirbhísí agus eolais;
- Chur le cumas na ngrúpaí phobal Gaeilge, rannpháirtíocht chathartha, comhoibriú, agus obair i gcomhpháirtíocht a spreagadh;
- Inbhuanaitheacht agus inmharthanacht earnáil phobal Gaeilge a fheabhsú; agus
- Fhorbairt a dhéanamh ar líonrú idir na pobail Gaeilge agus na hEarnálacha Reachtúla agus Deonacha

- Leithdháileadh buiséid cuí, monatóireacht, measúnú agus athbhreithniú.

5. Struchtúr agus Rialachas

Tá Aonad na Gaeilge sa Chomhairle freagrach as ucht Straitéis na Gaeilge a chur i bhfeidhm. Tá an t-Aonad mar chuid de Rannóg Pholasaí Corparáideach sa Roinn Phleanáil Corparáideach & Pholasaí atá faoi Stiúrtóireacht Seirbhísí Corparáideach do chuid na Comhairle.

Tá ról lárnach ag an Ghrúpa Oibre Traspháirtí um Straitéis na Gaeilge ag plé na modhanna le Straitéis na Gaeilge a chur i bhfeidhm. Níl an t-údarás ag an Ghrúpa Oibre Traspháirtí um Straitéis na Gaeilge cinntí a dhéanamh, ach amháin moltaí a thabhairt. Tá na moltaí a thagann ón Ghrúpa seo curtha faoi bhráid Choiste Straitéise, Polasaí agus Acmhainní do chuid na Comhairle.

6. Monatóireacht agus Athbhreithniú

Beidh tuairiscí ullmhaithe gach sé mhí agus iad á chur faoi bhráid Ghrúpa Oibre Traspháirtí um Straitéis na Gaeilge.

Déanfar athbhreithniú bliantúil ar Straitéis na Gaeilge le deimhniú go bhfuil na gníomhartha agus an buiséad bainteach léi go fóill ábhartha agus cuí.

Aidhm Straitéiseach a 1 An Ghaeilge a chothú agus a ghríosú go himhéanach i gComhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin, agus sa cheantar féin				
Gníomh dearfach	Measúnú feidhmíochta	Torthaí	Freagracht	Amscála
1.1 Seirbhísí lámacha Gaeilge a chur ar fáil trí Aonad na Gaeilge (AnaG)	<p>Na soláthairtí:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Aistriúchán & AteangaireachtComhairle & TacaíochtTaighde faoi: Comharthaíocht / Ainmniú sráide & eastát tithíochtaUasdátú ar an acmhainn logainmneachaClár le feasacht agus tuiscint i leith na Gaeilge a ardúClár Sheachtain na Gaeilge	<p>Bunseirbhísí Gaeilge á gcur ar fáil don Chomhairle, gach Roinn agus Seirbhís, chomh maith leis an phobal</p> <p>An Ghaeilge agus Aonad na Gaeilge á gcur chun cinn go dearfach agus dearchtaí i leith na Gaeilge a fheabhsú</p> <p>Cur le tuiscint agus eolas i leith an Pholasaí Dátheangeachais, Gnásanna agus Treoirínte</p>	<p>Aonad na Gaeilge (AnaG)</p> <p>Croíobair leanúnach an Aonaid (AnaG)</p>	
1.2 Córas soiléir agus treoirínte a fhorbairt agus a reáchtáil i dtaca le haistriúchán chaipéisí corparáideacha, comharthaíochta, srl	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pacáiste ríomhfhoghlama a fhorbairt do bhaill foirneCur i láthair ar an chóras a dhéanamh ar Teams le hachair ama á bplé mar chuid dóAn seoladh rphoist ILtranslation@nmandd.org a chruthúBogearraí aistriúcháin a cheannach agus a úsáidTeagmháil a dhéanamh leis an lárionad aistriúcháin Ghaeilge agus Ultaise atá ar fáil don earnáil phoiblí agus	<p>Tuiscint níos fearr a chothú ar an phróiseas aistriúcháin</p> <p>Dea-thionchar ar chaidrimh le ranna eile trí chumarsáid éifeachtach</p> <p>Ardú in éifeachtúlacht agus cruinneas sa phróiseas aistriúcháin</p> <p>Caidrimh a thógáil laistigh den Chomhairle agus le ranna rialtais</p>	<p>Aonad na Gaeilge (AnaG TF Foireann Foghlama agus Forbartha</p> <p>Eanáir 2024</p>	

	atá lonnaithe i Roinn na bPobal			
<p>1.3</p> <p>Pacáiste ríomhfhoghlama ar fheasacht teanga. Stráitéis na Gaeilge de chuid na Comhairle, Polasaí Dátheangachais, Gnásanna agus Treoiríntí d'fhostaithe na Comhairle</p> <p>Athbhreithniú ar an Pholasáí Dátheangachais, Gnásanna agus Treoiríntí d'fhostaithe na Comhairle</p>	<p>Líon na ndaoine ag glacadh seisiún eolais / traenála ar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fheasacht teanga Samplaí dea-chleachtais trasna na heagraíochta <p>2 cheardlann ar a laghad gach bliain ar an Pholasáí Dátheangachais & Gnásanna agus Treoiríntí</p> <p>Polasaí Dátheangachais Athbhreithnithe</p> <p>Gnásanna do chuid an Pholasáí Dátheangachais athbhreithnithe</p> <p>Treoiríntí athbhreithnithe d'úsáid na Gaeilge i gComhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúm agus an Dúin</p>	<p>Aonad na Gaeilge ag cur an Ghaeilge chun cinn i Seirbhísí na Comhairle / constaicí i leith na teanga a shárú</p> <p>Tabhairt faoi leanúnach maidir le cur chun cinn na Gaeilge i measc seirbhísí na Comhairle</p> <p>Caighdeán seasmhach i leith soláthar seirbhísí, ag teacht le treoiríntí Bhranda Corparáideach</p> <p>Treoiríntí d'fhostaithe na Comhairle</p>	<p>AnaG TF</p> <p>Foireann Foghlama agus Forbartha</p>	<p>Leanúnach</p> <p>Athbhreithniú ar an Pholasáí Dátheangachais, Gnásanna agus Treoiríntí d'fhostaithe na Comhairle le déanamh Eanáir 2025</p>
<p>1.4</p> <p>An Ghaeilge a phríomhshruthú i leith pleananna straitéiseacha</p>	<p>Cruinnithe le Stiúirtheachtaí / réimse seirbhísí</p>	<p>An dátheangachais a phríomhshruthú go himmheánach i bhfeidhmeanna na Comhairle, agus é seo a bhaint amach go</p>	<p>AnaG</p> <p>Freagracht chomhroinnte</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

agus ghnó, chomh maith le socrúithe oibríochta le béim faoi leith ar sheirbhísí a mbíonn ag plé go díreach leis an phobal	Sonraí na leasuithe / Líon na glár atá curtha in ord tosaíochta Cruinnithe le hOifigigh Toghcheantar (DEA)	forásach ag úsáid acmhainní atá inacmhainne An Ghaeilge a dhéanamh níos so-fheicthe agus á cur chun cinn ag leibhéal sholáthar seirbhíse	ag na Stiúrthóireachtaí cuí	
1.5 Suíomh Idirlín agus meáin shóisialta a fhorbairt agus a chaomhnú <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ascnamh sonraí• Ábhar Gaeilge ar shuíomh agus meáin shóisialta na Comhairle a chur i dtús áite, modhnóireacht a dhéanamh air agus é a uasdhátú• Táb Aonad na Gaeilge a chur leis an suíomh atá ann le heolas ar AnaG agus na seirbhísí cuí chomh maith le nasc chuig Stráitéis na Gaeilge agus an eolas cuí• Feachtais phoiblíochta ar mheáin shóisialta na	Suíomh Idirlín agus meáin shóisialta dátheangach atá ag feidhmiú Líon na bpostálacha dátheangacha (Gaeilge / Béarla) ar chainéil na Comhairle	Suíomh Idirlín agus meáin shóisialta na Comhairle a fhorbairt, agus é seo a bhaint amach go forásach ag úsáid acmhainní atá inacmhainne Ag feidhmiú agus ag freastal ar riachtanais pobail na Gaeilge sa cheantar agus níos faide i gcéin Méadú ar fheiceálacht na Gaeilge	AnaG Freagracht chomhroinnte ag na Stiúrthóireachtaí cuí	Márta 2021

Comhairle go rialta					
1.6 Clár Imeachtaí a fhorbairt i éineacht leis an Roinn Cumarsáide agus Margaíochta, na hIarsmalanna, na hIonaid Phobail agus na hIonaid Ealaíon	Leabhrán eolais ar imeachtaí agus ábhar Gaeilge atá le teacht a fhoilsiú agus scaipeadh Bolsaireacht a dhéanamh ar ábhar agus imeachtaí i bhfad roimh na himeachtaí	An Ghaeilge a dhéanamh níos so-fheicthe agus ar shuíomh agus chainéil mheán sóisialta na Comhairle Daoine a mhealladh isteach in ionaid de chuid na Comhairle chun sult a bhaint as imeachtaí Gaeilge / dátheangacha	AnaG Iarsmalanna Cumarsáid & Margaíocht Foireann Ealaíon agus Imeachtaí Foireann Rannpháirtíocht sa Phobal	Clár le seoladh i Márta 2023	
1.7 Ullmhú do reachtaíocht i leith na Gaeilge	Cruinnithe le príomh-eagraíochtaí na Gaeilge – teagmháil rialta le Conradh na Gaeilge maidir leis an fhorbairt reachtaíochta Cruinnithe le hOifigigh Gaeilge i gComhairlí Áitiúla eile le cúrsaí a phlé agus eolas a dhéanamh dár gcuid ullmhúcháin féin	A hultmhaithe is atá an Chomhairle dá gcuirfeadh Acht na Gaeilge i bhfeidhm i rith tréimhse na straitéise seo	AnaG Polasaí Corparáideach Conradh na Gaeilge Comhairlí Áitiúla eile	Go leanúnach	
1.8 Tuairiscí monatóireachta gach sé mhí le dul faoi bhráid Ghrúpa Oibre Tras-	Tuairiscí monatóireachta déanta	Monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar Straitéis na Gaeilge, chomh maith le hathbheithniú agus measanú	AnaG / Polasaí Corparáideach	Gach sé mhí le linn na straitéise	

Pháirtí um Straiteis na Gaeilge					
1.9 Forbairt acmhainne agus traenáil i leith na Gaeilge d'fhostaithe agus Bhaill Tofa: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conair Fhorbairt Ghairmiúil i leith na Gaeilge á bunú ag Acmhainní Daonna d'fhostaithe agus Bhaill Tofa;• Tacaíocht forbartha leanúnach a chur ar fáil do rannóga na Comhairle maidir le cur i bhfeidhm Polasáí Dátheangachais de chuid na Comhairle agus gnásanna a bhaineann leis;• Cur chuige traidisiúnta, chomh maith le ríomhfhoghlaim• Treoirscéim le 10 bhfostaí ar dtús agus ag forbairt go grúpa 20	Scileanna sa Ghaeilge á dtairscint mar dheis don fhorbairt fhoghlama agus ghairmiúil – mar threoirscéim ar dtús agus ag forbairt go líon daoine níos airde Líon na ndaoine a bhfreastalaíonn Pacáiste r-fhoghlaim a fhorbairt	Breisiú i dtaca le scileanna agus eolas na bhfostaithe Fostaithe a bheith níos ábalta Polasáí Dátheangachais de chuid na Comhairle a chur i bhfeidhm agus a phríomhshruthú i bhfeidhmeanna na Comhairle chomh maith le trí róla Rannpháirtíocht sa Phobal	AnaG Oifigeach Oiliúna & Forbartha in Acmhainní Daonna IT	Curtha ar fáil agus athbhreithnithe go bliantúil i rith tréimhse na Straiteise	Aibreán 2024 nó roimhe sin
1.10 Prionsabail inchosanta neamh-chlaonta maidir le scileanna Gaeilge a chur i	Líon na bpost a chuireann an Ghaeilge mar chritéar riachtanach nó inmhiannaithe	Breisiú i dtaca le scileanna agus eolas na bhfostaithe Seirbhís níos fearr do phobal na	Acmhainní Daonna AnaG	Leanúnach	

bhfeidhm mar chuid de phróisis earcaíochta agus roghnúcháin	Gaeilge		Polasaí Corparáideach	Leanúnach
1.11 Leanstan le léarscáiliú Infrastruchtúr Phobal na Gaeilge	Comhtháthú léarscáil infrastructúir na Gaeilge le freastal ar fhorbairt phobal na Gaeilge Comhoibriú le an Fhoireann Fhianaise agus Taighde chun léarsáiliú Infrastruchtúr Phobal na Gaeilge a fhorbairt mar ghraifíc eolais a bhfull logaimneacha leagtha amach air go dátheangach	Breisiú i dtaca le hInfrastruchtúr Phobal na Gaeilge Feabhsú i dtaca le comhionannas deiseanna do chónaitheoirí ar mhaith leo rochtain a bheith acu ar sheirbhísí Gaeilge fud fad an phobail	AnaG Rannpháirtíocht Pobail	Leanúnach
1.12 Athbhreithniú ar Straitéis na Gaeilge 2023 - 2027	Athbhreithniú ceithre bliana ar Straitéis na Gaeilge	Monatóireacht, athbhreithniú agus measúnú ar Straitéis na Gaeilge 2023-2027 agus Straitéis na Gaeilge nua a fhorbairt	AnaG Polasaí Corparáideach	Samhain 2026 – Albreán 2027

Teagmháil éifeachtúil a dhéanamh le Pobal na Gaeilge le hacmhainn an phobail a neartú, comhoibriú agus comhpháirtíocht a spreagadh agus deiseanna maoinithe a aimsiú				
Aidhm Straitéiseach a 2				
Gníomh dearfach	Measúnú feidhmíochta	Torthaí	Freagracht	Amscála
2.1 Tacú le forbairt leanúnach Fóram an Dúin agus Oirialla laistigh d'earnáil phobal na Gaeilge le hobairt grúpaí agus eagraíochtaí Gaeilge a chur chun cinn i gceantar na Comhairle.	Méid na gcrúinnithe de chuid an Fóraim Líon na ndaoine i láthair Líon na ngrúpaí i láthair	Borradh ar rannpháirtíocht pobail i leith ceisteanna tábhachtacha Fás ar inbhuanaitheacht eagraíochtaí pobail Gaeilge Feiceálacht na Gaeilge agus feasacht ar ról, tionscadail agus ionchur phobal na Gaeilge a mhéadú.	AnaG	Leanúnach
2.2 Clár Sceim Chúnamh Airgeadais Gaeilge a chur i bhfeidhm	Líon na n-iarraitasóirí Líon na n-iarraitasóirí rathúla	Forbairt agus athnuachan Phobal na Gaeilge, agus cúnamh airgeadais a úsáid le rannpháirtíocht sa Ghaeilge a spreagadh trí: a) Tionscnaimh a chothaíonn acmhainn an phobail, meantóireacht, agus obair dheonach a fhorbairt. Táthar ag súil go spreagfaidh sé seo comhoibriú idir na pobail Gaeilge atá forbartha agus pobail Gaeilge nua, nó atá go fóill ag fás agus	Aonad na gClár AnaG	Go bliantúil

			<p>ag forbairt, chun acmhainní a roinnt, líonraí a neartú agus obair dheonach a spreagadh.</p> <p>b) Tionscnaimh phobail rannpháirteachas a fhorbraíonn caidreamh dearfach, a mhéadaíonn tuiscint agus feasacht teanga, a théann i ngleic le tuairimí agus a spreagann meas don Ghaeilge.</p>	AnaG	Eagraíochtaí seachtracha maoinithe	Go leanúnach
<p>2.3</p> <p>Aird a tharraingt ar dheiseanna maoinithe eile do ghrúpaí Gaeilge seachas scéimeanna na Comhairle</p>	<p>Líon na ndeiseanna maoinithe eile, nach ón Chomhairle iad, a tharraingítear aird orthu</p>		<p>Tacaíocht a chur ar fáil do d'iaratasóirí atá in ann cur isteach ar dheiseanna maoinithe nach ón Chomhairle iad</p>	AnaG		Go bliantúil
<p>2.4</p> <p>Scéim Sparánachta na Gaeilge a chur i bhfeidhm</p> <p>Córas ríomhbhainistithe a forbairt</p>	<p>Méid na n-iaratas</p> <p>Líon na n-iaratasóirí rathúla</p> <p>Méid bronnta</p> <p>Méid ama a ghlactar chun iarraisais agus éilimh a phróiseáil</p>		<p>Tacaíocht curtha ar fáil do dhaoine a gcuid scileanna Gaeilge a fheabhsú trí sparánachtaí a chur ar fáil le freastal ar chúrsaí Gaeilge, ina measc coláistí Gaeilge, dianchúrsaí agus cúrsaí tríú leibhéal</p> <p>Córas iarraisais SSNG a nuachóiriú, agus mar sin ag seachaint meancóga agus moilleanna i bpróiseáil iarraisais agus éileamh.</p>	AnaG	IT	Go bliantúil

<p>2.5 Comhoibriú díreach leis an earnáil oideachais, chomh maith le trí Chumann na bhFiann (eagraíocht a n-oibríonn go díreach le daoine óga)</p>	<p>Méid na scoileanna a n-oibrítear leo</p> <p>Líon na ndaltaí ag freastal ar cheardlanna</p> <p>Líon na gclubanna óige a bhunaítear</p>	<p>Caidrimh fhiúntacha curtha ar bun agus caomhnaithe leis an earnáil oideachais</p> <p>Tacaíocht á tabhairt don earnáil dheonach trí dheiseanna do dhluthaí scoile a chur chun cinn</p>	<p>AnaG</p> <p>Earnáil oideachais</p>	<p>Go leanúnach</p>
<p>2.6 Imeachtaí agus ábhar físe (ar na meáin shóisialta) a fhorbairt agus a chur chun cinn trí Chlár Imeachtaí</p>	<p>Líon na n-imeachtaí sa Chlár Imeachtaí</p> <p>Líon na sraitheanna físe á roinnt go bliantúil agus á gcur i gcartlann ar líne</p> <p>Líon na n-ionaid de chuid na Comhairle atá bainteach leis an Chlár Imeachtaí</p> <p>Líon amharc agus rannta ar na meáin shóisialta</p>	<p>Ábhar Gaeilge a bheith níos sofheicthe ar líne</p> <p>Tionchar dearfach ag an Chomhairle ar an phobal trí fheasacht teanga agus téamaí san ábhar físe á roinnt</p> <p>Margaíocht éifeachtach á déanamh tríd an ábhar físe a chur ar scáileán: seisiún “ceist agus freagra”</p> <p>Úsáid níos mó á baint as ionaid de chuid na Comhairle</p>	<p>ILU</p> <p>Foireann na n-iarsmalanna agus na n-áiseanna cuí</p> <p>IT</p> <p>Cumarsáid agus Margaíocht</p>	<p>Seoladh an Chláir Imeachtaí – mí an Mhárta 2023</p> <p>Imeacht deiridh – Márta 2025</p>

Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin

Straitéis na Gaeilge 2023-2027

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027



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1. Introduction

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises the Irish language as an integral part of the heritage, identity and cultural life of the district. We have a strong, vibrant, ever increasing Irish Language community living, working, visiting and socialising in the Council area.

The Council remains committed to the objectives set out in our Bilingualism Policy and have put in place the necessary structures to ensure that the Irish language and Irish language community has a sustainable future.

Building upon our Irish Language Strategy 2020-2023, we have developed an Irish Language Strategy for the period 2023-2027 which sets out how the Council will continue to:

- increase the use of Irish language within its functions;
- facilitate the use of the Irish language when communicating with the public and relevant stakeholders; and
- promote and encourage the development of the Irish language across the Council area.

2. The strategic framework – mission, vision and values

Council's mission is twofold:

- *To mainstream the use of Irish Language in the internal administration of Council, and in its dealings with other public bodies and the community.*
- *To embed equality of opportunity standards, address barriers of access to information and services, promote the development of the Irish Language, and to give leadership in meeting the evidenced needs of existing and emerging Irish language communities within the District.*

Our Council's vision for the Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027 is:

- *To establish a sustainable environment which supports and enables the use and development of the Irish language in public, personal, economic and community life.*

In pursuing our mission, we will be guided by the five values outlined within the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-27:

- **Collaborative:** We will work in partnership with others;
- **Responsive:** We will listen and respond openly and positively to the views of everyone;
- **Engaging:** We will involve residents and staff in identifying needs and improving our services;
- **Sustainable:** We will modernise and transform our services in developing the district for current and future generations; and,
- **Transparent:** We will make our decisions and resource allocation openly and decisions will be informed by objective evidence.

3. Strategic objectives

The two strategic objectives of the Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027 are as follows:

Strategic Objective 1: To facilitate, enable and encourage the development of the Irish Language within Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the District.

Strategic Objective 2: To effectively engage with the Irish Language Community to strengthen community capacity, encourage collaboration, co-operation and identify appropriate funding opportunities.

4. The delivery framework

4.1 The associated action plan to deliver upon the two strategic objectives sets out:

- **Positive actions:** the detail and anticipated scale of the action.
- **Performance Measures:** demonstrating how effectively the strategy is achieving its anticipated outcomes.
- **Outcomes:** what will change as a result of the proposed action.
- **Responsibility:** identifies the relevant responsibility in relation to a given action.
- **Timeframes:** when the action will be delivered.

The actions complement the Council's Corporate Plan, and Bilingualism Policy to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish language and the English language in the Council area through:

- Progressively realising greater access to information and services;
- Increasing Irish language community capacity, civic engagement and participation, and encouraging partnership-working;
- Improving sustainability and viability of the Irish language community sector; and,
- Developing connectivity between Irish language communities and the Statutory and Voluntary sectors;
- Appropriate budget allocation, monitoring, evaluation and review.

5. Structure and governance

Council's Irish Language Unit is responsible for implementation of the Irish Language Strategy. The Unit is part of the Corporate Policy Section of the Corporate Planning & Policy Department which is within the Council's Corporate Services Directorate.

The Council's Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group has a pivotal role in considering and discussing the implementation of the Irish Language Strategy. The Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group does not have decision making powers, it makes recommendations only. Recommendations arising are tabled at the Council's Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

6. Monitoring and review

Six-monthly reports on progress will be prepared for consideration by the Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group.

The Irish Language Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure actions and the associated budget remain relevant and appropriate.

Strategic objective 1 To facilitate and encourage the development of the Irish Language within Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the District				
Positive action	Performance measure	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
1.1 Provision of core Irish language Services of Irish Language Unit (ILU)	Provision of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation & Interpretation • Advice & support • Research re: Signage / Street and development naming • Updating of placenames resource • Programme to raise awareness and understanding of Irish language • Irish Language Week programme (Seachtain na Gaeilge) 	Delivery of core Irish Language services to Council, all Departments and Services and our community. Irish language and Irish Language Unit positively promoted and addressing perceptions around the language Increased awareness of Bilingualism Policy, Procedures and Guidelines	Irish Language Unit (ILU)	Ongoing core work of ILU
1.2 Develop and administer clear system and/or guidelines for translation of corporate documentation, signage etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of e-learning package for staff • Online presentation on Teams explaining process including suggested timeframe • Creation of ILtranslation@nmandd.org • Acquisition and application of translating software • Engage with the Department for the Communities' Irish and Ulster-Scots central translation hub for the public sector 	Increased awareness of translation process Positive impact on relations with other departments through good communication Increased efficacy and accuracy in translation process Building relationships within the Council and with government departments	Irish Language Unit (ILU) IT Learning & Development Team (HR)	Jan 2024
1.3 Develop and promote elearning tool on language awareness and Council's Irish Language Strategy, Bilingualism Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for	Uptake of Information / training sessions regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • language awareness • best practice examples across the organisation Minimum of 2 workshops per annum re Bilingualism Policy & associated	Improved understanding of the practical application of Council's IL Bilingualism Policy, Procedure and Guidelines for Employees Improved communication and continuity across the organisation	ILU Learning & Development Team (HR) Communication & Marketing Department	Ongoing Review of Bilingualism Policy, Procedures and Guidelines

<p>employees</p> <p>Review Bilingualism Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for employees</p> <p>Raise awareness and promote practical application of NMDDC Brand Identity Guidelines (in conjunction with Communication & Marketing Department's Corporate Approach)</p>	<p>Procedures and Guidelines for Use of Irish in Council</p> <p>Reviewed Bilingualism Policy</p> <p>Revised Bilingualism Policy Procedures</p> <p>Revised Guidelines for employee in relation to the use of Irish Language in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council</p>	<p>Irish Language Unit promoting the Irish language across Council services / addressing barriers of access</p> <p>A consistent approach to the promotion of the Irish language across Council's services</p> <p>A consistent standard of service provision, in line with the Corporate Brand Identity Guidelines</p>	<p>due Jan 2025</p>
<p>1.4</p> <p>Mainstream Irish language within strategic and business plans and operational arrangements with particular focus on front-facing services</p>	<p>Number of meetings with Directorates / Service areas</p> <p>Details of amendments / Number of prioritised programmes</p> <p>Meetings with DEA Officers</p>	<p>Progressive realisation of mainstreaming bilingualism within Council functions</p> <p>Increased visibility and promotion of the Irish language at service delivery level</p>	<p>ILU</p> <p>Shared responsibility within relevant Directorates / Service Areas</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>1.5</p> <p>Development and maintenance of functioning bilingual website and social media platforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration of information • Prioritising, moderating and updating Irish language content on Council's website and social media platforms • Addition of Irish Language Unit tab to existing website with 	<p>Functioning bilingual website and social media platforms operational</p> <p>Number of bilingual (Irish / English) social media posts on Council's channels</p>	<p>Progressive realisation of Council's bilingual website and social media platforms</p> <p>Functioning and meeting needs of Irish language communities in District and beyond</p> <p>Increased visibility of the Irish language</p>	<p>ILU / Comms and Marketing / IT</p>

<p>info on ILU and services and link to strategy, relevant info</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular publicity campaigns on Council's social media 				
<p>1.6</p> <p>Development of Programme of Events in conjunction with Comms and Marketing, Museums, Community Centres, Arts Centres</p>	<p>Publication and dissemination of information booklet on upcoming Irish Language content and events</p> <p>Promotion of content and events in advance of event dates</p>	<p>Increased visibility of IL on website and social media platforms</p> <p>Attracting people into Council venues to enjoy Irish language / bilingual events</p>	<p>ILU Museums Comms & Marketing Arts & Events Team Community Engagement</p>	<p>Launch Programme in March 2023</p>
<p>1.7</p> <p>Prepare for Irish language legislation</p>	<p>Meetings with Irish language leading bodies – regular communication with Conradh na Gaeilge regarding progress of legislation</p> <p>Meetings with IL officers from other local Councils to discuss and inform our own preparation</p>	<p>Council preparedness should an Irish Language Act be implemented during lifetime of this strategy</p>	<p>ILU / Corporate Policy Conradh na Gaeilge Other local Council</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>1.8</p> <p>Six-monthly monitoring reports for consideration by the Irish Language Strategy Working Group</p>	<p>Monitoring reports completed</p>	<p>Monitoring, review and evaluation of Irish Language Strategy</p>	<p>ILU / Corporate Policy</p>	<p>Six-monthly during period of strategy</p>
<p>1.9</p> <p>Irish language capacity building / training for employees and Elected Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR to establish an Irish Language Professional 	<p>Irish Language Skills training offered as a professional learning and development opportunity – as pilot programme initially, progressing to wider uptake</p>	<p>Enhanced employee skills and knowledge base</p> <p>Employees better equipped to implement bilingualism policy and mainstreaming of IL within Council</p>	<p>ILU HR Training & Development Officer IT</p>	<p>Delivered and reviewed annually during period of strategy</p>

<p>Development pathway for employees and Elected Members;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going developmental support to Council departments on implementation of Council's Bilingualism Policy and associated Procedures Traditional and e-learning approach Funding obtained from central training budget With pilot scheme of 10 employees to begin and progressing to group of 20 	<p>Meetings with HR to progress and determine budgetary source</p> <p>Numbers of attendees</p> <p>Development of an e-learning package</p>	<p>functions as well as through community engagement roles</p>	<p>April 2024 or earlier</p>
<p>1.10</p> <p>Objective justification principles with regard to Irish language skills applied as part of all Recruitment and Selection processes</p>	<p>Number of posts which identify Irish Language as an essential or desirable criterion</p>	<p>Enhanced employee skills and knowledge base</p> <p>Improved service for Irish speaking community</p>	<p>HR / ILU / Corporate Policy</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>1.11</p> <p>Continue mapping the Irish Language Community Infrastructure</p>	<p>Integration of Irish language infrastructure map for Irish language community development</p> <p>Work with Evidence & Research Team to develop infographic mapping the IL Community Infrastructure along with placenames mapped out bilingually</p>	<p>Enhanced knowledge of Irish language community infrastructure</p> <p>Improved equality of opportunity for residents accessing Irish language services from across the community</p>	<p>ILU / Community Engagement</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

1.12 Review of Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027	Four-year review of Irish Language Strategy	Monitoring, review and evaluation of Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027 and development of new Irish Language Strategy	ILU / Corporate Policy	November 2026 – April 2027
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Strategic objective 2 To effectively engage with the Irish Language Community to strengthen community capacity, encourage collaboration, co-operation and identify appropriate funding opportunities						
Positive action		Performance measure		Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
2.1 Facilitate continued development of Fóram an Dúin agus Oirialla (Down and Oriel Forum) within the Irish Language community sector in the Council area to promote the work of Irish language groups and organisations within the district.	Number of Forum meetings		Increased community engagement on critical issues such as provision of activities for young people	ILU	Ongoing	
	Number of people and/or groups in attendance		Increased sustainability of Irish language community organisations			
	Number of committee members with specific roles		Increased visibility and awareness of the role, projects and contribution of the Irish language community sector			
2.2 Implementation of Irish Language Financial Assistance programme	Number of applicants		Irish Language community renewal and development, and positively engaging the Irish Language through financial assistance to support: a) Projects / initiatives that encourage Irish language community capacity building, mentoring and volunteering. It is envisaged that this scheme will inspire better developed Irish language communities to partner with newer or developing	Programmes Unit / ILU	Annually	
	Number of successful applicants					
	Success of projects themselves – liaise with Programmes Unit					

		language communities to share resources and build better networks and encourage volunteering. b) Community engagement projects /initiatives to build positive relations, raise awareness and understanding, address perceptions and promote respect for the Irish language.			
2.3 Promote non-Council funding opportunities for Irish Language groups	Number of non-Council financial assistance opportunities promoted Number of online / in-person information sessions / presentations with IL groups	Provision of support to potential applicants of non-Council funding streams Sharing of information re. funding streams Increased capability of IL groups to access funding	ILU External funding bodies	Ongoing	
2.4 Implementation of Irish Language Bursary Scheme Development of Electronic Management System	Number of applications Number of successful applicants Amount awarded Duration of time taken to process applications and claims	Individuals assisted to improve IL skills through bursaries for IL courses, including Gaeltacht colleges, intensive courses and relevant third level course modules. Modernising ILBS application system, thus avoiding errors and time delays on processing applications and claims.	ILU / IT	Annually January 2024	

2.5 Education sector engagement, both directly and through liaising with Cumann na bhFiann (IL youth-focussed group)	Number of schools engaged with Number of students participating in workshops No. of IL youth clubs forming	Positive relationships maintained with education sector Contribution to voluntary sector through promotion of opportunities to students	ILU Education sector	Ongoing
2.6 Development and promotion of Irish Language Events and Media Content through Events Programme	Number of events in Event Programme No. of series of video content shared annually and archived online No. of Council venues involved in Events Programme No. of views & shares on social media	Increased visibility of IL content online Positive impact on community through IL awareness and sharing of themes depicted in content Effective promotion of content through screenings; Q&A sessions Increased use of Council facilities	ILU Museums and relevant facilities IT Comms & Marketing	Programme of Events Launch March 2023 Final event March 2025

Report to:	SPR Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 December 2022
Subject:	Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment 2022-23
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director: Finance and Performance
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Catherine Hughes – Acting Head of Performance and Improvement

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	X	For noting only	
1.0			Purpose and Background
1.1			<p>The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the key findings from the Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment 2022-23 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 Part 12 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act (2014).</p>
2.0			Key issues
2.1			<p>Every year the LGA is required to report on 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.</p> <p>The challenging environment Councils continue to operate in with focus on recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and the current cost of living crisis has impacted on the LGA's ability to rely on past trends in Council's performance to assess the likelihood of future compliance with Part 12 of the Act. As a result, the Local Government Auditor has concluded that she is unable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess whether the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) during 2022-23.
2.2			<p>Audit Opinion</p> <p>The LGA has certified that, through the Assessment of Performance 2021-22, and Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has discharged its duties in connection with improvement planning and publication of improvement information in accordance with section 92 of the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.</p> <p>The LGA is proposing an unqualified audit and assessment opinion, with no statutory recommendations but with three proposals for improvement being made. The Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment report and certificate are attached at Appendices 2 and 3.</p>
2.3			<p>Proposals for Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An electronic performance management system would help to achieve long term continuous improvement as it would provide the basis for a more reliable system

	<p>for identifying and monitoring improvements, as well as creating efficiencies in the process that could free up time to spend on value adding activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council should consider using Internal Audit to review the performance improvement arrangements. • Council should consider enhancing transparency of the self-assessment report by providing more detailed narrative to allow the reader to better understand how Council has determined the ratings of the trends in performance. Furthermore, where there are downward trends in performance or the Council has assessed targets are not likely to be achieved, appropriate explanations should be included as to how Council intends to address this. <p>-Within the issues outlined by the LGA in relation to this proposal it is the measures under the corporate plan that is being referred to as those where data has not been collected for a number of years as we use residents survey data to measure some of the corporate plan actions and measures which is only carried out every four years.</p> <p>-Also the 3 indicators that they say have been identified as areas for improvement but no further details have been provided on how this is to be achieved are within the PIO 5 which the NIAO should have made a link to in the report as these are within an overall objective with key milestones.</p>
2.4	<p>Detailed Observations</p> <p>The LGA has included the following observations in relation to the collection, use and publication of performance information in Annex B of the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has made good progress with embedding performance improvement through the Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. It is evident that arrangements are becoming increasingly embedded within the overall business planning and performance management cycle particularly with the introduction of Service Plans, Corporate Performance Dashboard and continued development and rollout of 'People, Perform, Grow'. • The Council has demonstrated that the 2022-23 improvement objectives are legitimate, clear, robust, deliverable and demonstratable. • Whilst performance has been affected by COVID-19, the Council was able to demonstrate some improvement in relation to some statutory performance indicators and standards and performance. Likewise, against self imposed indicators it has been able to show improvement with the majority of targets/objectives achieved or on track to be achieved. • The Council has adequate governance and scrutiny arrangements for performance improvement and these arrangements are operating effectively. • LGA note however, that performance management is not a standing item on the SPR Committee and Council should therefore consider whether it would be beneficial to make this a permanent agenda item.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>To consider and agree the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment Report 2022-23 (Appendix 2)
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	<p>There are no direct financial resource implications within this report. However, the first proposal for improvement outlined in the Audit Findings references an electronic</p>

	performance management system which Council are currently progressing and which will have financial implications for the Council.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> Consultation not required.</p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	Appendices
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 1 – Correspondence to the Chief Executive

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 2 – s95 Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment Report 2022-23 for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council • Appendix 3 – Audit Certificate
8.0	Background Documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement Audit and Assessment Report 2021-22

Mrs Colette Kane LGA
106 University St,
Belfast BT7 1EU

29 November 2022

Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Downpatrick Office
Downshire Civic Centre
Ardglass Road
BT30 6GQ

Dear Marie,

**NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL: IMPROVEMENT AUDIT
AND ASSESSMENT – FINAL AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT REPORT 2022-23**

I have now certified the improvement audit for the Council with a standard, unqualified opinion. In terms of the audit assessment, I have concluded that I am unable to assess whether Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) during 2022-23. This is due to the changing landscape and refocusing of priorities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing cost of living crisis, that has impacted on the ability to rely on past trends in councils' performance to assess the likelihood of future compliance with Part 12 of the Act. No statutory recommendations will be made to the Department this year in respect of the Council nor is there a requirement for a special inspection.

The report sets out the findings and conclusions from our work, it includes the audit and assessment certificate as an Annex. I also attach a copy of the original certificate I have signed. Our audit and assessment procedures may not have brought to light all areas in which improvements could be made and our findings should not be seen as comprehensive in this respect. Responsibility for determining whether they should be implemented, and the effects of such implementation, necessarily rests with management.

This letter and attachments have been copied to the Department for Communities as the legislation requires. I would like to thank you and your staff for the assistance and cooperation we received throughout the audit.

Yours sincerely,



Colette Kane
Local Government Auditor



Audit and Assessment Report 2022-23

**Report to the Council and the Department
for Communities under Section 95 of the
Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act
2014**

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
29 November 2022

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We have prepared this report for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the Department for Communities sole use. You must not disclose it to any third party, quote or refer to it, without our written consent and we assume no responsibility to any other person.

1. Key Messages

Summary of the audit

Audit outcome	Status
Audit opinion	Unqualified opinion
Audit assessment	The LGA has concluded that she is unable to assess whether Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) during 2022-23.
Statutory recommendations	The LGA made no statutory recommendations
Proposals for improvement	The LGA made three new proposals for improvement

This report summarises the work of the Local Government Auditor (LGA) on the 2022-23 performance improvement audit and assessment undertaken on Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. We would like to thank the Chief Executive and her staff, particularly the Head of Performance Improvement, for their assistance during this work.

We consider that we comply with the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) ethical standards and that, in our professional judgment, we are independent and our objectivity is not compromised.

Audit Opinion

The LGA has certified the performance arrangements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification. She certifies an improvement audit and improvement assessment has been conducted. The LGA also states that, as a result, she believes that the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (the Council) has discharged its performance improvement and reporting duties, including its assessment of performance for 2021-22 and its 2022-23 improvement plan, and has acted in accordance with the Guidance.

Audit Assessment

The LGA is required to assess whether Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (the Council) is likely to comply with its performance improvement responsibilities under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act). This is called the 'improvement assessment'.

Councils continue to operate in a particularly challenging environment with focus on recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and the current cost of living crisis, impacting both on performance and the way in which services are delivered. This changing landscape and refocusing of priorities has impacted our ability to rely on past trends in councils' performance to assess the likelihood of future compliance with Part 12 of the Act. In light of this, the LGA has concluded that she is unable to reach an opinion on whether the Council is likely to have complied with its performance improvement responsibilities for 2022-23.

The LGA did not exercise her discretion to assess and report whether the council is likely to comply with these arrangements in future years.

Audit Findings

During the audit and assessment we identified no issues requiring a formal recommendation under the Act. We made three proposals for improvement (see Section 3). These represent good practice which should assist the Council in meeting its responsibilities for performance improvement. Detailed observations on thematic areas are provided in Annex B.

Status of the Audit

The LGA's audit and assessment work on the Council's performance improvement arrangements is now concluded. By 31 March 2023 she will publish an Annual Improvement Report on the Council on the NIAO website, making it publicly available. This will summarise the key outcomes in this report.

The LGA did not undertake any Special Inspections under the Act in the current year.

Management of information and personal data

During the course of our audit we 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 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Other matters

Sustainability and Climate Change

Councils have begun to address the issue of climate change and sustainability, with individual councils at varying stages of progress. If councils are to link climate change and sustainable action to their performance objectives or even as part of their wider continuous improvement arrangements in future years, it will be necessary to consider arrangements to improve, including ensuring adequate resourcing and gathering of accurate data.

2. Audit Scope

Part 12 of the Act provides all councils with 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; and
- key responsibilities for the LGA.

The Department for Communities (the Department) has published '*Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement 2016*' (the Guidance) which the Act requires councils and the LGA to follow. Further guidance to clarify the requirements of the general duty to improve was issued by the Department during 2019.

The improvement audit and assessment work is planned and conducted in accordance with the Audit Strategy issued to the Council, the LGA's Code of Audit Practice for Local Government Bodies in Northern Ireland and the Statement of Responsibilities.

The improvement audit

Each year the LGA 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 procedures conducted in undertaking this work are referred to as an "improvement audit". During the course of this work the LGA may make statutory recommendations under section 95 of the Act.

The improvement assessment

The LGA also has to assess annually whether a council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act, including consideration of the arrangements to secure continuous improvement in that year. This is called the 'improvement assessment'. She also has the discretion to assess and report whether a council is likely to comply with these arrangements in future years.

The annual improvement report on the Council

The Act requires the LGA to summarise all of her work (in relation to her responsibilities under the Act) at the Council, in an 'annual improvement report'. This will be published on the NIAO website by 31 March 2023, making it publicly available.

Special inspections

The LGA may also, in some circumstances, carry out special inspections which will be reported to the Council and the Department, and which she may publish.

3. Audit Findings

This section outlines key observations in the form of proposals for improvement, arising from following thematic areas of the Council's audit and assessment:

- General duty to improve;
- Governance arrangements;
- Improvement objectives;
- Consultation;
- Improvement plan;
- Arrangements to improve
- Collection, use and publication of performance information; and
- Demonstrating a track record of 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. Proposals for improvement include matters which, if accepted, will assist the Council in meeting its performance improvement responsibilities. The LGA may follow up how key proposals have been addressed in subsequent years. We recommend however that the Council's Audit Committee track progress on all proposals for improvement.

Our procedures were limited to those considered necessary for the effective performance of the audit and assessment. Therefore, the LGA's observations should not be regarded as a comprehensive statement of all weaknesses which exist, or all improvements which could be made.

Detailed observations for the thematic areas can be found at Annex B.

Thematic area	Issue	Proposal for improvement
General Duty to improve	The Council continues to maintain and manage the excel based performance management system.	An electronic performance management system would help to achieve long term continuous improvement as it would provide the basis for a more reliable system for identifying and monitoring improvements, as well as creating efficiencies in the process that could

Thematic area	Issue	Proposal for improvement
		free up time to spend on value adding activities.
Governance arrangements	Internal Audit has not specifically been used for the audit of performance improvement related activities since 2018-19, when it reviewed APSE performance indicators. Internal Audit could be used to provide the Council with assurance on the integrity and operation of the Council's performance management framework, and could identify any supplementary areas for improvement.	The Council should consider using Internal Audit to review the performance improvement arrangements.
Assessment	Council has identified 23 self-imposed indicators, and these are included within the 2021-22 self-assessment report. There is a comparison of 2021-22 figures to 2020-21 and to Local Authority averages, where applicable, however no specific targets are given. There are also some self-imposed indicators where data has not been collected for a number of years, for example, the 2018 citizens survey showed that 59% of residents feel that they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area. This has been classed as achieved or on track to be achieved, however it is not clear from the report how this has been assessed given that data has not	Council should consider enhancing transparency of the self-assessment report by providing more detailed narrative to allow the reader to better understand how Council has determined the ratings of the trends in performance. Furthermore, where there are downward trends in performance or the Council has assessed targets are not likely to be achieved, appropriate explanations should be included as to how Council intends to address this.

Thematic area	Issue	Proposal for improvement
	been collected on this since the last residents survey. No quantitative target has been set for this indicator. Furthermore, three self-imposed indicators have been identified as areas for improvement however no further details are given as to how this will achieved.	

Annexes

Annex A – Audit and Assessment Certificate

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 2021-22 and its improvement plan for 2022-23 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 2022-23 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 requirements of Part 12 of the Act.

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, informed by:

- a forward looking assessment of the Council's likelihood to comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement; and
- a retrospective assessment of whether the Council has achieved its planned improvements to inform a view as to its track record of improvement.

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 of the Act and

has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.

Improvement assessment

Councils continue to operate in a particularly challenging environment with focus on recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, the current cost of living crisis, impacting both on performance and the way in which services are delivered. This changing landscape and refocusing of priorities has impacted my ability to rely on past trends in councils' performance to assess the likelihood of future compliance with Part 12 of the Act. In light of this, I am unable to reach an opinion on whether the Council is likely to discharge its duties under Part 12 of the Act and act in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently during 2022-23.

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 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.



Colette Kane
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29 November 2022

Annex B – Detailed observations

Thematic area	Observations
General duty to improve	<p>The Council continues to develop arrangements to secure continuous improvement and has outlined within its Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23, its plans to achieve objectives and to attain continuous improvement.</p> <p>The Council published its Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23 on 26 June 2022 after gaining approval by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee. Approval was subsequently given by the Audit Committee and full Council in July 2022. The Performance Improvement Plan outlines the Council's improvement framework and provides a description of the Council's arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions evidenced by examples of self-imposed indicators and standards. Arrangements are constructed within the seven relevant criteria set out in legislation and the current functions prioritised and selected for improvement are aligned to its corporate plan and community plan. The objectives and associated projects are set across the whole functions of the Council.</p> <p>Throughout the year the Council has introduced a number of new arrangements, demonstrating commitment to secure continuous improvement. The Council has continued to embed the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. The Framework features within the Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan and Directorate Business Plans, as well as the guidance for Service Plans and People Perform Grow, demonstrating how employees contribute to the achievement of community planning outcomes and strategic objectives. The Business Planning and Performance Management Cycle has been updated to demonstrate the integrated timeline of activity required to strengthen the alignment across the Framework and facilitate the</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>development, implementation and review of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan, Directorate Business Plans, Service Plans and People Perform Grow. The monitoring, reporting and review arrangements at each level of the Framework continue to be mainstreamed and a standard, consistent approach has been developed for performance reporting, using the red/amber/green status.</p> <p>The Council continues to use a Microsoft Excel based system to identify, measure and monitor performance improvement at all levels of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. This, however, is a very labour intensive method of collating performance information, and ensuring that it is robust and accurate. An electronic performance management system would be a much more efficient way of capturing the growing central repository of performance information and would also provide a platform to demonstrate the alignment and interdependencies across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, create capacity for further analysis of the information and focus on key improvement areas across the organisation. This issue was raised in prior years as a proposal for improvement. The Council has developed and finalised the Outline Business Case for the electronic performance management system, which was approved by the IT Projects Group in July 2022. The Council is currently preparing the required procurement documentation and the anticipated timescale for implementing an electric system.</p>
Governance arrangements	<p>The Council has adequate governance and scrutiny arrangements for performance improvement and these arrangements are operating effectively. The Council has established a range of governance arrangements to assist in the delivery of the Performance Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The Performance Improvement Policy was adopted in November 2018 and is due to be reviewed 2022-23. The policy provides the context for mainstreaming and embedding of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework across the organisation. It is important the policy is reviewed as planned to ensure that developments that have</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>been made across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework are fully reflected.</p> <p>The Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meets monthly and has overall responsibility for Performance Management including monitoring and scrutiny however, whilst there was regular monitoring and discussion of Performance Improvement at committee, we note that it is not a standing item on the agenda. Council should therefore consider whether it would be beneficial to make this a permanent agenda item. The Audit Committee meets quarterly and is responsible for providing assurance that that the performance arrangements are robust and effective.</p> <p>The governance arrangements for the development, implementation and review of Directorate Business Plans have been strengthened over the past few years and included within the respective plan. All Business Plans are considered, scrutinised and approved by the respective Standing Committee.</p> <p>An Internal Audit review of performance improvement management has not been undertaken since 2018. A proposal for improvement was included in the previous years report recommending the use of Internal Audit to provide the Council with assurance on the integrity and operation of the Council's performance management framework, specifically in relation to data collation processes and data accuracy. The council are currently engaging with an external firm to agree the Terms of Reference for an audit of specific measures of success within the Corporate Plan 2021-23. This process will provide assurance that the necessary data collation processes are in place to ensure robust, reliable and accurate datasets are reported in the public domain, ahead of the development and publication of the new Corporate Plan 2023-27.</p>
Improvement objectives	The Council has demonstrated that the 2022-23 improvement objectives are legitimate, clear, robust, deliverable and demonstrable. The improvement objectives cover a wide

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>range of Council services and they relate to both improving Council functions and improving services for communities and citizens. The impact of COVID-19 has been considered and reflected in the published objectives.</p> <p>The 2022-23 Performance Improvement Plan contains five objectives, all of which have been carried forward from the prior year. The Council continues to review and refine improvement objectives and the associated actions, outcomes and measures every year as part of development of the Performance Improvement Plan. It is evident that improvement objectives have been developed in accordance with the strategic priorities of the Council as detailed in the Corporate Plan flowing from the Community Plan outcomes and in accordance with consultation with stakeholders. It is also clear that the objectives align with the strategic aspects of improvement.</p>
Consultation	<p>The Council has a statutory duty to consult key stakeholders on the proposed performance improvement objectives. An eight week consultation was undertaken from 21 March – 16 May 2022 and was approved by the Strategy, Policies and Resources Committee. The consultation process included the following mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic survey, ideas board, quick poll and documentation on the Speak NMD platform, which was promoted through the Council's website and social media channels • Public Notices in local newspapers • Engagement with the following stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seven District Electoral Area Forums - Newry and Mourne Youth Council - Cedar Foundation <p>This process was supplemented by the feedback from the Residents Survey in 2018 and the consultation and engagement on the impact of COVID-19 in September 2020. The findings from the consultation and engagement feedback was used to inform, finalise and endorse the proposed performance improvement objectives.</p>

Thematic area	Observations
Improvement plan	<p>Overall, the Council had a majority agreement from consultees on proceeding with the draft improvement objectives.</p> <p>The Council's 2022-23 Improvement Plan was published on 26 June 2022 and complies with the Act and with DfC guidance. The document is available on the Council's website along with a summary document "Our Performance, Looking Back, Going Forward", which sets out the key points from its Performance Improvement Plan (and its assessment of performance).</p> <p>The document contains a high-level description of the Council's plan for discharging its statutory performance improvement duties. It includes a description of its annual performance improvement objectives, how these were selected, the key actions to be undertaken in order to achieve each of the objectives, how the progress of the key actions will be measured and what the outcomes for local communities and stakeholders will be. For each objective detail is also provided on how it is linked to the corporate plan priorities, community plan outcomes and Programme for Government outcomes, as well as detailing the alignment of each objective to the seven aspects of improvement.</p> <p>The plan also provides a summary of the Council's consultation process and the outcome of that process, together with information on how citizens and stakeholders may propose new objectives during the year and how performance against the plan will be reported.</p>
Arrangements to improve	<p>The Council's arrangements to secure the achievement of its improvement objectives, statutory indicators and to comply with the general duty to improve, are adequate.</p> <p>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.</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>Over the last number of years the council has made good progress with embedding performance improvement through the Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. This framework forms the basis on which the arrangements to secure achievement of the objectives, statutory indicators and general duty are based. It is evident that arrangements are becoming increasingly embedded within the overall business planning and performance management cycle particularly with the introduction of Service Plans, the Corporate Performance Dashboard and continued development and roll-out of 'People Perform Grow.'</p> <p>The council has produced objective delivery plans for the 22-23 performance improvement success measures as a means to securing their achievement. These plans provide an overview of the rationale for selecting each Objective, alignment with the Corporate Plan, Community Plan and NICS Outcome Delivery Plan, 'supporting actions', 'measures of success', time-scales, links to existing plans, strategies and programmes of work, human and financial resource allocation, governance arrangements, risk management implications and arrangements to mitigate risks and alignment with the seven strategic aspects of improvement. These plans have been developed in close liaison with the Senior Management Team and Corporate Management Team, and are supplemented by a range of supporting plans and strategies which provide further information regarding the arrangements the Council has put in place to achieve each PI Objective in place for 2022-23.</p>
Collection, use and publication of performance information	<p>The Council's publication of its 2021-22 Performance Improvement Self-Assessment Report in September 2022 fulfils the Council's statutory requirement under Part 12, Section 92 of the Act.</p> <p>It presents the results of the Council's self-assessment in discharging its general duty under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 in relation to</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>performance improvement arrangements. It sets out an assessment of the Council's performance against the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory performance indicators and standards for the functions of Economic Development, Planning and Waste for 2021-22 including comparison with previous four years; • Performance information on self-imposed indicators and standards collected during 2021-22; and • Performance information on all five of the Improvement Objectives rolled over from 2020-21. <p>Councils are also required to assess performance of any selected self-imposed indicators and standards, in relation to the general duty to improve. Legislation requires the Council to compare its performance for the 2021-22 year to that of previous years and as far as is practicable, report performance against other councils in the exercise of the same or similar functions. The 2021-22 self-assessment reports on a variety of self-imposed indicators. The Council has contributed to and used the APSE led National Performance Benchmarking Network. This assisted the Council in improving its ability to compare performance across a wide range of services and activities.</p> <p>The issue of benchmarking with other councils is also part of the work plan for the Performance Improvement Working Group (PIWG) and it is expected that progress on this issue will be made to allow a broader range of activities to be compared. However, we note that delays to this process were faced because of the COVID-19 pandemic and while there was an intention to take this issue forward through the PIWG, limited progress has been made on this matter.</p>

Thematic area	Observations
Demonstrating a track record of improvement	<p>The LGA has concluded that the changing landscape and refocusing of priorities has impacted on her ability to rely on past trends in councils' performance to assess the likelihood of future compliance with Part 12 of the Act. Services have been affected by the impact of COVID-19 and cost of living crisis. On the basis however that all of the performance improvement objectives for 2021-22 were carried forward to 2022-23, the Council used the self-assessment 2021-22 to establish a baseline to monitor and report progress against the majority of the 'measures of success' which underpin the performance improvement objectives 2022-23.</p> <p>The Council also disclosed its performance in relation to its statutory indicators including a comparison across three years, providing explanation and context to performance and made performance comparisons against national averages or other Council's. Whilst performance has been affected by COVID-19, the Council was able to demonstrate some improvement in relation to some statutory performance indicators and standards and performance, although Planning again fell short of the targets set. Likewise, against self-imposed indicators it has been able to show improvement with the majority of targets/objectives achieved or on track to be achieved. Three of the indicators have not been achieved, though performance has improved since the prior year, one indicator where performance was similar to prior year and one indicator where performance has declined since the prior year.</p>

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 2021-22 and its improvement plan for 2022-23 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 2022-23 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 requirements of Part 12 of the Act.

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, informed by:

- a forward looking assessment of the Council's likelihood to comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement; and
- a retrospective assessment of whether the Council has achieved its planned improvements to inform a view as to its track record of improvement.

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 of the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.

Improvement assessment

Councils continue to operate in a particularly challenging environment with focus on recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, the current cost of living crisis, impacting both on performance and the way in which services are delivered. This changing landscape and refocusing of priorities has impacted my ability to rely on past trends in councils' performance to assess the likelihood of future compliance with Part 12 of the Act. In light of this, I am unable to reach an opinion on whether the Council is likely to discharge its duties under Part 12 of the Act and act in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently during 2022-23.

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 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.



Colette Kane
Local Government Auditor
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29 November 2022

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting
held on Thursday 1st December 2022, 10.00am
Hybrid: Council Chamber, Newry & MS Teams**

In Attendance:

Programme Board Members

**Councillor Declan Murphy - Chair (Teams)
Councillor David Taylor (Teams)
Councillor Charlie Casey (Teams)**

NMDDC Officials

**Conor Mallon, Director of Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism
Josephine Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Andy Patterson, Assistant Director, Tourism Culture & Events
Jonathan McGilly, Assistant Director, Enterprise, Employment & Regeneration
Anthony McKay, Chief Planner
Caolain Boyd, Assistant Director: Capital Projects & Procurement
Conor McGeown, Strategic Capital Projects Manager: Capital Projects & Procurement
Conor Woods, Strategic Capital Projects Manager (Teams)
Paul Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure and Sport (Teams)
Angela Powell (notes)**

External Members

Damian Mulholland, DFC

Apologies

**Councillor Gary Stokes
Councillor Pete Byrne**

Councillor D Murphy was nominated as Chairman in Councillor P Byrne's absence.
Councillor Murphy welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies

NCCR/146: Report of Presentation to Theatre/Arts Groups 27th Oct 2022.

Noted: On the proposal of Councillor Casey, seconded by Councillor Murphy it was agreed to 'Note' the Report as circulated.

NCCR/147: Project Board Action Sheets:

- NMD & BRCD Project Board 22nd November 2022
- Newry City Park Project Board 22nd November 2022

Noted: On the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Casey it was agreed to 'Note' the Reports as circulated.

NCCR/148: Project Board Action Sheet:

- Newry City Park – Albert Basin Stakeholders Forum Action Sheet 22nd November 2022

Mr Mulholland proposed a site visit be arranged for stakeholders with aim of users taking more responsibility for site plan and demonstrate options for the site.

Agreed:

- a) It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Taylor to 'Note' the Report as circulated.
- b) Mr Mallon to consider proposition –
What form a site meeting will take and what information can be released in terms of commercial sensitivity

NCCR/149: Update by DfC on North Street Flats (DfC)

Mr Mulholland advised that the Flats are no longer fit for purpose and that once the remaining few residents vacate their accommodation the building can be demolished. A Consultant is currently looking at an option for the future use of the site with a mixture of use that will satisfy the requirement of both Council, NIHE and DfC considering the best way to take the site to market and identifying commercial interests.

RESTRICTED –

NCCR/150: NCCR Programme Dashboard and Graphics (*Conor McGeown*)

- a) Programme Dashboard Report (Encl)
- b) Programme Dashboard Graphics (Encl)
- c) Risk Register (Encl)
- d) Issues Log (Encl)

Mr McGeown discussed the above reports the following items were noted –

In regard to Risk Register, Mr Mulholland confirmed Abandoned Roads risk could be removed as the project is not proceeding with abandoning any roads.

Mr Mulholland also informed that BRCD funding has been confirmed to Belfast City Council and that NMDDC will now receive a contract with elements of spend to occur by end March 2023.

Connect 2 Hub

Mr Mallon updated members on the current position with NICS Connect 2 Hub for Newry.

The Business Case for the Connect 2 Hub had been progressing with options being considered that included both the Civic & Regional Hub and premises at Drumalane Mill.

We were advised as recent as 2 weeks ago that DAERA had declared surplus office space in Carnbane following ongoing changes in working practices post covid, However,

We have been informed in writing that the Connect 2 Hub for Newry will be located in Glenree House, Carnbane Industrial Estate.

Mr Mallon advised that officials are now considering other options and other possible partners in public sector to collocate in the hub, updates would be provided as this work progresses

Councillors at the meeting voiced their disappointment at this late change of direction and the decision by the NICS. They raised concerns at the loss of an increased public sector presence in the city centre location in Newry due to locating the Connect 2 Hub in the industrial estate

Agreed: Reports were noted on the proposal of Cllr Declan Taylor, seconded by Councillor Charlie Casey

NCCR/151 Date for Next Meeting

Noted - Next meeting scheduled for Thursday 2nd February 2023

Councillor Casey informed members that he will be unable to attend the next meeting and that this will be his last meeting as he is now due to retire. The Chairman thanked Councillor Casey for all his sterling work over the years and wished him good luck in the future.

This concluded the business of the Meeting. The Meeting ended at 10:40

**Approved by Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board.
For Noting at the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee
Meeting 15th December 2022**