

January 26th, 2024

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Audit Committee Meeting to be held on **Thursday, 1st February 2024** at **2:00 pm** in **Chamber Downshire Civic Centre Downpatrick.**

Committee Membership 2023 - 2024

Ms Brona Slevin Independent **Chairperson**

Councillor C Bowsie

Councillor J Brennan

Councillor L Devlin

Councillor M Gibbons

Councillor O Hanlon

Councillor T Kelly

Councillor C King

Councillor S O'Hare

Councillor A Quinn

Councillor G Sharvin

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet - Audit Committee Meeting held 21 September 2023

For Approval

[3 - Audit Committee Action Sheet 2023_09_21.pdf](#)

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Corporate Services - (OPEN SESSION)

4.0 Corporate Risk Register - ERT Directorate Risk Register also to be tabled

For Approval

[4 - Corporate Risk Register Jan 2024.pdf](#)

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[4 - Appendix 1 - CRR Overview - January 2024.pdf](#)

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[4 - Appendix 2 - CRR - January 2024.pdf](#)

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[4 - Appendix 3 - ERT Overview - January 2024.pdf](#)

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[4 - Appendix 4 - ERT Directorate Risk Register.pdf](#)

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5.0 Prompt Payments

For Information

[5. Prompt Payments Report Q2 & Q3 2324.pdf](#)

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Performance

6.0 Mid-Year Assessment of PIP

For Information

[6 - Mid Year Progress Report PIP 2023-24 \(2\).pdf](#)

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[6 - Appendix 1 - PIP Mid Year Progress Report April-September 2023.pdf](#)

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Corporate Services (CLOSED SESSION)

7.0 Update on Audit Recommendations - to include risk profile

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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.

Report to follow.

8.0 Direct Award Contracts

For Information

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 **8 - Cover Report - Direct Award Contracts -Q3.pdf** **Not included**

9.0 Procurement Action Plans

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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.

 **9. Cover Report - Procurement Action Plans - February 2024.pdf** **Not included**

 **9 - Appendix 1 - CS Procurement Action Plan.xlsx** **Not included**

 **9 - Appendix 2 - AHC Procurement Action Plan.xlsx** **Not included**

 **9 - Appendix 3 - ERT Procurement Action Plan.xlsx** **Not included**

 **9 - Appendix 4 - SE Procurement Action Plan.xlsx** **Not included**

10.0 S&E Procurement Update

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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.

Report to follow.

11.0 Kilbroney Pitches

For Information


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Report to follow.

12.0 Update on Fraud and Whistleblowing (Including NFI)

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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

 **12 - Fraud and Raising Concerns update new.pdf** **Not included**

 **12 - Appendix 1 - Fraud and Raising Concerns Register.pdf** **Not included**


NIAO (CLOSED SESSION)

13.0 Audit and Assessment Report 2023-24 Report to the Council and the Department for Communities under Section 95 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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

 **13 - NMD final s95 report 301123.pdf** **Not included**

 **13 - Final Audit and Assessment Certificate 301123.pdf** **Not included**

14.0 NMDDC Report to those charged with Governance 2022/23

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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.

Report to follow.

15.0 NMDDC Annual Audit Letter 2022/23

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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.

Report to follow.

Internal Audit (CLOSED SESSION)

16.0 ASM Summary Report

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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.

Report to follow.

17.0 Internal Audit Plan 2023/24

For Decision

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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.

18.0 Risk Management Review

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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.

📎 [18 - 2023.24 NMDDC Risk management - final report.pdf](#)

Not included

19.0 Follow up of 2021-22 IA Recommendations

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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.

Report to follow.

20.0 Management Accounts Review

For Information

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📎 [20 - 2023.24 NMDDC Review of management accounts process.pdf](#)

Not included

21.0 Flood Grant Verification Review

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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.

Report to follow

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

22.0 External Assessment of Internal Audit

For Information

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial 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.

 **22 - Appenidx 1 - External Review of Internal Audit Report.pdf**

Not included

Circulars

23.0 Circular LG 25/2023 - Capitalisation

For Information

 **23 - LG 25-23-capitalisation-covering-letter.pdf**

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24.0 Circular LG 23/2023 - Consolidated Councillor Allowances Circular

For Information

 **24 - LG-23-2023- Consolidated Councillor Allowances.pdf**

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Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Ms Karen Beattie (NIAO)

Cllr Callum Bowsie

Mrs Fionnuala Branagh

Mr Stephen Brannigan (NIAO)

Cllr Jim Brennan

Mr Gerard Byrne

Mr Andrew Cassells

Cllr Laura Devlin

Ms Louise Dillon

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Christine Hagan (ASM)

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Mrs Josephine Kelly

Cllr Tierna Kelly

Cllr Cathal King

Mr Conor Mallon

Cllr Siobhan O'Hare

Cllr Áine Quinn

Cllr Gareth Sharvin

Ms Brona Slevin (Audit)

Donna Starkey

Sarah Taggart

Mrs Marie Ward

ACTION SHEET
AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY 04 JULY 2023

Actions: arising from Audit Committee Meeting – 4 July 2023

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
AC/052/2023	Corporate Risk Register	<p>It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to approve the updates to the Corporate Risk Register highlighted within the summary at Appendix 1. Full Corporate Risk Register can be evidenced at Appendix 2. • to note the revised Neighbourhood Services Directorate Risk Register at Appendix 3 and ensure document is kept up to date in terms of personnel changes within Council organisation. • Interview Panel Training for Elected Members to be arranged via HR Department. • Officers to examine possible changes required to the Terms of Reference for the recruitment panel for Director posts. 	G Byrne	A timetable and details for the recruitment of two Director posts was provided to the August SPR Committee Meeting. Two Directors have now been appointed Training for the panel members has taken place via NILGA / NIAO in October 2023.	Y

AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2023

Actions arising from Audit Committee Meeting – 22 September 2023

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead officer	Action taken / progress to date	Remove from action sheet Y/N
AC/068/2023	Audit Chairperson	It was agreed to approve the extension of the contract for the current Independent Chair of the Audit Committee to 31 July 2024	J Kelly	Contract extended	Y
AC/069/2023	Action sheet arising from Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 4 July 2023	It was agreed to note the Action sheet	D Services	Noted	Y
AC/070/2023	Audit Committee Training	It was agreed to note the update in relation to Audit Committee training and Members were encouraged to attend the NILGA/NIAO facilitated session on 06 October 2023 at 12.30pm	G Byrne	Noted	N
AC/071/2023	Corporate Risk Register	The following was agreed: - to approve the updates to the Corporate Risk Register highlighted within the summary at Appendix 1 of the officer's report - to note the revised AHC Directorate Risk Register at Appendix 3. - that SMT reflect on the comments made by Elected Members regarding the title of sickness absence risk and the need for an	G Byrne	Approved Noted CRR Amended to reflect Members comments	Y Y Y

		identified risk to be inserted into the register around Director recruitment			
AC/072/2023	Prompt Payment Statistics	It was agreed to note the Q1 2022-23 Prompt Payment statistics	G Byrne	Noted	Y
AC/073/2023	Update re Members Interests	It was agreed to note the 6-month review report	S Taggart	Noted	Y
AC/074/2023	NMDDC Statement of Accounts	The following was agreed: - to note the NIAO Report to Those Charged with Governance (RTTCWG) and approve the Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023 for signing by the Chief Executive. - to approve to not make any changes in respect of the unadjusted misstatements identified in the RTTCWG	G Byrne	Noted	Y
AC/075/2023	NIAO Report to Those Charged With Governance	It was agreed to note the Report and agree not to make any changes in respect of unadjusted mis-statements	NIAO	Noted	Y
AC/076/2023	Update Re: Audit Recommendations	It was agreed to note the update in relation to legacy audit recommendations. It was also agreed that a risk profile along with the visual summaries of the data be included on the Audit Recommendations report	E Cosgrove	Noted	Y
AC/077/2023	Direct Award Contracts	It was agreed to note the update in relation to Single Tender Actions	S McConville	Noted	Y
AC/078/2023	Fraud & Whistleblowing	The following was agreed: - to note the update in relation to Fraud & Raising Concerns cases which have been detailed at Appendix 1 of the officer's report - to note the National Fraud Initiative matches testing and the further work which will now be undertaken	G Byrne	Noted	Y

		- to note the progress on actions arising from the NIAO Internal Fraud Risk self-assessment.			
AC/079/2023	Procurement Action Plans	It was agreed to note the update in relation to Procurement Action Plans for each Directorate.	S McConville	Noted	Y
AC/080/2023	External Assessment of Internal Audit Service	It was agreed to note the update	G Byrne	Noted	Y
AC/081/2023	ASM Summary Report	It was agreed to note ASM Internal Audit Summary report.	ASM	Noted	Y
AC/081/2023	Assessment of Performance 2022/23	It was agreed to note the assessment of performance, including the summary document	G Byrne	Noted	Y
End					

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	1 February 2024
Subject:	Corporate Risk Register
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Josephine Kelly – Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director of Finance & Performance

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			The Corporate Risk Register was reviewed and updated by SMT on 18 December 2023. Quarter 2 Assurance Statements for 2023-24 have been used to inform and update the content of the Corporate Risk Register. Where relevant, Officers have also provided updates in relation to specific controls and action plans.
2.0			Key issues
2.1			<p>Corporate Risk Register</p> <p>The Council has identified 12 corporate risks, 7 of which are red, 4 of which are amber and 1 of which is a yellow level risk. One new risk has been added since the last Audit Committee in September 2023 in relation to staff resources.</p> <p>Appendix 1 provides an overview of each risk, risk owner(s), gross and residual risk scores, as well as a summary of changes and updates which have been made to the Corporate Risk Register since June 2023.</p> <p>Several actions have been updated to ensure the Corporate Risk Register is a live document and can be used as a Management tool for decision making.</p> <p>The updated Corporate Risk Register is attached at Appendix 2.</p>
2.2			<p>Other Risk factors which were considered</p> <p>No further risk factors considered for this quarters update.</p>
2.2			<p>Directorate Risk Register – Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism (ERT)</p> <p>The Risk Reporting section of the Risk Strategy states that Directorate Risk Registers will be presented to the Audit Committee on a rotational basis. The Risk Register for the ERT Directorate is attached at Appendix 3. The Risk Register was reviewed and updated with the Assistant Directors and Director of ERT on the 18 December 2023.</p>
2.3			Within the ERT Directorate Risk Register, eight risks have been identified, 7 of which are amber and 1 is a yellow level risk. These risks cover a range of service areas and functions.

	The ERT Risk Register will be updated on a regular basis and considered by the Audit Committee annually.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To approve the updates to the Corporate Risk Register highlighted within the summary at Appendix 1. Full Corporate Risk Register can be evidenced at Appendix 2. To note the revised ERT Directorate Risk Register summary at Appendix 3 and detailed ERT Directorate Risk Register at appendix 4.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	There are no resource implications.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.2	<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/> The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	<i>Proposal initiating consultation</i> 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"/> Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Rationale:</i> Consultation not required.

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
	<p>Appendix 1: Summary Sheet – Corporate Risk Register – January 2024</p> <p>Appendix 2: Corporate Risk Register – January 2024</p> <p>Appendix 3: Summary Sheet – ERT Directorate Risk Register – January 2024</p> <p>Appendix 4: ERT Directorate Risk Register – January 2024</p>
8.0	Background Documents
	None

NMDDC Corporate Risk Register Cover Sheet - January 2024

Risk	Description	Risk Owner(s)	Gross Risk Score	Sep-23	Jan-24		Comments
				Revised Residual Risk Score	Revised Residual Risk Score		
CR01	Failure to deliver the capital investment programme for the District	SMT Caolain Boyd	25	20	20	↔	Risk score remains unchanged. Actions have been updated. New Capital Plan procedure to be brought to SFWG and SP&R in Q4 2023/24.
CR02	Non-compliance with legislative requirements, including procurement	Josephine Kelly Andrew Cassells	25	20	20	↔	Risk score remains unchanged. Actions have been updated.
CR03	Failure to effectively manage waste	Andrew Cassells	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
CR04	Failure to provide robust and timely planning decisions	Conor Mallon	25	16	16	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated. Internal Audit undertaking a review of overturn planning Decisions currently. Final report will be shared with Audit and Planning Committees.
CR05	Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements	Marie Ward Josephine Kelly	20	16	16	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated
CR06	Failure to adequately react to a major incident which would minimise any negative consequences/impact	SMT Caolain Boyd	25	8		↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - new action in relation to the independent review which is due to take place of all Statutory Partners and their response to the recent flooding which took place in November 2023.
CR07	Failure to implement an economic development programme to regenerate the district and attract inward investment due to financial uncertainties caused by the current economic and political climate, including the NI Protocol	Marie Ward Conor Mallon	20	16	16	↔	Risk Score remains unchanged and all actions now updated. New action in relation to administering the flood recovery support to local businesses who have been impacted by recent flooding events.
CR08	Failure to manage sickness absence resulting in delays and an inability to deliver Council services.	Senior Management Team	25	20	20	↑	Residual risk score remains unchanged. Title of the risk has been reinstated to 'failure to manage' rather than an 'increase in sickness absence'. All actions now updated.
CR09	Risk that Council does not adequately react to the Economic Shocks facing the district, therefore failing in its objectives to regenerate and build a prosperous district due to the inability of Council to be financially sustainable in the long term	Senior Management Team	25	20	20	↔	Risk score remains unchanged and actions now updated.
CR10	Failure to effectively plan for and manage a cyber security attack.	Josephine Kelly Gavin Ringland	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk remain unchanged - actions and controls updated. Risk Score cannot be reduced until the IT services project is complete.
CR11	Risk of Industrial Action leading to the failure to have necessary staffing structures and resourcing to deliver services.	Senior Management Team	25	20	20	↔	Title of the risk amended from 'Risk of Industrial Action leading to the failure to have necessary staffing structures and resourcing to deliver efficient and effective services' to 'Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery'. Risk Scores remained unchanged and a new action in relation to rebuilding industrial relation framework now included.
CR12	Insufficient staff resources to deliver Council services in an effective and efficient manner	Marie Ward Josephine Kelly	20	NEW RISK	16	NEW	New risk highlighting the difficulties all Councils are currently facing in recruiting candidates for vacant post and also retaining staff within key positions.

Key Controls Identified

1. Asset Management Strategy in Place to identify surplus assets
1. Monthly review of spend against budget
1. Professionally qualified and experienced staff
- 2 Project risk register in place for major projects
2. Capital Plan annually approved at Council
2. Four year Capital Plan
2. Large projects are project managed by external consultants who report to the Estates Team.
2. Monthly site progress meetings which are minuted
2. Strategic Finance Working Group scrutinises each Capital Project
3. Internal Audit of Project Governance of Capital projects scheduled for 2022/23.

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Capital Plan Cash Flow forecasting	Detailed cash flow of Council capital plan to be brought to SFWG in December 2023 to display to Members the scale of the capital Programme and communicate when Council's big outlay will be required.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne	3/31/2024	Work is continuing on estimating the MRP/Loan payments over the life of our capital Programme as part of the 2024/25 Rates Estimate Process. New Capital Plan Procedure to go to SFWG / SP&R during Q4 2023/24.
Construction Industry - Material Shortages and Price Increases - Potential Impact to our capital Plan	NI central government have informed me that the Dept of Finance is being lobbied by the construction industry to contribute to the unforeseen increase in material costs for those construction projects (large value) which were awarded in advance of the recent price spikes, as well as term service contracts with fixed rates for undertaking works.	In Progress	Caolain Boyd	3/31/2024	Continue to keep Members updated of rising costs and supply chain difficulties leading to an impact on Councils Capital Plan. We possible during the design stage utilise building materials that meets the OBC estimates using value engineering and value management when appropriate.
Supplier/Contractor Options	AD of estates currently looking a number of option to counter act the over reliance on a small number of Contractors/Suppliers/PMs in NI	In Progress	Caolain Boyd	3/31/2024	Council has put more stringent Pre-Qualification Questionnaire criteria to ensure construction line value and project cashflow is stress tested.

Key Controls Identified

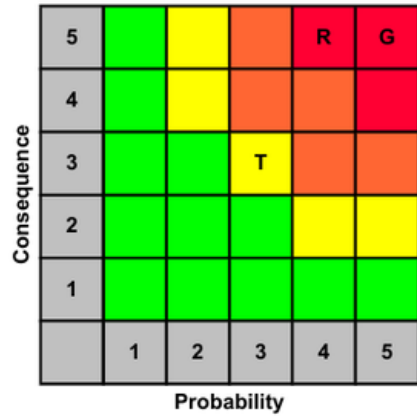
- 1. Asbestos and Legionella Policies and Management Plans in place
- 1. COVID19 - New Governance Arrangements in place in Council. Delegated authority amended through SO.
- 1. COVID19 - New legislation introduced to allow virtual committee meetings
- 1. COVID19 Risk Assessments being completed and reviewed as required
- 1. Dedicated skilled teams in place for:
 - Health and Safety, HR, Legal and Procurement
 - 1. Health and Safety Committees in place and ongoing programme of training in place
- 1. Policies and procedures in place - i.e H&S Policy, Procurement Policy, Access to Information, Records Management
 - 1. Procurement training rolled out to all relevant staff
 - 2. Compliance Reporting to SMT and H&S Committees
 - 2. Procurement a standing agenda item at Councils Audit Committee
- 3. Internal Audit Completed
 - H&S Check - 2019/20
 - Contract Management - 2019/20
 - Emergency Planning 2020/21
- 3. Internal Audits Scheduled:
 - Contract Management - 2021/22
 - Information Governance - 2022/21

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Actions from Fire Risk Assessment Audits	The actions from the Fire Risk Assessments which have been completed need to be actioned as soon as possible for all Council properties by the Facilities Management and Maintenance Department.	In Progress	Andrew Cassells	3/31/2024	Council is currently recruiting (second time) for a Compliance Officer to improve the management of compliance issues. The current level of risk regarding fire risks in our buildings is considered Low. The Fire Risk Management Policy has been approved and effective since 12th March 2020, however the associated Fire Safety Management Plan requires progressing. The priority is to seek agreement on a Fire Safety Management Plan which will guide future control of this risk. The Council has appointed a Council wide Contractor/s to undertake annual inspections of fire alarms and firefighting equipment. In relation to fire alarms inspections are likely to highlight a programme of work to upgrade some systems. The Council's Building Maintenance team continue to address work as required.

Advisory Internal Audit Review - Health and Safety	Implement the 30 recommendations arising from the internal audit review of Health and Safety	In Progress	Andrew Cassells Josephine Kelly	3/31/2024	An external review has been undertaken and an independent Report from by external body has been received and considered by the Directors of Corporate Services (CS) and Sustainability & Environment (SE). An action plan is being formulated. A revised Facilities Management Cross Service Working Group has been established under the Chairmanship of the Directors of CS and S&E. Where appropriate updates from the Working Group will be provided to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.
Asbestos Policy and Management Plans	Implementation of Asbestos Policies and Management Plans	In Progress	Andrew Cassells	3/31/2024	The current level of risk for asbestos, is considered Low. All buildings have been surveyed and no significant risks have been identified which cannot be managed through good building practices. A Contractor was appointed in October 2020 for a three-year period to undertake inspections, air sampling, training and related asbestos consultancy work. There was a defined year 1, 2 and 3 work programmes. An occurrence of asbestos has been identifies associated with the Downshire Civic Centre and is being managed in line with the policy. Current Contract being reviewed for retendering, however the current certificates cover Council until 2024.
E-Learning Training	E-Learning training to be promoted throughout the organisation as take up is low - this is particularly relevant to mandatory training sessions.	In Progress	Marina Hughes	3/31/2024	E Learning is promoted throughout the organisation, however it should be noted that there is currently a joint Council E Learning platform contract in place that is lead by LCCC.
Insurance	CMT to ensure that Council Properties and Vehicles are adequately covered and schedules are up to date	In Progress	Caolain Boyd	3/31/2024	Work currently underway to validate Councils Operators License against Councils fleet insurance schedule. SMT has approved the recruitment of an Insurance Officer which is progressing.
Legionella Policy and Management Plan	Implementation of Legionella Policies and Management Plans	In Progress	Andrew Cassells	3/31/2024	The current level of risk for legionella is considered Medium. A Contractor was appointed in August 2020 for three-year period to undertake legionella control measures on behalf of the Council. This comprises monthly, quarterly, six monthly and annual inspections and works. Current Contract being reviewed for retendering. Council officers are investigating remote monitoring which will be tabled in November 2023.
Social Procurement Policy	Council to consider bringing in a social procurement policy following the guidance issued by the Minister of Finance in June 2021.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne	3/31/2024	Legislation to be reviewed to determine if this is possible while adhering to Public Contract Regulations. Procurement team are liaising with the LG Procurement Working Group. Council is currently adhering to legislative requirements. Procurement Policy to be reviewed in Q4 in 2023/24.

Risk CR. 03 - Failure to effectively manage waste



Risk Categories Buildings / Engineering / Environment
Quality of Service
Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)

Risk Description Failure to effectively manage waste

Potential Root Cause Industrial dispute lodged by the Trade Unions
Insufficient resources (particularly availability of HGV drivers)
Market forces enable commercial operators to increase prices (MDR)
Failure to plan effectively for the future (including financial planning)
Historic contract arrangements which may not be providing the Council with VFM
Future changes to waste management arrangements
Structure of new contracts to process & dispose of our waste to reflect changes in legislation
Operation of the ARC21 Corporate Body going forward

Consequence Failure to meet recycling Targets
Reputational Issues
Lower levels of customer satisfaction
impact on service delivery and lost productivity
With high CPI price increases the budget for waste management is likely to be insufficient for the 2023/24 year.

Risk Owners Andrew Cassells

Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25 **Last Review** 3/31/2024

Residual Risk Red 20 **Next Review** 1/4/2024

Target Risk Level Yellow 9 **Risk Appetite** Risk Cautious

Objectives

- 2. Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district and reduce health inequalities.
- 7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Contingency Plans in place
- 1. Long term Waste Strategic Plan in place
- 1. Partnership working with key stakeholders
- 3. Internal Audits Completed;
Fleet Management 2020/21
Fuel Management procedures
- 3. Internal Audits Scheduled;
Waste Management - 2021/22

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
arc21 Waste Management Group	Following the May 2022 refusal to grant arc21 planning permission for their residual waste project and the requirement to recycle 70% by 2030 as per the Climate Change Bill and the Circular Economy package coupled with governance and internal issues within arc21 the long term viability of the group is now very questionable.	In Progress	Andrew Cassells	3/31/2024	Arc21 are carrying out their own strategic review of themselves the results of which may be known by the end of March 2024. NM&D have had an opportunity to input. Consideration needs to be given as to how the Council would participate in any successor body to arc21. This could have staffing implications for the Council should the Council decide to provide the functions currently provided by arc21 themselves. These resource implications would at least in part be offset by the arc21 contribution which in 2022/23 was some £156k.
Internal Waste Management Planning	Council waste management planning is driven by a number of internal and external factors including the introduction of legislation such as the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, Extended Producer Responsibility, Deposit Return Scheme and Common Collection Systems.	In Progress	Andrew Cassells	3/31/2024	Ongoing but stayed as there have been delays to the introduction of Deposit Return Scheme. Common Collection Systems may require legislation which cant be progressed without a sitting Assembly.
Operators Licence	Internal Audit carried out a review of the progress in implementing TRU and FTA recommendations in October 2018. A further review took place during November/December 2020 which has provisionally highlighted that limited progress has been made in implementing a number of recommendations from the 2018 audit.	In Progress	Andrew Cassells Sinead Murphy	3/31/2024	A consolidated action plan in relation to compliance to the Council's Operators License (OL) was presented to SE Committee in November 2022. A further update on compliance was provided in June 2023 showing good progress towards full implementation of actions and ongoing compliance.. Staffing issues are being addressed and the Head of Cleansing has been seconded as interim Head of Fleet. Further operators license COTC holders trained and named on the OL. A further follow up Audit by RHA for 2023/24 is being finalised and the Transport Regulation Unit is being regularly informed of progress.
Waste Management Plan	The Waste Management Plan is organised by ARC 21. The Council is required to feed into and approve ARC 21s Waste Management Plan.	In Progress	Andrew Cassells	3/31/2024	A initial review of the arc21 Waste Management Plan (which includes NMDDC) has been completed by WRAP on behalf of DAERA/NIEA. Technical expertise (RPS) has been procured to produce an Addendum for the Plan as part of the six yearly review. It is now understood that in the absence of a Minister DAERA will not now be consulting on a draft Waste Management Strategy for NI by the end of 2023; the publication of which would better inform the Councils Waste Management Plans.

Risk CR. 04 - Failure to provide robust and timely planning decisions

Consequence	5					G
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	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Probability				

Risk Categories Business operational/reputational
Financial
Quality of Service

Risk Description Failure to provide robust and timely planning decisions

Potential Root Cause Ineffective and/or inadequate resources
Planning Legislation not being followed
Ineffective technology - EPIC system changes

Consequence Litigation and financial costs
Reputational issues
Lower levels of customer satisfaction
Impact on service delivery and lost productivity
Financial implications resulting in budget constraints
Failure to achieve the statutory standards around local / major planning applications and enforcement cases

Risk Owners Conor Mallon

Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25

Residual Risk Amber 16

Target Risk Level Yellow 9

Last Review 3/31/2024

Next Review 1/4/2024

Risk Appetite Risk Open

Objectives

- 3. Enhance, protect and promote our environment
- 6. Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities.

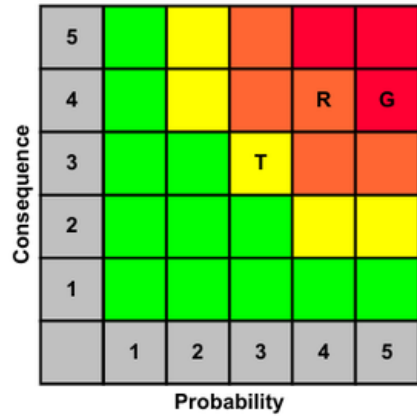
Key Controls Identified

- 1. Action plan in place to reduce backlog
 - 1. Increase in employee numbers
 - 1. Ongoing training for officers and members
 - 2. Dedicated Planning Committee in operation
- 2. Local Development Plan developed and timetable agreed
 - 2. Planning Consultant in place since January 2020 to bring about performance improvements
- 2. Scheme of Delegation in place to facilitate timely planning decisions

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Backlog cases	Implement action plan to reduce backlog in line with timeframe set	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	3/31/2024	<p>in 22/23 NMD received 1478 applications, 13.2% of total NI applications excluding CLUDs and non material change applications which bring the total to 1781. Average processing times for 22/23 across Councils was 19 weeks with Newry, Mourne and Down at 21.6 weeks. During 2021/22, Newry, Mourne and Down received the highest number of applications at 1,781. The new Planning Portal was implemented during 22/23 and disrupted normal processes for 4 – 6 weeks adding to backlog challenges, work is ongoing to monitor performance within the department to improve efficiency. Comparable stats for 23/24 are not yet available however mid term assessments show that processing times remain challenging and new application numbers have increased despite a general trend downwards in most other Council areas.</p> <p>Recruitment to backfill vacancies has been completed and staff have commenced taking up posts in December 2023 - Feb 2024, a further recruitment exercise will be required early 2024 to ensure staff compliment is returned to organisational resource plan. Absence management process is utilised to manage all absences as per Council policy</p>
Internal Review of overturn decisions	Council will undertake a review/audit of overturn decisions - this is based on the NIAO Public Accounts Committee report on Planning decisions across Councils in NI	In Progress	Gerard Byrne Conor Mallon	3/31/2024	<p>The number of decisions issued during 2022/23 was 1309, accounting for 12.2% of NI total with the second approvals. The Four Year Internal Audit Plan features an advisory review for Overturn Planning Decisions. Audit is nearing completion. Internal Audit to finalise report with Management and report will be shared with Audit and Planning Committee</p>
IT infrastructure	Upgrade of technical IT infrastructure (EPIC Replacement)	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	3/31/2024	<p>Operational from December 2022 – work is ongoing to fine tune performance of new system to improve user friendliness and efficiency through direct engagement with staff at all levels and stakeholder groups. The enforcement modules are now a priority action and this likewise will be managed via NI officer working groups co-ordinated by ICF</p>
Regional Planning Review	The Public Accounts Committee issued a regional report on Planning in Northern Ireland on 24 March 2022	In Progress	Conor Mallon	3/31/2024	<p>Review of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 – Initial Stakeholder Engagement commenced May 2023 – consultation responses were back in July 2023.</p> <p>Work also ongoing through the Local Government Development Management Working Group - Planning Improvement - PADS</p>

Risk CR. 05 - Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements



Risk Categories
 Business operational/reputational
 Financial
 Impact on individuals (staff or public)
 Quality of Service

Risk Description
 Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements

Potential Root Cause
 Difficulty recruiting key positions in Councils Management Team
 Corporate efficiency projects and other improvement activities are not currently joined-up with wider transformational activity
 The Council is currently unable to track the realisation of benefits (financial or non-financial) arising from investment in new IT systems (i.e. Legend)
 A lack of corporate capacity currently exists to support transformational activity
 The overall affordability of the Councils long term plans considering COVID19 / Cost of Living Crisis / inflation / pay demands.

Consequence
 Not promoting a single corporate identity
 The budget situation will continue to get worse (salaries and wages) therefore not providing VFM
 Our ability to provide citizens / customers with the services they require will be significantly constrained
 We will potentially lag behind other Councils & other public sector organisations

Risk Owners
 Josephine Kelly; Marie Ward

Gross/Inherent Risk
 Red 20

Residual Risk
 Amber 16

Target Risk Level
 Yellow 9

Last Review
 3/31/2024

Next Review
 1/4/2024

Risk Appetite
 Risk Hungry

Objectives

7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

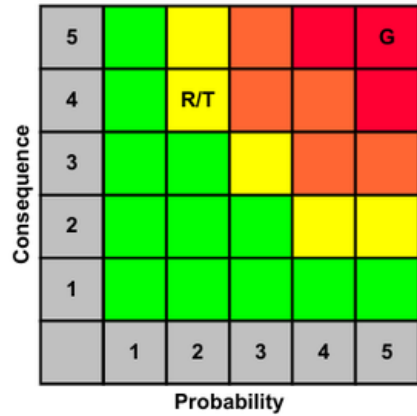
Key Controls Identified

1. Severance Rate agreed by Unions and Members
2. IT Project Group in place and meets monthly
2. Specialist independent IT consultants have been tasked with implementing the IT strategy

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
New HR System	New Self Service Human Resource Management system to be procured	In Progress	Marina Hughes Josephine Kelly	3/31/2024	The Business Case for the procurement of new systems is almost complete with a draft for approval having been presented to ITPG in September 2023.
Service Reviews	Service Reviews are currently being completed across Directorate in line with paper which was approved at SP&R	In Progress	Senior Management Team	3/31/2024	A draft action plan / timetable of service reviews has been provided to the Trade Unions as part of the agreement to the current dispute. Work is progressing. A full list of Service Reviews will be collated to ensure resources are appropriately directed to undertake the work required.
Voluntary Severance Call	Roll out of a voluntary severance call to communicated to staff	In Progress	Senior Management Team	3/31/2024	The Business Administration severance has been completed with all exit dates agreed. The Tier 3 Business Case was approved in September 2022 and these processes are almost complete.

Risk CR. 06 - Failure to adequately react to a major incident which would minimise any negative consequences/impact



Risk Categories Buildings / Engineering / Environment
Business operational/reputational
Impact on individuals (staff or public)
Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)

Risk Description In the event of a disaster or an emergency, the Council may not respond in a way which minimises any negative consequences/impact

Potential Root Cause Natural disasters, localised flooding, Harbour disasters, Fire
Pandemics - COVID 19
Significant IT failure
Inadequate preparedness to be able to respond in the event of an emergency

Consequence Reputational damage through inadequate civic leadership to provide adequate community emergency support
Loss of income
Litigation - civil/criminal
increased insurance premiums

Risk Owners Josephine Kelly; Senior Management Team

Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25 **Last Review** 3/31/2024

Residual Risk Yellow 8 **Next Review** 2/3/2024

Target Risk Level Yellow 8 **Risk Appetite** Risk Averse

Objectives

7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Emergency planning measures in place, including:
 - Flood risk plan
 - Inter-agency group
- 1. Annual Winter Resilience Plan in place
- 1. Business Continuity scenario plans in place
- 1. Dedicated Emergency Planning team and professionally trained and experienced staff
- 1. Emergency Plan Activated in March 2020 due to COVID19
- 1. Ferryman test exercise completed (May 2019) -Security alert in February 2021 - Lessons learned
- 2. Member of Southern Region Emergency Planning Group
- 2. New regional local government regional model
- 3. Internal Audits Completed;
 - Health and Safety Checks 2019/20
 - Emergency Planning 2020/21

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Documenting Business Continuity Plans	BCPs to be documented for each Service Area	In Progress	Caolain Boyd	12/31/2023	Revision of all Departmental BCP's was completed in July 2023.
Independent External Review of Flooding Incident	Independent review to be carried in the coming months of all statutory agencies	In Progress	Josephine Kelly	4/30/2024	Council will engage with an independent external review of the recent flooding incident along with all other statutory partners. When report is issued, Council will implement any recommendations or learning from the review.
Northern Ireland Emergency Planning Structures	Officers will continue to attend and contribute to the NI Emergency Planning Structures.	In Progress	Senior Management Team	3/31/2024	Council is represented at NIEPS were any upcoming incidents will be discussed.

Risk CR. 07 - Failure to implement an economic development programme to regenerate the district and attract inward investment due to financial uncertainties caused by the current economic and political climate, including the Windsor Framework

Consequence	5					
	4				R	G
	3			T		
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Probability				

Risk Categories Impact on individuals (staff or public)
Quality of Service

Risk Description Failure to implement an economic development programme to regenerate the district and attract inward investment due to financial uncertainties caused by the current economic and political climate, including the Windsor Framework.

Potential Root Cause Failure to engage stakeholders (public and private sector)
Inflationary pressures and cost of living crisis.
FFNI - NMDDC is lead Council with operations team - increased risk
Impact of the City Deal
The weakness in sterling driving inflation expectations higher
Issues around the NI Protocol including:
-Loss of EU funding
-Disruption of food and medical supplies
-Community tension and public disorder
-Changes in regulations, border controls, cross border trade and movement of goods and people
-Uncertainty amongst the business community in relation to food standards, trading standards and exports
-Lack of employees with the required expertise and experience, eg Environmental Health Officers

Consequence Lack of investment in the District and lower levels of economic activity
Lack of confidence from the private sector
Some services, which were funded externally, not being delivered
Lack of leadership and direction from the NI Executive and UK Government
Inadequate levels of service provision

Risk Owners Conor Mallon; Marie Ward

Gross/Inherent Risk Red 20

Last Review 3/31/2024

Residual Risk Amber 16

Next Review 1/4/2024

Target Risk Level Yellow 9

Risk Appetite Risk Hungry

Objectives

1. Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills
4. Support sustainable forms of tourism which value our environment and cultural heritage.
6. Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities.
7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

Key Controls Identified

1. FFNI Digital Transformation Projects underway
1. Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2020-25 in place
2. Engagement with other Councils, other Departments, NILGA and the Private Sector through the Chamber of Commerce
2. Establishment of Economic Forum including public and private sector stakeholders
3. Internal Audits Completed;
FFNI - 2019/20

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
City Deals	Actively engage in Belfast Region City Deal	In Progress	Conor Mallon Marie Ward	3/31/2024	The Belfast Region City Deal was signed in December 2021 and unlocks £1 billion of transformative co-investment. OBCs for NMD projects have been approved by BRCD Board and relevant Government Departments. Contracts for funding and funding agreements have been progressed. Progress ongoing on project delivery, based on stage of development of each.
Full Fibre Network NI (FFNI)	Local Full Fibre Network to improve connectivity across all of Northern Ireland.	In Progress	Conor Mallon	3/31/2024	FFNI appointed by Solace as lead for all Councils Digital Champions. FFNI operations lead and project officer currently appointed as Digital Champion and Coordinator in respect of the Mobile Action Plan. Barrier Busting team to be established to promote rollout of advanced technologies which underpins Councils Digital Transformation activities and projects under the City and Growth deals.
Provide Flood Recovery Support to Local businesses in impacted areas of the Disitric	Administering funding provided by UK Treasury for Businesses impacted by flooding in November 2023	In Progress	Conor Mallon	3/31/2024	Following the floods across the District, Council hosted LPS workshops for businesses online to provide information on rate relief. Council organised 3 business information clinics (Newry, Downpatrick and Flurrybridge). Over 50 businesses attended the clinics. Jobs and Benefits, Environmental Health, The Red Cross and DfC attended the session to assist Council. Council has processed 115 grants to date. Council is working with NI Civil Service on a second round of funding, UK Treasury approval required. Council delivered a Christmas Make it Local campaign (social and print media) focusing on 6 businesses that were impacted by the floods and that have reopened or relocated. An enhanced Christmas Programme was delivered in Newry and Downpatrick.
Support local businesses	The Council is also providing support, advice and guidance to local businesses as they anticipate and manage the changes associated with Brexit.	In Progress	Conor Mallon	3/31/2024	Go For It closed in August 2023 and Council's interim business support programme closed on 30th September therefore there was a gap in provision of business support due to the delay in the launch of the Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service - NIESS (Go Succeed). This was a delay that was outside of NMDDC's control. The new service launched in November 2023. NIESS is a regional programme funded by UK Government UKSPF. Delivery against Labour Market Partnership Action Plan ongoing.
Warrenpoint Port	To ensure efficient delivery of statutorily required of food import checks on relevant Agri-Food goods entering Northern Ireland at Warrenpoint port	In Progress	Sinead Murphy	3/31/2024	Required checks are being completed at Warrenpoint Port on an on-going basis by trained and authorised staff. Regular meetings are attended with relevant partners, DAERA, Defra, FSA, Border force, Seatruck, Warrenpoint Port, to continue to share learning and work through operational issues as they arise, including the implementation of the Windsor Framework. Funding is continuing to be provided through the FSA.

Risk CR. 08 - Failure to adequately manage sickness absence resulting in delays and an inability to deliver Council services.

Consequence	5	T	R	G		
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		1	2	3	4	5
		Probability				

Risk Categories Business operational/reputational
Financial
Impact on individuals (staff or public)
Quality of Service

Risk Description CR. 08 - Failure to adequately manage sickness absence resulting in delays and an inability to deliver Council services.

Potential Root Cause Increased levels of sickness absence
Failure to adequately manage sickness absence
Failure to conduct Return to Work Meetings following instances of absenteeism
Increase in sickness absence being experienced across all sectors

Consequence Increase in sickness absence
Critical services failing to be delivered
Financial cost of Occupational Sick Pay
Impact on remaining staff of increased workloads to cover sickness absence
Increased cost to Council due to the use of agency staff/overtime

Risk Owners Senior Management Team

Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25 **Last Review** 3/31/2024

Residual Risk Red 20 **Next Review** 1/4/2024

Target Risk Level Yellow 10 **Risk Appetite** Risk Minimal

Objectives

- 2. Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district and reduce health inequalities.
- 8. Advocate with others for the benefit of all people of the district.

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Employee Health Cash Plan
- 1. Human Resources Team
- 1. Managing Attendance Procedure
- 2. Health and Wellbeing Working Group/Team
- 2. Occupational Health Service
- 2. RTW absence interviews are now being monitored through the CMT group
- 3. Internal Audit of Sickness Absence in 2020/21 - another planned for 2023/24

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Return to Work interviews	The completion rate of RTW is very low presently.	In Progress	Marina Hughes	3/31/2024	RTW meetings are a core line management responsibility. HR will continue to provide support and management information. SMT & CMT ensure compliance in their areas of responsibility. An attendance management audit was undertaken in December 2023. The outcomes will be reviewed to determine if further improvements can be made in reporting and identification of outstanding return to work.
Training	All Managers must complete Managing Attendance training on the Councils e-learning platform	In Progress	Marina Hughes	3/31/2024	The new provider has been appointed and HR will work with them to establish robust processes which contribute to reduction in sickness absence durations. An attendance management audit was undertaken in December 2023. The outcomes will be reviewed to determine if further steps can be taken to enhance the learning in this area.

Risk CR. 09 - Risk that Council does not adequately react to the Economic Shocks facing the district, therefore failing in its objectives to regenerate and build a prosperous district due to the inability of Council to be financially sustainable in the long term

Consequence	5				R	G
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		1	2	3	4	5
		Probability				

Risk Categories	Business operational/reputational Financial Quality of Service Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)		
Risk Description	Risk that Council does not adequately react to the Economic Shocks facing the district, therefore failing in its objectives to regenerate and build a prosperous district due to the inability of Council to be financially sustainable in the long term		
Potential Root Cause	Inflation and rising utility costs Political uncertainty - RSG cuts Environmental Services - Loss of income (SEUPB/PHA) Leisure - significant loss of Leisure centre income and members going forward Community - Loss of income at community centres / difficulty in progressing financial assistance claims / uncertainty over PEACE funding Impact on Capital Projects - funding reduced/withdrawn, timescales extended / increased costs - capital budget may be reduced going forward Loss of Ratepayers income TU Demands in relation to staff pay and the recurring costs into the future Potential Banking Crisis		
Consequence	Council income reducing Going concern issues Large increase in District Rate going forward - negative publicity Council Reserves reducing to inadequate levels Social impact - economic inequality and increased risk factor for poor mental health		
Risk Owners	Senior Management Team		
Gross/Inherent Risk	Red 25	Last Review	3/31/2024
Residual Risk	Red 20	Next Review	1/4/2024
Target Risk Level	Yellow 9	Risk Appetite	Risk Open

Objectives

1. Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills
2. Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district and reduce health inequalities.
6. Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities.
7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement
8. Advocate with others for the benefit of all people of the district.

Key Controls Identified

1. Monthly Management Accounts completed by Finance
2. Multi agency Community Hub
2. NMDDC COVID-19 Recovery Group
2. Service and Business plans now in place
2. Working with ALFCO around a Council wide position to DfC and DoF
3. Internal Audits Completed;
Emergency Planning with a focus on COVID19 - 2020/21

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Management Accounts	Embedding a culture of reporting on variance analysis and budget accountability.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne Josephine Kelly	4/30/2024	ADs provide variance analysis going forward on a quarterly basis on their own Service Areas. This will feed into the Quarterly Management Accounts which are presented to SP&R. Quarterly budget meetings are to take place with Directorates, led by the DCS and AD of Finance & Performance. Internal Audit of the Management Accounts process completed in January 2024. Management Accounts Procedure to be revised and strengthened.
Rates Support Grant	Director of Corporate Services to write to the Minister of Finance and Communities about the reduction of the Rates Support Grant and to ascertain the grant will not be reduced going forward	In Progress	Gerard Byrne	3/31/2024	SOLACE are lobbying the Department and AD of Finance & Performance is lobbying via the ALGFO Group. Judicial Review also ongoing. Council has submitted a detailed response to the DfC Budget EQIA in May 2023.
Strategic Finance Working Group - rates process 2024/25	Strategic Finance Working Group to be established for new term of Council.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne Josephine Kelly	3/31/2024	SFWG now established for new term of Council. All Members can attend in relation to the Rates Estimate Process for 2024/25. New Capital Procedure to go through the Committee in Q4 2023/24. SFWG schedule for rates process presented at the September 2023 SFWG. Next meeting on the 16 January 2024.
Treasury Advice - Banking	The fallout from Silicon Valley Bank has quickly sparked international concerns and more uncertainty arose after Credit Suisse also collapsed. The turmoil in global markets fuel fears that this could mark the start of the next financial crisis.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne Josephine Kelly	3/31/2024	While we closely monitor market conditions, we are meeting with our Treasury Advisors in relation to our current Banking and Money Market arrangements and their exposure to a financial crisis. AD of Finance & Performance attended NI wide briefing on Treasury Management in December 2023.
Working Groups	Multiple Officer groups discussing these financial concerns on a regular basis.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne Senior Management Team	3/31/2024	CEO attends Solace and the AD of Finance & performance attends the Council wide Finance Working Group and ALGFO. AD of Finance & Performance and the CEO have also met with our Treasury Advisors to get an overview of the economic situation on a global scale - i.e. interest rates / borrowing etc Officers will continue to attend and input into the above groups.

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Agile working policy now in operation from 12 September 2022
- 1. Back up arrangements
- 1. Business Continuity Scenario Planning
- 1. Participation in threat intelligence networks
- 1. Penetration testing and vulnerability scanning
- 1. Phishing simulation and learning exercises
- 1. Technical security controls and arrangements
- 2. Engagement with Cyber bodies
- 2. National Cyber Security training
- 3. Internal Audits Scheduled;
IT Systems and Security - 2021/22
IT Strategy 2021/22

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Business Continuity Plans	BCP plans to be updated to reflect the cyber risk	In Progress	Caolain Boyd Gavin Ringland	3/31/2024	Critical and Priority Services currently being prioritised via scenario planning - being managed by the SHEP Department.
Cyber Incident Response/Disaster Recovery	Establish and test cyber incident response and disaster recovery capabilities	In Progress	Gavin Ringland	4/30/2024	Event Scenarios and PlayBooks are being continually tested and refined where confidence of no-impact is high. Deep impact testing will be completed and as part of the Computing Platform (formerly IT Services) project, currently in implementation phase, due to complete by April 2024.
IT Strategy	Implement additional security tools including multifactor authentication, conditional access and modern authentication where possible and appropriate	In Progress	Gavin Ringland	4/30/2024	Remote access to LAN completely MFA. MFA and conditional access to Office 365 complete. MFA also enabled on many Line of Business Systems, including IDOX. Single Sign On (SSO) implemented on numerous systems. Currently implementing LAPS, InTune, Defender and PAM with a view to having at least two such solutions implemented by June 2024. New Mobile Worker solution which forms part of new WAN arrangements due to be implemented by July 2024.
Training / Development Plans	Training to increase User Resilience	In Progress	Gavin Ringland	3/31/2024	In-person training was delivered to All Staff and Elected Members in 2023. A new eLearning campaign on Cyber Security commenced in October 2023.

Risk CR. 11 - Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery

Consequence	5			T	R	G
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5

Probability

Risk Categories Business operational/reputational
Impact on individuals (staff or public)
Quality of Service

Risk Description Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery

Potential Root Cause In common with many sectors and employers across the UK, industrial unrest has become increasingly likely
Unresolved Legacy employment issues
Current economic climate

Consequence Creation of uncertainty and instability
Negative impact on service delivery and lost productivity
Negative PR for the Council
Management & HR time lost to IR issues which impacts on operational and strategic matters being progressed
Financial implications for Council where meeting the TU demands results in increased salary costs

Risk Owners Senior Management Team

Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25

Residual Risk Red 20

Target Risk Level Amber 15

Last Review 3/31/2024

Next Review 1/4/2024

Risk Appetite Risk Averse

Objectives

- 2. Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district and reduce health inequalities.
- 7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Detailed budgeting process in operation
- 1. Qualified HR, IT & Finance professionals in place
- 2. External Facilitator engaged
- 2. LRA Conciliation Process

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Labour Relation Agency (LRA) Conciliation Process	Negotiations have been ongoing since March 2023 to resolve current industrial relations dispute, with the assistance of the LRA	In Progress	Senior Management Team	3/31/2024	At the time of reviewing this Risk Register, there have been 17 meetings held with the assistance of the LRA, in addition to which, there have a number of meetings between the sides where the LRA were not in attendance. Negotiations continued on 24 November 2023 and agreement in principle was reached subject to the LRA agreement being presented to the S&PR Committee. The agreement was accepted and proposal from Management Side regarding dealing with formally registered industrial disputes. Once the agreement is finalised through the LRA it will be provided for Council to ratify.
Rebuilding the Industrial Relations (IR) Framework	Agreement is in place between Management and the Joint Trade Unions, to work with an external facilitator, to rebuild the IR Framework and processes in NMDDC	In Progress	Josephine Kelly	3/31/2024	To commence following LRA Conciliation Agreement having been reached

Risk CR. 12 - Insufficient staff resources to deliver Council services in an effective and efficient manner

Consequence	5					
	4			T	R	G
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5

Probability

Risk Categories

Risk Description

Insufficient staff resources to deliver Council services in an effective and efficient manner

Potential Root Cause

There has been a difficulty in recruiting key positions in across Council. Another issue has been the retention of staff across all Directorates.
 Pay scales in private sector
 Competitive Job Market
 Candidates less likely to apply for temporary positions

Consequence

Our ability to provide citizens / customers with the services they require will be significantly constrained
 We will potentially lag behind other Councils & other public sector organisations
 Increased costs due to employing agency staff / consultants etc

Risk Owners

Josephine Kelly; Marie Ward

Gross/Inherent Risk

Red 20

Last Review

Next Review

4/3/2024

Residual Risk

Amber 16

Target Risk Level

Amber 12

Risk Appetite

Risk Cautious

Objectives

Key Controls Identified

1. Agency Framework in place
1. Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection
1. Qualified HR professionals in place
2. SMT review of recruitment schedule

Action Plans

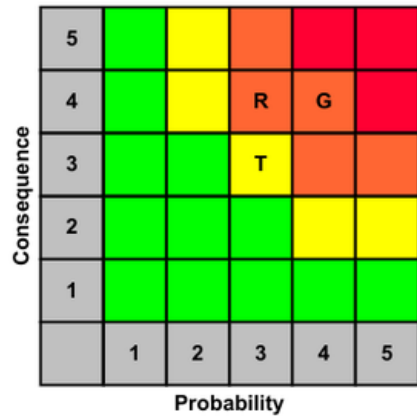
	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Alternative methods of recruitment	HR to look at alternative method of recruitment due to the difficulties in recruiting into key positions across Council. The difficulties are not limited to senior positions, all Directorates are struggling to fill vacant posts currently.	In Progress	Marina Hughes	3/31/2024	This includes the Regional Approach in relation to the Talent Management Strategy which is overseen by the LG Staff Commission. NMDDC represented on and contributing to LGSC Regional Talent Management Group. Recruitment exercises for Director posts have been completed in Q4 of 2023/24. A recruitment of a number of AD posts has been completed as part of PFTF. The three remaining posts will be advertised by Q4 of 2023/24. However it should be noted that there are still challenges across the Directorates on a number of posts at different levels.
Service Reviews	Service Reviews are currently being completed across Directorate in line with paper which was approved at SP&R	In Progress	Senior Management Team	3/31/2024	A draft action plan / timetable of service reviews has been provided to the Trade Unions as part of the agreement to the current dispute. Work is progressing. A full list of Service Reviews will be collated to ensure resources are appropriately directed to undertake the work required. Impact of pause on recruitment due to service reviews will be assessed by management with the support of HR.

NMDDC Corporate Risk Register Cover Sheet - January 2024

Risk	Description	Risk Owner(s)	Gross Risk Score	Sep-23	Jan-24		Comments
				Revised Residual Risk Score	Revised Residual Risk Score		
ER01	Failure to sustainably grow the tourism industry across the District	Andrew Patterson	16	12	12	↔	Risk score remains unchanged. Actions have been updated.
ER02	Failure to invest in towns and villages through urban and rural regeneration initiatives	Andrew Patterson Jonathan McGilly	16	12	12	↔	Risk score remains unchanged. Actions have been updated.
ER03	Failure to support the recovery of the arts and heritage sector across the District.	Andrew Patterson	15	9	9	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
ER04	Failure to effectively support the recovery and growth of the local economy	Andrew Patterson	16	12	12	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
ER05	Failure to secure, retain and maximise external funding opportunities to invest in the District	Andrew Patterson	25	12	12	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated
ER06	Failure to effectively implement MasterGov	Jonathan McGilly	16	12	12	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged. Title of the risk amended from 'Failure to implement the new Planning system (EPIC Replacement)' to 'Failure to implement MasterGov' - actions have been updated.
ER07	Failure to meet the statutory and corporate performance standards for processing planning applications, enforcement cases and complaints.	Jonathan McGilly	25	16	16	↔	Risk Score remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
ER08	Failure to develop and deliver the Local Development Plan within agreed timescales.	Jonathan McGilly	16	12	12	↑	Residual risk score remains unchanged. Actions have been updated.

Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Directorate

Risk 01. Failure to sustainably grow the tourism industry across the District



Risk Categories
 Business operational/reputational
 Financial
 Impact on individuals (staff or public)
 Quality of Service

Risk Description
 Failure to sustainably grow the tourism industry across the District

Potential Root Cause
 NMD has a high dependency on one day domestic visitors
 Lack of investment in tourism sites and opportunities
 Poor collaboration with tourism industry
 Impact of recession on tourism industry

Consequence
 Reputational damage for the District and Council
 Financial impact on the District and local tourism industry
 Negative impact on the local economy and jobs

Risk Owners
 Andy Patterson

Gross/Inherent Risk Amber 16

Residual Risk Amber 12

Target Risk Level Yellow 9

Last Review 12/18/2023

Next Review 3/31/2024

Risk Appetite Risk Open

Objectives

Work with industry partners and key stakeholders to develop and implement the Tourism Strategy 2023-28

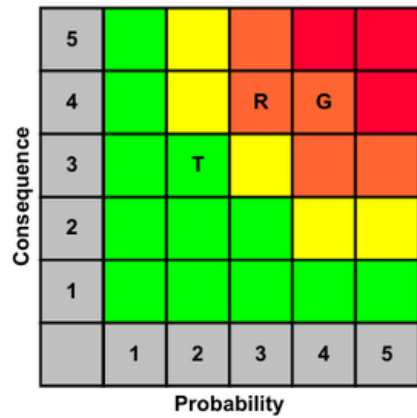
Key Controls Identified

- Belfast Region City Deal tourism projects
- Council Tourism Facilities
- Effective partnership working between TourismNI and NMDDC
- Flagship events programme
- Tourism Strategy 2023-28

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Mournes Gateway Project	Progress the Mournes Gateway Project as part of the Belfast Region City Deal investment programme.	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	The Belfast City Region Deal was signed in December 2021 and unlocks £1 billion of transformative co-investment. OBC for Mournes Gateway Project has been approved by Council, BRCD Board and relevant Government Departments. Work continuing on contract for funding and funding agreements. Procurement of Integrated Consultancy Team for the next stage of project development ongoing.
Tourism Strategy	Launch and commence delivery of the Tourism Strategy for 2023-28	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	Work is ongoing with the tourism industry partners and key stakeholders to finalise the new Tourism Strategy 2023-28. Industry support programmes are in place to support tourism businesses and to develop new visitor experiences.
UNESCO Global Geopark	Continue to deliver the UNESCO Geopark action plan.	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	Work ongoing with key partners to implement the Geopark Development Plan.
Visitor Experiences	Develop the tourism proposition for the district and new visitor experiences.	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	Work ongoing to develop new visitor experiences to showcase NMD food and activity tourism sectors.

Risk 02. Failure to invest in towns and villages through urban and rural regeneration initiatives



Risk Categories Buildings / Engineering / Environment
Business operational/reputational
Impact on individuals (staff or public)
Quality of Service

Risk Description Failure to invest in towns and villages through urban and rural regeneration initiatives

Potential Root Cause Lack of timely and appropriate planning
Lack of planning policy and adherence to existing policies
Poor identification /needs analysis
Failure to utilise existing assets
Insufficient funding and resources

Consequence Poor and inadequate service delivery by the Council
Reputational damage for the Council and District
Impact on the quality of life and environment for urban and rural communities
Low levels of investment in urban and rural areas

Risk Owners Jonathan McGilly; Andy Patterson

Gross/Inherent Risk Amber 16 **Last Review** 12/18/2023

Residual Risk Amber 12 **Next Review** 3/31/2024

Target Risk Level Green 6 **Risk Appetite** Risk Open

Objectives

- Deliver a programme of urban and rural regeneration initiatives/projects
- Work with partners to support the economic recovery of the District

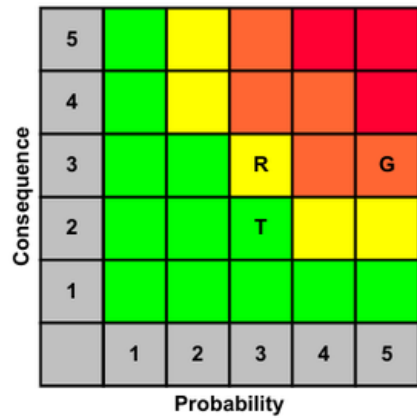
Key Controls Identified

- Baseline information on regeneration issues updated on an continuous basis
- Collaboration with the Planning Department
- Masterplans
- Partnership working with public and private sector partners
- Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2020-25
- Village Plans

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Forward Plan of regeneration initiatives	Progress the development and delivery of the following capital projects: Downpatrick Regeneration, Warrenpoint Baths, Warrenpoint Marina, Warrenpoint Public Realm, Castlewellan Park (in partnership with NHLF and DAERA) and Carlingford Lough Greenway.	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	3/31/2024	All 2023-24 regeneration initiatives are progressing as planned.
Masterplans and Village Plans	Review and update Masterplans, taking into account new and emerging priorities. Continue to implement Village Plans and develop new initiatives in rural areas.	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	3/31/2024	The review of Masterplans is underway and we are continuing to implement village plans and develop new initiatives through the small settlement scheme.
Rural Development Programme	Progress the Small Settlement Scheme.	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	3/31/2024	Exploring other options for additional Rural Development programmes and complete small settlement scheme.

Risk 03. Failure to support the recovery of the arts and heritage sector across the District



Risk Categories
Risk Description Failure to support the recovery of the arts and heritage sector across the District.
Potential Root Cause Failure to manage the Council's heritage assets, including buildings and collections
 Lack of training and resources
 Poor engagement and partnership working with key stakeholders
 Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and social restrictions
 Impact of recession and lack of investment in the arts, culture and heritage sector
Consequence Reputational damage to the Council and District.
 Financial impact on the District and potential loss of jobs.
 Low levels of customer satisfaction and potential impact on community wellbeing.
Risk Owners Andy Patterson
Gross/Inherent Risk Amber 15 **Last Review** 12/18/2023
Residual Risk Yellow 9 **Next Review** 3/31/2024
Target Risk Level Green 6 **Risk Appetite** Risk Open

Objectives

Lead the development and implementation of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy

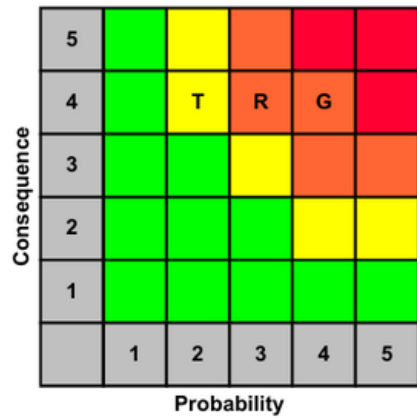
Key Controls Identified

- Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy
- New Theatre - Conference Facility
- Strategic Review of Museums Service

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy	Continue implementation of the Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022-27	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	Delivery against key priorities monitored via ERT Departmental Business Plans
Continue to develop our Arts Facilities and Programming	Continue work to deliver the new Arts - Conference facility in Newry, including delivery of Arts programming in 2024-25 during closure of NTH and SHAC and continue to develop the arts offering of Down Arts Centre	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	Work continuing on the new Theatre - Conference Centre for Newry within the NCCR Programme. Audience development plan to be progressed in 2023-24.
Strategic Review of Museums Service	Continue to implement the recommendations of the Strategic Review of Council's Museum Service.	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	Work continuing to implement strategic review recommendations, including development of updated Forward Plans for each museum.

Risk 04. Failure to effectively support the recovery and growth of the local economy



Risk Categories
 Business operational/reputational
 Financial
 Impact on individuals (staff or public)
 Quality of Service

Risk Description
 Failure to effectively support the recovery and growth of the local economy

Potential Root Cause
 Inadequate identification of the needs of local businesses and other key stakeholders
 Ineffective partnership arrangements with the private sector and local employers
 Failure to effectively engage with the education sector
 Poor collaboration with Government departments, specifically the Departments for Economy and Education
 Lack of resources and poor leadership
 Economic factors and government policy, particularly in relation to COVID-19 and Brexit

Consequence
 Financial impact on the Council and District
 Reputational impact on the Council and District
 Lack of investment in the District
 Local communities do not reach their full potential
 Socio-economic inequalities emerge and deepen across the District
 Inflation - cost of living

Risk Owners
 Andy Patterson

Gross/Inherent Risk
 Amber 16

Residual Risk
 Amber 12

Target Risk Level
 Yellow 8

Last Review
 12/18/2023

Next Review
 3/31/2024

Risk Appetite
 Risk Open

Objectives

- Deliver a programme of urban and rural regeneration initiatives/projects
- Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills
- Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities

Key Controls Identified

- City Deal Skills and Employability Programme
- Community Plan and Corporate Plan 2021-23
- Continue to identify and review skills gap
- Council led 'Employability and Skills Forum'
- Engagement via Economic Forum
- FFNI Digital Transformation Projects
- Labour Market Partnerships
- Partnership working with Chambers of Commerce and other key stakeholders
- Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2020-25

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
City Deals	Actively engage in Belfast Region City Deal	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	The Belfast Region City Deal was signed in December 2021 and unlocks £1 billion of transformative co-investment. OBCs for NMD projects have been approved by BRCD Board and relevant Government Departments. Contracts for funding and funding agreements have been progressed. Progress ongoing on project delivery, based on stage of development of each.
Full Fibre NI (FFNI)	FFNI - Digital Champions to coordinate and lead all Councils with regards to Mobile Action Plan.	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	FFNI appointed by Solace as lead for all Councils Digital Champions. FFNI operations lead and project officer currently appointed as Digital Champion and Coordinator in respect of the Mobile Action Plan. Barrier Busting team to be established to promote rollout of advanced technologies which underpins Councils Digital Transformation activities and projects under the City and Growth deals.
Full Fibre NI (FFNI)	Local Full Fibre Network to improve connectivity across all of Northern Ireland.	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	FFNI has successfully secured and delivered £23.1m of UK DCMS Government funded investment to improve digital infrastructure across Northern Ireland. The FFNI Operations team continues to monitor take-up of services and benefits realizations across all sites.
Support Local Businesses	The Council is continuing to provide support, advice and guidance to local businesses through agreed programmes and action plans.	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	Go For It closed in August 2023 and Council's interim business support programme closed on 30th September therefore there was a gap in provision of business support due to the delay in the launch of the Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service - NIESS (Go Succeed). This was a delay that was outside of NMDDC's control. The new service launched in November 2023. NIESS is a regional programme funded by UK Government UKSPF. Delivery against Labour Market Partnership Action Plan ongoing.

Risk 05. Failure to secure, retain and maximise external funding opportunities to invest in the District

Consequence	5					G			
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	1	2	3	4	5				
	Probability								

Risk Categories
 Business operational/reputational
 Financial
 Impact on individuals (staff or public)
 Quality of Service
 Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)

Risk Description
 Failure to secure, retain and maximise external funding opportunities to invest in the District

Potential Root Cause
 Failure to identify and promote investment opportunities
 Failure to develop professional networking opportunities
 Ineffective partnership working with Government Departments and private sector
 Lack of infrastructure and match funding
 Non-compliance with Letters of Offer
 Possible reduction in staff due to the loss of EU funding

Consequence
 Reduced funding in future years, specifically EU funding
 Reduced levels of service provision
 Loss of employment within the Council and broader District
 Negative impact on the overall investment in the local area and local communities
 Socio-economic inequalities emerge and deepen

Risk Owners
 Andy Patterson

Gross/Inherent Risk
 Red 25

Residual Risk
 Amber 12

Target Risk Level
 Green 6

Last Review
 12/18/2023

Next Review
 3/31/2024

Risk Appetite
 Risk Open

Objectives

- Deliver a programme of urban and rural regeneration initiatives/projects
- Work with partners to support the economic recovery of the District

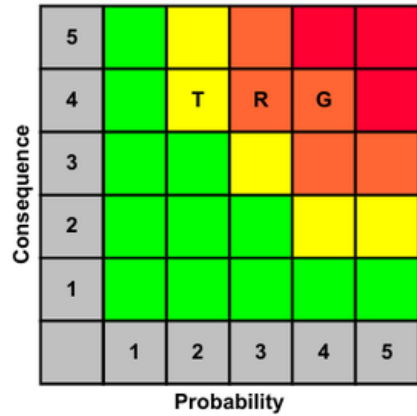
Key Controls Identified

- Cross border partnerships and European partnerships through EBR
- Funding information bodies / bulletins
- International Relations activity is ongoing
- Partnership working with Invest NI and Government Departments
- Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy in place
- University of Ulster School of Economics Service Level Agreement

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Emerging programmes	Research and develop proposals for future funded programmes, including the Shard Prosperity Fund, Peace Plus, Levelling Up Fund, Community Renewal Fund, Fisheries and Rural Development Funding, Shared Island Fund and Labour Market Partnerships	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	Officers continue to identify funding opportunities. The development of potential funding applications is underway.
Programme Delivery	Projects currently being scoped and delivered with funding secured under PEACE Plus, Levelling Up Fund, Community Renewal Fund, Fisheries and Rural Development Funding, Shared Island Fund and Labour Market Partnerships with monitoring and evaluation ongoing	In Progress	Andy Patterson	3/31/2024	Delivery against programme timelines ongoing.

Risk 06. Failure to effectively implement MasterGov



Risk Categories Business operational/reputational
Impact on individuals (staff or public)
Quality of Service

Risk Description Failure to effectively implement MasterGov

Potential Root Cause The new system is not fit for purpose for all Councils across NI.
Lack of capacity and employees not effectively participating in training on how to use the new system.
IT infrastructure within the Council does not support the new system.

Consequence Financial cost in procuring a new system.
Teething problems with the new system could have a negative impact on the Council's ability to achieve the statutory standards for processing planning applications and enforcement cases.
Low levels of customer satisfaction and reputational damage.

Risk Owners Jonathan McGilly

Gross/Inherent Risk Amber 16

Residual Risk Amber 12

Target Risk Level Yellow 8

Last Review 12/18/2023

Next Review 3/31/2024

Risk Appetite Risk Minimal

Objectives

Provide a robust, efficient and responsive development management service within the Council Planning Department

Key Controls Identified

Departmental Working Group
NMD representation on Working Groups
Partnership working Councils and the Department for Infrastructure

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Replacement System	Upgrade the existing IT planning infrastructure across NI.	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	3/31/2024	The system has now been operating for a year. Work still remains ongoing to adapt the system to meet operational needs. Officer training session occurred in November 2023 to refresh and identify any ongoing issues. The enforcement module is now the key focus for refinement.

Risk 07. Failure to meet the statutory and corporate performance standards for processing planning applications, enforcement cases and complaints.

Consequence	5					G
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	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Probability				

Risk Categories Business operational/reputational
Quality of Service
Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)

Risk Description Failure to meet the statutory and corporate performance standards for processing planning applications, enforcement cases and complaints.

Potential Root Cause Complaints not being logged, monitored and responded to within the corporate timescales.
Challenges of fully resourcing the Planning Department.
Backlog of planning applications linked to the high volume of applications received by the Council.

Consequence Complaints not being dealt with within the agreed corporate timescales.
Failure to achieve the statutory standards for processing planning applications and enforcement cases.
Low levels of customer satisfaction and reputational damage.
Poor staff morale and low levels of productivity.

Risk Owners Jonathan McGilly

Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25

Residual Risk Amber 16

Target Risk Level Yellow 8

Last Review 12/18/2023

Next Review 3/31/2024

Risk Appetite Risk Minimal

Objectives

Provide a robust, efficient and responsive development management service within the Council Planning Department

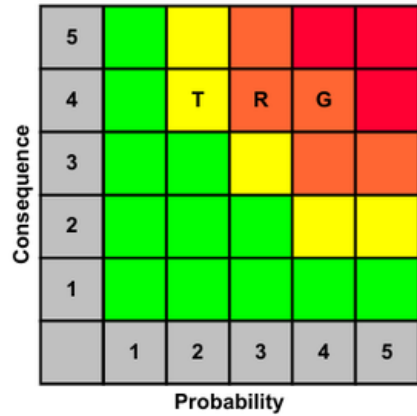
Key Controls Identified

- Benchmarking performance across NI
- Corporate Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures
- Internal correspondence tracking system
- Regular performance reports considered by the Planning and ERT Committees
- Statutory standards set for Councils in NI

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Internal Audit of Complaints Handling	Review why the Planning Department is not meeting the corporate processing timescales for handling complaints, to be reported to and monitored by SMT.	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	3/31/2024	Complaint handling has been reviewed and targets are being met.
Processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases	Achieve the statutory targets for major and local planning applications and enforcement cases.	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	3/31/2024	Due to resourcing challenges statutory targets are not being achieved. An action plan is in place to review and monitor on a monthly basis through SMT.
Review complaints and correspondence	A senior planner will review complaints and correspondence on a weekly basis to ensure they are being responded to in accordance with the timescales within the corporate Complaints Policy.	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	3/31/2024	Ongoing monitoring and weekly review of complaints made through BSM.

Risk 08. Failure to develop and deliver the Local Development Plan within agreed timescales



Risk Categories Business operational/reputational
Quality of Service
Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)

Risk Description Failure to develop and deliver the Local Development Plan within agreed timescales.

Potential Root Cause Challenges of fully resourcing the Planning Department.
Slippage in the timetable for developing the plan.
Inadequate software system to manage representations.

Consequence Local Development Plan not produced in a timely way, leading to reputational damage.
Impact on the future development of and investment in the District.
Political reaction.

Risk Owners Jonathan McGilly

Gross/Inherent Risk Amber 16

Residual Risk Amber 12

Target Risk Level Yellow 8

Last Review 12/18/2023

Next Review 3/31/2024

Risk Appetite Risk Averse

Objectives

Progress the preparation and delivery of the Local Development Plan (LDP) in accordance with the agreed timeframe to dir

Key Controls Identified

- Holding regular progress review meetings
- LDP progress against the revised timetable reported to Committee on a quarterly basis
- Local Development Plan Steering Group
- Local Development Plan Team
- Ongoing collaboration with specialist experts and DfI
- Progress reported to the Planning Committee on a monthly basis
- Stage 1 Preferred Options Paper

Action Plans










	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Local Development Plan	Develop and deliver the Local Development Plan within the timescales agreed with the Department for Infrastructure.	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	3/31/2024	The Council continues to progress the preparation of the draft Plan Strategy for Council approval and publication, in line with the published timeframe.

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	1 February 2024
Subject:	Prompt Payment Statistics – Quarter 2 & Quarter 3
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne: Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne: Assistant Director of Finance & Performance

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

For decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background															
1.1	<p>'Prompt payment' is the payment of valid supplier invoices by public bodies, as set in government targets.</p> <p>This dataset contains the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total amount paid by each Northern Ireland council to suppliers • Total number of invoices • Number of invoices paid within 10 working days • Number of invoices paid within 30 calendar days • Number of invoices paid outside 30 calendar days <p>Adherence to the policy is not mandatory for councils, but in a letter issued to council Chief Executives in October 2013, the Department of Environment’s Local Government Policy Division said that: ‘District councils are encouraged to pay suppliers as promptly as possible and to endeavour to meet the 10 day prompt payment commitment made by Northern Ireland Executive in response to the current economic position’.</p>															
2.0	Key issues															
2.1	<p>The table below provides a comparison of prompt payment statistics for the last four financial years.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Financial Year</th> <th>Within 30 days (T&C’s)</th> <th>Within 10 days</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>90%</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020/21</td> <td>86%</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>89%</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>86%</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Financial Year	Within 30 days (T&C’s)	Within 10 days	2019/20	90%	18%	2020/21	86%	11%	2021/22	89%	17%	2022/23	86%	43%
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2022/23	86%	43%														

2.3	<p>Quarter 1 2023/24 - 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Paid within 10 days</th> <th>Paid within 30 days</th> <th>Paid outside payment period</th> <th>Total invoices</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Number of Invoices</td> <td>1,773</td> <td>4,610</td> <td>304</td> <td>4,914</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Percentage</td> <td>36%</td> <td>94%</td> <td>6%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Value</td> <td>£7,162,826</td> <td>£18,517,783</td> <td>£1,363,695</td> <td>£19,881,478</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Average number of days to pay suppliers: 15</td> <td colspan="2">Performance trend: </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Paid within 10 days	Paid within 30 days	Paid outside payment period	Total invoices	Number of Invoices	1,773	4,610	304	4,914	Percentage	36%	94%	6%	100%	Value	£7,162,826	£18,517,783	£1,363,695	£19,881,478	Average number of days to pay suppliers: 15			Performance trend: 	
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31	<p>To note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Q2 and Q3 2023-24 Prompt Payment statistics. 																									
4.0	Resource implications																									
4.1	The Accounts Payable Team provide statistics to the Department for Communities on a quarterly basis.																									
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)																									
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i>																									

	It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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></p> <p>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	
	None	
8.0	Background Documents	
	None	

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	01 February 2024
Subject:	Mid Year Assessment - Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24
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:-

<table border="1"> <tr> <td>For decision</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>For noting only</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		For decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
For decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
1.0	Purpose and Background				
1.1	<p>Through the Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24 and Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, the Council makes a commitment to monitor, review and report performance on a regular basis.</p> <p>This report provides an overview of the Council's progress in implementing the performance improvement objectives between April-September 2023. Where possible, performance has been tracked against the targets set within the Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24.</p>				
2.0	Key issues				
2.1	<p>A significant number of 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success' within the Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24 are on track to be achieved. However, progress against the following has been limited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a decrease in the number of business plans approved and businesses and jobs created under the NI 'Go For It' scheme however this can be attributed to the closure of this schemes and the delay in the commencement of the ESS fund. • There was a decrease in the number of fixed penalty notices issued and paid. • The statutory standards for processing local and major planning applications were not achieved, and performance has decreased. 				
2.2	<p>It should be noted that the information contained within this report may be subject to change when the results are verified, validated and reported through the annual Assessment of Performance which will be published by 30 September 2024.</p>				
3.0	Recommendations				
3.1	<p>To note the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Year Assessment of the Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24 				
4.0	Resource implications				
4.1	<p>There are no financial resource implications within this report.</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 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>
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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 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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 1 – Mid Year Assessment - Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24
8.0	Background Documents
	Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24

Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24

Mid Year Assessment



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

**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

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Introduction

This report provides an overview of the Council's progress in implementing the performance improvement objectives between April-September 2023. Where possible, performance has been tracked against the targets set within the Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24.

Performance Improvement Objectives 2023-24

- 1. We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our local facilities and services**
- 2. We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs**
- 3. We will improve the cleanliness of our District by addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents**
- 4. We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change**
- 5. We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme**

Legend

Status		Legend	
	Target or objective achieved / on track to be achieved		Performance has improved since Q1/Q2 2022-23
	Target or objective partially achieved / likely to be achieved / subject to delay		Performance is similar to Q1/Q2 2022-23
	Target or objective not achieved / unlikely to be achieved		Performance has declined since Q1/Q2 2022-23

It should be noted that:

- For the statutory performance indicators for economic development, planning and waste management, performance has been compared to the same period in 2022-23.
- The information contained within this report may be subject to change when the results are verified, validated and reported through the annual Assessment of Performance which will be published by 30 September 2023.

Progress at a glance

Performance Improvement Objective	Progress	Status Trend
We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our local facilities and services	385,878 paid attendances recorded across the six Council Leisure Centres	
	120,264 visits recorded at 10 community trails	
	9,904 leisure centre memberships recorded	
	10,452 people participating in targeted health programmes	
	14,099 recorded attendances of young people participating in targeted youth health and wellbeing initiatives	
We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs	77 new jobs promoted through business start activity	
	8 new social enterprises supported, and 8 new social enterprise jobs created	
	129 businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions	
	69 new businesses and employer enterprises supported to start-up.	
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	27 fixed penalty notices issued and 22 paid	
	Assistance provided towards 14 community clean ups	
	£13k awarded towards 9 environmental projects through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' scheme	
	Increase in the rate of recycling	
	Decrease in the amount of waste sent to landfill	
We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change	80 trees planted on the Council managed estate	-
	Carbon footprint of Council estate to be progressed in 2024-25	
	5 drinking water fountains installed across the District	
	0 EV charging points installed across the District	
	61% of Council fleet younger than 8 years	
We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	The average processing time for local planning applications increased to 28.6 weeks	
	The average processing time for major planning applications increased to 513 weeks	
	Data on the conclusion times of enforcement cases has not yet been made available by the Department	-
	Increase in the number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	
	Increase in the number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more	

Performance Improvement Objective 1



We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our local facilities and services





Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Active and Healthy Communities

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2023-24, the Council:

- The completion of the Kilkeel Leisure Centre Review should be finalised by March 2024.
- Procurement for the implementation of 'Mystery Visitor' Programme will commence in Q3 with appointment to take place in Q4.
- Kilkeel Bowling Pavilion Project has now been completed.
- Council's Play Strategy Programme is complete, and the Play Strategy Review has commenced.
- The development of the Sports Development and Health & Wellbeing Strategy commenced in Q1.
- Sports capital financial assistance call was opened and completed in Q1/Q2.
- Multi Sports Hub expressions of interest has been progressed from Q1.

Measure of Success	2023-24		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1/Q2 Actual		
Number of paid attendances at:	750,000	385,878		In the first six months of 2023/24 there were a total of 385,878 paid attendances recorded across the six leisure centres in the District. The highest number was recorded in Newry Leisure Centre accounting for 46% of the total paid attendances recorded.
Newry Leisure Centre		178,672		
Down Leisure Centre		129,007		
Kilkeel Leisure Centre		31,674		
St. Colmans Sports Complex		19,964		
Newcastle Centre & Tropicana Outdoor Swimming Complex		16,018		
Ballymote Sports & Wellbeing Centre		10,543		
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes	9,400	10,452		During Q1 & Q2 of 2023-24 participation in targeted health programmes reached 10,452 which already exceeds the annual target of 9,400 by 11%.

Number young people participating in targeted youth health and wellbeing initiatives	20,000	14,099		Between April & September 2023, over 14,000 attendances were recorded of young people participating in youth health and wellbeing initiatives across the District, achieving 70.5% of the annual target. These initiatives included summer sports camps, teen fitness, volleyball and £1 summer activities.
Number of leisure centre memberships	9,750	9,904		A total of 9,904 leisure centre memberships were recorded by the end of Q2 2023-24 which already exceeds the annual target of 9,750 by 1.6%. The memberships are broken down by leisure centre as follows: Down Leisure Centre - 4397 Newry Leisure Centre – 3958 Kilkeel Leisure Centre – 805 Newcastle Centre - 466 Ballymote - 174 St Colmans Sports Complex - 104
Number of capital leisure projects progressed	No target	3		Kilkeel Bowling Pavilion complete. Multi-Sports Hub EOI progressed. Play Park signage complete.
Number of recorded visits at community trails	225,000	120,264	 	120,264 visits were recorded at 10 community trails across the District between April and September of this year, achieving over 50% of the annual target set.

Performance Improvement Objective 2












We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs

Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2023-24, the Council:

- Approved the 2023-24 Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Action Plan with one LMP meeting conducted.
- Hosted an Employment Pathway Job Fair event on 25th May with 50 employers; 10 support organisations; and 418 attendees to showcase opportunities in key sectors and career vacancies, along with enhanced career guidance.
- Commenced Drivers Academy with 22 participants registered.
- Approved the 2023-24 Schools to Industry Action Plan with 3 sub-group meetings conducted.
- Supported 128 entrepreneurs with an approved Business Plan, creating 69 new businesses and promoting 77 new jobs.
- Supported 129 local businesses to progress growth and scaling ambition.

Measure of success	2023-24		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1/Q2 Actual		
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	12	8	 	8 new social enterprise start-ups engaged, achieving 67% of the annual target.
Number of social enterprise jobs created	12	8	 	8 new social enterprise jobs created, achieving 67% of the annual target.
Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	300	128	 	128 Business Plans approved, achieving 43% of the annual target. Go For It ceased implementation on 30 September 2023. Potential clients for Go For It will be referred to ESS once commenced.
Number of new businesses and employer enterprises supported to start-up.	187	69	 	69 new businesses created, achieving 37% of the annual target. Go For It ceased implementation on 30 September 2023. Potential clients for Go For It will be referred to ESS once commenced.
Number of new jobs promoted through business start up activity NI 'Go For It' <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	>155	77	 	77 new jobs promoted, achieving 50% of the statutory annual target. When compared to Q1/Q2 2022-23, this is below the 92 jobs which were promoted through the NI 'Go For It' programme. Go For It ceased implementation on 30 September 2023. Potential clients for Go For It will be referred to ESS once commenced.
Number of existing businesses	200	144		144 existing businesses supported, achieving 72% of the annual target. ERDF

supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions				funding programmes ceased between March and June 2023. Council implemented an interim programme to support businesses with the potential for growth.
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Performance Improvement Objective 3

We will improve the cleanliness of our District by addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents






Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Sustainability and Environment

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2023-24, the Council:

- Received 373 service requests for incidents of illicit dumping and fly tipping (261) and dog fouling (112).
- Issued 27 fixed penalty notices (22 of which have been paid). Overall, 81.5% of fixed penalty notices have been paid to date.
- Assisted 14 voluntary organisations, community groups, sports associations, schools and individuals with community clean ups across the District.
- Supported the NI 'Live Here Love Here' scheme, through which £13,000 was awarded towards 9 environmental projects covering themes such as community clean ups, community food growing initiatives and skill sharing in horticulture and community growing.
- Recorded an increase in the rate of recycling and a decrease in the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill. All current statutory standards have been achieved.

Measure of success	2023-24		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1/Q2 Actual		
LEAMS score (Keep NI Beautiful Cleanliness Index)	65	-	-	The annual Cleaner Neighbourhoods Survey results for the 2023-24 financial year will be published by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful in July 2024 and the LEAMS score for Newry, Mourne and Down will be reported through the annual Assessment of Performance 2023-24.
Number of fixed penalty notices issued (littering, fly tipping and dog fouling)	120	27		The Council issued 27 fixed penalty notices, achieving 22.5% of the annual target. To date, 22 of the fixed penalty notices have been paid which represents 22.9% of the annual target. FPN's not paid will be referred for legal action with a higher penalty likely to apply. It should be noted that the post responsible for the management of the enforcement team continues to be vacant.
Number of fixed penalty notices paid (littering, fly tipping and dog fouling)	96	22		
Number of community clean ups supported	100	14		The Council assisted with 14 community clean ups between April and September 2023.

Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	No target	9		A total of 9 environmental projects across Newry, Mourne and Down received funding through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' small grants scheme.
The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	50% by 2020	Q1 Actual		In 2022-23 the Council did not achieve the 2020 recycling target of 50%, falling slightly below this at 49.6%. For Q1 2023-24 however, the 2020 target has been exceeded with the rate of recycling recorded as 52.4%. This falls below the regional average of 53.8% and the Council is currently ranked 9/11 across Northern Ireland. When compared to Q1 2022-23, this represents an increase of 0.6% in the rate of recycling, from 51.8% to 52.4%. There was no increase in the rate of recycling at the regional level when comparing these quarters.
		52.4%	 	
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	<20,954 tonnes (2019-20)	504	 	During Q1 2023-24, the Council sent 504 tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste to landfill which was the second lowest across Northern Ireland and has only used 2.4% of the NILAS* allowance. When compared to Q1 2022-23, the amount of waste that was sent to landfill decreased by 10.6%, from 564 tonnes.
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	No target	22,473		When compared to Q1 2022-23, the amount of local authority collected municipal waste arisings increased by 0.5%, from 22,351 tonnes to 22,473 tonnes. This increase is lower than the increase experienced at the regional level.

*NILAS: Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme.

Performance Improvement Objective 4




We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change


Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Sustainability & Environment

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2023-24, the Council:

- Progressed the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy which will be brought to Committee for approval in Q4 2023-24.
- Continued the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan which will be brought to Committee for approval in Q4 2023-24.
- Progressed the development of the Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2023-28), with a public consultation planned for Q3 2023-24.
- Installed 5 Drinking Water Fountains at the following locations:
 - Annalong Harbour
 - Ardglass Harbour
 - Delamont Country Park
 - Kilkeel Harbour
 - Newcastle Promenade
- Planted 80 trees across the District.

Measure of Success	2023-24		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1/Q2 Actual		
Carbon footprint of Council Estate	No Target			It was agreed by Council to procure a consultant in 2024 to assist in setting a carbon baseline and future targets. DAERA are currently consulting on future carbon budgets and so when the outcome of this is known in 2024, and more detail provided on the proposed methodology, then Council can align its approach with Central Government.
Percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years	50%	61%		61% of the Council's fleet is younger than 8 years which already exceeds the annual target set by 11%
Number of vehicles within the Council fleet that have an alternative fuel source	10	1		Approval has been granted for the replacement of a proportion of existing small and medium sized diesel vans with electric vehicles. Work is ongoing in relation to the procurement of these vehicles and the required EV infrastructure.
Number of trees planted on Council managed estate	No target set	80		80 trees have been planted across 4 sites in the District and are a mix of native and non-native species including Oak, Beech, Hawthorn and Lime.

<p>Number of Council supported EV charging points</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>0</p>		<p>Council anticipate that EV chargers will be installed through the FASTER project in Q3 23/24 (approx. 8 charging bays). Others are to be installed through the collaborative ORCs (On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme) project, which is currently being procured, with delivery expected by the end of Q4 2023-24.</p>
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Performance Improvement Objective 5



We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme




Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism

Progress:

During Q1 2023-24, the Council:

- Received 357 planning applications in total which is the highest across Northern Ireland.
- The Council decided on 251 applications in Q1 2023-24, which is the fourth highest across Northern Ireland. 241 local planning applications were approved, resulting in an approval rate of 96.0%, which is just below the Northern Ireland average of 96.3%.
- Processed 16.5% of local planning applications within the statutory standard of <15 weeks, which is below the regional average of 39.8%. This represents a decrease of 21.4% when compared to the 37.8% of applications processed within <15 weeks during Q1 2022-23.
- Received 1 major planning application, decided on 1 application and approved 1 application. Similar to Q1 2022-23, no major planning applications were processed within the statutory standard of <30 weeks which is below the current regional average of 34.1%.
- Opened 73 enforcement cases which is the sixth highest across NI however data on the number of concluded cases is under development and therefore not yet available. As at 30 June 2023, the Council had 741 planning enforcement cases in the system, which is by far, the highest across Northern Ireland.

Measure of Success	2023-24		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1 Actual		
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks) <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	<15 weeks	28.6 weeks		During Q1 2023-24, the average processing time for local planning applications was 28.6 weeks which is above the regional average of 18.9 weeks. When compared to Q1 2022-23, this represents an increase of 11 weeks for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks) <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	<30 weeks	513.0 weeks		During Q1 2023-24, the average processing time for major planning applications was 513.0 weeks which is significantly above the regional average of 59.6 weeks. When compared to Q1 2022-23, this represents an increase of 209.2 weeks for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	70%	-	-	Enforcement data for 'Enforcement cases concluded by planning authority' and 'Enforcement cases conclusion times by planning authority' is currently under development. The Department has advised that users will be notified when data is

				published.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	150	239		As at 30 June 2023, Newry, Mourne and Down had 239 planning applications in the system for 12 months or more. This represents an increase of 11 applications when compared to March 2023 and 18 applications when compared to 30 June 2022. A reduction of 89 applications is required to achieve the annual target.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less	700	1,025		As at 30 June 2023, Newry, Mourne and Down had 1,025 planning applications in the system for 12 months or less. This represents an increase of 91 applications when compared to 31 March 2023 and an increase of 255 applications when compared to 30 June 2022. A reduction of 325 applications is required to achieve the annual target.
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more	450	544		As at 30 June 2023, Newry, Mourne and Down had 544 enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more. This represents an increase of 41 cases when compared to 31 March 2023 and an increase of 94 cases when compared to 30 June 2022. A reduction of 94 cases is required to achieve the annual target.



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Our ref: CO1/23/773333
Date: 20 December 2023

To all Council Chief Executives

Circular LG 25/23

CAPITALISATION

This guidance supersedes the Department's previous guidance in respect of capitalisation directions (Circular LG 18/2011 and its subsequent reissue as part of Circular LG 02/2012) and provides further clarification on, and incorporates some agreed changes to, the procedures for requesting and considering capitalisation directions including the role of the Finance Working Group (FWG).

The Department of Finance has agreed to the widening of the criteria for capitalisation to include statutory redundancy costs and enhanced costs, the lump sum element of the pension payment arising from compensatory added years, or any payments the council makes into its pension fund in order to eliminate deficits resulting from premature retirements.

Any queries on this circular and accompanying guidance note should be directed to Local Government Finance Branch as follows - LGFinanceBranch@communities-ni.gov.uk.

JEFF GLASS



CAPITALISATION DIRECTION

A Guidance Note for district councils in Northern Ireland

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Capitalisation facilitates a relaxation of the normal accounting principle that long-term borrowing or capital receipts should only be used to finance capital expenditure.
- 1.2 Section 19(3) of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 empowers the Department to issue capitalisation directions to councils, which in turn permit expenditure that would normally be classified as revenue expenditure to be treated as capital expenditure. Applications for capitalisation directions will be considered against strict criteria and the Department will monitor closely and control the use of capitalisation directions.

“CAPITAL EXPENDITURE”

Section 19 of the 2011 Act states –

- 19(1) *Subject to subsection (2) and (3), references in this Part to capital expenditure, in relation to a council, are to expenditure of the council which falls to be capitalised in accordance with proper practices.*
- 19(2) *Regulations may provide that expenditure of councils shall be treated for the purposes of this Part as being, or as not being, capital expenditure.*



19(3) *The Department may by direction provide that expenditure of a particular council shall be treated for the purposes of this Part as being, or as not being, capital expenditure.*

- 1.3 This guidance note sets out the Department's procedures for considering and issuing capitalisation directions. **It should be noted that the application process for a capitalisation direction is a separate process from a loan application process.**

BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Capitalisation runs counter to the normal principles of prudent financial management in district councils, since it facilitates practice which breaches HM Treasury's rule that long-term borrowing should be used only to finance capital expenditure. The introduction of the Prudential Code removed the routine need for councils to seek Departmental approval for borrowing. Instead councils must adhere to the principles and rules defined within the Prudential Code. A successful application to capitalise expenditure which would ordinarily be treated as revenue expenditure therefore removes the only formal obstacle to borrowing for revenue purposes. Capitalisation of expenditure that would ordinarily be treated as revenue expenditure can never permanently solve financial difficulties arising from the need to fund such expenditure through the General Fund in the financial year in which the expenditure is incurred. However, capitalisation of such expenditure and the associated funding thereof over a period in excess of one year will reduce the financial pressure by simply extending the period over which the expenditure may be funded. For example, debt incurred to fund capitalised revenue costs may have to be serviced from revenue resources over a number of years. Using capital resources to fund revenue expenditure tends to reduce long-term investment in the capital assets needed to create and maintain sustainable communities. All of these issues should be strongly considered by a council before it makes an application for a capitalisation direction.



- 2.2 Even if a council intends to fund capitalised expenditure out of capital receipts instead of by new borrowing, there may still be an indirect breach of HM Treasury's rule since capital receipts arise from the sale of assets which may have been bought with borrowed money. Expending capital receipts on (capitalised) revenue expenditure may mean a council will sooner or later wish to increase its borrowing to finance capital expenditure which might otherwise have been paid for with such receipts.
- 2.3 It is important that councils are aware of the latest Government Resource and Budgeting Guidance (RAB) which underlines the fiscal importance of maintaining capitalisation at manageable levels within the context of the UK public expenditure framework. The capitalisation limit set by HM Treasury for councils in Northern Ireland is £3.4m per annum.

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 Capitalisation directions will normally only be available for either of the purposes shown below:

(a) **To help a council manage exceptional financial difficulties**

The following three conditions must be met:

- (i) The costs which the council seeks to capitalise are unavoidable (for example, because they relate to statutory duties or contractual or other commitments);
- (ii) The council could not meet the costs out of revenue resources without there being an unacceptable adverse impact on those who use or pay for its services; and



(iii) There is no alternative affordable way of ensuring that the costs could be met.

(b) **To facilitate the use of cost-cutting measures**

The capitalised expenditure must relate to measures with an immediate and demonstrable cost-cutting effect.

- 3.2 In relation to paragraph 3.1(b) this includes statutory redundancy costs and enhanced costs, the lump sum element of the pension payment arising from compensatory added years, or any payments the council makes into its pension fund in order to eliminate deficits resulting from premature retirements.
- 3.3 Statutory redundancy costs are those costs required and calculated in accordance with Part 12 of the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (see in particular Article 197).
- 3.4 A capitalisation direction will only apply to one financial year therefore it is important to note that if costs span two financial years then two separate applications will be required. A council will only be able to capitalise costs that have been incurred in the year that the direction applies.
- 3.5 For the avoidance of doubt, **it will not be acceptable to include estimates** for applications to the Department for capitalisation directions. Councils are required to provide detailed supporting information/calculations along with their application to substantiate the figures. When councils advise the Department how much of their allocation was used in the previous financial year (see paragraph 5.2 below), and this is a different amount to that included in the initial application, councils will receive a new capitalisation direction and will not be able to capitalise amounts more than that approved in the new capitalisation direction.

4. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- 4.1 Applications for capitalisation directions should be made by **30 June** of the financial year in which the expenditure is to be incurred. In exceptional circumstances the Department may allow applications received shortly after 30 June to be processed normally. The Department will acknowledge all applications within 10 working days of receipt.
- 4.2 The Department will provide, insofar as is practicable, if requested, an indication of whether the application appears to meet the specified criteria. However no formal capitalisation direction will be given prior to the consideration of all applications which will take place in consultation with the Finance Working Group (FWG) after 30 June of the financial year in which the expenditure is to be incurred. Where an indication is requested, the applicant council is required to advise the Department that they wish to proceed with their application (as submitted) or resubmit a new application by the specified date (30 June) if the application is to be considered for a formal capitalisation direction. **Estimates are acceptable for the purposes of receiving an indication from the Department, however it will not be acceptable to include estimates for an application that is to be considered for a formal capitalisation direction.** The Department will acknowledge both applications received for the purposes of receiving an indication, and any new application resubmitted, within 10 working days of receipt. For applications received without the request for an indication, the application will be considered for a formal capitalisation direction and no further advice or resubmission will need to be given to the Department.



- 4.3 Normally applications received after 30 June of the financial year in which the expenditure is to be incurred will be considered separately from those made by the due date. Such applications will be considered in light of any margin between the aggregate value of that year's approved applications and the annual capitalisation limit, and any surplus that may ultimately be available as a result of councils not calling down the full value of their approved applications. This will be undertaken in consultation with members of the FWG.
- 4.4 An outline of the minimum information required in relation to an application for a capitalisation direction is attached at Annex A. All applications for a capitalisation direction must include:
- Details of the amount of expenditure the council is requesting to be capitalised;
 - Details of when the expenditure will be incurred; and
 - Sufficient information to demonstrate that the relevant tests have been met, including robust figures to satisfy the affordability test.
- 4.5 The Department will aim each year to issue formal capitalisation directions by **16 September** of the financial year in which the application was received by the Department.
- 4.6 To ensure the capitalisation limit of £3.4m is allocated fairly, the Department will consult members of the FWG prior to issuing formal capitalisation directions each year. While the Department will assess applications against the criteria, the formal agreement of all members of FWG (regardless of whether they are in attendance at the meeting(s) of the FWG at which the Department consults with the members) will be required in respect of the decision to issue individual capitalisation directions. In circumstances where unanimity cannot be obtained within a reasonable time period which will facilitate the issuing of the formal



capitalisation directions by the 16 September, the Department may accept a majority agreement.

- 4.7 A council which makes a request for a capitalisation direction which does not satisfy the criteria indicated in this note should give the fullest reasons why it considers that a capitalisation direction is necessary and appropriate. The Department shall consider such explanation(s) but is not bound to accept it as being sufficient to support the issue of a capitalisation direction.

5. RETURNS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING REGULATION DIVISION

- 5.1 The capitalisation direction letter will ask councils to notify the Department by **1 December** that they intend to use the direction in its entirety or that they have not used the full amount of their direction. Where a council has notified the Department that they have not used the full amount of their approved capitalisation direction the Department will issue a revised direction for the appropriate amount. The sum total of any unused allocations may then be made available for any late or unmet capitalisation direction applications.
- 5.2 Councils are also required to advise the Department of how much of their allocation was used in the previous financial year. This information will be requested in tandem with the accounts direction and should be provided no later than **30 June** of the following financial year in which the expenditure is to be incurred. These returns are required by this date to enable the Department and members of the FWG to monitor the operation of the system, and to facilitate the Department's timely update of the final position to DoF. There is no template form for returns, an email or hard copy return will suffice.
- 5.3 Where the Department is advised that all / part of a capitalisation direction will not be used, either a new capitalisation direction will be issued which will supersede the previous capitalisation direction, or the previous capitalisation direction will be withdrawn.



Capitalisation Timetable	Dates
Application for Capitalisation Directions	By 30 June
Departmental Acknowledgment	Within 10 working days
Formal Capitalisation Directions issued	By 16 September
Council notification to the Department of intention to use the Direction	By 1 December
Council notification to the Department of the actual allocation used in previous financial year	By 30 June of financial year after the year expenditure was incurred

6. CONTACTS

6.1 Queries and applications should be directed to Local Government Finance Branch as follows - LGFinanceBranch@communities-ni.gov.uk

:



7. **Please indicate if the amount requested to be capitalised is the final figure or an estimate (if estimation state when final figure will be available):**

8. **Description of application: 8(a) & (b) or 8 (c) should be completed**

The general principles of a capitalisation direction are outlined in paragraph 3 of the guidance. With reference to paragraph 3.1 where the application is made to:

- help a council manage exceptional financial difficulties please complete 8(a) and 8(b), or
- facilitate the use of cost-cutting measures please complete 8(c).

8(a). Explain why the capitalisation direction is required to enable the District Council to manage exceptional financial difficulties.



8(c). Explain why the capitalisation direction is required to facilitate cost-cutting measures.

9. **Indicate the likelihood of further applications for capitalisation for this purpose in future years, in particular if any applications are pending:**

10. **Please confirm that the costs cannot be funded from revenue resources without there being an unacceptable adverse impact on those who use or pay for services:**

11. **Please indicate whether a successful bid for capitalisation would be funded by capital receipts or by borrowing?**

12. **Please include any further information which you consider relevant to your application.**



DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is correct.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Chief Executive/or Deputy

Completed applications or any queries about this document should be addressed to:

LGFinanceBranch@communities-ni.gov.uk



Department for

Communities

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Department fur

Commonitieswww.communities-ni.gov.uk

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Chief Executive of each District Council
Finance Officer of each District Council
Other Interested Parties

Local Government and Housing
Regulation Division
Finance Branch
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
BELFAST
BT2 7EG
Phone: 028 9082 3375
email:
Anthony.carleton@communities-ni.gov.uk

Our ref: CO1-23-1118

28 November 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

**CIRCULAR LG 23/2023 - CONSOLIDATED COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES CIRCULAR
(Updated November 2023)**

This Local Government Circular provides a consolidated record of all councillor allowances and supersedes Local Government Circular LG 3/2023.

This consolidated circular is required to determine and reflect an increase in maximum rates for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance from 1 April 2023 and an increase in Dependants' Carers' Allowance from 1 April 2024.

All determinations are made by the Department under section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019.

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We invest in people Standard



If you have any queries on the content of this circular please contact Jeff Glass on 028 9082 3375 or Ian Lewis on 028 9082 3506 or by email jeff.glass@communities-ni.gov.uk or ian.lewis@communities-ni.gov.uk .

Yours faithfully,

ANTHONY CARLETON
Director
Local Government and Housing Regulation

1. Basic Allowance

- valid from 1 April 2023

Basic Allowance
Maximum £17,030 per annum ≠

≠ (The basic allowance includes an element for incidental and consumable costs incurred by councillors in their official capacity. In 2015/16 this element was £1,000 and each year this amount is uplifted in line with the increase applied to the basic allowance, therefore this element within the basic allowance is £1,199 from 1 April 2023.)

2. Dependants' Carers' Allowance

- valid from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

The following table states the maximum rates for dependants' carers' allowance.

Dependants' Carers' Allowance	Hourly Rate	Maximum Monthly Amount
	£	£
Standard	10.42 [^]	542
Specialist	20.84	1,084

[^](Based on national living wage)

- valid from 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

The following table states the maximum rates for dependants' carers' allowance.

Dependants' Carers' Allowance	Hourly Rate	Maximum Monthly Amount
	£	£
Standard	11.44 [^]	595
Specialist	22.88	1,190

[^](Based on national living wage)

3. Travel Allowances

– valid from 1 April 2017

The following table states the maximum rates for travel allowances.

Type of Vehicle	Rate per Mile Pence	Rate per Mile Above 8,500 miles Pence	Rate per Mile Above 10,000 miles Pence
A pedal cycle	20.0p	20.0p	20.0p
A motor cycle (all engine capacities)	24.0p	24.0p	24.0p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 450cc but not exceeding 999cc	46.9p	13.7p	13.7p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 999cc but not exceeding 1,199cc	52.2p	14.4p	14.4p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 1,199cc	65.0p	16.4p	16.4p
An electric car	45.0p	45.0p	25.0p
Passenger rate (per passenger)	5.0p	5.0p	5.0p

4. Special Responsibility Allowance

– valid from 1 April 2023

The following table states the maximum rate of Special Responsibility Allowance that a council may pay. The maximum rate is based on the size of the council population. Each council's population figures are updated each year by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and it is the duty of each council to operate within the total maximum rate appropriate to its population band. For ease the maximum any councillor can receive, within each band, is also provided.

Population of council	Maximum Special Responsibility Allowance £	Maximum (1/5th) for individual councillor £
Less than 120,000	59,960	11,992
120,000 to 199,000	83,944	16,789
200,000 +	129,513	25,903

5. Subsistence Allowances

– valid from 1 April 2015

The following table states the maximum rates for subsistence; however, where councils believe it is necessary there is flexibility for councils to increase these rates by applying a suitable measure of price inflation.

PERIOD/MEAL	British Isles Rates £	London Rates £
Accommodation allowance - An absence involving an overnight stay, away from the normal place of residence. This rate does not include any meal allowance.	100.70	122.45
Breakfast allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period before 11 am)	11.50	11.50
Lunch allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 12 noon and 2pm)	13.50	13.50
Tea allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 3pm and 6pm)	4.70	4.70
Evening meal allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period ending after 7pm)	20.95	20.95