

December 13th, 2023

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on Thursday, 14th December 2023 at 6:00 pm in Microsoft Teams & Downshire Civic Centre.

Committee Membership 2023 - 2024

Councillor L McEvoy **Chairperson**

Councillor C Enright **Deputy Chairperson**

Councillor J Brennan

Councillor P Byrne

Councillor O Hanlon

Councillor R Howell

Councillor T Kelly

Councillor A Lewis

Councillor D McAteer

Councillor A Mathers

Councillor S O'Hare

Councillor A Quinn

Councillor H Reilly

Councillor G Sharvin

Councillor D Taylor

Agenda

1.0 Introduction and Apologies

2.0 Declaration of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from SPR Committee Meeting held on 16 November 2023

[Draft SPR-Action Sheet arising from 2023 11 16.pdf](#)

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Corporate Planning and Policy

4.0 Draft Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan 2024- 2027

[Draft NMDDC Corporate Plan 2024-2027.pdf](#)

Page 5

[Appendix I - Draft NMD Corporate Plan 2024-2027.pdf](#)

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5.0 Officer report on Notice of Motion – Leid Week

[Officer report on Notice of Motion Leid Week .pdf](#)

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6.0 Officer report on Notice of Motion (Amended) – Crossgar’s Titanic Victim

[Officer report on Notice of Motion \(Amended\) Crossgars Titanic Victim.pdf](#)

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For Consideration and/or Decision

7.0 S95 Audit and Assessment Report 2023-24

[SPR Cover Report Improvement Audit and Assessment 2023-24.pdf](#)

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

Page 53

[Appendix 2 - NIAO Audit and Assessment Report 2023-24.pdf](#)

Page 54

[Appendix 3 - Audit Certificate.pdf](#)

Page 74

8.0 Theatre Conference Revised elevations.

[NCCR - Theatre Conference - Revised Elevations.pdf](#)

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9.0 Mid Year Assessments of Directorate Business Plans 2023-24

- | | |
|--|---------|
| SPR Cover Report Mid Year Assessment of Business Plans 2023-24.pdf | Page 83 |
| Appendix 1 - CX Mid Year Assessment Business Plan 2023-24.pdf | Page 85 |
| Appendix 2 - CS Mid Year Assessment Business Plan 2023-24.pdf | Page 92 |

10.0 Off-Street Car Parking: December 2023 Charging Arrangements

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Car Parking Charges; Suspension of.pdf | Page 107 |
|--|----------|

Democratic Services

11.0 Report on Conferences

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|---|----------|
| SPR - Report on Conferences.pdf | Page 110 |
|---|----------|

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

12.0 Extension of Lease in respect of lands known as Rosconnor Pavilion and Playing Fields, Annacloy, Downpatrick

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

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| Extension of Lease in Respect of Rosconnor Pavilion Playing Fields Annacloy Downpatrick.pdf | Not included |
| Map of Rosconnor Pavilion Playing Fields.pdf | Not included |

13.0 Renewal of Lease of office Space at Downshire Civic Centre to Probation Board

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

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| Proposed Renewal of Lease of Office Space at Downshire Civic Centre to Probation Board NI.pdf | Not included |
| Map for Office Space at Downshire CC to Probation Board.pdf | Not included |

14.0 Renewal of Lease of office Space at Downshire Civic Centre to Youth Justice Agency

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

📄 *Proposed Renewal of Lease of Office Space at Downshire Civic Centre to Youth Justice Agency.pdf* **Not included**

📄 *Lease Map for Youth Justice Agency - SPR Dec 23.pdf* **Not included**

15.0 Renewal of Lease of lands at Cranfield Beach, Kilkeel.

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

📄 *proposed Renewal of Lease for Cranfield Foreshore - SPR Report Dec 23.pdf* **Not included**

📄 *Map for Renewal of Lease at Cranfield Beach.pdf* **Not included**

16.0 Renewal of Stationery and Office Supplies Framework

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

📄 *Report to SPR Committee 14 Dec 2023 - RM6059 Framework.pdf* **Not included**

📄 *Business Case Supply of Stationery and Office Supplies SPR 14 Dec 2023.pdf* **Not included**

17.0 NCCR – Professional Fees update

For Decision

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

📄 *SPR December 2023 NCCR Professional Fees.pdf* **Not included**

18.0 Industrial Relations Briefing Paper

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraphs 4 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014: 4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a government department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council. 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal

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

 2023-12-14 SPRC Report LRA Agreement.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
 Appendix 1 LRA Agreement.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
 Appendix 2 - Workplan.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
 Appendix 3 Summary of Legal Advice.pdf	<i>Not included</i>

For Noting

19.0 Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting held on Friday 8th September 2023

 Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Mtg 08.09.2023.pdf	<i>Page 112</i>
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Invitees

- Cllr Terry Andrews
- Cllr Callum Bowsie
- Mr Caolain Boyd
- Mrs Fionnuala Branagh
- Cllr Jim Brennan
- Cllr Pete Byrne
- Mr Gerard Byrne
- Cllr Philip Campbell
- Mr Andrew Cassells
- Cllr William Clarke
- Mrs Linda Cummins
- Cllr Laura Devlin
- Ms Louise Dillon
- Cllr Cadogan Enright
- Cllr Killian Feehan
- Cllr Doire Finn
- Cllr Aoife Finnegan
- Ms Joanne Fleming
- Cllr Conor Galbraith
- Cllr Mark Gibbons
- Cllr Oonagh Hanlon
- Cllr Glyn Hanna
- Cllr Valerie Harte
- Cllr Roisin Howell
- Ms Catherine Hughes
- Ms Marina Hughes
- Cllr Jonathan Jackson
- Cllr Geraldine Kearns
- Miss Veronica Keegan
- Mrs Josephine Kelly
- Cllr Tierna Kelly
- Mrs Sheila Kieran
- Cllr Cathal King
- Cllr Mickey Larkin
- Cllr David Lee-Surginor
- Cllr Alan Lewis
- Cllr Oonagh Magennis
- Mr Conor Mallon
- Cllr Aidan Mathers
- Cllr Declan McAteer
- Cllr Leeanne McEvoy
- Mr Conor McGeown

Cllr Andrew McMurray
.....
Mr Colin Moffett
.....
Maureen/Joanne Morgan/Johnston
.....
Cllr Declan Murphy
.....
Cllr Kate Murphy
.....
Cllr Selina Murphy
.....
Cllr Siobhan O'Hare
.....
Mr Philip Preen
.....
Cllr Áine Quinn
.....
Cllr Henry Reilly
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Cllr Michael Rice
.....
Mr Peter Rooney
.....
Cllr Michael Ruane
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Cllr Gareth Sharvin
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Donna Starkey
.....
Sarah Taggart
.....
Cllr David Taylor
.....
Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly
.....
Cllr Jill Truesdale
.....
Mrs Marie Ward
.....

**ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) –
THURSDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2023**

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014

SPR/131/2023	Surplus Assets Update	C Boyd	Complete	Y
<p>It was agreed Elected Members approve the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To withdraw the D1 Application made by Sir Hans Sloane Centre at this stage as the timescales within the process have not been met and there are still outstanding issues that need to be addressed prior to disposal. This will allow the issues that have arisen to be explored further before next steps are considered. A report will be brought back in due course to the Committee. • To note the current lack of interest in the site at Patrick Street and that Officers will look at the options available and report back to the Committee in due course. 				Y

Action Sheet – Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting (SPR) Thursday 16 November 2023

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SPR/154/2023	Action sheet of SPR meeting held 12 October 2023	It was agreed to approve the action sheet.	J Kelly		Y
SPR/155/2023	Notice of motion – annual financial assistance call for provision of life saving equipment	It was agreed to note the contents of the report. It was also agreed that this proposal be considered as part of the 2024/25 rates estimates	P Tamati		Y
SPR/156/2023	Irish Language Strategy 2024-2027	It was agreed to approve the Irish Language Strategy 2024-2027	C Moffett		Y
SPR/157/2023	Updated terms of reference – Irish language Strategy cross party working group	It was agreed to approve the updated Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group.	C Moffett		Y
SPR/158/2023	Statutory Reporting – section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for July-Sept 2023	It was agreed to note the contents of the report	C Moffett		Y
SPR/159/2023	Mid-year assessment – performance improvement plan	It was agreed to consider and agree the Mid-Year assessment report.	C Hughes/G Byrne	Queries from Councillors addressed at Council meeting 4 December 2023	Y

SPR/160/2023	Impact of flooding on Council Estate	It was agreed to note the contents of the report	J Kelly		Y
SPR/161/2023	NMD Floods Communication Performance	It was agreed to note the contents of the report. It was agreed that officials would bring a report back with regard to community resilience groups	J Kelly	Discussed at Council meeting on 4 December 2023	
SPR/162/2023	NMDDC Emergency Management Plan report & Emergency Communications Plan Reports	It was agreed that all elected members note and familiarise themselves with the content of the reports, and their roles and responsibilities in relation to emergencies and response of the Council.	V Keegan/C Boyd		Y
Items restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014					
SPR/163/2023	NMDDC Emergency Communications Plan Sept 2023 Procedures	It was agreed to note the NMDDC Emergency Communications Plan and Procedures	C Boyd		Y
SPR/164/2023	Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) Collaboration and Funding Agreement	It was agreed to approve that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council sign the DBEC Collaboration and Funding Agreement, accepting NMDDC as the current lead Council on behalf of the collaborating Council's and Universities, under the terms and conditions as outlined in the agreement.	C Mallon		Y
SPR/165/2023	STA – Sun System	It was agreed to approve the STA SYSCO Software to ensure continuity of financial systems.	G Byrne		Y
SPR/166/2023	Newry City Park – Contract for Funding	It was agreed to approve both the funding agreement and the signing of the funding agreement between NMDDC and Department for Communities in respect of Newry City Park Project	P Tamati	Updated provided at Council meeting 4 December 2023	Y
SPR/167/2023	Consolatory Payments	It was agreed to note the consolatory payment of £2000	J Kelly		Y
SPR/168/2023	Castlewellan Park Update	It was agreed to approve the appointment of the preferred contractor to deliver the Castlewellan Landscape & Historic Demesne Restoration	A Patterson		Y

SPR/169/2023	Dundrum Playing Field Changing Pavilion	Project, and to approve the inclusion of the required budget in the Council's Capital Programme to deliver the project to the agreed timescales it was agreed to replace the changing pavilion at Dundrum Playing Fields as per the costs outlined in section 4.1 of the officer's report, and to approve the business case as per appendix 1 of the report	P Tamati		Y
SPR/170/2023	Saintfield Hockey Pitch – Floodlighting Upgrade	it was agreed to approve floodlighting upgrade works at Saintfield hockey pitch at a cost as outlined in section 4.1 of the officer's report, and to approve the business case as per Appendix 1 of the report.	P Tamati		Y
SPR/171/2023	Specific Delegated Function	It was agreed to defer the report to be re-presented at a future SPR Committee Meeting	M Ward	SPR December 2023	N
SPR/172/2023	Management Accounts	It was agreed to note the Q2 2023-24 Management Accounts and the Q1 Treasury Management update.	G Byrne		Y
END					

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 December 2023
Subject:	Draft Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan 2024-2027
Reporting Officer:	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy
Contact Officers:	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy Alan Beggs, Head of Evidence and Research Catherine Hughes, Head of Performance and Improvement (Acting) Jonathan McGilly, Assistant Director: Regeneration Suzanne Rice, Corporate Policy & Equality Officer

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

For decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>Council has reviewed its Corporate Plan 2021-2023 and developed a draft Corporate Plan for the period 2024–2027.</p> <p>The purpose of the report is to consider and agree the attached draft Corporate Plan 2024-2027 (Appendix I) which will then proceed to a 12-week public consultation.</p> <p>The draft Corporate Plan 2024-2027 sets out the Council’s Vision, Mission and Values; our past performance during the period 2021-2023; details of how we developed the new plan; and our principal projects, strategic objectives and key actions for the 2024-2027 period.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	<p>To develop the draft Corporate Plan we carried out engagement and consultation with residents, as well as with Council employees, our senior management and Elected Representatives.</p> <p>Our Residents Survey, undertaken in September 2022, was based on a representative sample of residents aged 16+ with quotas applied for age, gender, social class and electoral wards. Residents were asked to think about their local area, the Council’s services and what was needed to improve to make it a better place to live.</p> <p>Across all service areas, residents reported relatively high satisfaction levels with 88% of residents being satisfied with the work of our Council. The results of the survey highlighted the priorities that are important to our residents which included improving skills, employability and job prospects, supporting local businesses, reducing poverty, and improving people’s health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Council held four focus groups, three with Council employees and one with Elected Members to consider the findings of the Residents Survey and a one-day workshop with the Council’s Senior Management Team.</p>

3.0	Recommendations
3.1	Members are asked to consider and agree the draft Corporate Plan 2023-2027 to proceed to a 12-week public consultation.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Resources associated with the implementation of the principal projects, strategic objectives and key actions.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service

	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	Appendices
	Appendix I – Draft NMDDC Corporate Plan 2024-2027
8.0	Background Documents
	N/A

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Phlean Corparáideach 2024–2027

Corporate Plan 2024–2027



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

Ag freastal ar an Dúin agus Ard Mhacha Theas
Serving Down and South Armagh

An aerial photograph of a town and a river, with a bridge crossing the river. The image is overlaid with a dark teal gradient. The text is centered over the image.

Proud of our past. Building our future together.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Corporate Plan 2024-2027

Foreword

Welcome to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2027.

This is an exciting time for our Council. As one of the largest councils in Northern Ireland we are on a transformational journey and over the past two years have made significant progress towards realising our goals.

Our Corporate Plan 2024-2027 outlines our ambitious agenda, our eight strategic objectives and the principal projects identified to support this transformation across our district and internally within our organisation.

Newry, Mourne and Down is a place where ambition thrives. It's a place where people get things done, translating aspiration into action. We are proud of what we have achieved over the past two years and are very excited about the future for our Council and district as we go forward with confidence to fulfil and advance the objectives of our Corporate Plan 2024-2027.

While Newry, Mourne and Down District Council faces the same financial challenges as all other Northern Ireland councils, the Council's collaborative approach with partners and communities offers a path to redesigning and delivering services that are responsive to local needs.

We look forward to delivering on important benefits for our district and are confident that we will adapt to new opportunities and challenges as they emerge, all with the key objective of improving the lives and livelihoods of the people who live and work here.



Councillor Valerie Harte
Council Chairperson



Marie Ward
Chief Executive



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10	Our District in Numbers
14	Our Council Performance
18	How we Developed our Corporate Plan
22	Our Strategic Objectives and Key Actions
28	Our Council How we Govern
30	Elected Members
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Introduction

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2027 builds on the progress and achievements of our first eight years and will guide and prioritise our work, and how we allocate our resources. It sets out our strategic objectives and key action, our commitment to provide progressive civic leadership and the delivery of high quality and best value public services for all.

181,368

estimated population

£67m

combined revenue

1,634km²

district area

£91m

capital budget

150km

coastline



Our Vision, Mission and Values

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Vision, Mission and Values serve as the foundation of our Corporate Plan. They convey the purpose and direction of what we want to achieve for our citizens.

Our District

Strategically located on the important eastern A1/M1 economic corridor, Newry, Mourne and Down has an estimated population of 181,368, a coastline of approximately 150 kilometres, and encompassing an area of 1,634 square kilometres, we have three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Mourne, Ring of Gullion, and Strangford and Lecale.

Our Council

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is one of the largest councils in Northern Ireland and has 41 elected members representing seven district electoral areas: Crotlieve, Downpatrick, Newry, Rowallane, Slieve Croob, Slieve Gullion and The Mournes.

The Council has a combined revenue of circa £67 million, a capital budget of approximately £91 million and circa 1,000 employees. We are responsible for providing services such as Household Waste Collection, Registration, Leisure, Environmental Health, Building Control, Economic Development and Tourism. We are also responsible for Planning and Community Planning - statutory functions transferred from central government to Northern Ireland local authorities in 2015.

Our Vision

As set out in your Community Plan, 'Living Well Together':

Newry, Mourne and Down is a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high-quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs.

Our Mission

To deliver sustainable services and empower our communities through transparent governance and collaboration.

Our Values

Respect

We will demonstrate respect for all people in our attitudes, behaviours and working relationships.

Integrity

We want the people of our district to trust us to do the right thing.

Transparency

We will be transparent in how we make decisions.

Accountability

We will be accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. We will be accountable for how we plan for and use resources sustainably.

Excellence

We will take pride in our work and be passionate about the standards we strive to achieve.

Our Corporate Plan

Why we need it

The Programme for Government contains strategic outcomes which, taken together, set a clear direction of travel and enable continuous improvement on the essential components of societal wellbeing. They touch on every aspect of government, including the attainment of good health and education, economic success and confident and peaceful communities.

A key feature of the Programme for Government is its dependence on collaborative working between organisations and groups, whether in the public, voluntary, or private sectors.

The Programme for Government outcomes for the whole region are reflected within the district's Community Plan. Our Community Plan, 'Living Well Together', was agreed by the Council, public service providers, government departments and partners in the business, voluntary and community sectors.

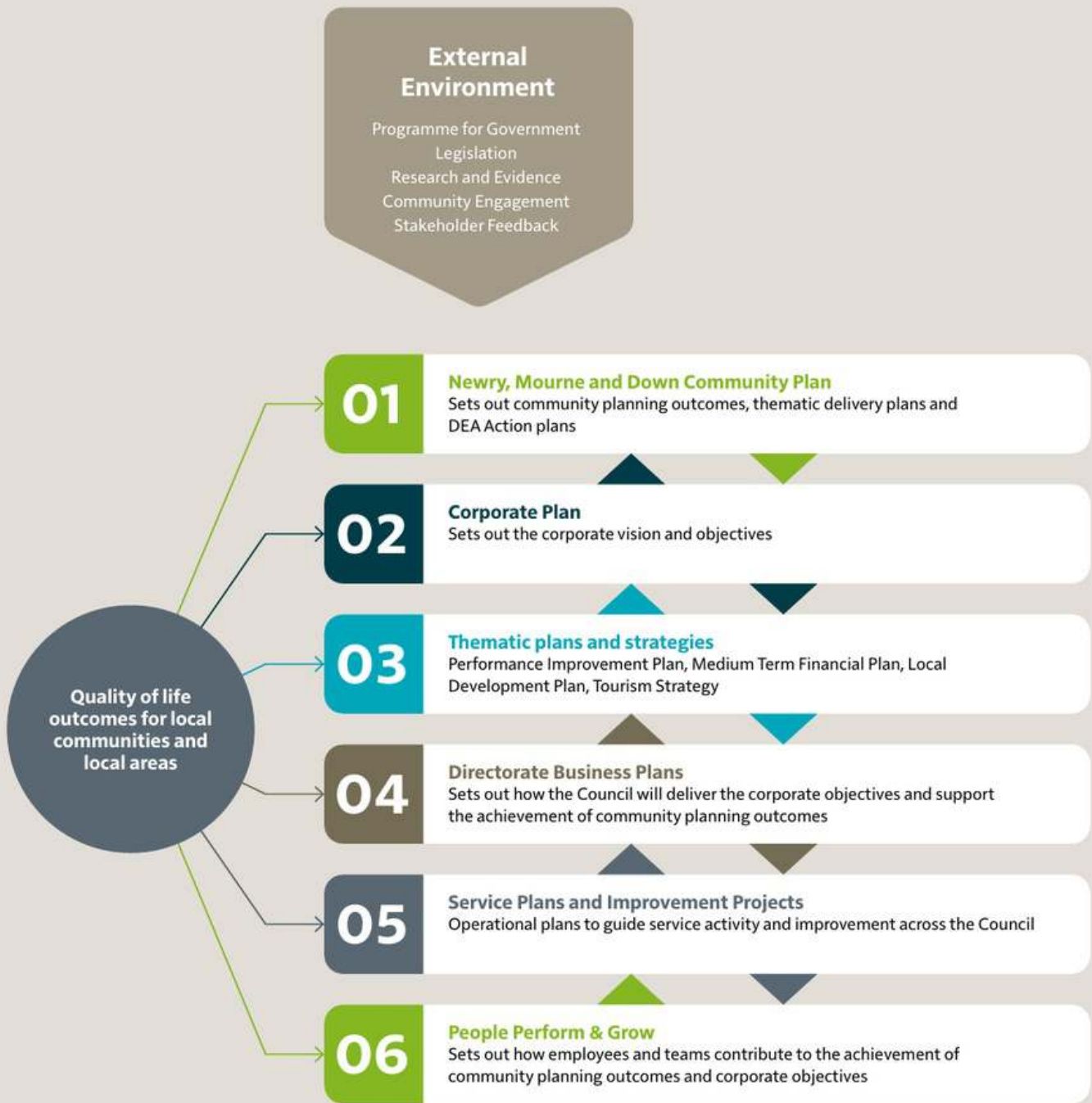
The Community Plan partners are committed to playing a full and active role in delivering the following outcomes:

All people in Newry, Mourne and Down:

- get a good start in life and fulfil their lifelong potential
- enjoy good health and wellbeing
- benefit from prosperous communities
- benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment
- live in respectful, safe and vibrant communities.

In preparing our Corporate Plan 2024-2027 we have sought to contribute to achieving the outcomes set out within our Community Plan.

As such, the Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework drives and provides assurance that community planning outcomes, corporate priorities and performance improvement objectives are being delivered.



The schematic illustrates how the priorities set out within our Corporate Plan are reflected within business plans and service plans to ensure the entire organisation is working towards corporately defined objectives.



Our District in Numbers



Economy

73.6%

employment rate in 2023

8,865

VAT and/or PAYE registered
businesses in 2022

3%

of 18-24 year olds in NMD
claiming jobseekers allowance
plus out-of-work universal
credit in 2023

1,507,584

nights spent on overnight trips (2019)
resulting in an estimated tourism
spend of £83,671,689



Businesses by Sector

Newry, Mourne and Down



Agriculture

Northern Ireland



Construction



Production
(including Manufacturing)



Services



Community

87%

of residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different background get on well together

100%

of residents feel safe in the district during the day

78%

of residents feel safe after dark in the district

45%

of residents feel they have a say on how services run in their local area

16%

of participants said they had participated in or attended an arts, heritage or culture activity in the last 12 months



Sustainability



86%
of residents stated that recycling is important to them



53.7%
of our waste is currently recycled (2022-2023)

3,849

applicants on the NIHE waiting list at 31 March 2022

1,031

applications for new residential properties have been approved 2021-2022

4,219

new residential properties built 2016-2022

Protected Sites

3 AONBs covering approximately 55.7% of the district

4 RAMSAR Wetlands Sites

3 Special Protection Areas

11 Special Areas of Conservation

62 Areas of Special Scientific Interest

7 National Nature Reserves



Health & Wellbeing

82%
of residents feel they are in very good or good health

83%
of residents are physically active at least once a week for 30 minutes

7.7 out of 10

residents score in relation to their satisfaction with their mental health and emotional wellbeing

78.9

male life expectancy in NMD in 2016-2018

76.3 for males living in the 20% most deprived areas of the district

82.7

female life expectancy in NMD in 2016-2018

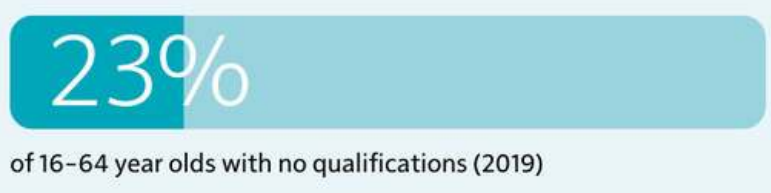
82.1 for females living in the 20% most deprived areas of the district



Connectivity



Education



Deprivation

3rd highest

In 2017, NMD had the 3rd highest level of Super Output Areas (SOAs) within the top 100 most deprived areas within NI

23

of the SOAs in NMD are within the top 25% (NI) for Multiple Deprivation rank. This is out of a total of 84 SOAs within the district









4 of the 5


















highest ranked SOAs in NI for income deprivation come from within NMD

Our Council Our Performance




Between 2021 and 2023, the Council made significant progress in delivering the Corporate Plan. Our performance to date has helped us to identify new corporate objectives, supporting actions and measures of success.




Corporate Priority	Progress	Status Trend
 <p>Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills</p>	426 new jobs created and 1,052 businesses supported through Council programmes.	
	566 new jobs promoted through business start up activity.	
	£16.5m held in economic and regeneration funding contracts for investment with £3.7m spent in 2022-2023.	
	Belfast City Region Deal signed in December 2021.	
	Through Full Fibre Northern Ireland (FFNI), 68 Council sites (hubs) were connected to the value of £2.3m. A further 34 Business Services Organisation (BSO) sites were also connected across the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area, improving the access to Ultrafast fibre.	
	Council is working with partners in the employability, skills and education sectors through a new Labour Market Partnership (LMP) in the district.	
 <p>Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district and reduce health inequalities</p>	A consultant has been appointed to develop the Physical Activity, Health, Wellbeing and Sports Development strategy which will be carried out in 2024-2025.	
	The Multi Sports Hub review was completed in 2022-2023 which allowed Council to establish a capital budget to support the future development of multi sports hubs across the district.	
	11,901 people participated in targeted health programmes which was lower than expected due to COVID-19.	

Corporate Priority	Progress	Status Trend
	430 children and young people took part in community play initiatives across the district.	▼
	968% increase in the number of attendances at the 6 main leisure centres between 2020-2021 and 2022-2023*. <i>*The low usage levels experienced in 2020-2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic has led to the high percentage increase when compared to the 2022-2023 figures recorded.</i>	▲
 Enhance, protect and promote our environment	The Council's Education and Enforcement Plan has been delayed.	☹️
	Preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP) is underway, the publication of the draft Plan Strategy (dPS) will be in line with the updated and approved timeline.	☹️
	The development of the Local Climate Adaptation Plan is underway.	😊
	Newry Mourne and Down District Council as lead partner, completed the implementation of the €9 Million CANN (Collaborative Action for the Natura Network) project.	😊
	In 2020, the Council launched a new initiative to re-wild areas of the district.	😊
	The street cleanliness score for the district remains at 64, just below the regional level.	☹️
	The average recycling rate over the past three years has been 50.4%, which is just above the 2020 recycling target of 50%.	😊
 Support sustainable forms of tourism which value our environment and cultural heritage	The Council achieved UNESCO Global Geopark designation for Mourne, Gullion, Strangford in May 2023.	😊
	The Council continued to deliver the current Tourism Strategy for Newry, Mourne and Down and completed the development of the new Tourism Strategy 2023-2028.	😊
	Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy launched.	😊
	68 tourism experiences are now offered throughout the district, developed by tourism and hospitality businesses and supported by Council.	😊
	74% increase in visitor spend.	▲
	27% increase in overnight stays.	▲

Corporate Priority	Progress	Status Trend
 <p>Enable and support people to engage in inclusive and diverse activities in their communities</p>	<p>Newry, Mourne and Down District Council organised a second Housing Needs Conference which took place in November 2021.</p>	
	<p>A community facilities strategy has now been developed and is out for consultation. This should be available in 2024/2025.</p>	
	<p>Through Participatory Budgeting, £67,000 was distributed across 60 successful community groups / organisations.</p>	
	<p>£3.5m awarded to 1117 successful applications through the Financial Assistance Scheme which represents an average of 69% of applicants being successful.</p>	
	<p>A second Residents survey was carried out in 2022.</p>	
	<p>87% of residents agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.</p>	
	<p>65% of residents agree that the Council consults with and listens to the views of local people.</p>	
	<p>45% of residents feel that they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area.</p>	
 <p>Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities</p>	<p>Progress continues on the implementation of the key transformative projects for Newry, Mourne and Down through the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).</p>	
	<p>Investment of £4 Million in 7 public realm schemes completed across seven rural villages.</p>	
	<p>Planning has now been submitted for the development of the new Newry civic hub including theatre and conferencing facilities.</p>	
	<p>The work on the Bann Road car park facility has been completed and is operational as a Park and Share facility.</p>	
	<p>Downpatrick Regeneration Working Group established and meeting to envisage town's future.</p>	
	<p>Increase in the number of VAT/PAYE registered businesses registered in Newry, Mourne and Down.</p>	
	<p>Increase in the number of employee jobs.</p>	

Corporate Priority	Progress	Status Trend
 <p>Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement</p>	88% of residents are satisfied with the Council.	
	92% of residents believe that the Council helps make Newry, Mourne and Down a good place to live.	
	88% of residents say they trust the Council.	
	74% believe the Council provides good value for money.	
	Increase in employee absenteeism.	
	Compliance with the statutory Duty of Improvement.	
 <p>Advocate with others for the benefit of all people of the district</p>	Implementation of the Community Plan is underway with a statement of progress presented to the Partnership Board in 2022.	
	Set up a Community Coordination Hub in response to the emergency COVID-19 pandemic to ensure vulnerable residents received essential supplies.	
	18,407 food parcels were delivered to vulnerable households.	
	Council continues to comply with the statutory duty of community planning.	
	91% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.	

-  Target or action achieved
-  Target or action partially achieved
-  Target or action not achieved

-  Performance has improved
-  Performance is similar to the previous years
-  Performance has declined

How we Developed our Corporate Plan

As a Council we are committed to engaging with our residents and stakeholders to ensure we maintain an evidence led approach to decision-making and service provision. We carried out engagement and consultation with residents, as well as with Council employees, our senior management and elected representatives.

Residents' Survey

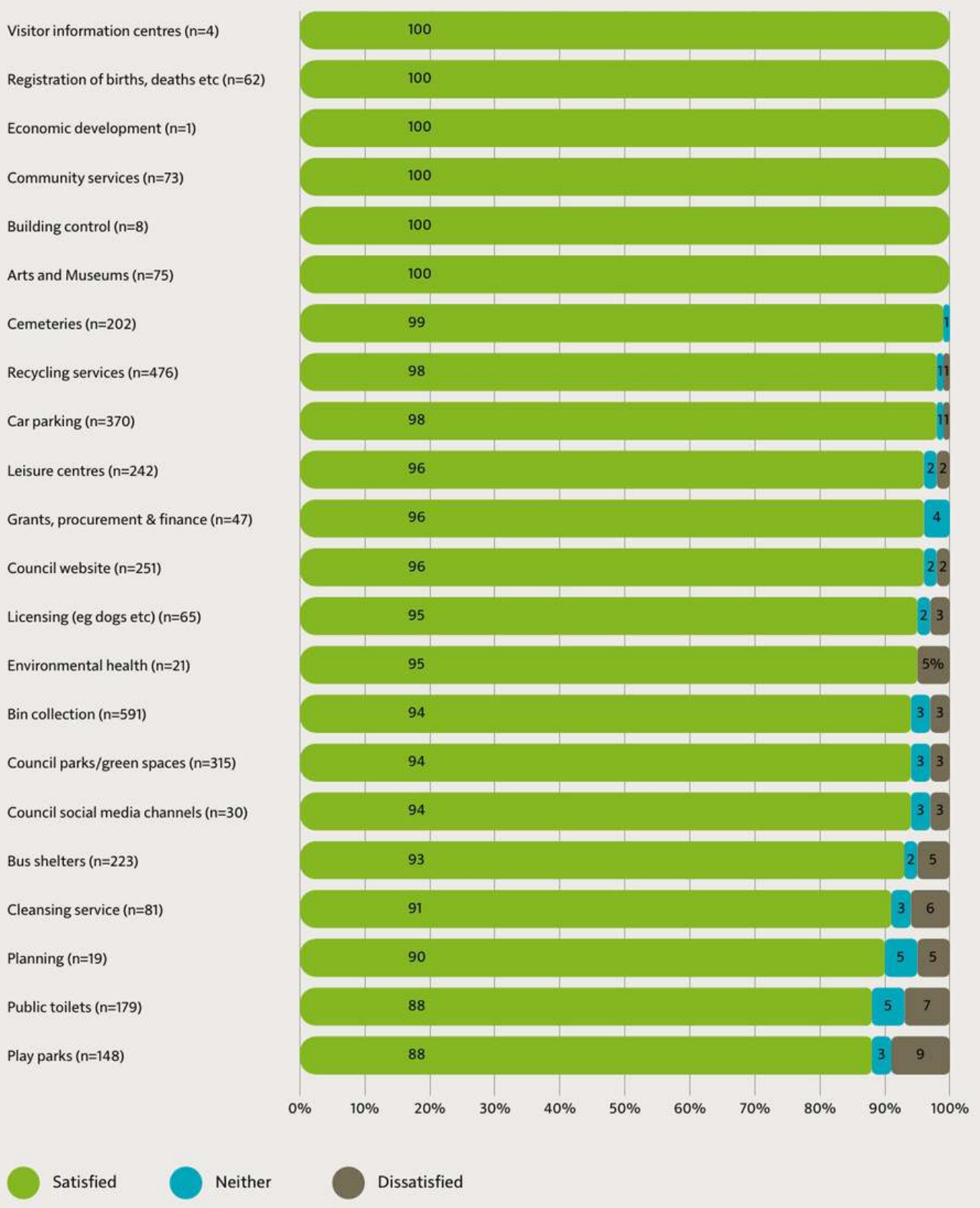
Our residents' survey, undertaken in September 2022, was based on a representative sample of residents aged 16+ with quotas applied for age, gender, social class and electoral wards.

Residents were asked to think about their local area, the Council's services and what needs improving to make it a better place to live.

Across all service areas, residents reported relatively high satisfaction levels. Furthermore, 88% of residents were satisfied with the work of our Council.

The results of the survey highlighted the priorities that are important to our residents. Priorities for residents included improving skills, employability and job prospects, supporting local businesses, reducing poverty, and improving people's health and wellbeing.

Satisfaction with Council Services



- Satisfied
- Neither
- Dissatisfied

Council also held four focus groups, three with Council employees and one with elected members. The focus groups were presented with the findings of the Residents Survey and those present were invited to put forward their views on the key priorities for the district and the strategic direction of the organisation.

Following this, a one-day workshop with Council's Senior Management Team:

- considered the findings of the Residents' Survey and feedback from the employee and elected member focus groups;
- reviewed performance in relation to the delivery of the strategic objectives, supporting actions, measures of success and principal projects within the Corporate Plan 2021-2023;
- considered current and emerging challenges and opportunities for the Council; and
- identified and agreed broad themes, objectives, supporting actions and measures of success, to inform the development of the new Corporate Plan 2024-2027.

The broad themes which were identified included growing the economy and supporting local business, making the most from advances in digitisation, supporting health and wellbeing, reducing poverty and inequality, targeting social needs and community wealth building, and protecting and benefiting from the unique landscape and environment of our Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Priorities for improving local area... (most important)





Our Strategic Objectives and Key Actions

We have adopted eight strategic objectives. These are aligned to the five themes of the Community Plan and will be delivered in collaboration and partnership with a range of stakeholders.



We aim to progress the following principal projects:

- Organisational transformation and delivery of sustainable services
- Newry City Centre Regeneration
- Downpatrick Regeneration
- Belfast Region City Deal Projects including skills and innovation
- Warrenpoint Health and Wellbeing Centre
- Newcastle tourism and recreation facilities
- Local Development Plan Strategy

Draft Strategic Objectives	Draft Key Actions	Measures of Success
<p>Support the continued growth and development of our local economy</p>	<p>Implement a programme of support that will increase growth and investment for new and established businesses and social enterprises across the district.</p> <p>Through the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) partnership, and other programmes, implement a range of skills and employability initiatives that meets the needs of local economy.</p> <p>Support the growth of new and existing businesses through the delivery of innovative and digital focused initiatives.</p> <p>Through Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) and other cross-border linkages, maximise the district's location as a cross-border gateway to Great Britain, EU, Ireland and international markets.</p> <p>Continued growth of our area's infrastructure through a responsive planning system.</p>	<p>Number of jobs created and businesses supported through Council programmes.</p> <p>Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity.</p> <p>Amount of investment secured and distributed by Council.</p>
<p>Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district</p>	<p>Continue to implement our:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Travel Masterplan • Age Friendly Strategy 2021-2031 • Sports Facilities Strategy • Play Strategy • Community Trails Development Plan. <p>Carry out initiatives to tackle health inequalities across the district.</p> <p>Establish an Open Spaces Strategy.</p> <p>Delivery of projects within the PeacePlus Action Plan addressing wellbeing, social prescribing and opening of shared spaces.</p>	<p>Number of people participating in targeted health programmes.</p> <p>Number of attendances at Council indoor leisure facilities.</p> <p>Numbers of users of community trails.</p>

Draft Strategic Objectives	Draft Key Actions	Measures of Success
<p>Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future</p>	<p>Develop and implement a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy • Local Climate Change Adaptation Plan • Biodiversity Strategy • Tree Strategy. <p>Undertake a baseline assessment of the Council's carbon footprint and set targets to reduce our carbon emissions.</p> <p>Support the implementation of new Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.</p> <p>Contribute to the delivery of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Action Plans and the Marine Protected Area Management Plans.</p> <p>Develop and implement a District Enforcement Action Plan for controlling environmental crime and reducing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents.</p> <p>Develop and implement the Local Development Plan.</p> <p>Implementation of Building Regulations and licensing obligations in partnership with our customers and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Level of street cleanliness across the district (Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Cleanliness Index).</p> <p>Level of compliance with Sustainable Development Duty.</p> <p>Percentage of waste recycled.</p> <p>Percentage of EV charging points.</p>
<p>Support regenerative tourism opportunities which promote our culture, heritage and environment</p>	<p>Deliver the Council's Tourism Strategy.</p> <p>Develop the tourism proposition for the district and new visitor experiences with industry in line with Tourism Experience Brands.</p> <p>Continue to progress the Mourne Gateway Project as part of the BRCD investment programme, and other major tourism capital projects throughout the district.</p> <p>Implement the Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark Masterplan 2020-2023 and Business Plan 2021-2025.</p> <p>Continue to deliver the Council's Arts, Culture & Heritage Strategy to grow our audiences, increase engagement and enhance our Arts, Museums and Events' offering.</p>	<p>Level of visitor spend.</p> <p>Number of overnight stays.</p> <p>Level of visitor satisfaction.</p> <p>Number of visitors to Council's Arts Centres and Museums.</p>

Draft Strategic Objectives	Draft Key Actions	Measures of Success
<p>Empowering communities to play an active part in civic life</p>	<p>Development and delivery of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Electoral Area Action Plans • Policing & Community Safety Partnership Action Plan • Good Relations Programme Action Plan • Downpatrick and Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Areas Action Plan • Social Inclusion Action Plan including the delivery of the Ethnic Minority Support Centre • PeacePlus Action Plan • Community Wealth Building Action Plan. <p>Implementation of the Community Plan.</p> <p>Development of a Community Facilities Strategy.</p> <p>Delivery of the Financial Assistance Programme.</p>	<p>Percentage of residents who agree their local area is a place where people of different backgrounds get on well together.</p> <p>Percentage of residents who agree the Council consults with, and listens to, the views of local people.</p> <p>Percentage of residents who feel they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area.</p> <p>Number of financial assistance projects funded.</p> <p>Number of people accessing the Ethnic Minority Support Office services.</p>
<p>Develop and revitalise our district</p>	<p>Implement a Small Settlement regeneration scheme in partnership with Government Departments.</p> <p>Implement regeneration initiatives across urban centres and develop forward work programme for future regeneration initiatives.</p> <p>Progress the Belfast Region City Deal.</p> <p>Update existing masterplans and village plans in line with the emerging Local Development Plan.</p> <p>Implement our Public Convenience Strategy.</p>	<p>Number of BRCD projects delivered.</p> <p>Number of small settlement schemes delivered.</p> <p>Number of new / upgraded public conveniences.</p>

Draft Strategic Objectives	Draft Key Actions	Measures of Success
<p>Deliver sustainable services</p>	<p>Develop a robust and reliable evidence base to inform decision making, policy development and service provision.</p> <p>Effectively manage performance and align individual contribution with corporate objectives and better outcomes for all.</p> <p>Implementation of People Perform Grow (PPG).</p> <p>Utilise our website and digital channels to enhance service delivery.</p> <p>To embed a digital culture across the organisation.</p> <p>Implement our:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Action Plan • Disability Action Plan • Irish Language Strategy. 	<p>Level of citizen satisfaction.</p> <p>Compliance with duty of improvement.</p> <p>Number of users registered to Council corporate social media channels.</p> <p>Number of visits to Council’s corporate website.</p>
<p>Represent the voice of the district with our partners</p>	<p>Continue to work with our statutory partners to improve the health and wellbeing across the district.</p> <p>Collaborate and engage with key tourism and hospitality sector stakeholders to reinforce a strong partnership approach to tourism growth and leadership – including tourism business clusters and industry associations.</p> <p>Work with partners to implement the Community Plan and deliver better outcomes / improve the quality of life for all.</p> <p>Support elected members in their advocacy role around key local actions.</p> <p>Implementation of Elected Member Development Programme.</p>	<p>Compliance with the duty of Community Planning.</p> <p>Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.</p> <p>Number of training events provided to elected members.</p>



Our Council How we Govern

The Council’s 41 elected members and its committee and management structure ensures sound governance, ownership and scrutiny in the decision-making process across the entire organisation.

Reviewing performance and reporting progress to elected members and other key stakeholders is very important as it facilitates transparency, accountability and improvement in everything the Council does. The Council regularly monitors performance in relation to the implementation of key plans and strategies, which supports the achievement and delivery of the Corporate Plan.

These include the Performance Improvement Plan and Directorate Business Plans. The Council publishes an Annual Performance Improvement Plan which is independently audited.

The governance arrangements to develop, monitor, report and review the Council's progress in implementing the Corporate Plan 2024–2027 are outlined below:

Governance Arrangements

Full Council

Approval of the Corporate Plan
Annual Performance Assessment

Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee

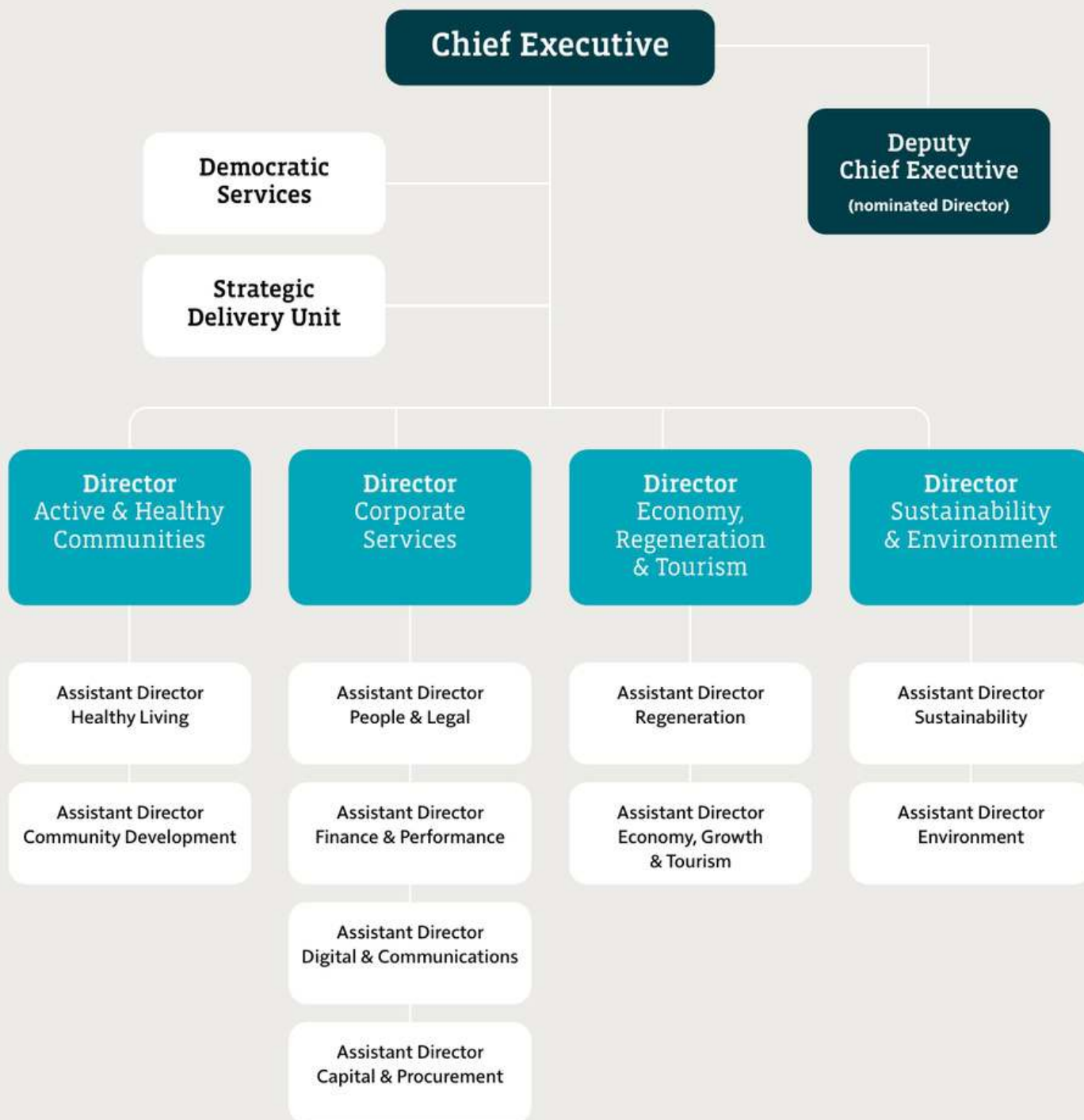
Scrutiny, challenge and approval of the Corporate Plan
Annual Performance Assessment

Senior Management Team

Lead the development and implementation of the Corporate Plan
Annual Performance Assessment

There are also ongoing reviews of performance at directorate and service levels within Council.

The committee and management structure demonstrates how the decision-making process is implemented in Council as follows:



Elected Members

The Council's 41 elected members and its committee and management structure ensures sound governance, ownership and scrutiny in the decision-making process across the entire organisation.



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Appendix

The following table sets out the linkages between the Community Plan Outcomes and the Corporate Plan Strategic Objectives.

Community Plan Outcomes		Corporate Plan Strategic Objectives 2024-2027	
	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing.		Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district.
	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities.		Support the continued growth and development of our local economy. Support regenerative tourism opportunities which promote our culture, heritage and environment. Develop and revitalise our district.
	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment.		Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future.
	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down live in respectful, safe and vibrant communities.		Empowering communities to play an active part in civic life.
	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down get a good start in life and fulfil their lifelong potential.		Deliver sustainable services. Represent the voice of the district with our partners.



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Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 December 2023
Subject:	Officer report on Notice of Motion – Leid Week
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy Suzanne Rice, Corporate Policy and Equality Officer

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

For decision	X	For noting only	
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>The following Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor Lewis, tabled for consideration at Council Meeting on 2 October 2023, was referred to the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6:</p> <p><u>C/198/2023 Notice of Motion – Leid Week</u></p> <p><i>"This Council recognises and supports the Ulster Scots Community of Newry Mourne and Down. The Ulster-Scots Language is widely used by everyone from all sections of the community in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area. For a number of years now, as part of the celebration and promotion of the Ulster-Scots Leid or Language, a special week has been set aside in the calendar where events and activities take place to bring the Language to the people. With events taking place between 20 – 24 November.</i></p> <p><i>Leid Week also aims to help dispel some of the myths about the Ulster-Scots language - that it is not the preserve of one community or another but is spoken by people from all diverse backgrounds and rather than being a 'recently made up' language, it has been around for centuries. For many years, the language has suffered from neglect by public services and Leid Week is an opportunity for councils across NI, community organisations and corporate body/statutory agencies, schools, and youth organisations etc to help improve better understanding of the language and its shared history and heritage. Across NI, many councils are now directly organising events or activities to celebrate Leid Week and are working with organisations to deliver activities/events as part of the Leid Week celebrations. Indeed, Derry City and Strabane District Council this year has opened a funding call for community groups to apply to facilitate Leid Week events.</i></p> <p><i>Newry Mourne and Down Council will recognise and commit resources to Leid week for the benefit and support of Ulster Scots Groups across our district. Council commit to lead on a community themed event for this year's celebrations."</i></p> <p>The Notice of Motion was discussed at the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group meeting on 20 November 2023.</p>

	Key issues
2.1	<p>During discussion at the Councillors' Equality and Good Relation Reference Group Members present were supportive of the Notice of Motion.</p> <p>Members were also advised that following correspondence from the Ulster Scots Agency the Council had organised a talk, '<i>Ulster-Scots: a people, a culture and a language</i>', in partnership with the Ulster Scots Agency to celebrate Ulster Scots Language Week 2023.</p> <p>The talk delivered by Nelson McCausland took place in Newry and Mourne Museum was attended by 23 people and focused upon the Newry, Mourne and Down area, including Ulster-Scots emigration through the port of Newry, the piping tradition, and writers such as Hugh Porter, the Bard of Moneyslane.</p>
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To note the notice of motion has been considered and discussed at the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group on 20 November 2023 and that members of the Reference Group were supportive of the notice of motion and the talk organised in Newry and Mourne Museum on 22 November 2023.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Resource implications associated with the talk organised on 22 November 2023.
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>

<p>5.3</p>	<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> <hr/> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
<p>6.1</p>	<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>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>N/A</p>
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Background Documents</p>
	<p>NMDDC Policy on Naming Council facilities</p>

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 December 2023
Subject:	Officer report on Notice of Motion (Amended) – Crossgar’s Titanic Victim
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy Suzanne Rice, Corporate Policy and Equality Officer

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

For decision	X	For noting only	
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>Further to initial consideration at the Councillors’ Equality and Good Relation Reference Group on 1 August 2023 and Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee on 17 August 2023 the following amended Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor Bowsie was discussed at the Councillors’ Equality and Good Relation Reference Group on 20 November 2023:</p> <p><u>C/104/2023 Notice of Motion (Amended) – Crossgar’s Titanic Victim</u></p> <p><i>"This Council recognises the significance of the Titanic’s legacy, the public interest in the tragedy and the importance of remembering the local lives that were lost on it; Tasks the Council to prepare a report with the view to installing a Titanic-style information bench to Crossgar’s Titanic victim, James McGrady, in a public space in Crossgar and recommends liaising with a maritime historian and the council’s heritage officer to ensure this feature is accurate and befitting to this Titanic worker."</i></p>
	Key issues
2.1	<p>Discussion at the Councillors’ Equality and Good Relations Reference Group meeting on 20 November 2023 centred upon the most appropriate means to acknowledge the legacy of the Titanic and its local impact; an information panel; and if the need for a bench was established it should be in keeping with other street furniture.</p> <p>Councillor Bowsie advised that local community a public / historical meetings were in support of a ‘Titanic style’ bench as there was no seating in Crossgar Square. Members were advised that erection of benches and information panels on Council property falls within the scope of the Council’s Policy on naming Council facilities.</p> <p>The consensus of those present was that the Council should give consideration to the erection of an information panel in Crossgar and that the local community should seek to source funding and submit an application through the appropriate process to place a bench on Council property.</p>

3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>To note the amended notice of motion has been considered and discussed at the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group on 20 November 2023 and that members of the Reference Group recommended Council should give consideration to the erection of an information panel in Crossgar referencing the Titanic, explaining Crossgar's link to the Titanic; and that the local community should seek to source funding and submit an application through the appropriate process to place a bench on Council property.</p> <p>Should Council agree to approve the Notice of Motion this will be progressed as per Council's Policy on Naming Council facilities.</p>
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Resource implications associated with this Notice of Motion include the cost of purchasing and designing an appropriate information panel, installation and ongoing maintenance.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></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
	N/A
8.0	Background Documents
	NMDDC Policy on Naming Council facilities

Report to:	SPR Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 December 2023
Subject:	S95 Audit and Assessment Report 2023-24
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director of Finance and Performance
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Catherine Hughes – Acting Head of Performance and Improvement

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

For decision	x	For noting only	
1.0			Purpose and Background
1.1			The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the key findings from the Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment 2023-24 which was carried out by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) on behalf of the Local Government Auditor (LGA). This audit and assessment underpins the general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions, which has been placed on Councils through Part 12 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act (2014). A copy of the report is attached at Appendix 2 .
2.0			Key issues
2.1			Audit Opinion The LGA has certified the performance arrangements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification. It certifies an improvement audit and improvement assessment has been conducted. The LGA also states that, as a result, they believe that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (the Council) has discharged its performance improvement and reporting duties, including its assessment of performance for 2022-23 and its 2023-24 improvement plan, and has acted in accordance with the Guidance. A certificate of compliance has been issued and is attached at Appendix 3 .
2.2			Proposals for Improvement During the audit and assessment the LGA identified no issues requiring a formal recommendation under the Act. One proposal for improvement was proposed and detailed below. This represents good practice which should assist the Council in meeting its responsibilities for performance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets set out in the Improvement Plan should also be included within the Self Assessment Report to enable the Self Assessment report to be used as a standalone document
2.3			Detailed Observations The LGA has included a number of observations in relation to the following thematic areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General duty to improve; • Governance arrangements;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement objectives; • Consultation; • Improvement plan; • Arrangements to improve • Collection, use and publication of performance information; and • Demonstrating a track record of improvement.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>To consider and agree the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment Report 2023-24 (Appendix 2)
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	There are no direct financial resource implications within this report. However, the first proposal for improvement outlined in the Audit Findings references an electronic performance management system which Council are currently progressing and which will have financial implications for the Council.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p>

	<p><i>Rationale:</i> Consultation not required.</p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	Appendices
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 1 – Cover Letter from NIAO • Appendix 2 – s95 Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment Report 2023-24 for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council • Appendix 3 – Audit Certificate
8.0	Background Documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement Audit and Assessment Report 2022-23

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

30 November 2023

Dear Marie,

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

I have now certified the improvement audit for the Council with a standard, unqualified opinion. In terms of the assessment, I have concluded that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) during 2023-24. No statutory recommendations will be made to the Department this year in respect of the Council nor is there a requirement for a special inspection.

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

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

Yours sincerely,



Colette Kane
Local Government Auditor



Audit and Assessment Report 2023-24

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

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
30 November 2023

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

1. Key Messages

Summary of the audit

Audit outcome	Status
Audit opinion	Unqualified opinion
Audit assessment	The LGA has concluded that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) during 2023-24
Statutory recommendations	The LGA made no statutory recommendations
Proposals for improvement	The LGA made one new proposal for improvement

This report summarises the work of the Local Government Auditor (LGA) on the 2023-24 performance improvement audit and assessment undertaken on Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. We would like to thank the Chief Executive and her staff, particularly the Head of Performance Improvement for their assistance during this work.

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

Audit Opinion

The LGA has certified the performance arrangements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification. She certifies an improvement audit and improvement assessment has been conducted. The LGA also states that, as a result, she believes that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (the Council) has discharged its performance improvement and reporting duties, including its assessment of performance for 2022-23 and its 2023-24 improvement plan, and has acted in accordance with the Guidance.

Audit Assessment

The LGA has assessed whether the Council is likely to comply with its performance improvement responsibilities under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act). This is called the 'improvement assessment'.

In her opinion, the Council is likely to discharge its duties in respect of Part 12 of the Act during 2023-24 and has demonstrated a track record of improvement. The LGA did not exercise her discretion to assess and report whether the Council is likely to comply with these arrangements in future years.

Audit Findings

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

Status of the Audit

The LGA's audit and assessment work on the Council's performance improvement arrangements is now concluded. By 31 March 2024 she will publish an Annual Improvement Report on the Council on the NIAO website, making it publicly available. This will summarise the key outcomes in this report.

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

Management of information and personal data

During the course of our audit we have access to personal data to support our audit testing. We have established processes to hold this data securely within encrypted files and to destroy it where relevant at the conclusion of our audit. We can confirm that we have discharged those responsibilities communicated to you in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Other matters

Sustainability and Climate Change

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

Benchmarking

The issue of benchmarking with other councils has been part of the work plan for the Performance Improvement Working Group (PIWG) for several years and limited progress has been made on this matter. Progress on this issue would allow a broader range of functions to be compared to support councils with their General Duty to Improve, in accordance with section 84 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014. We acknowledge that delays to this process were faced because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Audit Scope

Part 12 of the Act provides all councils with a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. It sets out:

- a number of council responsibilities under a performance framework; and
- key responsibilities for the LGA.

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

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

The improvement audit

Each year the LGA has to report whether each council has discharged its duties in relation to improvement planning, the publication of improvement information and the extent to which each council has acted in accordance with the Department's Guidance. The procedures conducted in undertaking this work are referred to as an "improvement audit". During the course of this work the LGA may make statutory recommendations under section 95 of the Act.

The improvement assessment

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

The annual improvement report on the Council

The Act requires the LGA to summarise all of her work (in relation to her responsibilities under the Act) at the Council, in an 'annual improvement report'. This will be published on the NIAO website by 31 March 2024, making it publicly available.

Special inspections

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

3. Audit Findings

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

- General duty to improve;
- Governance arrangements;
- Improvement objectives;
- Consultation;
- Improvement plan;
- Arrangements to improve
- Collection, use and publication of performance information; and
- Demonstrating a track record of improvement.

These are not formal recommendations, which are more significant matters which require action to be taken by the Council in order to comply with the Act or Guidance. Proposals for improvement include matters which, if accepted, will assist the Council in meeting its performance improvement responsibilities. The LGA may follow up how key proposals have been addressed in subsequent years. We recommend however that the Council’s Audit Committee track progress on all proposals for improvement.

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

Detailed observations for the thematic areas can be found at Annex B. Within Annex B, we have also highlighted a number of prior year proposals for improvement that are yet to be implemented.

Thematic area	Issue	Proposal for improvement
Collection, use and publication of performance information	The targets included within the 2022-23 Performance Improvement Plan had not been included in the 2022-23 Self-Assessment Report. This makes it difficult to assess performance using the Self-Assessment Report as a standalone document.	Targets set out in the Improvement Plan should also be included within the Self-Assessment Report to enable the Self-Assessment report to be used as a standalone document.

4. Annexes

Annex A – Audit and Assessment Certificate

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

Certificate of Compliance

I certify that I have audited Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's (the Council) assessment of its performance for 2022-23 and its improvement plan for 2023-24 in accordance with section 93 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) and the Code of Audit Practice for local government bodies.

I also certify that I have performed an improvement assessment for 2023-24 at the Council in accordance with Section 94 of the Act and the Code of Audit Practice.

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

Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Local Government Auditor

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

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

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

- The Council has discharged its duties in relation to improvement planning, published the required improvement information and the extent to which the Council has acted in accordance with the Department's guidance in relation to those duties; and

- The Council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act.

Scope of the audit and assessment

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

For the improvement assessment I am required to form a view on whether the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act, informed by:

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

My assessment of the Council's improvement responsibilities and arrangements, therefore, comprised a review of certain improvement arrangements within the Council, along with information gathered from my improvement audit.

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

Audit opinion

Improvement planning and publication of improvement information

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

Improvement assessment

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

In my opinion, the Council has demonstrated a track record of ongoing improvement and I believe that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Act during 2023-24.

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

Other matters

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

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



Colette Kane
Local Government Auditor
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1EU

30 November 2023

Annex B – Detailed observations

Thematic area	Observations
General duty to improve	<p>The Council continues to develop arrangements to secure continuous improvement and has outlined within its Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24, its plans to achieve objectives and to attain continuous improvement.</p> <p>The Council published its Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24 on 5 July 2023 after gaining approval by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee. Approval was subsequently given by the Audit Committee and full Council in July 2023. The Performance Improvement Plan outlines the Council's improvement framework and provides a description of the Council's arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions evidenced by examples of self-imposed indicators and standards. Arrangements are constructed within the seven relevant criteria set out in legislation and the current functions prioritised and selected for improvement are aligned to its Corporate Plan and Community Plan. The objectives and associated projects are set across the whole functions of the Council.</p> <p>Throughout the year the Council has introduced a number of new arrangements, demonstrating commitment to secure continuous improvement. The Council has continued to embed the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. The Business Planning and Performance Management Cycle has been updated to demonstrate the integrated timeline of activity required to strengthen the alignment across the Framework and facilitate the development, implementation and review of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan, Directorate Business Plans, Service Plans and People Perform Grow. The monitoring, reporting and review arrangements at each level of the Framework continue to be mainstreamed and a</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>standard, consistent approach has been developed for performance reporting, using the red/amber/green status.</p> <p>The Council continues to use a Microsoft Excel based system to identify, measure and monitor performance improvement at all levels of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. This, however, is a very labour intensive method of collating performance information, and ensuring that it is robust and accurate. An electronic performance management system would be a much more efficient way of capturing the growing central repository of performance information. It would also provide a platform to demonstrate the alignment and interdependencies across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, create capacity for further analysis of the information and focus on key improvement areas across the organisation. This issue was raised in prior years as a proposal for improvement. The Council has developed and finalised the Outline Business Case for the electronic performance management system, which was approved by the IT Projects Group in July 2022. A paper was approved by the Senior Management Team (SMT) in December 2022, 'to commence with a procurement process for the implementation of a performance system'. In January 2023, a tender process was initiated with a four year licence for the system secured in February 2023. A date for the implementation of the system has now been agreed for November 2023. This observation has been included as a finding on a number of the previous s95 reports and it is clear that the Council are making efforts to address the issue.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that the Council has identified a number of self-imposed indicators to measure progress in various areas of work across the Council. The outcomes for these indicators are included within the 2022-23 self-assessment report. Whilst there is a comparison of 2022-23 outcomes with those for previous years and to Local Authority averages, no specific targets have been set by the Council for these indicators. This observation was included as a finding in last year's s95 report.</p>

Thematic area	Observations
Governance arrangements	<p>We noted that the Council has not set a target for certain measures of success for one of the 2023-24 performance objectives, e.g., "Number of trees planted on Council managed estate". This could make it difficult for the Council to assess improvement in future years.</p> <p>The Council has adequate governance and scrutiny arrangements for performance improvement and these arrangements are operating effectively. The Council has established a range of governance arrangements to assist in the delivery of the Performance Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The Performance Improvement Policy was adopted in November 2018 and was reviewed in October 2022 which concluded that the policy was fit for purpose. The policy provides the context for mainstreaming and embedding of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework across the organisation.</p> <p>The Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meets monthly and has overall responsibility for Performance Management including monitoring and scrutiny. However, whilst there was regular monitoring and discussion of Performance Improvement at this committee, we note that it is not a standing item on the agenda. The Council may want to consider whether it would be beneficial for this to be a permanent agenda item. The Audit Committee meets quarterly and is responsible for providing assurance that the performance arrangements are robust and effective. Regular monitoring will detect any barriers or challenges in achieving these desired outcomes at an early stage, creating more time to rectify any difficulties.</p> <p>The governance arrangements for the development, implementation and review of Directorate Business Plans have been strengthened over the past few years and included</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>within the respective plan. All Business Plans are considered, scrutinised and approved by the respective Standing Committee.</p> <p>A proposal for improvement was included in the previous year's s95 report recommending the use of Internal Audit to provide the Council with assurance on the integrity and operation of the Council's performance management framework, specifically in relation to data collation processes and data accuracy. An internal audit was carried out by ASM in Q4 2022-23 to validate the performance indicators in the Corporate Plan 2021-23, specifically in relation to the adequacy and effectiveness of the data collation processes across the Council's Directorates. ASM provided a satisfactory level of assurance, but identified a number of improvements that could be incorporated within the Council's systems which are currently being looked at and implemented where possible.</p>
Improvement objectives	<p>The Council has demonstrated that the 2022-23 improvement objectives are legitimate, clear, robust, deliverable and demonstrable. The improvement objectives cover a wide range of Council services and they relate to both improving Council functions and improving services for communities and citizens.</p> <p>The 2023-24 Performance Improvement Plan contains five objectives, three of which have been carried forward from the prior year. One of the objectives has been amended to reflect improvements achieved and where improvements are now required, while another has seen significant progress and is deemed to have been delivered and has therefore been replaced. The Council continues to review and refine improvement objectives and the associated actions, outcomes and measures every year as part of development of the Performance Improvement Plan. It is evident that improvement objectives have been developed in accordance with the strategic priorities of the Council as detailed in the Corporate Plan flowing from the Community Plan outcomes and in</p>

Thematic area	Observations
Consultation	<p>accordance with consultation with stakeholders. It is also clear that the objectives align with the strategic aspects of improvement.</p> <p>The Council has a statutory duty to consult key stakeholders on the proposed performance improvement objectives. An eight week consultation was undertaken from 20 March – 15 May 2023 and was approved by the Strategy, Policies and Resources Committee. The consultation process included the following mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic survey on the Council’s website and social media platforms, asking for stakeholder views on the proposed performance improvement objectives 2023-24; • Electronic survey on the Council’s online engagement platform ‘Speak NMD’; • Public notices in local newspapers; and • Engagement sessions took place between March and May 2023 with the following stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cedar Foundation User Forum; - Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Council; and - Newry and Mourne Senior Forum. <p>This process was supplemented by the feedback from the Residents Survey in 2022 and the consultation and engagement on the impact of COVID-19 in September 2020. The findings from the consultation and engagement feedback were used to inform, finalise and endorse the proposed performance improvement objectives 2023-24.</p> <p>Overall, the Council had a majority agreement from consultees on proceeding with the draft improvement objectives.</p>
Improvement plan	<p>The Council’s 2023-24 Improvement Plan was published on 5 July 2023 and complies with the Act and with DfC guidance. The document is available on the Council’s website along with a summary document “Our Performance, Looking Back, Going Forward”,</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>which sets out the key points from its Performance Improvement Plan (and its assessment of performance).</p> <p>The document contains a high-level description of the Council’s plan for discharging its statutory performance improvement duties. It includes a description of its annual performance improvement objectives, how these were selected, the key actions to be undertaken in order to achieve each of the objectives, how the progress of the key actions will be measured and what the outcomes for local communities and stakeholders will be. For each objective detail is also provided on how it is linked to the corporate plan priorities, community plan outcomes and Programme for Government outcomes, as well as detailing the alignment of each objective to the seven aspects of improvement.</p> <p>The plan also provides a summary of the Council’s consultation process and the outcome of that process, together with information on how citizens and stakeholders may propose new objectives during the year and how performance against the plan will be reported.</p>
<p>Arrangements to improve</p>	<p>The Council’s arrangements to secure the achievement of its improvement objectives, statutory indicators and to comply with the general duty to improve, are adequate.</p> <p>The Council is required to establish arrangements to deliver on its improvement objectives each year. The Department for Communities’ guidance states that the Council should be able to understand and demonstrate the impact of its arrangements for continuous improvement on the outcomes for citizens.</p> <p>Over the last number of years the council has made good progress with embedding performance improvement through the Council’s Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. This framework forms the basis on which the arrangements to secure achievement of the objectives, statutory indicators and general duty are based. It is evident that arrangements are becoming increasingly embedded within the overall</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>business planning and performance management cycle particularly with the introduction of Service Plans, the Corporate Performance Dashboard and continued development and roll-out of 'People Perform Grow.'</p> <p>The Council has produced objective delivery plans for the 2023-24 performance improvement success measures as a means to securing their achievement. These plans provide an overview of the rationale for selecting each Objective, alignment with the Corporate Plan, Community Plan and NICS Outcome Delivery Plan. They also include 'supporting actions', 'measures of success', time-scales, links to existing plans, strategies and programmes of work, human and financial resource allocation, governance arrangements, risk management implications and arrangements to mitigate risks and alignment with the seven strategic aspects of improvement. These plans have been developed in close liaison with the Senior Management Team and Corporate Management Team, and are supplemented by a range of supporting plans and strategies which provide further information regarding the arrangements the Council has put in place to achieve each PI Objective in place for 2023-24.</p>
Collection, use and publication of performance information	<p>The Council's publication of its 2022-23 Performance Improvement Self-Assessment Report by 30 September 2023 fulfils the Council's statutory requirement under Part 12, Section 92 of the Act.</p> <p>It presents the results of the Council's self-assessment in discharging its general duty under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 in relation to performance improvement arrangements. It sets out an assessment of the Council's performance against the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory performance indicators and standards for the functions of Economic Development, Planning and Waste for 2022-23 including comparison with previous four years; • Performance information on self-imposed indicators and standards collected during 2022-23; and

Thematic area	Observations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance information on all five of the Improvement Objectives from 2022-23. <p>Councils are also required to assess performance of any selected self-imposed indicators and standards, in relation to the general duty to improve. Legislation requires the Council to compare its performance for the 2022-23 year to that of previous years and as far as is practicable, report performance against other councils in the exercise of the same or similar functions. The 2022-23 self-assessment reports on a variety of self-imposed indicators. The Council has contributed to and used the APSE led National Performance Benchmarking Network. This assisted the Council in improving its ability to compare performance across a wide range of services and activities.</p> <p>In the 2022-23 self-assessment report, where both statutory and self-imposed targets had not been met or where performance had declined, the council has not included explanations of the reasons for this or any future plans for improvement in these areas. Additionally, the targets included within the 2022-23 Performance Improvement Plan had been excluded from the 2022-23 Self-Assessment Report.</p>
<p>Demonstrating a track record of improvement</p>	<p>The Council has disclosed its performance in relation to its statutory indicators including a comparison across four years, providing explanation and context to performance and made performance comparisons against national averages or other councils.</p> <p>Whilst two years of performance has been affected by COVID-19 the Council was able to demonstrate improvement in relation to all statutory performance indicators with the exception of planning indicators which are still falling short.</p> <p>One of the performance improvement indicators was considered fully delivered and was replaced in the 2023-24 performance improvement plan, demonstrating improvement.</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>The majority of the measures of success and supporting actions have been achieved in the 2022-23 year.</p> <p>Likewise, against self-imposed indicators, although the Council has not set targets, out of the 23 indicators, only one has been identified as an area of improvement with four showing reduced performance from the previous year.</p> <p>As a result, the Council appears to benefit from a clearly demonstrable track record of performance improvement.</p>

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

Certificate of Compliance

I certify that I have audited Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's (the Council) assessment of its performance for 2022-23 and its improvement plan for 2023-24 in accordance with section 93 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) and the Code of Audit Practice for local government bodies.

I also certify that I have performed an improvement assessment for 2023-24 at the Council in accordance with Section 94 of the Act and the Code of Audit Practice.

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

Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Local Government Auditor

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

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

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

- The Council has discharged its duties in relation to improvement planning, published the required improvement information and the extent to which the Council has acted in accordance with the Department's guidance in relation to those duties; and
- The Council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act.

Scope of the audit and assessment

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

For the improvement assessment I am required to form a view on whether the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act, informed by:

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

My assessment of the Council's improvement responsibilities and arrangements, therefore, comprised a review of certain improvement arrangements within the Council, along with information gathered from my improvement audit.

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

Audit opinion

Improvement planning and publication of improvement information

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

Improvement assessment

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

In my opinion, the Council has demonstrated a track record of ongoing improvement and I believe that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Act during 2023-24.

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

Other matters

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

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



Colette Kane
Local Government Auditor
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1EU

30 November 2023

Report to:	SPR Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 December 2023
Subject:	Theatre Conference Revised elevations.
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Conor Mallon, Director Economy Regeneration and Tourism
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Conor McGeown Strategic Capital Projects Manager

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

For decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	Seek Members approval for the formal submission of the amended elevations for the project to the planning department as appended to this report.
2.0	Background & Key issues
2.1	<p>Background</p> <p>Since the submission of the planning application in January 23 the Integrated Consultancy Team have been liaising with the Planning Department, Rivers Agency, Road Service and HED on several matters.</p> <p>A meeting was organised by the Planners on the 5 October 23 via Teams, whereby all the above authorities were in attendance. The primary concerns to be address revolved around HED and the Planners feedback on the proposals: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrate a dormer around the roof-level duct. • Illustrate a different external finish – i.e., white/off white brickwork instead of red. • To produce internal wall elevations showing services for other rooms (as email to Nicola Golden earlier today to clarify which rooms) • Illustrate all new fixture & fittings in blue on proposed architectural plans. • Illustrate other solutions to Bank Parade elevation, i.e., square instead of arched colonnade. • Illustrate the West elevation less visually horizontal, e.g., by introducing buttresses. <p>Following the meeting revised information was submitted to HED and the Planners on the 26 & 27 October for their consideration.</p> <p>On the 9th November we received the following feedback from HED (full correspondence available on request)</p>

	<p><i>“Hi Ben</i></p> <p><i>As promised, I tabled your amended elevations and rooftop duct alternatives at HED’s forum yesterday (re: your emails dated 27th and 31st Oct 2023 respectively).</i></p> <p><i>The consensus on the change to white brick is that it is an improvement as it ties in much better with the rendered and light stone buildings along Kildare St / Bank Parade / Sugar Island”.</i></p> <p>Summarising Paragraph from HED correspondence of the 9th November.</p> <p><i>To summarise, however, the amended scheme is considered more positive and more appropriate by HED. I will be presenting these changes to HBC this coming Fri 10th Nov and will feedback any additional comments afterwards.</i></p> <p>A design workshop to discuss the revised elevations was held on the 16th November 2023, all Councillors were invited.</p> <p>Following the recommendation of members at the workshop, the revised design was tabled at the NCCR Programme Board on the 8th December 2023 with board members agreeing that the new revised elevations are brought to the SPR for committee for approval.</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Recommendations</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>Members approve the recommendation of the NCCR Programme Board to formally submit the amended elevations for the project to the planning department, as set out in appendix 1 of this report.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Resource implications</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Consultant team to update and issue revised proposals. This will delay receipt of planning approval and increase the Consultants fee.</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</p>
<p>5.1</p>	<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>
<p>5.2</p>	<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>

	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	Proposal initiating consultation	
	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>	
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)	
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service	
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	If yes, please complete the following:	
	Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.0	Appendices	
	Appendix 1 – Proposed Revised Elevation	
	Appendix 2 – Existing Planning application submission elevations	
8.0	Background Documents	
	Email correspondence of 9 th November from HED available on request.	

Appendix 1 – Proposed Revised Elevations





Appendix 2 – Existing Planning Application Submission Elevations





Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 December 2023
Subject:	Mid Year Assessments of Directorate Business Plans 2023-24
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Marie Ward - Chief Executive Josephine Kelly – Director: Corporate Services
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Marie Ward - Chief Executive Josephine Kelly– Director: Corporate Services

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		Directorate Business Plans provide an overview of planned activity for the year ahead, and contribute to the delivery of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and other key plans and strategies. They form an essential part of the Council’s Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, which demonstrates how corporate objectives are cascaded across the organisation and provides assurance that they are being delivered.
2.0		Key issues
2.1		In order to improve transparency and accountability, and facilitate a performance led approach to business planning, each Directorate has undertaken an assessment of their Business Plan 2023-24, to provide an overview of progress between April-September 2023. This exercise forms an important part of the Council’s statutory responsibility to strengthen the way performance is monitored, reviewed and reported across the organisation.
2.2		The Mid Year Assessments of the Chief Executive’s Department Business Plan and Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan are outlined at Appendices 1 and 2.
3.0		Recommendations
3.1		To consider and agree the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Year Assessment of the Chief Executive’s Department Business Plan 2023-24 • Mid Year Assessment of the Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2023-24
4.0		Resource implications
4.1		There are no financial resource implications within this report.
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>

<p>5.2</p>	<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>
<p>5.3</p>	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> Consultation not required.</p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
<p>6.1</p>	<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>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Appendices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 1 – Mid Year Assessment of the Chief Executive’s Department Business Plan 2023-24 • Appendix 2 – Mid Year Assessment of the Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2023-24
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Background Documents</p> <p>Directorate Business Plans 2023-24</p>

Chief Executive's Department

Mid-Year Assessment Business Plan 2023-24



Introduction

This report provides an overview of progress in delivering the Business Plan 2023-24 for the Chief Executive’s Department between April – September 2023, across the following service areas:




- Business Transformation
- Evidence and Research
- Community Planning
- Democratic Services

The delivery of the Chief Executive’s Departmental Business Plan 2023-24 supports the achievement of all community planning outcomes and corporate objectives, specifically the corporate objectives outlined below. Performance has also been tracked using the legend below.

Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement





Advocate with others for the benefit of all people of the district


Legend

Status	
	Target or objective achieved / on track to be achieved
	Target or objective partially achieved / likely to be achieved / subject to delay
	Target or objective not achieved / unlikely to be achieved





Chief Executive’s Department

Key Office Objectives / Actions
<p>Community Planning – Work with partners to lead the implementation of the Community Plan and deliver better outcomes for local people.</p> <p>Evidence and Research – Develop a robust and reliable evidence base to underpin and inform future decision-making and policy development processes.</p> <p>Democratic Services – Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council.</p>



Community Planning			
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
Work with partners to lead the implementation of the Community Plan and deliver better outcomes for local people	Advocate with others for the benefit of all people of the district		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Support the Strategic Stakeholder Forum in progressing priority projects including social supermarkets, hardship funds distribution and asylum seeker provision.	Q1 onwards		Hardship fund ongoing. SSF have completed the planning stage of the NMD Social Supermarket and will launch on the 12 October 2023.
Facilitate three Community Planning Partnership Board meetings	Q1 onwards		Community Planning Partnership Board meetings held in June and September 2023 with a final meeting scheduled for January 2024.
Progress and review agreed actions within the community planning priority subgroups and identify future workstreams	Q1 onwards		Actions continue to be developed. Thematic summit for Health & Wellbeing (October 2023) will identify further priority areas under this theme.
Ensure representation of the Council and CPP at the Integrated Care Systems pilot within the Southern HSCT area.	Q1 onwards		Community Planning manager has represented Council throughout the pilot which has been extended until January 2024.





In collaboration with the Department for Communities, facilitate the 'People and Place' review for the District	Q1 onwards		On-going.
Facilitate the Thematic Summit for the Health and Wellbeing theme of the Community Plan.	Q3		
Prepare, progress and publish the Community Planning review and 2023 Statement of Progress.	Q4		
Work with Community Planning partners to progress the development and implementation of further Participatory Budgeting projects across the District	Q4		

Evidence and Research

OBJECTIVE Develop a robust and reliable evidence base to underpin and inform future decision-making and policy development processes	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Provide Geographic Information System (GIS) and data analytics support across the organisation	Q1 onwards		On-going
Work with internal departments to develop service specific GIS applications to support service delivery	Q1 onwards		On-going. For example the litter bin condition collector app
Facilitate effective stakeholder consultation and engagement through online surveys and the NMD Citizens Panel	Q1 onwards		Ongoing. Examples include Parks and Beaches Survey, Tourism Survey, Irish Language Strategy and Disability Action Plan
Update the evidence base documentation that underpin evidence based decision making such as: - Health Inequalities	Q1 onwards		.Post currently vacant. Need for work remains.

- Socio economic needs of people in rural areas. Key findings (NMDDC) census 2021.			
Prepare indicator update for the 2023 Community Plan Statement of Progress	Q3		
Develop a series of project scorecards for internal and community planning projects	Q3 - Q4		

Democratic Services			
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council	Advocate with others for the benefit of all people of the district		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Provide administrative and governance support to the Council, Standing Committees, PCSP/Policing Committee and ad-hoc Working Groups	Q1 onwards		Despite staffing issues the department continues to provide administrative and governance support to the Council and its Standing Committees, as well as the quarterly meetings of the Audit Committee. Action sheets for each meeting are instrumental in monitoring and tracking progress in implementing Council decisions. Hybrid meetings are continuing with the extension of the legislation until end of March 2024.
Organise the annual meeting of the Council and manage the appointment to positions of responsibility for the Council and Committees	Q1		The annual meeting of the Council took place in May 2023 following the local Government Elections and Elected Members have been appointed to designated positions of responsibility for 2023-24, as well as the four year term of Council in relation to political party representation.

Organise and publish the programme of Council and Committee meetings	Q1		The programme of Committee meetings for 2023-24 has been organised, agreed and published on the corporate website. It is always monitored for amendments.
Organise an induction, training and capacity building programme to support Elected Members in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities, including e-learning, Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Decision Time, Safeguarding, Data Protection and Performance Management	Q1		Induction training has been provided to new Councillors. The department continues to support Elected Members in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Elected Members also attended a range of conferences organised by NILGA, National Association of Councillors and APSE.
Commence preparations to re-attain the Elected Development Charter for NMDDC	Q2 – Q4		Re-attaining the Elected Member Development Charter has been delayed due to resource constraints and competing priorities.
Support the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson in carrying out their role(s) as First Citizen(s)	Q1 onwards		The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson have a designated resource within the Council to support them in fulfilling their role(s) as First Citizen(s). To date, the Chairperson has hosted

Measures of Success			
Measure	Q1/Q2 Actual	Status	Explanation
Compliance with the statutory Duty of Improvement			
Compliance with the statutory Duty of Community Planning			

<p>The number of events hosted on behalf of the Chairperson</p>			
<p>The number of official events attended by the Chairperson/Vice Chairperson</p>			<p>Between April-September 2023, the Chairperson attended 149 official events across the District. This included the 'Eco-Schools Green Flag', 'Ulster Rally', 'Skiffie Festival', 'Downtime Festival' as well as illuminating Council buildings to recognise World Heart Day, Baby Loss Awareness, Anti-Slavery Day, National Coming Out Day and Spina Bifida Awareness</p>

Corporate Services

Mid-Year Assessment Business Plan 2023-24



Introduction

This report provides an overview of progress in delivering the Corporate Services Business Plan 2023-24 between April-September 2023, across the following service areas:

- Finance, including Procurement and Performance
- Human Resources, including Safeguarding
- Corporate Planning and Policy, including Communications and Marketing
- Administration, including Legal Services, Compliance and Registration Services
- Information Technology
- Estates and Capital projects, including Health and Safety and Emergency Planning

The delivery of the Corporate Services Business Plan 2023-24 supports the achievement of all corporate objectives, particularly the following corporate objectives, and performance has been tracked using the legend below.

Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills


Enhance, protect and promote our environment








Legend

Status	
	Target or objective achieved / on track to be achieved
	Target or objective partially achieved / likely to be achieved / subject to delay
	Target or objective not achieved / unlikely to be achieved






Directorate objectives, supporting actions and measures of success









Key Office Objectives / Actions	
Administration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a Corporate Compliance Service • Deliver a Corporate Business Support Service and Registration Service • Provide a Corporate Legal Support Service 	
Corporate Planning and Policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a Corporate Planning and Corporate Policy function, including statutory duty compliance and Irish Language • Provide a corporate Communications and Marketing service including digital communications 	
Estates and Capital	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide adequate Emergency Planning and response • Provide appropriate Health and Safety and Insurance provision • Provide strategic asset strategy for Council 	
Finance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and efficient finance function • Ensure appropriate risk management arrangements in place • Provide an effective procurement service • Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements. 	
HR and Safeguarding	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to mitigate existing and emerging safeguarding risks, for both Council & Citizens • Provide a professional HR service all employment matters, including employee relations, resourcing and development • Contribute to the further development of future workforce skills 	
IT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a highly available, accessible, and secure IT environment to support Council services. 	



Administration			
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
Provide a Corporate Compliance Service	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Review and update the Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedure (COIPP) including implementing a new monitoring and evaluation process.	Q1 -Q4		Council ratified July 2023. Staff issued new COI form Summer 2023. New M&E process will be implemented Q3-4.




Review and update the Gifts and Hospitality Policy and Procedure (G&HPP) including implementing a new monitoring and evaluation process.	Q1 -Q4		It is anticipated work will progress during Q3-4.
Ensure SPRC receive an updated Access to Information and Records Management Policy and Procedure by their respective review dates.	Q1 -Q4		SPRC approved ATIPP June 2023 and RMPP August 2023.
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
Deliver a Corporate Business Support Service and Registration Services	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Design and implement service standards for all activities delivered by the corporate business support service	Q2		Work to be undertaken in Q3.
Provide improved corporate Complaints Management through implementation of and support for the NIPSO Model Complaints Handling Procedure	Q3		MCHP implementation plan in place and training planned for staff and dedicated users
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
Provide a Corporate Legal Support Service	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Complete a Retention and Disposal review of historical legal files extracting information which requires to be retained (R/BS and store review)	Q4		Ongoing as and when resources allow.
Work with Evidence Section to ensure all relevant Council assets are included on the ARC GIS system	Q1 -Q4		Work ongoing and a number of additional assets captured on ARC GIS
In line with Council's Digital First policy move as far as possible to electronic files versus paper-based files.	Q1 -Q4		Electronic Files opened in Legal Administration section- Paper files opened for some/not all matters, as required.




Corporate Planning and Policy			
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
Provide a corporate planning and policy service	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Development of the Corporate Plan 2023-2027	Q3		Following SMT consideration on 26 September 2023 of the draft strategic objectives, key actions and performance measures a draft Corporate Plan is to be prepared during Q3. Draft to be considered by SMT, SPR and then to be subject to a 12-week public consultation.
Ensure Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties compliance	Q4		Ongoing implementation including annual statutory reporting to ECNI and DAERA during the reporting period.
Review Corporate Consultation and Engagement Framework	Q4		To be undertaken during Q4.
Development of Equality Action Plan 2023-2027	Q2		12-week public consultation completed, analysis of responses undertaken and updated plan agreed at September Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee.
Development of Disability Action Plan 2023-2027	Q2		12-week public consultation completed, analysis of responses undertaken and updated plan agreed at 14 September 2023 Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee.
Development of Community Wealth Building Action Plan	Q2		Draft CWB Action Plan has been prepared for consideration by CMT/SMT during Q3.



Development of Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027	Q2		12-week public consultation completed, analysis of responses undertaken and updated plan to be considered at 12 October 2023 Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee (Q3).
Review Irish Language Bursary Scheme	Q3		Initial discussion at 27 September 2023 Irish Language Strategy Working Group with further consideration during Q3.
OBJECTIVE Provide a corporate Communications and Marketing service	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Provide a Press Office service to include raising awareness of Council corporate priorities, services, facilities and responding to media enquiries across local, regional, national and special media	Q1 -Q4		69 press releases issued to the media and posted on the corporate social media channels and website. 222 media enquiries responded to within agreed timeframes.
Continue to manage, deliver and develop the Council's corporate social media channels	Q1 -Q4		797,544 recorded visits (hits) to the Council's corporate website 68,872 public / stakeholder users registered to corporate social media (Facebook likes, Twitter followers) 992 social media notifications to the public / stakeholder users via corporate social media (eg posts, tweets etc)
Contribute to work on the development of a new corporate website with regards to content management (when required)	Q1 - Q4		Awaiting corporate direction on next steps.





Renew ESPO Framework for Advertising Solutions	Q3		On target for renewal in December 2023.
Award tender for Media Monitoring Services	Q2		New contract awarded in September 2023.
Review, update and implement Year 2 of Corporate Digital Communications Action Plan 2022-2024	Q1 – Q4		Ongoing implementation.
Develop a new Digital Advertising Staff Toolkit	Q1 – Q4		On target to publish Q3.
Finalise NMDDC Emergency Communications Plan (ECP)	Q2		On target. New ECP drafted and will be tabled for Committee/Council in Q3.
Establish the Roving Reporter approach as an integral resource in the C/M Service Plan	Q3		On target to confirm within the C/M Service Plan.
Develop a calendar of significant PR and digital opportunities to support the Chairperson 2023/2024	Q1 – Q4		On target. Updated PR Plan presented to SMT and CMT on a monthly basis.
Support the Chief Executive’s Office in the development and delivery of signature projects 2023/2024	Q1 – Q4		On target. C/M support provided pre-during-post for signature corporate events.



Estates and Capital			
OBJECTIVE Provide adequate Emergency Planning and Response	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Enhance, protect and promote our environment		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Update of the Council Emergency Plan following review of JESIP Doctrine, including training of staff and elected members. Dependent on SMT/CMT structures in place	Q3		Agreed by SMT in October 2023. Presented for noting to SPR in November 2023 to include promotion of upcoming Elected Member training in November.
Ensure debrief of emergencies/ incidents (internally & externally) as appropriate to capture learning – within 6 weeks of end of response phase.	Q1 -Q4		Ongoing as required


Including - SMT/ CMT/ EPIG/ LG Resilience/ Statutory Agencies			
OBJECTIVE Provide adequate Health & Safety and Insurance provision	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Enhance, protect and promote our environment		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Review of current H&S Policy and communication to staff to accurately reflect mechanisms for effective consultation & communication (governance & operational)	Q3		Discussed at October Corporate H&S Committee meeting. To be raised at CMT in relation to communication mechanisms in place currently and agree new structures going forward. To be discussed and agreed at next Corporate H&S Committee meeting (Jan 2024) to allow for the Corporate H&S Policy to be agreed for April 2024. Committee TOR will also be updated
Proactive investigation and review of reported employee lost-time accidents working with relevant line manager and escalation of issues to SMT/CMT as required.	Q1 – Q4		Timescale is dependent on when employees return to work.
Continue to contribute to the library of e-learning H&S modules available for staff in line with Corporate H&S Training Framework/ Matrix – in conjunction with Learning & Development Staff (HR). SHEP request direct access to update content	Q1- Q4		Awaiting new contract to be awarded by HR for e-learning platform. Will update/ contribute as required.
OBJECTIVE Provide strategic Estate Management and Capital Project support to Council	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Enhance, protect and promote our environment		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress

Deliver approved capital projects through design, procurement and delivery stages and provide regular and updated reports to departments	Q1 - Q4		Currently 37 Capital Projects. 5 Projects at the Construction Stage 32 Projects in Design, Planning or Procurement Stage
Advise and assist departments in the identification of projects for consideration for inclusion in the capital programme, including advising of projected costs, programme, risks and procurement strategy.	Q1 - Q4		Active involvement in the OBC stages with the relevant departments. Obtaining planning information and third party costs to inform incept stages with actual costs and programme timelines.
Continuation with the identification and disposal of all surplus assets, including the direct liaison with directorates and external organisations	Q1 - Q4		This is an ongoing exercise. An update of the Surplus Asset Register was presented at August SFWG & August SPR to members.











Human Resources			
OBJECTIVE Provide a professional HR service on all employment matters, including employee relations, resourcing and development and safeguarding.	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Continue to embed People Perform Grow across all services, supported by training and support to managers, employees and teams.	Q1 - Q4		A number of PPG Roadshows and PPG Leaders training sessions have been held and will continue in Q3.
In conjunction with the recognised trade unions, review existing industrial relations structures, with a view to developing revised arrangements as required.	Q2 - Q4		Joint agreement reached on 3 rd party independent assistance and commitment to do. Negotiations continue towards reaching a Conciliation Agreement, through the LRA




Finalisation for approval of the Outline Business case for HR Systems and review of existing HR Processes with stakeholder input	Q3 - Q4		V1 & V2 OBCs have been produced. Once approved, stakeholder engagement etc can commence
In conjunction with the Equality and Evidence & Research Teams, work with key stakeholders across the organisation to develop Affirmative Action measures to examine opportunities to promote NMDDC as an equal opportunities' employer.	Q1-Q4		Significant work and analysis undertaken and continues to be a work in progress, with close engagement with the ECNI. Further information awaited from ECNI in order to conclude
Implementation of Tier 3 PFF management structures.	Q2 – Q3		Further appointments have been made. Programme still in process.
Support and protect everyone in our District from harm by working in partnership with other bodies, to implement and promote broader prevention measures, thereby continuing to mitigate existing and emerging safeguarding risks, for both Council & Citizens.	Q1 – Q4		Achieved through a range of activities and both external and internal engagement and capacity building. ONUS audit recently completed in order to retain Safe Employer Accreditation and currently completing SBNI Safeguarding Audit



Information Technology			
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide a highly available, and secure IT environment to support Council services	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement	
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Replace the Council's Computing Platform to improve its stability and resilience and operate it as a firm foundation to support future business requirements.	Q4		
Continue to develop and test response plans and capabilities in line with CAF	Q1 – Q4		



(Cyber Assessment Framework) and other relevant standards.			
Continue to increase user awareness and resilience through the provision of training, advice and testing.	Q1 - Q4		
OBJECTIVE Provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress


Finance			
OBJECTIVE Provide an efficient finance function	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
P2P Procedures (as per IA report) – including Bank Details verification	Q3		To Be presented to January 2024 SP&R
Training on PECOS – recap and for new staff	Q3		TBC
Account Receivable Procedures including TW (as per IA report)	Q2		To Be presented to December 2024 SP&R
Review of Payroll Process (standardisation off both sites)	Q3		TBC
Payslips on CINTRA	Q3		Completed in Q1
New Capital Procedure – Business Cases and financial management	Q1		Presented to SMT to be presented to SP&R pre December 2023
Quarterly Capital Management Reports detailing spend	Q1		Monthly reports to sent to AD of Finance and Performance and AD of Capital and Estates
OBJECTIVE Ensure appropriate risk management arrangements are in place	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		

Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Review of Whistleblowing / Raising Concerns procedures	Q3		Will be brought to January 2024 Audit Committee
Review of Fraud Response Plan	Q3		Will be brought to January 2024 Audit Committee
Fraud Risk Assessment to be completed	Q2		Will be brought to April 2024 Audit Committee
Training for new Audit Committee Members	Q2		Completed in October 2023
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
Provide an effective procurement service	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Procurement policy to be updated to create an interim policy document pending full review upon implementation of new procurement legislation.	Q4		To be completed by March 2024
Procurement team to receive official training on new legislative framework prior to its implementation.	Q4		Training has not been released to date
Continue to update and maintain Contract Register but make the Contract Register an internal resource available to all staff in the 'R' drive.	Q2		Contracts Register now on the 'r' drive.
Continue to monitor developments regarding Social Value in Procurement and move to implementation once legally practicable	Ongoing		ongoing
Develop a MultiQuote quick guide for staff and host a virtual training session	Q3		Completed in October 2023
Explore options to enhance visibility of Council tender processes, for example through working with	Q4		Further work to be completed with Elcom and Marketing.

Elcom to enable MultiQuote competitions to be advertised on E-tenders NI and E-tenders.ie.			
Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements		ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN	
		Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement	
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Prepare and publish the Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24	Q1		The draft performance improvement objectives were endorsed through the public consultation and engagement process and published in the Performance Improvement Plan, which was made available on the corporate website before 30 September 2023, in line with the amended statutory timescale for 2023-24.
Prepare and publish the Assessment of Performance 2022-23	Q2		The Assessment of Performance 2022-23 provides an overview of progress against the 'measures of success' in the Corporate Plan 2021-23 and Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23, and was published before 30 September 2023, in line with the statutory timescale. The summary document entitled 'Our Performance Looking Back, Going Forward' was also published on the corporate website.
Facilitate the Performance Audit and Assessment and implement the 'proposals for improvement' put forward by the Local Government Auditor	Q2 – Q3		The NIAO's Audit and Assessment Tool has been completed and all evidence compiled and ready to be sent to the Auditor when the process commences in Q3 2023-24.
Develop the 2024-25 performance improvement	Q3 – Q4		

objectives, in line with the Corporate Plan			
Strengthen the alignment across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and co-ordinate the business and service planning process	Q1 onwards		The alignment across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework continues to strengthen through the Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan, Directorate Business Plans, Service Plans and People Perform Grow which enables teams and employees to identify their contribution to achieving strategic outcomes and objectives.
Implement the new electronic Performance Management System and embed the system through training of relevant officers	Q1 – Q2		A company has been appointed to implement the electronic performance system with a start date agreed for November 2023. This action will be implemented now in Q3/Q4 2023-24.

Measures of Success																
Measure	Target	YTD Actual	Status	Explanation												
Administration: 95% of responses to requests for information provided within statutory timeframe	95%	94%		Figures as at 13 October:- <table border="1" data-bbox="885 1317 1369 1590"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Count of Deadline Met</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Status</th> <th>Y/N</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pending</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>349</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>371</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Count of Deadline Met		Status	Y/N	No	2	Pending	20	Yes	349	Total	371
Count of Deadline Met																
Status	Y/N															
No	2															
Pending	20															
Yes	349															
Total	371															
Finance: Pay 90% of invoices to suppliers within 30 days	90%	94%		94% of invoices paid within 30 days for first 6 months of the 2023/24 year.												
IT: 97.5% System "UP" Time	97.5%	99%														
HR:	N/A															

<p>People, Perform, Grow rolled out across the organisation</p>				
<p>Estates and Capital Projects: 90% of staff to receive training on the new Health & Safety Policy</p>	<p>90%</p>			
<p>Corporate Planning and Policy: 90% of media requests for information responded to within agreed timeframes</p>	<p>90%</p>	<p>93%</p>		<p>Received 222 media enquiries in the first six months of 2023/24 year. Response timeframes are appropriate to the nature of the request eg: operational – provide clarification, comment or update on subject matter to meet with daily/weekly publications; or detailed response – requiring access to information held on file, historical information etc. to meet with ICO guidance.</p>

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 December 2023
Subject:	Off-Street Car Parking: December 2023 Charging Arrangements
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Andrew Cassells, Director of Sustainability & Environment
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Gary McCurry, Duty Manager Off-Street Car Parking Function

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

For decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>The recent flooding events across the District, have had a significant negative impact on a number of businesses, particularly in the City of Newry and Downpatrick town.</p> <p>Local representation, both political and commercial, has given expression to the removal of Saturday parking charges in the affected settlements, believing this would provide assistance to boost local trade on the run up to Christmas, when hopefully, the majority of businesses inundated with flood water would have re-opened for trade.</p> <p>At a Party Leaders Meeting held on the afternoon of Wednesday 6 December 2023 it was agreed to suspend the car parking charges on the three remaining Saturdays in the run up to Christmas 2023; that is 9, 16 and 23 December 2023.</p> <p>Following the meeting the Director of Sustainability and Environment contacted all Members by email; no objections were received.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	Free Car Parking was arranged for Saturday 9 December 2023 although given the short notice it was not possible to have signage erected in advance although social media feeds did broadcast the information. It is anticipated that signage will be in place in advance of Saturday 16 th December 2023.
2.2	The present tariff in all 11 charged Council controlled Off-Street car parks is 50p/hr. Tariffs are a dual-purpose mechanism, firstly to raise revenue to cover costs associated with the entire suite of car parks, both charged and non-charged; Secondly and equally as important, as a traffic management tool to maximise parking actions within town/city centre car parks, which in turn permits optimum space turnover, thus positively impacting footfall and assisting trade.
2.2	The 50p/hr tariff is designed to promote short stay parking and conversely deter long stay parking achieving maximum parking bay turnover. If tariffs are suspended

	for all users, then effectively the car park becomes stagnant, hence those wishing to visit shops end up with no available parking capacity, thus trade suffers as a consequence.
2.4	Data from recent surveys clearly shows that space availability is the number one priority for town/city centre motorists. People are prepared to pay a reasonable tariff for parking, providing they can find a space with minimal inconvenience. The removal of tariffs for all users would thus prevent this.
2.4	This scheme will clearly not solve the substantial problems being encountered by local businesses following the extreme weather event. The gesture will have a limited time bounded impact and may be of benefit to some participants more than others.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	That members endorse the decision made at the Party Leaders meeting on Wednesday 6 December 2023 to suspend car parking charges in the Councils pay and display off-street car parks on Saturday 9, 16 and 23 December 2023.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	An estimated loss of income of up to some £7,500 plus the cost of signage.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision.</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation. <input type="checkbox"/></p>

5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation.</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service.</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>None</p>
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p>
	<p>None</p>

Report to:	Strategy Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 th December 2023
Subject:	Conference Attendance
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Josephine Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Sarah Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)

For decision	x	For noting only	
1.0			Purpose and Background
1.1			In considering the rates process, officers had been looking at the Conference budget available for Members and suggested refocusing the budget to ensure it was available for Elected Member Development.
2.0			Key issues
2.1			There were a number of conferences held by organisations such as National Association of Councillors and APSE that Elected Members requested to attend on a regular basis.
2.2			The budget for conferences was finite and was being utilised to attend conferences that may not be focusing on the issues that impact upon Council.
2.3			Council's Elected Member Development Charter had lapsed and officers were renewing efforts to reattain the Charter. To do this an element of Elected Member Development was required which would utilise the budget set aside.
2.4			Party Reps Members discussed the issue at its meeting on 6 th December stating that attendance at conferences should only be on the basis of benefit and learning for Council. Remote attendance at conferences should be investigated for those Members that wished to avail of same.
3.0			Recommendations
3.1			Party Reps recommended to refocus the Conference budget to reflect Elected Member Development and ensure any attendance at conferences was on the basis of benefit and learning for Council.
4.0			Resource implications
4.1			N/A
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>	
6.0	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> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
7.0	Appendices	
	N/A	
8.0	Background Documents	

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting
held on Friday 8th September 2023, 10.30am
Hybrid: Council Chamber, Newry & MS Teams**

In Attendance:**Programme Board Members**

Councillor Declan Murphy - Chair
Councillor Cadogan Enright
Councillor Aidan Mathers
Councillor Michael Savage

NMDDC Officials

Conor Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Josephine Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Jonathan McGilly, Assistant Director - Regeneration
Paul Tamati, Assistant Director - Leisure and Sport
Andy Patterson, Assistant Director – Economy, Growth & Tourism
Conor McGeown, Strategic Capital Projects Manager
Conor Woods, Capital Projects Manager
Tracie McLoughlin PA, ERT Dept.

External Members: **Neil Richardson, Dept for Communities**

Apologies: **Cllr Doire Finn**
Paula Moan DfC

NCCR/169: Welcome and Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr D Finn and P Moan DfC.

**NCCR/170: Verbal Update on Newry Civic Centre Design Hub Workshop held
30th August 2023**

Mr C Mallon advised a chamber design workshop for Councillors took place on 30th August. He said visual display boards were available for members to view and were currently located in the area outside the Boardroom, Monaghan Row. He advised the Boards would remain in Monaghan Row until ERT Committee on 11th Sept, then relocated as follows:

12th Sept to 18th Sept: Downshire
 19th Sept to 22nd Sept: Monaghan Row
 25th Sept to 3rd Oct: Downshire

Mr Mallon asked that members view visuals and provide feedback on proposals for consideration within the design.

NCCR/171: Project Board Minutes / Action Sheets

- Newry City Park Project Board Action Sheet 8th Aug 2023
- Newry City Park Stakeholder Group Meeting Action Sheet 28th Aug 2023
- Newry City Centre Regeneration Project Board Minutes 17th Aug 2023

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Aidan Mathers, seconded by Councillor Michael Savage it was agreed to 'Note' the Project Board Minutes & Action Sheets.

NCCR/172: Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Minutes 30th June 2023

Members were asked to review minutes and proposed amendments by Councillor C Enright.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Michael Savage, seconded by Councillor Aidan Mathers it was agreed to accept the Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting 30.06.2023 and the amendments proposed by Councillor C Enright.

NCCR/173: Newry Town Hall Temporary Closure

Mr A Patterson asked members to consider an extension to the timeline of closure of Newry Town Hall to allow users to programme and prepare in advance for 2024 events. Mr Patterson outlined the delay in closing the Town Hall will have minimal impact on the current development programme

Cllr A Mathers said it was important that officials liaise with users and actively seek alternative options for users when the works commence. He said plans need to be in place before April next year.

Mr M Mallon confirmed there is ongoing communication with the user groups individually and collectively. He advised a meeting with all user groups will be arranged next week.

Cllr M Savage concurred with Cllr Mathers comments and said meetings with groups will be helpful to allay their fears that productions will be impacted and asked that Newry Youth Performing Arts Group are included in discussions.

Mr A Patterson confirmed all groups will be invited to attend a meeting next week to ensure all users are kept up to date with proposals.

Cllr Savage asked what are the plans for the Boardroom in Newry Town Hall. Mr C McGeown advised that consultation with HED has been carried out and the Boardroom will be upgraded but historical features will remain. Mr Mallon advised that detail on all proposals for the project are available on the planning portal.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor A Mathers, seconded by Councillor M Savage it was agreed to 'Note' the contents of the report and approve recommendation within to "extend closure date of Newry Town Hall to end of April 2024 to accommodate local arts groups annual programme of events".

EXEMPT ITEMS

NCCR/174: Project Manager Update

C McGeown referred members to Item 6 in the Agenda pack and provided an overview and update on the Regeneration Project.

- Budget:
 - Total ICT costs incurred to date were circa £1.7m which included surveys, reports, consultant fees, compensation events and planning fees.
 - The public realm aspect of the works are reimbursable from BRCD.
 - NCCR/BRCD Budget indicated of circa £42m as per approved OBC
 - RIBA Stg 3 report and estimate received for the Civic Hub and stage 3 interim report and estimate for the Theatre Conference. Currently awaiting finalised Stage 3 + report for the Theatre Conference which should be issued in the next few weeks.
 - Summary table of estimates for each project attached at Appendix 1
- Risk Management:
 - Procurement Strategy reviewed and agreed for Civic Hub and omitted from register
- Proposed Programme Timetable:
 - Theatre / Conference
Construction Commence Apr 2024 / Completion Jan 2026
 - Civic Hub
Construction Commence Apr 2024 / Completion Aug 2025
 - Newry City Park
Works Commence July 2025 / Completion May 2027
 - Grade A Office Provision
Dates to be confirmed

- Newry City Park
 - CPD review of OBC carried out and project costs assessed. Awaiting DoF approval
 - 3 stakeholder meetings undertaken.
 - CPD currently reviewing tender documentation.
- Grade A Office
 - ongoing.

In relation to Risk Management, Cllr Savage noted the construction cost concerns and asked if there are any other potential risks eg legal fees. Mr C McGeown said all risks were being managed and any additional costs would be recorded in the Project Manager's compensation events reports at Programme board meetings

Mr McGeown advised civic hub visuals would be provided in due course to enable staff to view layout etc.

Cllr Savage thanked the Chief Executive and Officials on clarity regarding the Peace Plus Funding and also thanked officials with the progression of the projects.

Cllr Enright queried if consultation with Department of Finance in relation to legal requirement to compute "lifetime cost of ownership" on commercial new builds to show compliance for NZEB as opposed to BREEAM. Mr Mallon advised as part of the BRCD governance CPD are acting as advisors to DfC and all submissions made as part of the BRCD project have received necessary approvals. Cllr Enright asked for assurances that Council have "jumped through this hurdle". Mr Mallon confirmed he would revert back to Cllr Enright.

The Chairman enquired if the benefits to the local construction economy had been discussed. Mr Mallon confirmed the number of jobs created both during construction and operation are included within the OBC, this would be shared with members.

Cllr Savage said Council should encourage support for recruitment as businesses were finding it challenging to recruit in the construction sector.

Mr N Richardson advised a social value plan for the development will be included as part of the project and local recruitment would be important.

Mr Richardson confirmed meeting is scheduled with DfC and Council next week to discuss progress with the Grade A Office grant and potential areas to explore.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor M Savage, seconded by Councillor A Mathers, it was agreed to:

a) Note the updates on the:

- **Civic & Regional Hub**

- Theatre/Conference Facility
- Public Realm
- Newry City Park
- Grade A Office Space

- b) Officials to seek confirmation from Department of Finance on the Lifetime Cost of Ownership on this projects and update Cllr C Enright.
- c) Officials to report back on jobs created as part of the project to the next Programme Board meeting

NCCR/175: Compensation Events

Mr McGeown outlined detail within the report in regard to compensation events accepted and implemented. Mr Mc Geown advised that compensation events are reviewed and arithmetically checked before being accepted and implemented. Mr Mallon advised that they are a contractual requirement and are assessed in accordance with the contract.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor C Enright, seconded by Councillor D Murphy it was agreed to 'Note' the contents of the Compensation Events Report.

NCCR/176: Date for Future Meetings

Meetings agreed as follows:

Tuesday 7th November 2023 2:00pm
 Thursday 11th January 2024 11.00am
 Tuesday 5th March 2024 11.30am
 Friday 3rd May 2024 10.30am

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

**Approved at Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting held
8 December 2023.**

**For Noting at the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee 14th December
2023**