June 10th, 2026

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Thursday, 11th June 2026** at **6:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre.**

Committee Membership 2026-27

Councillor C Bowsie **Chairperson**

Councillor O Hanlon **Deputy Chairperson**

Councillor Pete Byrne

Councillor Martin Hearty

Councillor Roisin Howell

Councillor Tierna Howie

Councillor Aurla King

Councilor Cathal King

Councillor Aidan Mathers

Councillor Declan McAteer

Councillor Siobhan O'Hare

Councillor Henry Reilly

Councillor Michael Rice

Councillor David Taylor

Councillor Jill Truesdale

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held 14 May 2026

For Approval

Attachment: SPR-Action Sheet arising from 2026 05 14.pdf ***Page 1***

4.0 To Agree Start Times for Strategy, Policy & Recources Committee Meetings 2026-2027

For Decision

Attachment: SPR schedule 26-27.pdf ***Page 4***

For Discussion/Decision

5.0 Directorate Business Plans

For Decision

Attachment: SPR Cover Report Directorate Business Plans.pdf ***Page 5***

Attachment: Appendix 1 - CX-CS Directorate Annual Assessment of Business 2025-26.pdf ***Page 8***

Attachment: Appendix 2 - Chief Executive - Corporate Services Business Plan 2026-27.pdf ***Page 29***

6.0 Unreasonable Behaviour Policy Report

For Decision

Attachment: SPRC Unreasonable Behaviouir Policy Report June 2026 - vf.pdf ***Page 52***

Attachment: Appx 1 - June 2026 NMDDC Final Policy Unreasonable Behaviour - vf (002).pdf ***Page 55***

7.0 Annual Complaint Handling Report

For Decision

Attachment: Annual Complaint Handling Report.pdf ***Page 64***

Attachment: Annual Complaint Handling Report - Appendix 1.pdf ***Page 67***

8.0 Greenway Feasibility and Design

For Decision

Attachment: SPR Report - Greenway Feasibility and Design Warrenpoint to Newcastle.pdf ***Page 74***

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

9.0 Meigh Community Centre

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 (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: 2. SPR - Meigh CC Works - 01.06.2026.pdf ***Not included***

10.0 Sustainability & Environment Resources

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 (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: SPR Committe Report - SE Resources - 11.06.26.pdf ***Not included***

11.0 Strangford & Lecale Landscape Connections

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 (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: SPR Report - Strangford and Lecale Landscape Connections.pdf ***Not included***

12.0 Finance Structure

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 (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: SPR Report - Finance and Performance Structural Review - final.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Appendix 1 - Proposed Finance and Performance Structure.pdf ***Not included***

1.0 Year End Management Accounts 2025/26

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 (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: Management Accounts 202526 - SPR - Final.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Appendix 1 Management Accounts by Directorate for period ending 31st March 2026.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Appendix 2 Management Accounts by Assistant Directorate for period ending 31st March 2026.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Appendix 3 Management Accounts by Expense code for period ending 31st March 2026.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Appendix 4 Payroll report for period ending 31st March 2026.pdf ***Not included***

14.0 Communications Resources

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 (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: 11.06.2026 SPRC Communications Resources.pdf ***Not included***

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

15.0 Land & Property Services NI Valuations 2026

For Information

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

Attachment: LPSNI Valuations 2026.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: NMDDC Terms of Engagement 31 March 2026.pdf ***Not included***

16.0 Newry Town Hall Closure

For Information

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

Attachment: SPR Report - NCCR - Newry Town Hall Closure.pdf ***Not included***

17.0 NIAO Audit Fee

For Information

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

Attachment: NIAO Audit Fee.pdf ***Not included***

18.0 Kilkeel Leisure Centre Update

For Information

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

Attachment: Kilkeel Leisure Centre.pdf ***Not included***

For Noting

19.0 Minutes of NCCR Programme Board Meeting 23/03/2026

For Information

Attachment: Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Mtg 23.03.2026.pdf ***Page 78***

Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Cllr Callum Bowsie

Mr Caolain Boyd

Fionnuala Branagh

Cllr Jim Brennan

Lorraine/Emma Burns/McParland

Mr Gerard Byrne

Cllr Pete Byrne

Cllr Philip Campbell

Cllr William Clarke

Cllr Laura Devlin

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Killian Feehan

Cllr Doire Finn

Cllr Conor Galbraith

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Cllr Valerie Harte

Mr Conor Haughey

Cllr Martin Hearty

Cllr Roisin Howell

Cllr Tierna Howie

Ms Catherine Hughes

Cllr Jonathan Jackson

Cllr Geraldine Kearns

Miss Veronica Keegan

Mrs Sheila Kieran

Cllr Aurla King

Cllr Cathal King

Ms Elaine Kirk

Cllr Mickey Larkin

Cllr Niall Lawlor

Cllr David Lee-Surginor

Cllr Alan Lewis

Cllr Oonagh Magennis

Mr Conor Mallon

Cllr Aidan Mathers

Cllr Declan McAteer

Jonathan McGilly

Mr Colm McGrath

Mr Martin McKibbin

Ms Tracie McLoughlin

Cllr Kate Murphy

Cllr Declan Murphy

Cllr Selina Murphy

Sinead Murphy

Ms Patricia Murtagh

Cllr Siobhan O'Hare

Mr Andy Patterson

Cllr Áine Quinn

Cllr Henry Reilly

Cllr Michael Rice

Ms Alison Robb

Cllr Michael Ruane

Mr Conor Sage

Mrs Amanda Smyth

Conor Smyth

Donna Starkey

Sarah Taggart

Cllr David Taylor

Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly

Ms Sinead Trainor

Cllr Jill Truesdale

Mrs Marie Ward

Cllr Helena Young

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken / progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet? Y/N
ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – Thursday 14 August 2025					
SPR/135/2025	Business Case – Residual Waste Contract	It was agreed that the requested rates per tonnage be brought back before Members as discussed.	S Murphy	**New rates not available until Procurement Process completed Update tabled at March 26 meeting.**	N
ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – Thursday 20 April 2026					
SPR/058/2026	Castlewellan Forest Park NLHF Project	It was also agreed that a paper be brought to the next SPR Committee outlining the compensation events and the reporting structures for the project.	C Boyd	**Ongoing**	N
ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – Thursday 14 May 2026					
SPR/070/2026	Action sheet of SPR meeting held 23/04/2026	It was agreed to note the action sheet	M Ward	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/071/2026	LDP Revised Timetable	The following was agreed: • The draft revised timetable at Appendix A. • That following approval by resolution of the Council, the Planning Department liaises with the PAC prior to submitting the revised Timetable to the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) for agreement. • That following agreement of the revised Timetable by DFI, that it be made available and published in accordance with regulation 8 of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. It was also agreed that the Council would write to the Planning Performance Improvement Forum requesting that it consider LDP development across the North and examine what legislative changes could be introduced to improve and shorten the LDP timeline.	J McGilly J McGilly	**Agreed** **Ongoing**	Y N
SPR/072/2026	Performance Improvement Plan 26/27	The Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27 (including the five performance improvement objectives), Consultation and Engagement Report 2026-27 and Objective Delivery Plans 2026-27 were	G Byrne	**Agreed**	Y

		agreed.			
SPR/073/2026	Cullyhanna Community Centre	It was agreed to approve the procurement and appointment of a contractor to replace the roof at Cullyhanna Community Centre as detailed within the report.	A Robb	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/074/2026	Changing Pavilion at Milltown, Warrenpoint	It was agreed to approve the procurement and appointment of a contractor for the replacement of the existing changing pavilion at Milltown, Warrenpoint, with a new modular facility, ensuring compliance with health and safety standards and supporting continued use of the site by local sports clubs.	C Haughey	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/075/2026	Fitness Equipment, Kilkeel Leisure Centre	It was agreed to approve the purchase of fitness equipment for Kilkeel Leisure Centre as detailed within the report.	C Haughey	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/076/2026	Cranfield Sea Defences	It was agreed to approve the provision in the capital programme a budget to progress the Cranfield Sea Defences project and progress with ICT appointment.	C Mallon	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/077/2026	Membership of Ulster Scots Ulster British Working Group	It was agreed to note the recommendation of the Party Leaders meeting on 5 March 2026, and that the membership of the Ulster Scots Ulster British Working group be the same allocation as that of the Councillor's Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group.	E Kirk	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/078/2026	Disposal of Land at Annalong	It was agreed to accept a surrender of the Lease from the tenants and grant a new lease to the existing tenants of the land outlined in magenta and green on the map attached to the officer's report for a term of 99 years from 2026 at a peppercorn rent subject to revised Departmental Consent.	E Kirk	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/079/2026	Planning - Professional Support	It was agreed to approve the engagement of the Professional Planning support to the Development Management Team for 1-2 days support per week over an initial period of 6 months.	C Mallon	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/080/2026	Direct Award Contract for IT Solutions	It was agreed to approve the continuation of use of the DAC process for the contracts at Appendix 1 until 31st March 2030 in order to enable continued use of existing solutions which are deeply embedded into operational practices.	G Ringland	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/081/2026	AVCs	It was agreed to approve the re-contracting of the AVC provider via the Portsmouth Framework for a period of 36 months, with the option to extend for a further 12 months. The proposal delivers a net saving	G Byrne	**Agreed**	Y

		to the Council and to officers who avail of the scheme.			
SPR/082/2026	Release of Easement at Diasy Hill, Newry	It was agreed to release the Easement detailed in the officer's report for the market value.	E Kirk	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/083/2026	Request for Wayleave at Market Street Car Park, Downpatrick	It was agreed to enter into a Wayleave Agreement with Northern Ireland Electricity Networks over the lands knows as Market Street Car Park, Downpatrick.	E Kirk	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/084/2026	Licence at Foreshore Bloodybridge, Newcastle for bird survey	It was agreed to grant the British Trust for Ornithology a licence permitting them to carry out a survey of the Kittiwakes from May 2026 until September 2026 and then again from May 2027 to September 2027 in respect of a strip of the foreshore at the Bloody Bridge, Newcastle, subject to the consent of the Crown Estate.	E Kirk	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/085/2026	Licence for Glenree House	It was agreed to sign and seal the licence with the Department of Finance for the occupation of premises at Glenree House, Springhill Road, Newry as detailed on the map shaded grey attached to the officer's report for the amount detailed in the report, together with the accompanying Licence for Works to facilitate preparation for Council occupancy.	E Kirk	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/086/2026	Fleet Replacement Programme	It was agreed to approve the fleet replacement programme 2026/27	S Murphy	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/087/2026	Camlough Lake Recreational Hub	It was agreed to progress the appointment of the preferred contractor (supplier 4) to deliver the Camlough Lake Recreational Hub Facility subject to the completion of standstill period.	C Boyd	**Agreed**	Y
SPR/088/2026	SFWG Minutes of Meeting held 7 May 2026	It was agreed to note the minutes	C Mallon	**Agreed**	Y

STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date	Time	Location
11 June 2026	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
13 August 2026	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
17 September 2026	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
15 October 2026	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
12 November 2026	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
17 December 2026	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
21 January 2027	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
11 February 2027	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
11 March 2027	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre

Report to:	Strategy Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	11 June 2026
Subject:	Directorate Business Plans
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Marie Ward – Chief Executive
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Marie Ward – Chief Executive

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. As Directorate Business Plans are directly aligned to the achievement of the Corporate Plan, they remain fairly high level, and do not necessarily capture the core, business as usual activity that is undertaken by individual departments. Alternatively, they provide an insight into the key, overarching objectives, supporting actions and measures of success for each Directorate in the year ahead, whilst setting the context for the development of departmental Service Plans which are operational in nature.
2.0	**Key issues**
2.1	**Assessment of Directorate Business Plans 2025-26** 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 2025-26. These assessments provide an overview of the performance of each Directorate and have been used to influence the development of the 2026-27 Business Plans. This exercise is an important part of the Council's statutory responsibility to strengthen the way performance is monitored, reviewed and reported across the organisation. The assessment of the Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2025-26 are attached at Appendix 1
2.2	**Directorate Business Plan 2026-27** Directorate Business Plans 2026-27 outline the key objectives, actions and measures each Directorate will work towards and are aligned to the objectives within the Corporate Plan 2024-27. Directorate Business Plans 2026-27 are now aligned to the new organisational structure following completion of the planning for the future process. The Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2026-27 is attached at Appendix 2.

2.3	It should be noted that further improvements to the business planning process are underway across the Council, particularly in relation to cascading corporate objectives in a meaningful way to employees through the introduction and roll-out of Service Plans and People Perform Grow. This process seeks to improve the use of performance measures at all levels of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and create a clear 'line of sight' between the work of individuals, teams and departments, and how they contribute to the achievement of Directorate Business Plans and the Corporate Plan.
3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	To consider and agree the: • Assessment of the Chief Executive's - Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2025-26 • Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2026-27
4.0	**Resource implications**
4.1	There are no financial resources implications within this report.
5.0	**Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)**
5.1	***General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes*** It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	***Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision*** Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
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 ☐

	Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐
	Rationale: Consultation not required.
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 ☒ No ☐ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☒
7.0	**Appendices**
	• **Appendix 1** – Assessment of the Chief Executive's -Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2025-26 • **Appendix 2** – Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2026-27
8.0	**Background Documents**
	• Directorate Business Plans 2025-26 • Assessments of Directorate Business Plans 2024-25

Chief Executive - Corporate Services

Annual Assessment
Business Plan 2025-26

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

Introduction

This report provides an overview of progress in delivering the Chief Executive-Corporate Services Business Plan 2025-26 across the following service areas:

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

The delivery of the Chief-Executive -Corporate Services Business Plan 2025-26 supports the achievement of all corporate objectives, particularly the following corporate objectives, and performance has been tracked using the legend below.

Deliver sustainable services
Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future
Represent the voice of the district with our partners

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

DIRECTORATE OBJECTIVES
People & Legal • Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations. • Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations. • Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives. • Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery. • Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities. • Provide efficient and professional HR services ensuring compliant integrated and sustainable services for all stakeholders that meet the corporate priorities and contractual obligations of the Council. **Finance and Performance** • Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations. • Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making. • Support the development of a performance culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements. **Digital and Communications** • Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service. • Provide a highly available, accessible and secure Information Technology environment to support Council services. • To provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated and compliant for all stakeholders that meet the corporate objectives. **Capital and Procurement** • Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district. • Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives. **Democratic Services** • Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council. • Provide support for Project Delivery at a Corporate Level

Alignment to the Corporate Plan

ALIGNMENT TO THE CORPORATE PLAN	
Directorate Objective	**Corporate Plan Objective**
Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations.	• Deliver sustainable services
Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations.	• Deliver sustainable services
Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.	• Deliver sustainable services
Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery.	• Deliver sustainable services
Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities.	• Deliver sustainable services
Provide efficient and professional HR services ensuring compliant integrated and sustainable services for all stakeholders that meet the corporate priorities and contractual obligations of the Council.	• Deliver sustainable services
Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations.	• Deliver sustainable services
Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making.	• Deliver sustainable services
Support the development of a performance culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements.	• Deliver sustainable services
Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service.	• Deliver sustainable services
Provide a highly available, accessible and secure Information Technology environment to support Council services.	• Deliver sustainable services
To provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated and compliant for all stakeholders that meet the corporate objectives.	• Deliver sustainable services
Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.	• Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future
Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and	• Deliver sustainable services

underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives.	
Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council.	• Represent the voice of the district with our partners
Provide support for Project Delivery at a Corporate Level.	• Deliver sustainable services

Assessment of Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan

Corporate Services			
CXS1: Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations			
95% of responses to FOI/EIR/DP requests for information provided within statutory timeframes	Target **Actual**	Sep 25 95% 100% * 1	Mar 26 95% 95%
Notes:	**1** There has been a greater than 95% ICO performance criteria		
Continue to review and update current Retention and Disposal practices across Council, implementing methods to manage the review, retention and disposal of records. (SCC)	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Continue to review and update the Corporate Privacy Notice to help everyone understand how Council processes personal data	Target **Progress**	Mar 26	
CXS2: Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations.			
Continue to deliver a Professional Registration Service providing quality customer service standards for the delivery of births, deaths and marriages.	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Continue to embed NIPSO policies, procedures and monitoring arrangements to ensure compliance with NIPSOs statutory Model Complaints Handling Procedure.	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
CXS3: Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.			
Continue to review Retention and disposal of historical legal files extracting information which requires to be retained. (SCC) (Q4)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 Green	
Continue to work with Evidence Section to ensure all relevant Council assets are included on the ARC GIS system.	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green

		Sep 25	Mar 26
In line with Council's 'Digital First' approach continue to minimise physical paper and progress towards electronic files versus paper based files where possible (SCC)	Target **Progress**	 Green	 Green
CXS4: Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery.			
Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties implementation	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green * 1	Mar 26 Green * 2

Notes:	**1** Ongoing action in relation to implementation of Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan which included nine policy equality screenings and twelve rural needs impact assessments completed during the half-yearly reporting period and policy reviews (specific Corporate Policy Section Policies namely the Bilingualism Policy, Policy on Naming Council facilities, Policy on new Artworks/Sculptures on Council property and the Policy on requests to plant a tree on Council property were reviewed during the reporting period). All policy owners were emailed on 12 August 2025 advising of policies to be reviewed by the end of the 2025-2026 financial year. **2** Ongoing action in relation to implementation of Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan which included twenty-eight policy equality screenings, twenty-nine rural needs impact assessments completed, and eighteen policy reviews were completed during the 2025-2026 reporting period.

		Sep 25	Mar 26
Progress the use of the Irish language in civic life	Target **Progress**	 Green * 1	 Green * 2

Notes:	**1** Ongoing implementation of Irish Language Strategy which included review of the Bilingualism Policy, managing Irish Language Bursary Scheme, verification of two projects funded through the Irish Language financial assistance theme, undertaking Irish Language translations, and six-monthly report on progress tabled for consideration at the Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group meeting on 17 September 2025. **2** Ongoing implementation of Irish Language Strategy which included review of the Bilingualism Policy, launch and management of the Irish Language Bursary Scheme, verification of projects funded through the Irish Language financial assistance theme, undertaking Irish Language translations, and six-monthly reports on progress tabled for consideration at the Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group meeting on 17 September 2025 and 3 March 2026.

		Sep 25	Mar 26
Corporate Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties compliance	Target **Actual**	Yes Yes * 1	Yes Yes * 2

Notes:			
1 Five-year review completed and report and revised Equality Scheme considered at Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 12 June 2025. Five year review report and revised Equality Scheme forwarded to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 22 July 2025. Council's Equality Consultees emailed and advised the five-year review had been undertaken. Report and revised Equality Scheme is available for download from Council website. Quarterly Policy Screening reports for January - March 2025 and April - June 2025 tabled for noting at Strategy, Policy and Equality meetings held on 17 April 2025 and 14 August 2025 respectively. Quarterly Policy Screening reports and equality screenings are available on website for download. Council's equality consultees were emailed advising the Quarterly Policy Screening Report can be accessed from the Council website. NMDDC Annual Progress Report on implementation of both the Section 75 and Disability Duties for the period 2024-2025 noted at 14 August 2025 Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and forwarded to Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 21 August 2025. NMDDC Annual Monitoring Report on the implementation of the Rural Needs Act for period 20242025 noted at 15 May 2025 Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and forwarded to DAERA on 16 June 2025.			
2 Five-year review completed and report and revised Equality Scheme considered at Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 12 June 2025. Five year review report and revised Equality Scheme forwarded to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 22 July 2025. Council's Equality Consultees emailed and advised the five-year review had been undertaken. Report and revised Equality Scheme is available for download from Council website. Quarterly Policy Screening reports for January - March 2025, April - June 2025, July - September 2025 and September December 2025 tabled for noting at Strategy, Policy and Equality meetings held on 17 April 2025, 14 August 2025, 16 October 2025 and 22 January 2026 respectively. Quarterly Policy Screening reports and equality screenings are available on website for download. Council's equality consultees were emailed advising the Quarterly Policy Screening Report can be accessed from the Council website. NMDDC Annual Progress Report on implementation of both the Section 75 and Disability Duties for the period 2024-2025 noted at 14 August 2025 Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and forwarded to Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 21 August 2025. NMDDC Annual Monitoring Report on the implementation of the Rural Needs Act for period 2024-2025 noted at 15 May 2025 Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and forwarded to DAERA on 16 June 2025.			
CXS5: Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities			
Continue to support Directorates to implement PPG for all staff across the organisation	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Continue to develop a Leadership Charter demonstrating our core values and an implementation action plan for roll out	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Review statutory and mandatory training for the organisation, identifying key timelines	Target **Progress**	Sep 25	

Refresh, Rebrand and Relaunch the eLearning portal	Target Progress	Sep 25	
People Perform Grow, rolled out across the organisation	Target Progress	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
CXS6: Provide efficient and professional HR services ensuring compliant integrated and sustainable services for all stakeholders that meet the corporate priorities and contractual obligations of the Council.			
Support Directorates to ensure staff absence is effectively managed to ensure appropriate and timely support for staff	Target Progress	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Continue to develop an Industrial Relations Framework and agree a workplan with Joint Trade Union Side	Target Progress	Mar 26	
Procure new systems and develop a project plan for new ways of working and efficient use of resources	Target Progress	Mar 26	
Continue to review and analyse current employment data and develop KPIs	Target Progress	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Continue to identify ways to increase the number of people from disadvantaged communities who are employed by council (CWB)	Target Progress	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Implement and maintain a recruitment plan	Target Progress	Mar 26	
CXS7: Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations.			
Pay 90% of invoices to suppliers within 30 days (CWB)	Target Actual	Sep 25 90% 90% * 1	Mar 26 90% 90% * 2
	Notes:	**1** average of 90% across first 2 quarters. details published on the Council Website **2** 90% of invoices paid within 30 days from 1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026	

Unqualified financial audit opinion (Q4)	Target **Actual**	Mar 26 Yes **Yes**
Notes:	1 https://www.newrymournedown.org/media/uploads/statement_of_accounts_nmddc_year_ended_31_march_2025.pdf Unqualified Audit Opinion for the 2024/25 Financial Statements, provided in September 2025.	
Standardisation of Payroll Procedures Q4	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 working ongoing **Amber**
Notes:	1 Work ongoing	
Payslips to be communicated electronically, where possible	Target **Actual**	Mar 26 Yes **Yes**
Notes:	1 All payslips which can be communicated electronically have been progressed	

Accounts Receivable Procedures to be finalised, including Debt Recovery and Newry BID (Q4)	Target **Actual**	Mar 26 Yes **Yes**
Notes:	1 Accounts Receivable procedures updated in January 2026. Newry BID Agreement updated in April 2026.	
Commence service review of General Finance/Accounts Q4	Target **Actual**	Mar 26 Yes **Yes**
Notes:	1 SMT Approval in March 2026. Paper to presented to SP&R in June 2026 along with consultation with the Trade Unions.	
Review and update Financial Regulations of Council Q4	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 Action to be completed in 2026/27 **Red**

Notes:	**1** Action to be completed in 2026/27		
Business Case to be developed and approved for new Finance Solution and procurement to be progressed (Q4)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 Business Case Approved. **Green** * 1	
Notes:	**1** Business case approved by ITPG on 14 May 2026.		
CXS8: Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making.			
Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment (Q4)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 Not completed - to be carried forward **Red** * 1	
Notes:	**1** Not completed - to be carried forward to 2026/27 Business Plan.		
NIAO Effective Audit and Risk Assurance Committees best practice guides templates to be completed	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 completed **Green** * 1	
Notes:	**1** Tabled at the May 2025 Audit Committee - see attached.		
Audit Module to be embedded and all recommendations to be uploaded as reports are finalised.	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 completed **Green** * 1	
Notes:	**1** All 2024/25 Audits now uploaded and historic audits. Officers are updating progress and progress updates are brought quarterly to Audit Committee to inform Members of Progress.		
CXS9: Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements			
Compliance with statutory Duty of Improvement	Target **Actual**	Mar 26 Yes **Yes** * 1	

Notes:	**1** The Performance Improvement Plan was published before the statutory deadline of 30 June 2025 and the Assessment of Performance was published before the statutory deadline of 20 September 2025. NIAO concluded that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) during 2025-26		
Continue to strengthen the alignment across Business Planning, Community Planning and Performance Management Framework and coordinate the business and service planning process	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green * 1	Mar 26 Green * 2
Notes:	**1** Presented on performance and business planning at the SMT/CMT Business Planning Day held in April. Assisted and advised on the development of Directorate Business Plans. Attended a number of Department Business Planning Days, presenting on the Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and assisting in the Business Planning process. The Head of Performance continues to coordinate and embed the business and service planning process. **2** Lead the co-ordination of the 6 month review of Directorate Business and Service Plans which were reviewed and approved by senior management and committee members in December / January 2025-2026.		
Unqualified performance audit opinion	Target **Actual**	Mar 26 Yes * 1	
Notes:	**1** NIAO certified the improvement audit for the Council with an unqualified opinion in November 2025.		
CXS10: Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service			
90% of media requests for information responded to within the agreed Procedures	Target **Actual**	Sep 25 90% 97% * 1	Mar 26 90% 96% * 2
Notes:	**1** Target met. **2** Target met. Total media enquiries: 416		
Review and assessment of the corporate website, including Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to inform future requirements. (Q4)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 Green * 1	
Notes:	**1** Corporate website is compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.2 Level AA).		

Review of Media Policy and Procedures. (Q4)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 Green * 1	
Notes:	**1** Policy review undertaken and will be included in the Policy Review report for SPRC, April 2026. Procedures reviewed and consultation with SMT and CMT undertaken.		

Review of Social Media and Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures. (Q4)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 Green * 1	
Notes:	**1** Policy review undertaken and will be included in the Policy Review report for SPRC, April 2026. Procedures reviewed and consultation with SMT and CMT undertaken.		
Support the communications and marketing of principle projects within the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027 (Newry City Centre Regeneration, Downpatrick Regeneration, Belfast Region City Deal Projects, Warrenpoint Health and Wellbeing Centre, Local Development Plan Strategy and organisational transformation and delivery of sustainable services	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green * 1	Mar 26 Green * 2
Notes:	**1** Ongoing support provided by the Communications Team as appropriate for individual projects. **2** Ongoing support provided by the Communications Team as appropriate for individual projects. 68 projects serviced adhering to the Strategic Approach Q1 - Q4.		
CXS11: Provide a highly available, accessible and secure Information Technology environment to support Council services			
97.5% System "UP" Time	Target **Actual**	Sep 25 97.5% 100%	Mar 26 97.5% 100%
Procure SOC/SIEM/XDR Cyber Security Service	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green * 1	Mar 26 Green * 2
Notes:	**1** Service procured and in implementation phase. **2** Procurement complete. Implementation has been realigned to run in parallel with the Technology Refresh project.		
Progress the User Access Management Action Plan (Q3)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 * 1	

Notes:	**1** Progressing to target.		
Undertake Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) baseline assessment and develop action plan to begin journey to compliance (Q4)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 Focus has been on Cyber Risk	
Develop a new IT Policy Suite in line with audit recommendations following CAF guidelines (Q3)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 * 1	
Notes:	**1** Policies and Procedures approved in December 2025		
Procure IT Equipment for Technology Refresh Project (Q4)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26	
4 Targeted Cyber Security Training Modules in Year	Target **Actual**	Sep 25 2 **6**	Mar 26 4 **8**

4 Targeted Phishing Simulations in Year	Target **Actual**	Sep 25 2 **3**	Mar 26 4 **4**
4 Services with established Teams/SharePoint Data and Collaboration Repositories	Target **Actual**	Sep 25 2 **2**	Mar 26 4 **4**
3 Facilitated M365 User Clinics	Target **Actual**	Sep 25 1 **0** * 1	Mar 26 3 **4**
Notes:	**1** Focus has been on the development of appropriate policy and procedures.		

CXS12: Provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated, and compliant for all stakeholders, ensuring adherence to good governance and alignment with corporate objectives.

Progress the implementation of the Departmental Structural Changes (Phase 1) (Q4)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 Green	
Notes:	**1** Approved structures; Digital Transformation Manager in post, March 2026. Project Officer recruitment underway.		
Progress approved IT Transformation Programme Projects	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Notes:	**1** Progress of approved IT Transformation Programme projects reviewed and advanced through two ITPG Working Group meetings (1 April & 22 July), ensuring adherence to established governance and oversight requirements. **2** Progress of approved IT Transformation Programme projects reviewed and advanced through ITPG Working Group meetings (16 October, 4 December & 3 February), ensuring adherence to established governance and oversight requirements.		
Advise and assist Departments in the identification of projects for consideration in the Digital Transformation Programme	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Notes:	**1** Ongoing support is provided to Departments in identifying and shaping projects for inclusion in the Digital Transformation Programme, including the development of Project Proposals for CMT consideration and the preparation of Project Mandates and Business Cases for submission to the ITPG. **2** Ongoing support is provided to Departments in identifying and shaping projects for inclusion in the Digital Transformation Programme, including the development of Project Proposals for CMT consideration and the preparation of Project Mandates and Business Cases for submission to the ITPG.		
Identify Policy gaps in relation to Digital Transformation (Q4)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 Green	
Notes:	**1** AI Policy and Procedure gap identified. AI Adoption Working Group to be established 26/27 to progress with DTM.		

CXS13: Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.

Deliver approved Capital projects through design, procurement and delivery stages providing regular updates and reports to directorates, project boards and committees. (CWB) (SCC)	Target / **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Notes:	**1** Regular Monthly reporting to SMT. Strategic projects in accordance with governance arrangements and Terms of Reference have monthly reporting at Project Boards & Programme boards to internal officers, members and external oversight bodies and funders. **2** Regular Monthly reports to SMT & Monthly reports to all project boards and programme boards. These have all been uploaded and recorded on decision time.		
Advise and assist departments in the identification of projects for consideration in the capital programme, including advising of project feasibility, costs, programme risks informing decision making and funding applications (CWB)	Target / **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Notes:	**1** Capital Project department advise & assist other directorates in the identification of viable projects and assisting with business case development, financial assistance assessment of projects in programmes unit, and cost reporting throughout all stages of the project lifecycle. **2** The Capital Projects Department supported directorates in identifying viable projects, developing business cases, assessing financial assistance requirements with the Programmes Unit, and providing cost reporting throughout the project lifecycle		
Continuation with the identification and disposal of council surplus assets, including the direct liaison with directorates, legals and external organisations. (CWB) (SCC)	Target / **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 75% planning approval on surplus assets identified for disposal Green
Notes:	**1** Ongoing. The Surplus Assets register will be brought to SFWG in November for review by members and decisions where required. Estates team actively managing the planning applications, transfer, sale and disposals in accordance with council policies and the D1 process. **2** Continue to progress the identification, assessment, and disposal of surplus council assets, working closely with directorates, Legal Services, and external organisations to support efficient asset management, compliance, and the delivery of NMDDC Surplus Asset Disposal		
Capital projects programme and budget in line with agreed parameters and Council policy.	Target / **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Notes:	**1** All projects are delivered in accordance with approved budgets and parameters. Any overspend or additional budget required is brought back to members for their review and approval as decision makers. **2** Managed the Capital Projects Programme and associated budgets in line with agreed parameters, governance arrangements, and Council policy / Council Standing Order requirements.		

CXS14: Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives			
Procurement policy fully implemented	Target / Progress	Sep 25: Green [1]	Mar 26: Green [2]
Notes:	1 Procurement Policy updated and ratified at October Council meeting 2 New Compliant Procurement Act - Procurement Policy updated and ratified at October Council meeting		
To undertake in-depth training on the Procurement Act 2023	Target / Progress	Sep 25: Green [1]	Mar 26: Green [2]
Notes:	1 Ensured In-depth training on new Procurement Act 2023 for Procurement team was completed before legislation came into effect including Certified E-learning from cabinet office and Procurement law workshops. Promote Knowledge Drops corporately to enhance awareness of new legislation. Three Cohorts of approx.60 staff have completed the 2 days CIPS Masterclass in UK Public Procurement. This was delivered by a Procurement expert and covered in depth training on the new Procurement Act and the Changes in legislation. Further training can be delivered as required. 2 Ensured In-depth training on new Procurement Act 2023 for Procurement team was completed before legislation came into effect including Certified E-learning from cabinet office and Procurement law workshops. Promote Knowledge Drops corporately to enhance awareness of new legislation. Three Cohorts of approx.60 staff have completed the 2 days CIPS Masterclass in UK Public Procurement. This was delivered by a Procurement expert and covered in depth training on the new Procurement Act and the Changes in legislation. Further training can be delivered as required.		
Increasing supplier outreach through attendance at Meet the Buyer type events and premarket engagement. (CWB) (SCC)	Target / Progress	Mar 26: Amber [1]	
Notes:	1 Working internally to develop pipeline of upcoming procurement opportunities. These will be collated and presented in 26/27 at event and also published on website / social media.		
Enhancing visibility of NMDDC Tender opportunities in the marketplace through social media campaign. (Q4) (CWB) (SCC)	Target / Progress	Mar 26: Amber [1]	

Notes:	**1** Working internally to develop pipeline of upcoming procurement opportunities. These will be collated and presented in 26/27 at event and also published on website / social media.		
In line with the revised Procurement Policy, develop updated procedures and review systems. (CWB) (SCC)	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Notes:	**1** New Procurement & Contract Management Procedures completed. Contracts Register has been reviewed and updated and is reported on internally. Meetings have been held internally with IT Dept. on migrating Contracts Register onto SharePoint and hosting this on dedicated Procurement Intranet System. **2** New Procurement & Contract Management Procedures completed. Contracts Register has been reviewed and updated and is reported on internally. Meetings have been held internally with IT Dept. on migrating Contracts Register onto SharePoint and hosting this on dedicated Procurement Intranet System.		
Democratic Services			
CXS15: Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council			
The number of events hosted on behalf of the Chairperson / Vice Chairperson	Target **Actual**	Sep 25 10 10	Mar 26 10 12
Notes:	**1** Chairperson has hosted youth groups, schools and various other organisations. **2** Chairperson hosted the Annual Civic Awards, held receptions for various organisations and charities and hosted primary school councils in the Council chambers.		
The number of official events attended by the Chairperson / Vice Chairperson	Target **Actual**	Sep 25 100 143	Mar 26 100 156
Notes:	**1** Chairperson, Deputy or other Committee Chairs deputising attended 143 events up to 30 September 2025 **2** Chairperson, Deputy or other Committee Chairs deputising attended 156 events up to end March 2026.		
Establish a Corporate Support Role on behalf of all Directorates across Council (CPP)	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green

Notes:	1 We have developed initial frameworks and guidance to ensure the role can effectively support cross departmental projects, improve communication, and provide consistent advice and assistance to Council teams. Consultation has been undertaken with relevant staff to ensure the role aligns with operational requirements and supports the Council's Corporate Plan priorities 2 Corporate Support Role has been initiated across all Directorates in Council.		
To digitally transform the operations of Democratic Services by adopting modern, secure, and accessible technologies (Q3)	Target **Progress**	Mar 26 Amber	
Notes:	**1** Ongoing process throughout the year. Have been involved in Microsoft 365 project meetings to discover new ways of working. Work is continuing to progress with IT. New issue arose regarding accessibility on website which is currently being worked through.		
Chief Executive			
CXS16: Provide support for Project Delivery at a Corporate Level			
Progress the delivery of the project assigned	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Notes:	1. 30th September Phase 1 target reached for the relocation of staff and services from Monaghan Row Site. **2.** 31st March - relocation project progressing and ongoing target date for full relocation 30 June 2026.		
Ensure the project delivery complies with Council's Governance arrangements	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Notes:	**1** Complete **2** All governance arrangements complied with.		
Ensure projects are delivered within agreed budgets and timelines	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green	Mar 26 Green
Notes:	**1** Targeted timeline reached. Delivered within agreed budget. **2** Timelines for relocation being met. Budget spend minimal.		

Liaise with all departments to ensure collaborative approach for corporate projects	Target **Progress**	Sep 25 Green * 1	Mar 26 Green * 2
Notes:	**1** All departments consulted throughout the project period. **2** All departments/trade unions/employees communicated to and continue to be through all stages for the relocation project.		

Chief Executive / Corporate Services Directorate

Annual Business Plan 2026-27

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

Contents

		Page
1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Background and Context	3
3.0	Purpose and Values	6
4.0	Challenges and Opportunities	7
5.0	Cross-Cutting Themes and Actions	8
6.0	Directorate Objectives and Alignment to the Corporate Plan	10
7.0	Performance	21
8.0	Organisation and Office Structure	21
9.0	Financial Information	21
10.0	Governance Arrangements	22

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Chief Executive / Corporate Services Directorate is responsible for supporting the organisation to achieve the strategic objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan 2024-27. The Directorate is responsible for the overall management of the Council's staff, finances and elected members and plays a key role in providing professional advice and guidance to support and improve the services provided. The Directorate provides services directly to the public through corporate communications and marketing, as well as providing registration, digital and telephony, emergency advice and customer services.

1.2 The core responsibilities of the Department are:

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

2.0 Background and Context

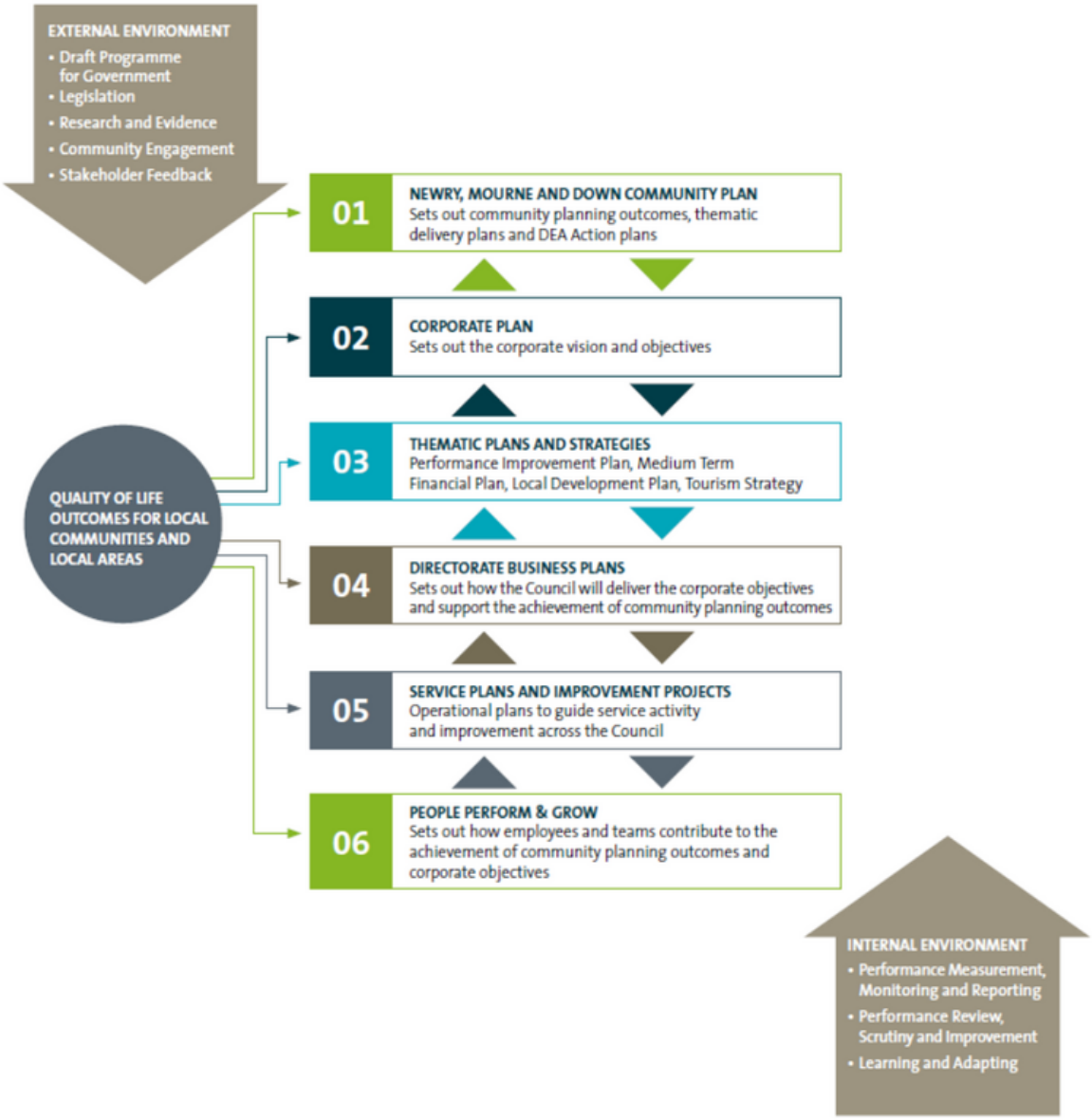
2.1 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan is developed within the context of the Community Plan and Corporate Plan 2024-27 and Performance Improvement Plan. The Community Plan sets out the long-term outcomes for the District, based on the needs and aspirations of local people. The Corporate Plan sets out the key strategic objectives for the Council between 2024-27, and how it will contribute to achieving the community planning outcomes. The Performance Improvement Plan highlights the improvements stakeholders can expect to see through the annual performance improvement objectives, which are clearly aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives.

2.2 The Community Plan and Corporate Plan are cross cutting and strategic in nature. They guide all activity within the organisation, as well as the subsequent allocation of resources, and sit within a hierarchy of plans, as outlined in the 'Business Planning and Performance Management Framework' (Figure 1).

2.3 The Business Planning and Performance Management Framework drives and provides assurance that the Council is delivering its corporate vision and priorities, whilst securing continuous improvement in the exercise of functions. It provides a mechanism to join up and cascade the various plans and strategies across the organisation, demonstrating how employees

contribute to achieving community planning outcomes and corporate priorities, for the ultimate benefit of the citizens we serve.

Figure 1: Business Planning and Performance Management Framework



2.4 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan provides an overview of the key operational activities for the coming year. These activities are explicitly linked to corporate objectives and coupled with 'business as usual' service delivery, provide clear direction for all employees within the Directorate (Figure 2). Directorate Business Plans are supported by Service Plans and the 'People Perform and Grow' initiative.

2.5 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan is published annually and is the basis upon which performance is managed and reviewed by full Council, the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Senior Management Team.

Figure 2: Chief Executive/Corporate Services Alignment across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework



1

COMMUNITY PLANNING OUTCOMES

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



2

CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future
- Deliver sustainable services
- Represent the voice of the district with our partners



3

DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLAN
SRO Director of Corporate Services

- Legal & People
- Finance & Performance
- Digital and Communications
- Capital and Procurement
- Democratic Services

3.0 Purpose and Values

3.1 Purpose

3.1.1 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Directorate's primary purpose is to provide the resources and support required to the organisation to enable delivery of the strategic (corporate) outcomes for the Council. As a result, the bulk of Directorate activity is aligned with the Council's strategic objective:

- Deliver Sustainable Services
- Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future
- Represent the voice of the district with our partners

3.1.2 However, there are other important Council strategic objectives where the Directorate makes a significant contribution in supporting the achievements of the objectives. Further, more detailed information is provided in Sections 5.0 (Corporate Services Supporting Actions 2025-26) and 6.0 (Performance) of this Plan.

3.2 Values

3.2.1 The Department adheres to the Council's values which are outlined in the Corporate Plan 2024-27:

	What This Means
Respect	We will demonstrate respect for all people in our attitudes, behaviours and working relationships.
Transparency	We will be transparent in how we make decisions.
Excellence	We will take pride in our work and be passionate about the standards we strive to achieve.
Integrity	We want the people of our district to trust us to do the right thing.
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 responsibility.

3.2.2 In accordance with the Section 75 requirements of the Northern Ireland Act (1998), the Chief Executive/Corporate Services Department is committed to carrying out its functions having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard for the desirability to promote good relations. All new and revised policies, procedures and programmes of work will be subject to an equality screening and rural needs impact assessment (where appropriate).

4.0 Challenges and Opportunities

4.1 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Directorate was established in December 2014, as part of the organisational design of the new Council, to centralise the management of a number of existing Council functions as well as support new powers which were transferred to the Council on the 1 April 2015. From 1 April 2017, the functional areas of Corporate Planning and Policy, and Estates and Capital Projects have become part of the Corporate Services Directorate. For the purposes of efficiency, democratic services under the Chief Executives department is now reported through the Chief Executive/Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan.

4.2 The Directorate continues to develop in line with organisational change. Over the course of this financial year, the Directorate will continue to develop and embed the necessary corporate frameworks, policies, processes and systems to deliver strategic improvement across the organisation, specifically in the areas of human resources, finance, communications and information technology.

4.3 The various (internal and external) challenges and opportunities for the Directorate are summarised as follows:

External Environment

- **Financial Planning:** Establishing the necessary financial plans within which Members' priorities for the District will be delivered.
- **Legislation and Regulations:** Ensuring legislative compliance with a range of legislation including S75 NI Act, Rural Needs Act.
- **Corporate Planning and Policy:** Establishing the necessary corporate planning and policy frameworks within which Members priorities for the District will be delivered and statutory obligations met, and we communicate effectively.

Internal Environment

- **Management**: Successfully establishing the Directorate in terms of its structure, governance and internal processes and increased responsibilities.
- **Resources:** Identifying and securing the financial and non-financial resources needed for the Directorate to successfully develop.
- **Estate Planning and Asset Management**: Successfully developing and implementing the necessary frameworks, policies and processes to support the effective and efficient management of the Council's Estate.
- **Transformation & Efficiencies**: Successfully developing and implementing transformational change that drives out the efficiencies and improvements that both Members and the public demand.
- **Information Management:** Ensuring adequate policies and procedures are in place to effectively manage our information in accordance with legislative requirements.

- **Information Technology**: Establishing robust information technology infrastructure to support business transformation.
- **Compliance**: Establishing the necessary policies and procedures and monitoring arrangements to ensure corporate legislative compliance in respect of key statutory obligations, including Equality, Disability, Rural Needs, Employment and Procurement legislation.
- **Risk Management:** Managing potential risks and opportunities in achieving the key actions outlined in the CX/CS Business Plan by adhering to the Corporate Risk Management Policy and reviewing the CX/CS Risk Register on a quarterly basis.
- **Performance Management:** Managing Council performance, highlighting areas of high-performance, identifying areas for intervention, developing a performance led approach to business and service planning and facilitating the development of a performance improvement culture.
- **Corporate Communications and Marketing:** Developing and delivering relevant communications activities, aligned to the corporate strategic priorities and agreed approach, ensuring staff, members, residents and other stakeholders are kept well informed about the work of the Council and other relevant activities in the district, in an appropriate, accessible and engaging manner.

5.0 Cross-Cutting Themes and Actions

There are a number of cross cutting actions aligned to the Community Planning Partnership priorities, Community Wealth Building and Sustainability and Climate Change that span across all Directorates and contribute to the fulfillment of Directorate Objectives, Corporate Objectives and ultimately Community Planning Outcomes.
Officers should indicate where their actions are contributing to the fulfillment of CPP, CWB or SCC actions by putting the relevant acronym in the column.
These actions should be identified in liasion with the relevant officers (CPP – Alan Beggs; CWB – Colin Moffett; SCC – Conor Sage) and relevant annual assessments of service plans forwarded to the above officers.

Acronym	Themes
CWB	Community Wealth Building
CPP	Community Planning Partnership priorities
SCC	Sustainability and Climate Change

Community Planning Partnership Priorities
While all actions will contribute to the delivery of the Community Plan, some actions may be considered appropriate to be contained within the Community Planning Partnership Priorities.

Relevant priorities should:

- Align to the outcomes of the Community Plan
- Involve collaborative working across statutory and community voluntary sector partners for both design and delivery.
- Report through the Community Planning Structures
- Measure and report impacts and outcomes

Community Wealth Building

Community Wealth Building is an approach to the way that economies function, retaining more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people.
Key actions in relation to CWB should deliver on the 5 recommendations and sub-recommendations contained within the CLES/DTNI report – Newry, Mourne and Down pioneering the potential of community wealth building.

Sustainability and Climate Change

Sustainability and the climate change emergency continue to be a key driver of Council with the key objective of improving the lives and livelihoods of the people who live and work here. Approval to develop a Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy was agreed in June 2022.

6.0 Directorate Objectives and Alignment to the Corporate Plan

DIRECTORATE OBJECTIVES
Legal & People – Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations. Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations. Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives. Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery. Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities. Provide efficient and professional HR services ensuring compliant integrated and sustainable services for all stakeholders that meet the corporate priorities and contractual obligations of the Council. **Finance and Performance –** Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations. Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making. Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements. **Digital and Communications –** Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service. Provide a highly available, accessible and secure Information Technology environment to support Council services. Support and deliver digital transformation initiatives across Council service areas to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated, and compliant for all stakeholders, ensuring adherence to good governance and alignment with corporate objectives.

Capital and Procurement –
Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.

Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives.

Democratic Services –
Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council.

Provide support for Project Delivery at a Corporate Level.

ALIGNMENT TO THE CORPORATE PLAN	
Directorate Objective	**Corporate Plan Objective**
Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations.	• Deliver sustainable services
Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations.	• Deliver sustainable services
Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.	• Deliver sustainable services
Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery.	• Deliver sustainable services
Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities.	• Deliver sustainable services
Provide efficient and professional HR services ensuring compliant integrated and sustainable services for all stakeholders that meet the corporate priorities and contractual obligations of the Council.	• Deliver sustainable services
Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable	• Deliver sustainable services

services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations.	
Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making.	• Deliver sustainable services
Support the development of a performance culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements.	• Deliver sustainable services
Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service.	• Deliver sustainable services
Provide a highly available, accessible and secure Information Technology environment to support Council services.	• Deliver sustainable services
To provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated and compliant for all stakeholders that meet the corporate objectives.	• Deliver sustainable services
Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.	• Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future
Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives.	• Deliver sustainable services
Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council.	• Represent the voice of the district with our partners
Provide support for Project Delivery at a Corporate Level	• Deliver Sustainable Services

Chief Executive - Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2026-27

Legal & People			
CXS1: Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations			
95% of responses to FOI/EIR/DP requests for information provided within statutory timeframes	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 95% _	Mar 27 95% _
Continue to review and update current Retention and Disposal practices across Council, implementing methods to manage the review, retention and disposal of records. (SCC)	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Continue to review and update the Corporate Privacy Notice to help everyone understand how Council processes personal data	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
CXS2: Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations.			
Continue to deliver a Professional Registration Service providing quality customer service standards for the delivery of births, deaths and marriages.	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Continue to embed NIPSO policies, procedures and monitoring arrangements to ensure compliance with NIPSOs statutory Model Complaints Handling Procedure.	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
CXS3: Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.			
Continue to review Retention and disposal of historical legal files extracting information which requires to be retained. (SCC)	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Continue to work with Evidence Section to ensure all relevant Council assets are included on the ARC GIS system.	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
In line with Council's 'Digital First' approach continue to minimise physical paper and progress towards electronic files versus paper-based files where possible (SCC)	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
CXS4: Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery.			

Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties implementation	Target Progress	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Progress the use of the Irish language in civic life	Target Progress	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Corporate Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties compliance	Target Actual	Sep 26 Yes _	Mar 27 Yes _
CXS5: Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities			
Continue to support line managers in the effective rollout of PPGs through targeted updates, training, and ongoing guidance and support.	Target Progress	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Support the delivery of the SLT Leadership Charter Action Plan, to build a strategic high performing leadership team with 'One Team' culture that supports our core values and collective ownership of senior leadership decisions.	Target Progress	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Support delivery of statutory and mandatory training for the organisation across the Council via corporate, departmental and eLearning training initiatives.	Target Progress	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
CXS6: Provide efficient and professional HR services ensuring compliant integrated and sustainable services for all stakeholders that meet the corporate priorities and contractual obligations of the Council			
Support Directorates to ensure staff absence is effectively managed to ensure appropriate and timely support for staff	Target Progress	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Continue to develop an Industrial Relations Framework and agree a workplan with Joint Trade Union Side	Target Progress	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Procure new systems and develop a project plan for new ways of working and efficient use of resources	Target Progress	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Continue to review and analyse current employment data and develop KPIs, as appropriate	Target Progress	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _

Continue to identify ways to increase the number of people from disadvantaged communities who are employed by council (CWB)	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Implement and maintain a recruitment plan	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Finance & Performance			
CXS7: Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations			
Pay 90% of invoices to suppliers within 30 days (CWB)	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 90% _	Mar 27 90% _
Unqualified financial audit opinion (Q4)	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes _	
To progress the implementation of the new finance system. Go live by 31 December 2027. Data Migration should be complete by 31 March 2027.	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
To complete the finance restructure and ensure the new roles are evaluated and consulted on prior to implementation	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
To update the financial regulations of Council	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
CXS8: Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making.			
To complete Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment in line with NIAO best practice	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes _	
Internal Audit Provision needs to be retendered - above threshold services competition which needs to be in place for the 1 April 2027.	Target **Progress**	Mar 27 _	
To achieve a satisfactory Annual Assurance Opinion from the Head of Internal Audit.	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes _	

CXS9: Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements			
Compliance with statutory Duty of Improvement	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes _	
New performance schedule agreed to strengthen alignment across Business Planning, Community Planning and Performance Management Framework	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 Yes _	Mar 27 Yes _
Unqualified performance audit opinion	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes _	
Digital & Communications			
CXS10: Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service			
Actively promote the Council's services and programmes of investment.	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
% of media requests for information responded to within the agreed timeframe.	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 90% _	Mar 27 90% _
Compliance with web accessibility standards (WCAG 2.2).	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 Yes _	Mar 27 Yes _
Increase the use of digital communications across Council platforms by adopting a modern approach to targeting and engaging key audiences.	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Progress communications arrangements for the delivery of Local Government Elections taking place in May 2027.	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes _	
CXS11: Provide a highly available, accessible and secure Information Technology environment to support Council services.			
% Systems and Network Uptime.	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 97.5% _	Mar 27 97.5% _

% of devices replaced/upgraded against Technology Refresh Implementation Plan.	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 100% –	

Undertake a Baseline Assessment against the UK National Cyber Security Centre's Cyber Assessment Framework to inform requirements for accreditation.	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 –	Mar 27 –
Undertake a review of corporate telephony requirements and develop a fully costed, governed and deliverable implementation plan for a replacement solution aligned to organisational needs and modern working practices.	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 –	Mar 27 –
Progress IT requirements for the delivery of Local Government Elections taking place in May 2027.	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes –	
CXS12: Support and deliver digital transformation initiatives across Council service areas to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated, and compliant for all stakeholders, ensuring adherence to good governance and alignment with corporate objectives.			
Progress approved digital transformation projects.	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 –	Mar 27 –
Further develop roadmap of new digital initiatives for the next two-year period.	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 –	Mar 27 –
Development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy and Procedure.	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 –	Mar 27 –
Increase in usage of Microsoft 365 tools across all Directorates.	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 –	Mar 27 –
Capital & Procurement			
CXS13: Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.			
Deliver approved Capital projects through design, procurement and delivery stages providing regular updates and reports to directorates, project boards and committees. (CWB) (SCC)	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 –	Mar 27 –

		Sep 26	Mar 27
Advise and assist departments in the identification of projects for consideration in the capital programme, including advising of project feasibility, costs, programme risks informing decision making and funding applications (CWB)	Target **Progress**		
Continuation with the identification and disposal of council surplus assets, including the direct liaison with directorates, legals and external organisations. (CWB) (SCC)	Target **Progress**		
Capital projects programme and budget in line with agreed parameters and Council policy.	Target **Progress**		
CXS14: Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives			
Increasing supplier outreach through attendance at Meet the Buyer type events and premarket engagement. (CWB) (SCC)	Target **Progress**		
Enhancing visibility of NMDDC Tender opportunities in the marketplace through social media campaign. (CWB) (SCC)	Target **Progress**		

Chief Executive			
CXS15: Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council			
The number of events hosted on behalf of the Chairperson / Vice Chairperson	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 20	Mar 27 40
The number of official events attended by the Chairperson / Vice Chairperson	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 100	Mar 27 200
Prepare and organise a programme of Committee meetings for 2026-27, ensure meetings are scheduled into Council diaries and advertise the meeting programme on the corporate website.	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes	
Publication of 98% of agendas within the statutory deadline every month	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 98%	Mar 27 98%

Provide administrative and governance support to the Council and Standing Committees - Provide administrative and governance support, as well as advice on standing orders and meeting protocols, to the: • Monthly meetings of Council • Monthly meetings of the Council's Standing Committees (AHC / ERT / SPR / S&E / Planning) • Quarterly meetings of Audit Committee, PCSP and Policing Committee • Ad-hoc Working Group meetings • Party Representatives meetings	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 Yes –	Mar 27 Yes –
Organise the Mock and Annual Meetings of the Council and party grouping meetings and manage the appointment to positions of responsibility for Council and Standing Committees	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes –	
Following each Council and Committee meeting, prepare and circulate minutes and action sheets to monitor and record progress in implementing Council decisions	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 Yes –	Mar 27 Yes –
Publication of Minutes within the target timeframe i.e. within 5 working days	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 100% –	Mar 27 100% –
Support the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson in carrying out their role(s) as First Citizen(s) including management of diaries, support in organising and hosting events and public engagements and supporting local charities	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 Yes –	Mar 27 Yes –
Provide ongoing and informal support and advice to Elected Members, as required	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes –	
To digitally transform the operations of Democratic Services by adopting modern, secure, and accessible technologies	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes –	
Corporate Services			
CXS16: Provide support for Project Delivery at a Corporate Level			
Progress the delivery of the project assigned	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 – –	Mar 27 – –
Ensure the project delivery complies with Council's Governance arrangements	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 – –	Mar 27 – –
Ensure projects are delivered within agreed budgets and timelines	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 – –	Mar 27 – –

Liaise with all departments to ensure collaborative approach for corporate projects	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 _	Mar 27 _
Democratic Services			
CXS17: Prepare a compliant, efficient and well-managed Local Government Election			
Plan, manage and deliver all aspects of the Local Government Election process in accordance with statutory requirements and Electoral Office guidance.	Target **Progress**	Mar 27 41 Elected Members duly elected following the Election Process _	
Provide full induction and training for new Elected Members following the Election and subsequently as they are co-opted onto the Council	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 Yes _	Mar 27 Yes _
Organise and deliver a training, induction and capacity building programme for Elected Members - Identify training needs and develop an induction, training and capacity building programme to support Elected Members in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 Yes _	Mar 27 Yes _
Coordinate and deliver training for all levels of staff for the Local Government Elections	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes _	
Post-Election review completed within set timeframe as per Electoral Office guidelines	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes _	
CXS18: Operate a Corporate Support Role on behalf of all Directorates across Council			
Provision of cross-cutting service support to all Directorates, ensuring consistency in governance practices.	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 Yes _	Mar 27 Yes _
Provide support for corporate meetings and briefings for Directors across the organisation	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 Yes _	Mar 27 Yes _
Percentage of Committee reports received on time from Directorates	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 90% _	Mar 27 90% _

7.0 Performance

7.1 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services performs a key role in leading the development of robust and meaningful performance measures at all levels across the organisation. This exercise will also identify additional, suitable performance measures for the Corporate Services/Chief Executive Directorate.

Chief Executive/ Corporate Services Plans and Strategies

7.2 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Directorate is responsible for leading the development, implementation and review of the following plans and strategies, which influence the work of the Office and Council:

- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Treasury Management Strategy
- Equality Action Plan
- Disability Action Plan
- Irish Language Strategy
- Corporate Communications Strategy
- Corporate Digital Communications Strategy
- Information Technology Strategy
- Digital Transformation Strategy
- Estates and Asset Management Strategy
- Performance Improvement Plan
- Business Planning and Performance Management Framework
- Performance Improvement Policy
- Constitution

8.0 Organisation and Office Structure

8.1 Chief Executive/Corporate Services is one of four Directorates, which together, comprise the Management structure of the Council.

9.0 Financial Information

Net estimated expenditure (£) (2026-27)	
People & Legal	£
Finance & Performance	£
Digital & Communications	£
Capital & Procurement	£
Democratic Services	£
TOTAL: Corporate Services/Chief Executive (including payroll)	£

10.0 Governance Arrangements

10.1 Reviewing performance and reporting progress to Elected Members and other key stakeholders facilitates transparency, accountability and improvement in everything the Council does. The political and organisational governance arrangements to develop, monitor and report the Council's progress in implementing the Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan are outlined below, and are supplemented by regular reviews by the Director of Corporate Services and her team. The governance arrangements the Council has put in place to deliver continuous improvement are also subject an annual audit and assessment by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Figure 4: Governance Arrangements

Full Council
- Ratification of Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan
- Ratification of annual and bi-annual reviews Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan

Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee / Audit Committee
- Scrutiny and challenge around the Duty of Improvement
- Provide assurance that performance management arrangements are robust and effective

Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
- Consideration, scrutiny and approval of Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan
- Consideration, scrutiny and approval of the annual and bi-annual reviews of Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan

Senior Management Team
- Development, consideration and approval of Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan
- Development, consideration and approval of the annual and bi-annual reviews of Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan

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

0330 137 4000 (Council)
0330 137 4036 (Planning)
council@nmandd.org
www.newrymournedown.org

Oifig an Iúir
Newry Office
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row

Newry BT35 8DJ

Oifig Dhún Pádraig
Downpatrick Office
Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road

Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee.
Date of Meeting:	11 June 2026
Subject:	Unreasonable Behaviour Policy
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Conor Haughey, Assistant Director Healthy Living
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Gary Scott - Safeguarding Coordinator. Kerri McConnell – Head of Indoor Leisure

For decision	**x**	**For noting only**	

1.0	**Purpose and Background**
1.1	**Purpose** To consider and agree the recommendation in section 3.1 of this report on the approval and adoption of the Council's Unreasonable Behaviour Policy. **Background** Newry Mourne and Down District Council is committed to the principle that unreasonable behaviour by any person is unacceptable behaviour and everyone has the right to live free from fear, harm and abuse. As part of an overall review of Council Safeguarding processes, the need for an Unreasonable Behaviour Policy and associated procedures was identified to support the Council in mitigating risk and supporting & safeguarding any person impacted by the unreasonable behaviours of others. Legislative requirements place an obligation on Council in having have a duty of care to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of their staff, and all persons availing of services provided by Council through assessment of any risks of violence and to make arrangements for their health and safety by effective planning, organisation and control.
2.0	**Key issues**
2.1	The proposed Unreasonable behaviour Policy (**Appendix 1**) focuses on supporting staff or any person who has been impacted by, or are at risk of, any form of harm/abuse, and by creating this Unreasonable Behaviour Policy and associated support mechanisms, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council can fulfil its duty of care to its employees and other citizens to help create a safe and supportive community for all. This Policy demonstrates Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's commitment to family friendly working and seeks to benefit the welfare of all our citizen, individual members of staff; retain valued employees; improve morale and performance; and enhance the reputation of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. Consultation has taken place in developing this policy with external partners including other Councils, and Designated Safeguarding Officers. Consultation with the recognised Trade Unions took place in November 2025.

	This policy will support and ensure Council compliance with legislative requirements and existing processes, procedures & policies currently in place across the Council, in relation to Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Health & Wellbeing and the Department of Health and the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman's Best Practice Guidance - Promoting Positive Engagement and Managing Unacceptable Behaviour. This Policy supports all staff and customers and recognises unreasonable behaviour can occur internally and externally to Council facilities and by anyone. This Unreasonable Behaviour Policy will be accompanied by Operational Procedures which have been developed and implemented as standard across all directorates including guidance for staff, managers and training Legal advice was sought and the was Unreasonable Behaviour Policy and Procedures endorsed on 16th April 2026. The new policy and operational procedures will require a coordinated launch process to ensure full understanding and implementation. In addition to tiered training for managers, an eLearning module is being developed and will be in place for Policy implementation and will be available for staff and further eLearning can be created. Staff will be advised and supported thought a series of circulations and virtual conferencing which includes support from Health and Wellbeing, Active Leisure and Learning & Development departments.
3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	Approval of the Unreasonable Behaviour Policy and Procedures for adoption and introduction through Council.
4.0	**Resource implications**
4.1	Budget requirements will be met within allocated Departmental Budgets. No additional budget allocations are required.
5.0	**Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)**
5.1	***1. General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes*** It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	***2. Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision*** Yes ☒ No ☐ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☒ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐

	3. Proposal initiating consultation – N/a	
	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	☐
	Consultation period will be 12 weeks	☐
	Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided)	☐
	Rationale: Consultation with key stakeholders has already been completed commencing in January 2025.	
5.3	Councils development of an Unreasonable Behaviour Policy demonstrates its commitment to mitigate the risk of harm of anyone, proactively supporting staff or members of the public who are victims of or witnesses to any sort of behaviour that causes or may cause harm and positively impacts on relationships with partner agencies and stakeholders.	
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 ☒ No ☐ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed	☒ ☒
7.0	**Appendices**	
7.1	Appendix 1 – Unreasonable Behaviour Policy	
8.0	**Background Documents**	
	None	

Policy title: Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

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

Policy Control

Policy reference:	AHC/10
Title of Policy:	Unreasonable Behaviour Policy
Version:	1
Directorate / Departmental ownership:	AHC
Officer responsible:	Conor Haughey
Date of ratification:	
Review date:	7.1.2030
Equality screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed by:	Kerri McConnell
Equality screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment date:	7.1.2026
Location where document is held and referenced:	Responsible Department ☐ Corporate Policy repository ☒

Contents

Content	Page Number
Title of Policy	**2**
Statement	**2**
Aim of this policy	**2**
Scope of the policy	**3**
Related policies and legislation	**3**
Policy Detail	**4**
Reporting	**7**
Department & Officer responsible	**8**
Policy approval process	**8**
Review date	**8**
Procedures and arrangements for monitoring the implementation and impact of the policy	**8**
Equality screening	**9**
Rural Needs Impact Assessment	**9**

1. Title of policy

Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

2. Statement

Newry Mourne and Down District Council ('the Council') is committed to providing a safe and pleasant environment for our staff, and members of the public in our facilities or whilst engaging with Council services.

The Council's ambition is to provide excellent, customer-focused services to all. Anyone who comes into contact with Council services and our staff has the right to be listened to, acknowledged and respected. Council considers that staff and the public have the same right and Council reserves the right to manage contact between staff and members of the public or between members of the public in an appropriate manner to protect staff and the public, and to maintain the effectiveness of our services.

The Council will not tolerate unreasonable behaviour, including, but not limited to, abusive, aggressive, offensive or threatening behaviour or physical attacks from any persons towards members of staff (including third party contractors delivering a service on our behalf), Elected Members or individual members of the public. For the purposes of this Policy Council will use the definitions of unreasonable behaviour set out in Section 4 below.

Council will take the necessary steps to ensure that prompt and effective action is taken against any person(s) engaging in unreasonable behaviour.

3. Aim

The aim of this Policy is to provide a safe and pleasant environment for our staff, and individual members of the public:

- Defining what Council considers to be unreasonable behaviour
- Ensuring staff can identify behaviour that is unreasonable.
- Ensuring staff understand what is expected of them when dealing with incidents of unreasonable behaviour.
- Ensuring that staff follow corporate or departmental procedures when dealing with incidents of unreasonable behaviour.
- Ensuring that staff are equipped to manage situations where behaviour is considered unreasonable.
- Ensuring that a fair and consistent approach is used throughout the Council when dealing with unreasonable behaviour

Council will take the necessary steps to ensure that prompt and effective action is taken against any person engaging in unreasonable behaviour.

4. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- Any person, using or visiting any Council owned or controlled property/facility/land (referred to from here onwards as a "Council Facility"); or are using or participating in an activity at a Council Facility; or are visiting a Council Facility for any reason.
- Any person who comes into contact with Council staff who are undertaking Council business outside of a Council Facility (see definition below).
- Any person who contacts or engages with Council staff through any medium. This contact may be in person, by telephone, letter, email, or any digital medium/platform including social media.
- Persons engaging with each other whilst using a Council Facility and during provision of Council run programs or events.

This Policy does not apply to staff behaviour towards each other or the public. These matters are dealt with under the relevant policies e.g. Dignity at Work Policy, Code of Conduct and the Grievance and Disciplinary policies.

5. Related policies and legislation

Legislation & Regional Guidance:

- Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978
- Management of Health & Safety (NI) Regulations 2000
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Section 75 NI Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Sexual Offences (NI) Order 20008
- Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967
- Offences Against the Person Act 1861
- The Protection from Harassment (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
- NIPSO: Best Practice Guidance - Promoting Positive Engagement and Managing Unacceptable Behaviour

In addition to legal, policy and procedural guidance, The Council has framed this Policy within the following human rights and values:

- Article 2 The Right to Life
- Article 3 Freedom from Torture (including humiliation and degrading treatment)
- Article 8 Right to Family Life (one that sustains the individual)
- Article 14 Prohibition of discrimination

This Policy operates in parallel to, and is supported by, the following council policies:

- Equality & Good Relations

- Training and Development
- Whistleblowing
- Social Media
- Safeguarding
- Health & Safety
- Complaints, Comments and Compliments
- Data Protection
- Domestic Abuse
- Code of Conduct

6. Policy Detail

Definition of Staff

Those employed by Newry Mourne and Down District Council (including agency staff and casuals, volunteers, contractors, contractor services and Elected Members)

Definitions of unreasonable behaviour

It is important to distinguish between people who make several requests because they think things have gone wrong, and people who are unable or unwilling to accept a decision by Council staff.

We must also recognise that individuals may sometimes act out of character when anxious or distressed and reasonable allowances should be made for this. We must also recognise that some individuals require support when contacting us and provide them with guidance where appropriate.

However, Council does not expect staff, or those acting on behalf of Council, or the public to tolerate unacceptable behaviour. We will deal with individuals politely and with respect, and we expect the same in return from them.

Definitions and examples of unreasonable behaviour include the following:

- Behaviour which because of the frequency or nature of contact with Council, hinders our ability for example, to deal with Council business; to deal with enquiries; to consider their or other persons complaints.

- Making inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations.

- Inappropriate use of social or other media. This includes any threat to safety where individuals pose a threat to themselves or others.

- Making malicious, unwarranted, or defamatory comments or making remarks which are related to any protected characteristic as set out under various anti-discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland.

- Work-related violence such as abuse, threatening behaviour or assault as defined below.

Term	Abuse	Threatening	Assault
Definition	Verbal, intimidation, bullying, or harassment that causes emotional or psychological harm.	Any statement or action that causes someone to fear immediate harm, even if no physical contact occurs.	Intentionally or recklessly causing another person to fear immediate unlawful force or actually applying that force.
Examples	• Swearing, shouting, or name-calling • Derogatory or discriminatory remarks • Persistent undermining or humiliation	• Verbal threats ("I'll hurt you") • Gestures (e.g., raising a fist) • Written or digital threats (emails, texts)	• Physical attacks (hitting, pushing, grabbing) • Throwing objects • Spitting or unwanted physical contact • Threats that cause fear of being harmed

Violation of rules:

- Persons who repeatedly violate Councils rules, regulations, policies, procedures/protocols and where applicable Customer Charter and Terms and Conditions.

Unreasonable demands:

Persons with unreasonable expectations of the level or type of service that we can offer.

- Refusing to give details, or respond to requests for clarification, which are needed to handle the request, yet still wanting the matter resolved.
- Insufficient, or no, grounds for the request made; and/or following a request through for reasons not made clear.
- Disruptive behaviour including being overly loud, intoxicated, or causing a disturbance.

People who are Unreasonably Persistent:

- Raising many detailed questions and/or requesting large volumes of information and insisting they are answered within an unreasonable timeframe.
- Refusing to accept that certain issues are not the Council's responsibility, not services that we offer, or are not within the scope of the Council Policies and

procedures e.g. Customer Complaints Procedure (because there is a suitable alternative procedure to follow).

- Insisting on the request being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with good practice (such as insisting that there should be no written record of the request) or Council standards, policies, procedures or protocols, terms and conditions, rules, or regulations
- Continuing to attempt to make unwarranted or unjustified representations during ongoing attempts to resolve existing issues or attempting to improperly influence or change aspects of an enquiry, during investigation.
- Continuing to attempt to pursue any matter, having exhausted all stages of the Council or other statutory procedures including complaints procedures. This includes complaints repeated in their original form or where the substance of a complaint is the same as that originally made. E.g. in cases where the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman's Office has completed their investigation and closed the case.

Other behaviours that are unacceptable may include but is not restricted to the following (which may also be dealt with utilising other related policies where appropriate):

- Theft, vandalism, causing damage/targeted damage or other illegal acts on Council premises.
- Soliciting, selling, distributing, or canvassing other than for Council approved activities.
- Being under the influence of alcohol and/or an illegal or intoxicating substance that causes, or is likely to cause, a public disturbance or interferes, or is likely to interfere with, others' use or enjoyment of Council facilities and resources.
- Any intentional movement of the body which may include touching, gesturing, pushing, striking, stalking, spitting, any unwanted intrusion of "reasonable space" of an employee or another person or an intentional use of any object towards an individual.
- Loitering on the premises under circumstances that warrant alarm / concern for the health and safety of any person on the property or causes, or is likely to cause, fear, alarm, or distress.
- Activity that would be a risk to their safety or to the safety of other staff, or members of the public.
- Failing to comply with any element of Council Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy.
- Submitting falsified documents from themselves or others.
- Making unjustified comments about or to staff who are trying to deal with the issue.
- Bypassing the relevant Officer to escalate the issue prematurely. The Council will determine which member of staff is the right person at the right level in the organisation to handle the individual's request.
- Making an unreasonable number of contacts with us, in relation to a specific request.
- Demanding responses in an unreasonable timescale.
- Refuting statements, they made at an earlier stage.
- Introducing new information at a later stage to get a different answer or submitting another request to have it further considered. (Council must ensure

not to disregard new requests that are significantly different to the original one).
- Changing the basis of the request as it proceeds.
- Electronically recording meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the other person involved.
- Recording, filming, or photographing a Council employee, or individual member of the public without their consent and any action in contravention of the relevant Council policies
- Refusing to accept the Council's decision; repeatedly arguing points with no new evidence and/or denying that an adequate response has been given.
- Vexatious requests i.e., those that are made without sufficient grounds but made to cause annoyance or disruption or in relation to section 14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- Council relies on people treating each other politely and with respect; if unreasonable behaviour takes place between individuals the Council representative present (i.e. staff member or person acting on our behalf) will follow relevant corporate or departmental protocols/procedures for dealing with the unreasonable behaviour.
- Occasionally, Council staff engage with individuals who communicate in a manner that causes offence, who use a disproportionate amount of Council time and resources, or who hinder the implementation of a service request, or the investigation of an enquiry or complaint they have made. This behaviour is also deemed to be unreasonable.

This is not an exhaustive list.

Please note: If an individual or a Council staff member feels that another member of the public has assaulted them whilst on Council or any property and/or engaging with Council for provision of services they have the right to contact the PSNI and consideration should be given to the PSNI being contacted.

Right of Appeal

When management have taken action and an exclusion has been applied in the case of unreasonable behaviour by an individual, the individual has the Right of Appeal. They can do this by Requesting a review/appeal in writing to the Director within the relevant Directorate (who issued the exclusion) within 14 days from receipt of letter informing them of the decision taken to exclude. The exclusion letter may be issued in person, by recorded delivery post or read receipt email. They must clearly state the grounds for an appeal.

The relevant Directorate Director's decision on the Appeal will be final and no further appeal can be made.

7. Reporting

It is fundamentally important that if any member of staff have concerns about the behaviour of any individual they follow the steps laid out in the accompanying procedures for Unreasonable Behaviour and any other relevant policy guidance as appropriate.

This Policy is accompanied by tailored operating procedures that outline the standards required for appropriate safeguarding.

8. Department and Officer responsible

Directorate / Department	**Active and Healthy Communities**
Officer(s) responsible for developing the policy	**Conor Haughey**

9. Policy approval process

Meeting	**Date**
CMT	*22 April 2026*
SMT	*5 November 2025*
Relevant Committee(s) e.g. Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee	*Pending - 11 June 2026*
Monthly Council Meeting	*Pending - 6 July 2026*

10 Review Date

"The policy will be reviewed in line with the Council's agreed policy review cycle i.e. every 4 years (as per Council's Equality Scheme commitment 4.31), or sooner to ensure it remains reflective of legislative developments."

11 Procedures and arrangements for monitoring the implementation and impact of the policy

This Policy is accompanied by tailored operating procedures that will outline the standards required for appropriate safeguarding.

Notices will be displayed at all Council premises advising that inappropriate, aggressive, threatening, or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in action being taken including their exclusion from Council facilities, land/property or form programs and events run by Council or the PSNI being called.

The Policy will be implemented via a series of briefings and training sessions in accordance with the need of the relevant department.

Quality assurance visits will be undertaken periodically to ensure compliance with the Policy and associated procedures.

The impact of the Policy would be monitored via feedback from the Safeguarding Steering Group, Union Representation and Departmental Heads regarding the effectiveness and suitability of the operating procedures.

12 Equality Screening

All policies must be equality screened prior to implementation, and policy screening templates, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, must be forwarded to the Equality Officer.

This section must advise the policy has been screened, and refer to one of the following outcomes:
1. Not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required)
2. Not be subject to an EQIA (with mitigating measures /alternative policies)
3. Not be subject to an EQIA at this time
4. Be subject to an EQIA

13 Rural Needs Impact Assessment

.

The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 requires the Council to have due regard to rural needs when: (a) developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and (b) designing and delivering public services.

Rural Needs Assessments must be completed and forwarded to the Head of Corporate Policy. A template has been developed to assist with this process.

This section must confirm the policy has been subject to rural needs impact assessment.

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resource Committee
Date of Meeting:	11 June 2026
Subject:	Annual Complaint Handling Report
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Elaine Kirk, Assistant Director, Legal and People
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Sally Andrée, Head of Administration and Customer 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	The purpose of this report is to: 1. seek approval for the transition of the Council's annual complaints reporting from a calendar year to a financial year basis; and 2. present the 2025/26 Annual Complaint Handling Report.
1.2	The Council's first annual complaints report, published in November 2025, covered the 2024 calendar year following implementation of the Model Complaints Handling Procedure.
1.3	To ensure consistency with corporate performance, financial planning, and governance reporting, complaints reporting will now align with the financial year (April–March).
2.0	**Key Issues**
2.1	**Consistency with Corporate Reporting** Aligning complaints reporting to the financial year brings it into line with: • corporate performance reporting • financial and service planning cycles • reporting to Senior Management Team and Members This supports clearer oversight and more meaningful comparison with wider Council performance.
2.2	**Annual Report 2025/26** Councils have a statutory responsibility to process complaints, report on performance, and promote learning. The 2025/26 report: • meets all NIPSO reporting requirements • provides analysis of complaint trends, outcomes and learning • demonstrates that overall complaint levels remain low relative to service activity
3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	The Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee is asked to:

	• Approve the transition to financial year reporting for the Council's annual complaints report • Agree that future reporting will align with the financial year • Note the 2025/26 Annual Complaint Handling Report.
4.0	**Resource implications**
	The change has no additional financial or staffing implications and will be managed within existing resources. It is expected to: • improve efficiency in report preparation • strengthen alignment with corporate reporting cycles • support clearer governance and oversight
5.0	**Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)**
5.1	***General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes*** It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☐
5.2	***Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision*** Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
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 ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐
	Rationale:

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 ☐ No ☐ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☐
7.0	**Appendices**
7.1	Annual Complaint Handling Report 2025/26
8.0	**Background Documents**
8.1	**Complaint Handling Procedure - Guide for Complainants**

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

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Annual Complaint Handling Performance Report 2025/26

Introduction

The Council published its first annual complaints report covering the 2024 calendar year, reflecting the establishment of the new Model Complaint Handling Procedure on 01 January 2024 and its accompanying formal complaint reporting arrangements. That report provided a baseline overview of complaint handling activity.

However, the Council's wider corporate performance, governance, and statutory reporting is aligned to the financial year. To ensure consistency with these arrangements, the current report is presented as the Year 2 Annual Complaints Report and uses the 2024/25 financial year as the Year 1 comparator period.

Background

The Council's arrangements for handling complaints are based on the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) issued by the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO). The MCHP provides a standardised, two-stage framework for handling complaints across public bodies in Northern Ireland and promotes fairness, consistency, transparency, and learning from complaints.

The Council adopted the MCHP to ensure that complaints are managed in a timely and proportionate manner, that complainants are treated fairly, and that outcomes and learning are recorded and used to support service improvement.

This annual complaints report is produced in line with the expectations of the MCHP and provides an overview of complaint volumes, themes, performance, and learning. Publishing this information supports openness and accountability and allows the Council, elected Members, and the public to understand how complaints are handled and how feedback is used to improve services.

Complaint Management

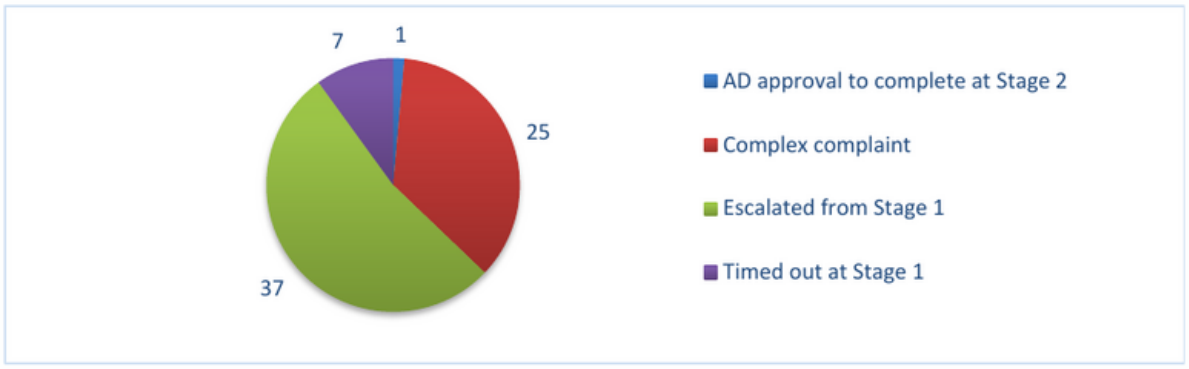
This report covers complaints received by the Council between 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

During this time, the Council received 341 complaints, representing an increase of 12% compared with the same period in 2024/25.

56% of complaints received were submitted via the online form and 39% by email, which demonstrates a strong preference for digital channels in line with Council's Digital First strategy.

The total number of complaints received includes complaints received at Stage 1 and those escalated to Stage 2.

- 315 Stage 1 complaints were closed in the period 01 April 2025 – 31 March 2026
- 70 Stage 2 complaints were processed during this period as follows:



When adjusted for population size, the Council recorded 1.87 complaints per 1,000 residents in Year 2, compared with 1.67 in Year 1. This small increase remains within typical local authority benchmarks and does not indicate a disproportionate level of dissatisfaction with Council services.

The increase also reflects improved complaint recording, accessibility, and consistent application of the Complaints Handling Procedure. Ongoing improvements to tracking, oversight, and learning continue to support transparency, accountability, and service improvement.

Complaints by Council Department

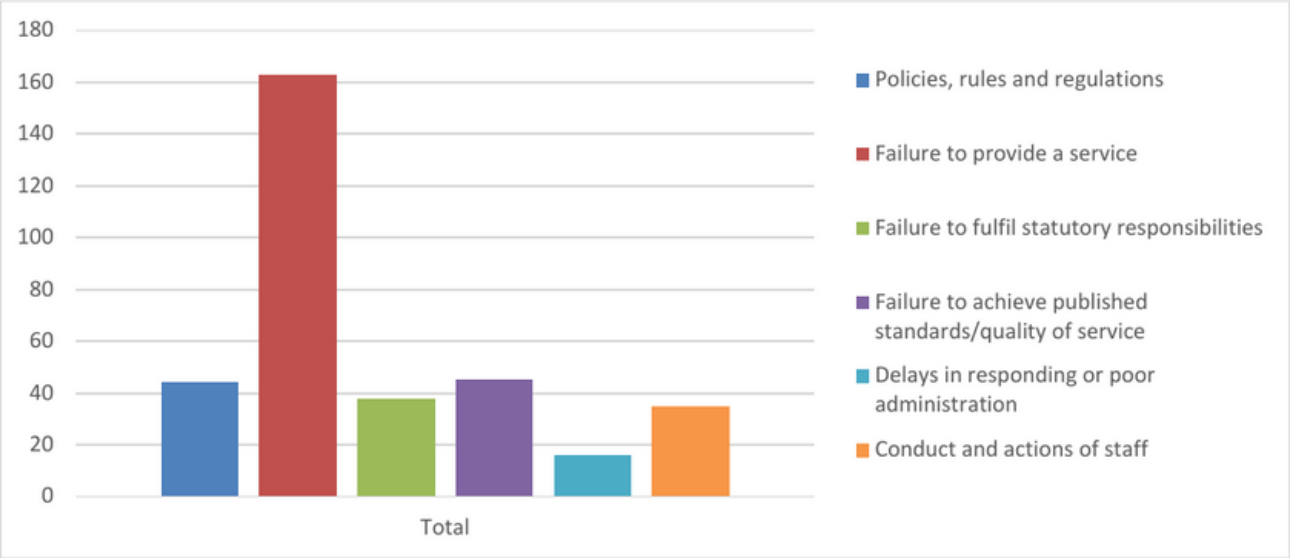
Council Department	Areas of Complaint	Number of Complaints
Healthy Living	Leisure Centres, Sport and Outdoor Recreation	117
Environment	Refuse, Recycling, Street Cleansing, Environmental Health and Animal Welfare	114
Regeneration	Planning and Planning Enforcement	34
Sustainability	Public Conveniences, Grounds Maintenance	31
Economy, Growth and Tourism	Forest Parks, Tourist Amenities, Grants & Funding and Events	18
Legal and People	Recruitment, Corporate Policy	13
Community Development	Diversity and Inclusion, Community Centres	13
Democratic Services	Council and Committee Meetings	1

Healthy Living and Environment services accounted for the majority of complaints, together representing over two-thirds of the total, reflecting the high level of day-to-day interaction with these frontline services.

Regeneration-related complaints made up around 10% of the total, largely in relation to planning matters.

Sustainability services accounted for a relatively small proportion of complaints, at around 9%.

Complaints by Category



The most common reason for complaints was failure to provide a service, accounting for 48% of all complaints received. The second most frequent reason was failure to fulfil statutory responsibilities, while the third related to complaints about policies, rules, and regulations, each of which accounted for 13% of total complaints.

These complaints primarily relate to frontline services with high levels of public interaction, and continue to inform the Council's focus on maintaining service standards and responding effectively to issues raised by residents.

Complaint extensions

26% of Stage 1 complaints were extended beyond the 5 working days timeframe

74% Stage 2 complaints were extended beyond the 20 working days timeframe

Acknowledgements – Stage 2

76% of stage 2 complaints were acknowledged within the required 3 working days

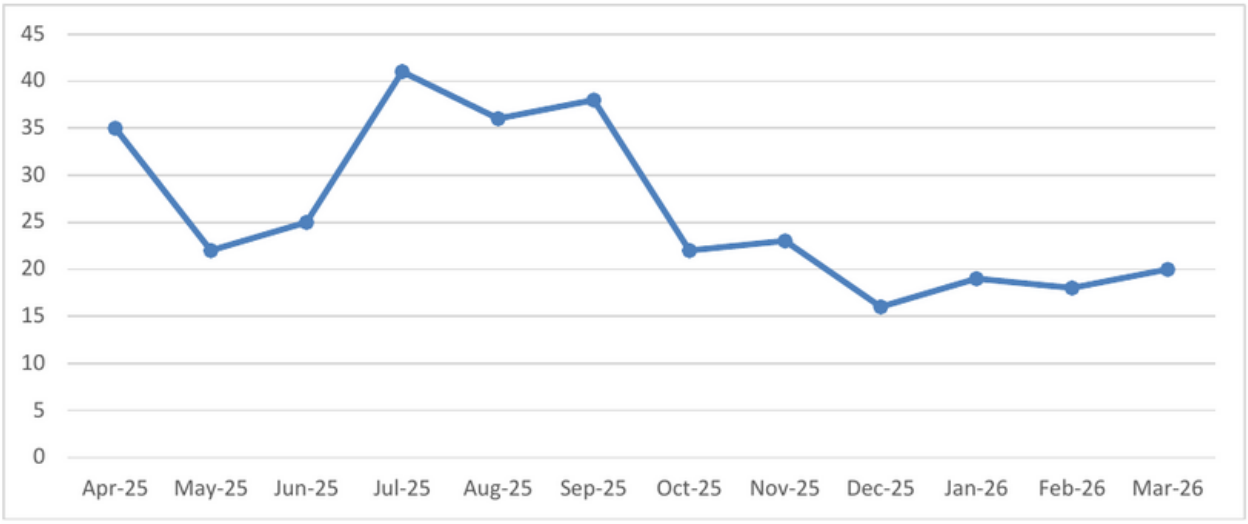
Average time to close complaints – Stage 1

The average time to close all Stage 1 complaints in 2025/26 was 6 working days. This represents a 25% reduction on Year 1.

The average time to close all Stage 1 complaints that were not extended was 3 working days

The average time to close extended stage 1 complaints was 10 days

Average number of days taken to close a Stage 1 complaint by month



The graph shows some monthly variation in the average time taken to close Stage One complaints during the year, with higher averages recorded in the early part of the reporting period, particularly in April and July 2025. From the end of Quarter 2 onwards performance improves with a sustained reduction in average completion times through autumn and winter and consistently lower figures from October 2025 to March 2026. This overall downward trend reflects strengthening complaint handling processes, improved oversight, and more consistent application of timescales over the course of the year.

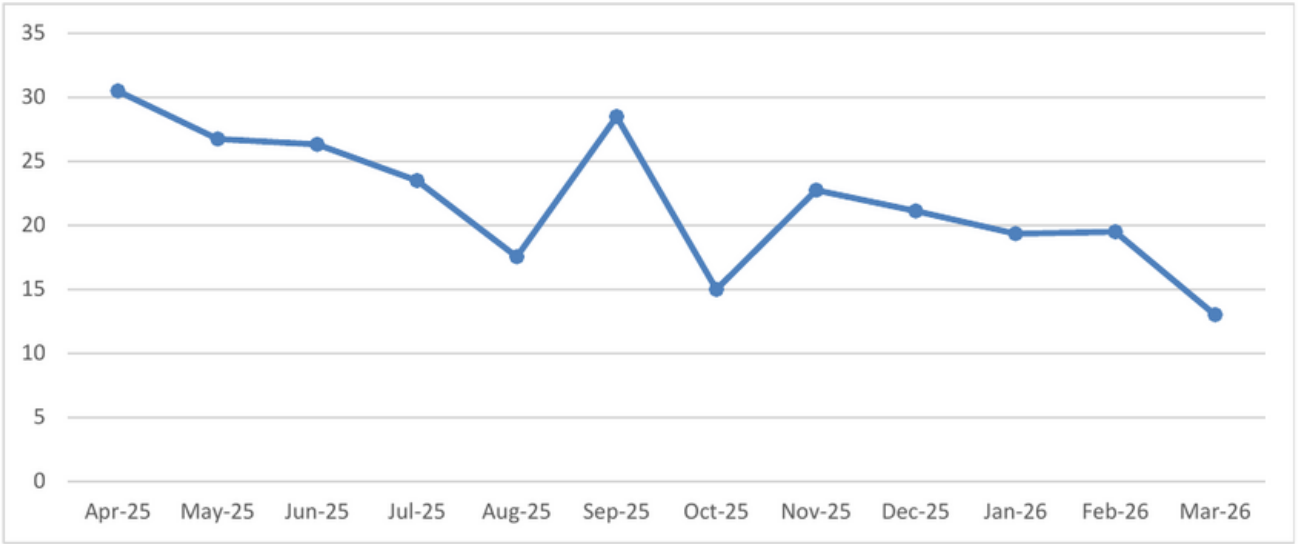
Average time to close complaints – Stage 2

The average time to close all stage 2 complaints was 23 working days. This represents an 8% reduction on Year 1.

The average time to close all Stage 2 complaints that were not extended was 19 working days

The average time to close extended stage 2 complaints was 40 working days

Average number of days taken to close a Stage 2 complaint by month



While some monthly variation is evident, the overall trend demonstrates sustained improvement across the year, with marked reductions in average figures from Quarter 3 onwards. This indicates strengthened processes and improved oversight as the year progressed.

Resolution of complaints

- 74% of stage 1 complaints were closed within five working days.
- 12% of all stage 1 complaints were resolved at point of contact
- 40% of all stage 1 complaints were upheld and 34% were partially upheld
- 19% of all stage 1 complaints were not upheld and 7% were resolved
- 66% of stage 2 complaints were closed within 20 working days
- 26% of stage 2 complaints were upheld, 22% partially upheld
- 46% of stage 2 complaints were not upheld and 4% were resolve

Lessons Learnt

Complaints received during the year highlighted recurring themes across key service areas with high levels of public interaction, including waste collection, planning matters and leisure facilities. This feedback provided valuable insight into where service standards are most visible to residents.

Services responded by reviewing operational processes, reinforcing service schedules, improving monitoring arrangements and providing additional guidance or clarification where required. In several cases, complaints led directly to service adjustments or improvements helping to prevent recurrence.

Overall, the themes identified demonstrate the importance of listening to resident feedback and using complaints constructively to strengthen service delivery. The Council continues to view complaints as an important source of learning and assurance, supporting continuous improvement, responsiveness, and a positive resident experience.

For further information on our Complaints Handling Procedures please visit https://www.newrymournedown.org/complaints-to-the-council

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

0330 137 4000 (Council)
info@nmandd.org
www.newrymournedown.org

Oifig an Iúir
Newry Office
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry BT35 8DJ

Oifig Dhún Pádraig
Downpatrick Office
Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road
Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

Report to:	Strategic, Policy and Resource Committee
Date of Meeting:	Thursday 11th June 2026
Subject:	Greenway Feasibility and Design: Warrenpoint to Newcastle
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Conor Mallon Director – Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Amanda Smyth Assistant Director – Economy, Growth & Tourism

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	Purpose To approve the recommendation in section 3.1 of this report. Background Council Active Travel Masterplan Greenways are seen strategically as having great potential in the development of Active Travel initiatives and opportunities for both local people and the general economy linking settlements via safe and secure cycle and walking pathways. They also have a key role to play in the development of Tourism infrastructure and encouraging tourists into the district to enjoy our scenery and clean air and exercise In the Council's Masterplan Key Greenway routes were identified building on routes defined within the DfI Strategy 'Exercise - Explore - Enjoy: A Strategic Plan for Greenways' and also suggesting additional routes, with opportunities for developing a comprehensive joined up Greenway Network for the district which further integrates with the wider Northern Ireland and cross border Greenway Network. One of the priority Greenway routes identified in the Masterplan was a new Greenway Route linking Newcastle to Newry. Developing the Cross-Border Greenway Network (2026) Most recently The National Development Plan 2021 – 2030 (DPER, 2021) pledged 'to creating an island-wide greenway network, linking the Atlantic coast with the Eastern seaboard through greenway projects across the border region'.

	In response to the NDP, the shared island unit in Dept. Taoiseach and Dept. Transport are committed to progressing this objective by identifying opportunities to encourage and support the development of cross-border greenways by commissioning a review on potential greenway opportunities in the region, with direct support and engagement from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Northern Ireland's Department for Infrastructure (DfI). A proposed Greenway Route including Newry to Warrenpoint via Newcastle and Kilkeel was ranked second of five routes identified
2.0	**Key issues**
2.1	Funding has been secured to appoint a design team to carry out a Feasibility Study on a proposed Warrenpoint to Newcastle via Kilkeel greenway route As this is a Feasibility Study, it will examine whether the Greenway is the best option and what would happen if the product /service was not provided. It will look at the impact on the council and the local district and the wider cross border region. The Feasibility Study will be an important step in identifying potential new routes that connect 2 premier tourism towns and beyond. Carrying out a Feasibility study on this Greenway route will be an important next step in this project and in our overall Greenway programme in Newry, Mourne and Down.
2.2	<u>Corridor wide assessment</u> The project will be progressed in the following stages: Phase 1: Warrenpoint to Rostrevor / Kilbroney Park will be developed up to concept design stage. This will include: • A targeted visual site audit • Identification of route opportunities and constraints • Consideration of up to three broad route options or route corridors • Review of key access, safety, land, environmental and engineering issues • Identification of a preferred concept route or route corridor • Identification of key risks • The review will be undertaken at concept level Phase 2: will be reviewed at a strategic level to maintain the wider corridor context and identify future delivery considerations in the sections below. • Kilbroney Park to Greencastle Ferry • Greencastle Ferry to Kilkeel • Kilkeel to Annalong

	• Annalong to Newcastle
2.3	Key Outputs from feasibility Study • Identification of a project study area following a desktop assessment of potential constraints and opportunities including topographical, engineering, environmental, landscape and visual and trip generators; • Identification of potential greenway route options within the identified project area; • An engineering appraisal of the constraints and opportunities of identified route options to determine a preferred greenway route option including stakeholder and public engagement; • Identification of the preferred greenway option
2.4	Next Steps • Appointment of a consultant to carry out a Feasibility Study and Design work, on a proposed Warrenpoint to Newcastle greenway route, with a focus on phase one route.
3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	To note the Letter of Offer for funding from Department for Infrastructure and Department of Transport
3.2	Approval to appoint a design team through an existing framework to progress the feasibility study on the proposed Greenway from Warrenpoint to Newcastle.
4.0	**Resource implications**
4.1	Funding has been secured to support delivery of this project £20,000: Department for Infrastructure €25,000: Department of Transport The funding is for 100% of the costs of the project.
5.0	**Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)**
5.1	***General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes*** It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒

5.2	***Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision*** Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
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 ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐
	Rationale:
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 ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☐
7.0	**Appendices**
8.0	**Background Documents**

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting held on Monday 23rd March 2026, 10am Newry Town Hall / MS Teams

In Attendance:

Programme Board Members
Councillor Declan Murphy (Chair)
Councillor Aidan Mathers
Councillor Doire Finn (Teams)
Councillor Henry Reilly (Teams)

NMDDC Officials
Conor Mallon, Director - Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Andy Patterson, Director – Active and Healthy Communities
Conor McGeown, Strategic Capital Projects Manager
Jonathan McGilly, Assistant Director – Regeneration
Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director – Economy, Growth & Tourism
Tracie McLoughlin, Corporate Relationship Officer

Apologies
Councillor David Taylor
Councillor Killian Feehan
Councillor Helena Young

NCCR/239: Welcome and Apologies
The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies received.

NCCR/240: Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting held 6th February 2026.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor H Reilly, seconded by Councillor A Mathers it was agreed to the approve the record of the meeting as circulated in Item 2.0 of the Agenda as a true and accurate account.

NCCR/241: FBC – Public Perception Survey

Mrs A Smyth explained as part of the spending objectives and targets outlined in the full business case there was inclusion of a public perception target:

> *Increase the public perception of Newry City centre as a result of the investment in public realm and as measured by the baseline pre-works survey.*

In advance of the commencement of the works, Council are required to complete a pre works survey to establish public perception baseline. (Copy of survey circulated). The survey will be managed and analysed by County Down Rural Community Network who will provide a summary report of the analysis.

The survey will be carried out in person and digitally during the period 24 March – 17 April 2026 with the option to extend if necessary.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor A Mathers, seconded by Councillor D Murphy it was agreed to 'note' the recommendations within the report as circulated in Item 3.0 of the Agenda:

- Council will now progress with a public perception survey as required under the NCCR Full Business Case.

NCCR/242: Newry City Park Correspondence

Mr A Patterson asked members to note correspondence circulated in relation to content of stakeholder engagement meetings and advised officers continue to meet the Newry City Park Stakeholder Group as well as with small groups and one to one's as required and updates are provided in line with governance requirements. He said another collective meeting would be scheduled in coming months.

Mr McGeown said feedback follow the engagement with stakeholders in January was positive. Councillor Mathers asked that the feedback from the stakeholders is shared.

Councillor Finn said she also received positive feedback from the stakeholders meetings and was disappointed any issues where not raised at the time through that forum and agreed with Councillor Mathers suggestion of a report with names withheld showing the positive comments.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor A Mathers, seconded by Councillor D Murphy it was agreed to 'note' the report as circulated in Item 4.0 of the Agenda.

NCCR/243: Project Manager's Updates

Mr McGeown provide progress updates for:

Newry City Park

- Planning;
- Participation Stage Documents (PSD. P*reviously known as PQQ*);
- Programme dates;
- Budget - CEs / EWs / BREEAM

Mr Patterson advised a press release will be issued when the PSD is live on e-tender and a visualisation/animation will be finalised by the end of the month and shared with the Programme Board.

Newry City Centre Regeneration

- Planning (*Theatre/Conference*);
- Flood Alleviation;
- Social Value;
- BREEAM;
- Programme dates;
- Budget;
- Funding;
- CEs & EWs (*Theatre/Conf & Public Realm*);
- Civic Hub;
- Grade A Office.

Councillor Murphy queried if the flood alleviation work impact the project delivery. Mr Mallon advised there is no impact at present will only be a delay to the public realm if the Flood alleviation works were delayed. Final written notification was requested from DfI Rivers outlining the scope of the flood alleviation.

Mr Mathers welcomed the progress and said there has been some commentary on the theatre façade. He asked if engagement has been ongoing with theatre users.
Mr Mallon confirmed the HED advised that the façade had no historical value and said engagement with users on alternative venues has been ongoing and officers have been actively looking at sourcing alternative options but unfortunately none of the options presented to date suited all of the users.

It was proposed the Newry Regeneration Working Group is re-established and a meeting convened in the coming weeks.

Cllr Reilly said he felt there is a lot of detail to take in at these meetings. The Chairman advised the PMs report formatting will be simplified going forward.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor A Mathers, seconded by Councillor D Murphy, it was agreed to 'note' the Project Manager's Updates as circulated in Item 5.0 within the Agenda and noted the next meeting of the Programme Board is scheduled for 1st May.**

Meeting ended: 11:00am

For Approval by Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board
For Noting at Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee