November 11th, 2026

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Thursday, 12th November 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 15 October 2026

Attachment: SPR-Action Sheet arising from 2026 10 15.pdf ***Page 1***

For Discussion/Decision

4.0 Mid-Year Assessment of Directorate Business Plans 2026/27

For Decision

Attachment: SPR Cover Report Mid Year Assessment of CX-CS Directorate Business Plans 2026-27 .pdf ***Page 5***

Attachment: Appendix 1 - CX-CS Mid Year Assessment Business Plan 2026-27.pdf ***Page 7***

5.0 Mid-Year Assessment Performance Improvement Plan 2026/27

Attachment: SPR Cover Report Mid Year Progress Report PIP 2026-27 .pdf ***Page 25***

Attachment: Appendix 1 - PIP Mid Year Progress Report April-September 2026.pdf ***Page 27***

6.0 Public Right of way from Donard Park to Summit of Slieve Donard- Works and Assertion of section alongside Glen River

Attachment: Glen River SPR Report.pdf ***Page 41***

Attachment: Maps Glen River path.pdf ***Page 44***

7.0 Licence Agreement for PEAT & Survey Works on Forest Service Lands at Slieve Gullion

Attachment: Licence Agreement for PEAT Survey Works on Forest Service Lands at Slieve Gullion.pdf ***Page 46***

Attachment: NMDDC Licence Agreement Map.pdf ***Page 49***

8.0 DAERA funding for Air Quality Equipment

Attachment: SP&R committee report on Air Quality equipment 12 Nov 2026.pdf ***Page 50***

9.0 Delamont Caravan Park Provision 2027

For Decision

Attachment: SPR Report - Delamont Caravan Site 2027.pdf ***Page 53***

Exempt Appendicies

9.1 Exempt Appendix - Delamont Caravan Park Provision 2027

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: Appendix 1 - Delamont Camping and Caravan Site 2027.pdf ***Not included***

For Discussion/Decision

10.0 Update on Newry Portadown Canal Working Group & Locks Survey Project

For Approval

Attachment: SPR Report - Newry Canal Working Group Update and Lock Surveys.pdf ***Page 56***

Exempt Appendicies

10.1 Exempt Appendix - Update on Newry Portadown Canal Working Group & Locks Survey Project

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

Attachment: Appendix 1 - Bus Case Newry Canal Working Group Update and Lock Surveys.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Appendix 2 - Financial Provision Newry Canal Working Group Update and Lock Surveys.pdf ***Not included***

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

11.0 Purchase of New Pay & Display Ticket Machines

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 PD machines.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Business Case PD machines.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: MS1-Brochure-UK-V1 (3).pdf ***Not included***

12.0 Lands at Castlewellan 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: Lands at Castlewellan CC SPR report.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: DDC034-G-1-30.pdf ***Not included***

13.0 Licence of Room at Crossmaglen 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: Crossmaglen Community Centre Room Licence.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Map 2.pdf ***Not included***

14.0 Newcastle Rock Pool Tender Report

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 Committee Report - ICT Appointment - Newcastle Rockpool.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: ITT Evaluation Report - 53-2026 Newcastle Rock Pool Rev1.pdf ***Not included***

15.0 Bessbrook Digihub Contractor Appointment

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 Committee Report - Bessbrook Digi Hub.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Tender Evaluation Report_Rev1.pdf ***Not included***

16.0 Warrenpoint Health & Wellbeing Hub

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 Committee Report - Warrenpoint HWH - IDT QS-PM Procurement (003).pdf ***Not included***

17.0 Camlough Lake Recreational Hub – Capital Build Project

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 Committee Report - Camlough Lake Recreational Hub - Rev 1.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Tender Evaluation Report-05-2024 - Camlough Lake Recreational Hub - Re-Tender.pdf ***Not included***

18.0 Disposal of Kilkeel Town Hall

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- Kilkeel Town Hall.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: NM123-G-1-00.pdf ***Not included***

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

19.0 Management Accounts - Quarter 2

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: Management Accounts Q2 2026-27 SPR Report 06.11.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Appendix 1 - Management Accounts by Directorate for period ending 30 September 2026.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Appendix 2 - Management Accounts by Assistant Director for period 30 September 2026.PDF ***Not included***

Attachment: Appendix 3 - Mnagement Accounts by Expense Code at 30 September 2026.pdf ***Not included***

Attachment: Appendix 4 - Payroll Report as at 30 September 2026.pdf ***Not included***

For Noting

20.0 Minutes of BRCD Tourism Proposition Project Board Meeting 26th Oct 2026

Attachment: Minutes of BRCD Tourism Proposition Project Board Mtg 26.10.2026.pdf ***Page 61***

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/071/2026	LDP Revised Timetable	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	Ongoing	N
ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – Thursday 13 August 2026					
SPR/117/2026	FMA / SLA Proposals	The following was agreed: • A one-year extension of the current FMAs and SLAs relating to community centres to facilitate a comprehensive review of contract specifications and service delivery. • The uplift in funding allocation to community groups who currently run community facilities under an FMA or SLA based on all relevant groups fully claiming the uplifted amount. • The incorporation of the Community	A Robb	Ongoing	N

		Development Strategy public consultation findings into the future re-procurement strategy for the facilities.			
ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – Thursday 15 October 2026					
SPR/157/2026	Action Shete of SPR Meeting held 17/09/2026	It was agreed to note the action sheet	A Jones	Agreed	Y
SPR/158/2026	Officer Report on NOM – Supreme Court Ruling	It was agreed to note the Notice of Motion: Supreme Court Ruling was discussed at the Councillor's Equality and Good Relations Reference Group on 30 September 2026 and the consensus of those present was to recommend Council await the outcome of the High Court and direction from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in relation to the Supreme Court Ruling.	E Kirk	Agreed	Y
SPR/159/2026	Newry Canal Lock 6 Restoration Works, Lock 7 Survey	The following was agreed: •To procure and appoint a contractor and additional consultancy services as required to deliver the Lock No. 6 project as outlined in section 2.1 of the officer's report. •To procure a detailed survey and restoration plan for Lock No. 7. •To update the capital plan with the budget required to progress the project.	C Mallon	Agreed	Y
SPR/160/2026	Purchase of Saintfield Depot	It was agreed to defer the item to allow for a site visit (if Translink were agreeable) prior to November Council, to allow for a decision on the item at November Council meeting.	C Sage	Agreed	Y
SPR/161/2026	Purchase of New Pay & Display Machines	It was agreed to defer the item to allow for further information to be tabled for Members consideration.	C Sage	Agreed	Y
SPR/162/2026	Licence of Office Space at Crossmaglen Community Centre	It was agreed to grant the annual licence agreement with the group identified in the report for a period of up to five years subject to the licence fee noted in the officer's report.	E Kirk	Agreed	Y

SPR/163/2026	Release of Charge from Part of Land at Mullaghbawn	It was agreed to release the charge over that portion of the lands as outlined in red on the map attached to the officer's report	E Kirk	Agreed	Y
SPR/164/2026	Licence for Car Park at Barnmeen Community Centre	It was agreed to grant a licence in respect of the car parking spaces at Barnmeen Community Centre during term time to the party named in the report for a term of 5 years at a peppercorn licence fee subject to Departmental consent.	E Kirk	Agreed	Y
SPR/165/2026	Licence for Access at Mill Street, Newry	It was agreed to issue a licence to the party named in the officer's report in respect of the strip of lands at Mill Street, Newry as outlined in green on the map attached for a period of 12 months, subject to the licence fee noted in the officer's report.	E Kirk	Agreed	Y
SPR/166/2026	Surrender of Lease at Lir Grove Newtownhamilton	It was agreed to surrender the Lease dated 21 June 1993 in respect of lands at Lir Grove, Newtownhamilton, subject to agreement from NI Housing Executive.	E Kirk	Agreed	Y
SPR/167/2026	Surrender of Lands at Donard Park Newcastle	It was agreed to accept a surrender of a portion of the lands leased by the party named in the report as hatched black on the map attached to the officer's report.	E Kirk	Agreed	Y
SPR/168/2026	Canal Bank 3 Emergency Work	It was agreed to approve the final account value as detailed in section 2.3 of the officer's report.	C Sage	Agreed	Y
SPR/169/2026	Standby Generators	It was agreed to approve the business case to progress a capital project for standby power provision at Newry Leisure Centre.	C Sage	Agreed	Y
SPR/170/2026	Development Management Review – Planning	It was agreed to approve the implementation of a 12 month pilot project within Development Management to address case load allocation and processing as detailed in section 2.2 and 4.1 of the officer's report.	C Mallon	Agreed	Y
SPR/171/2026	Rowallane DEA Multi-Sport Delivery Programme	the following was agreed: •To appoint a framework contractor for delivery of the 3G pitch as detailed within the report. •To procure and appoint an Integrated Consultancy Team to progress the Langley Road	C Haughey	Agreed	Y

		Multi-Sports Hub to planning stage and subsequent delivery of the hockey pitch at the site. •To continue stakeholder engagement regarding future governance management and lease arrangements of the Langley Road Multi-Sports Hub site.			
SPR/172/2026	Legal Administration – Structure Review	It was agreed to approve the new Legal Administration structure, to create one additional Full-Time Equivalent Legal Advisor and one law student placement, as presented at Appendix 1 and section 2 of the officer's report.	E Kirk	Agreed	Y
SPR/173/2026	NCCR Theatre Conference Update Report	It was agreed to note the update provided on progress against delivery of the NCCR Theatre and Conference Facility.	C Mallon	Agreed	Y
SPR/174/2026	NCCR Programme Board Minutes	It was agreed to note the minutes	C Mallon	Agreed	Y
SPR/175/2026	BRCD Tourism Proposition Project Board Minutes	It was agreed to note the minutes	C Mallon	Agreed	Y
SPR/176/2026	Statutory Screening: Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report Period July – Sept 2026	It was agreed to note Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for period July – September 2026.	E Kirk	Agreed	Y

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	12 November 2026
Subject:	Mid Year Assessment of Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2026-27
Reporting Officer and Job Title:	Marie Ward - Chief Executive Aileen Jones – Director: Corporate Services
Contact Officer and Job Title:	Marie Ward - Chief Executive Aileen Jones– Director: Corporate Services

Purpose of Report:

For Decision

1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	Directorate Business Plans form an essential part of the Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, which drives and provides assurance that corporate objectives are being delivered.
1.2	Directorate Business Plans demonstrate how planned activity during 2025-26 will contribute to the achievement of strategic outcomes in relation to the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan and other key strategies.
2.0	Key Issues
2.1	A Mid Year Assessment of each Directorate Business Plan has been undertaken in order to provide an overview of progress between April-September 2026. This exercise is an important part of the Council's statutory obligations to strengthen the way performance is monitored, reviewed and reported at all levels across the organisation.
2.2	The Mid Year Assessment of the Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan is outlined at Appendix 1.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To consider and approve: • The Mid Year Assessment of the Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2026-27
4.0	Resource Implications
4.1	There are no financial resource implications within this report.
5.0	Due Regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations
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	Does the proposal relate to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision No If yes, please select one of the following: Choose an item.
5.3	Proposal initiating consultation The consultation 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 Please select the consultation period: Choose an item. Rationale: Consultation not required
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs
6.1	Does the proposal relate to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service. Yes – Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed
7.0	Appendices
7.1	Appendix 1 – Mid Year Assessment of the Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2026-27
8.0	Background Documents
8.1	Directorate Business Plan 2026-27

Chief Executive / Corporate Services

Mid-Year Assessment
Business Plan 2026-27

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 2026-27 between April-September 2026, across the following service areas:

- **Finance, including Performance**
- **Human Resources and Organisational Development**
- **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 2026-27 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

Key Office Objectives / Actions

Legal and 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 culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements across Council.

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, 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 and legislative requirements.

Democratic Services –

- Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council.
- Provide support for Project Delivery at a Corporate Level.
- Prepare a compliant, efficient and well-managed Local Government Election.
- Operate a Corporate Support Role on behalf of all Directorates across Council.

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% 95% * 1	Mar 27 95% —
Notes:	**1** 416/436 requests responded to on time		
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 Ongoing Amber * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** Work focused on the move out of Monaghan Row and prioritising specific Teams Records Management requests, due to the absence of an Officer. It is anticipated a Business Support Officer will be recruited during Quarter 3 which will support the delivery of the objective.		
Continue to review and update the Corporate Privacy Notice to help everyone understand how Council processes personal data	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 Green * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** Corporate Privacy Notice updated and published on Council website		
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 Green * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** Maintained high-quality delivery of the Registration Service for births, deaths and marriages, including the successful relocation of the Newry Registration Office while ensuring continuity of service.		
Continue to embed NIPSO policies, procedures and monitoring arrangements to ensure compliance with NIPSOs statutory Model Complaints Handling Procedure.	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 Green * 1	Mar 27 —

Notes:	**1** Provided advice and guidance on complaint handling and maintained complaint monitoring and reporting. Enhanced the Council's customer feedback framework through a revised Complaints and Customer Feedback Policy, updated NIPSO Procedures, a new Comments and Compliments Procedure and a Customer Charter.		

CXS3: Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.

		Sep 26	Mar 27
Continue to review Retention and disposal of historical legal files extracting information which requires to be retained. (SCC)	Target **Progress**	 Green	 –
Continue to work with Evidence Section to ensure all relevant Council assets are included on the ARC GIS system.	Target **Progress**	 Amber	 –
In line with Council's 'Digital First' approach continue to minimise physical paper and progress towards electronic files versus paperbased files where possible (SCC)	Target **Progress**	 Amber * 1	 –
Notes:	**1** There is a move towards digital files only		

CXS4: Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery.

		Sep 26	Mar 27
Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties implementation	Target **Progress**	 Green * 1	 –
Notes:	**1** Ongoing implementation of positive actions within Council's Equality Action Plan, Disability Action Plan and co-ordination of rural needs impact assessments which included communication to CMT members of DAERA's new online portal for reporting rural needs impact assessments.		
Progress the use of the Irish language in civic life	Target **Progress**	 Green * 1	 –
Notes:	**1** Ongoing implementation of Council's Irish Language Strategy and the two Strategic Objectives. This included implementation of Council's Irish Language Grant Scheme and Irish Language Bursary Scheme.		
Corporate Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties compliance	Target **Actual**	Yes Yes * 1	Yes –

Notes:	1 Quarterly policy screening reports for the periods January - March 2026 and April - June 2026 prepared and noted at Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meetings on 23 April 2026 and 13 August 2026 respectively. Equality consultees forwarded notification of quarterly reports and all Quarterly Policy Screening reports and equality screenings available for download from the Corporate Policy and Equality page on the Council's website. Annual reports on progress re Section 75 Statutory Duties and Disability Duties submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 17 August 2026. Annual report on implementation of the Rural Needs Act submitted to DAERA on 7 September 2026.

CXS5: Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities

	Target	Sep 26	Mar 27
Continue to support line managers in the effective rollout of PPGs through targeted updates, training, and ongoing guidance and support.	Progress	Green *1	–

Notes:	1 HR continue to support the roll out of PPG with the delivery of PPG Leaders Workshops and L & D newsletter to support launch 26-27 PPG Cycle, regular updates and reminder to all staff and data on the completion rates to Assistant Directors. To date 181 PPGs have been completed.

	Target	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.	Progress	Green *1	–

Notes:	1 Delivery of 2 SLT Workshops in Q1 on Creative Problem Solving and Q2 Learning Exchange visit with local businesses and engagement with Head of Service.

	Target	Sep 26	Mar 27
Support delivery of statutory and mandatory training for the organisation across the Council via corporate, departmental and eLearning training initiatives.	Progress	Green *1	–

Notes:	1 Deliver of 115 L & D events (corporate and departmental), support for 2 EQA applications and creation of 3 new eLearning mandatory modules.

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

	Target	Sep 26	Mar 27
Support Directorates to ensure staff absence is effectively managed to ensure appropriate and timely support for staff	Progress	Green *1	–

Notes:	**1** Support for line managers continues with regular reporting on absences at SMT, CMT and Service level and regular meetings between managers/HRBPs to discuss absence reports and cases. HRBPs trained as Trainers to support the roll out of practical absence management training in the planning Supervisory Management training course in Q4. Monthly absence case conference meeting established to review long term absence cases to discuss targeted intervention and compliance with the Attendance Management Procedure and support a return to work, as appropriate.		
Continue to develop an Industrial Relations Framework and agree a workplan with Joint Trade Union Side	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 Green * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** Industrial Relations Framework was ratified at Council meeting in September 2026. Trade Union Co-ordinator posts were approved as established posts. Work will take place in Q3 to have the first JNCC meeting.		
Procure new systems and develop a project plan for new ways of working and efficient use of resources	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 Green * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** Implementation of Work Flow Infinity for all staff complete in April 2026. HR System - A governance framework has been put in place to manage decisions, issues, risks and budget. The project plan is in place with detailed actions and deadlines agreeing key activities with the supplier through to the end of Phase 1 to include Recruitment and Selection and the launch of Manager and Employee Self Service. An outline plan for Phase 2 has also been identified. Phase 1 scoping and blueprinting sessions are complete and the established system structure has been agreed.		
Continue to review and analyse current employment data and develop KPIs, as appropriate	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 Green * 1	Mar 27 —

Notes:	**1** Work continues to develop reporting on core HR functions, including resourcing, employee relations, attendance management, temporary contractual changes. This will facilitate monthly reporting to Directors. Absence reporting has been enhanced to include monthly open absence reports to monitor absence levels and facilitate monthly case conference meeting. Reporting for HR on temporary contracts have been developed to support due diligence, monitoring and to facilitate monthly reviews.		
Continue to identify ways to increase the number of people from disadvantaged communities who are employed by council (CWB)	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 Green * 1	Mar 27 —

Notes:	**1** Council have supported this objective by widening recruitment outreach through attendance at community careers fairs and employability events within the District, and reviewing recruitment practices to reduce barriers for underrepresented groups including simplified recruitment materials, reasonable adjustments during recruitment and review of personal specifications to remove unnecessary barriers to entry and monitoring recruitment data to identify lessons learned. In addition, continuation of local media advertising of vacancies, higher level apprenticeships, work experience, placement students opportunities and development of career pathways.		
Implement and maintain a recruitment plan	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 Green * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** A recruitment schedule has been developed to record all recruitment activity, accessible to SMT for weekly approvals. Work continues to develop reporting on recruitment activity. Placement Student recruitment planned for October 2026 for a 26/27 intake.		
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% 89% * 1	Mar 27 90% —
Notes:	**1** Achieved 89% in Q2		
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 Green * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** Project planning in progress. Implementation to commence as planned in November. JDs being evaluated for temporary resources.		
To complete the finance restructure and ensure the new roles are evaluated and consulted on prior to implementation	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 Green * 1	Mar 27 —

Notes:	**1** Ongoing. Working with HR. Measure will be complete by 31st March 2027.		
To update the financial regulations of Council	Target **Progress**	Sep 26 Amber * 1	Mar 27 –
Notes:	**1** The review is currently in progress with completion anticipated by year end.		
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 Yes * 1	Mar 27 Yes –
Notes:	**1** A paper went to SMT in September outlining potential options for a revised performance schedule. SMT are discussing the options presented and finalising a decision to ensure better alignment with the rates setting process.		
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 Green * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** Communications activity has supported a range of Council services, investment projects and strategic initiatives through proactive media coverage, social media campaigns, website updates and stakeholder engagement, ensuring key audiences were informed of Council investment and the benefits being delivered to local communities. Grade A Office Accommodation, LEP, BRCD Tourism Project, Student Placement & Recruitment, DTFF, NCCR.		
% of media requests for information responded to within the agreed timeframe.	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 90% 97% * 1	Mar 27 90% —
Notes:	**1** Target met. 103 media enquiries processed.		
Compliance with web accessibility standards (WCAG 2.2).	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 Yes Yes * 1	Mar 27 Yes —
Notes:	**1** Maintained compliance with WCAG 2.2 web accessibility standards through the embedding of accessibility best practice across web content, documents and digital communications, supported by staff training and the rollout of an accessibility toolkit.		
Increase the use of digital communications across Council platforms by adopting a modern approach to targeting and engaging key audiences.	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 20% 20% * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** Progressed the Council's digital-first communications approach through the strategic use of multiple digital platforms, including LinkedIn and Instagram, supported by targeted content planning and a greater focus on people-centred storytelling. This has enhanced audience engagement, increased the visibility of Council priorities and services and improved overall reach and engagement.		
Progress communications arrangements for the delivery of Local Government Elections taking place in May 2027.	Target **Actual**	Mar 27 Yes Yes * 1	

Notes:	**1** Continued participation in the Elections Voter Public Awareness Working Group to support planning and coordination for the delivery of the 2027 Local Government Elections, including progressing communications arrangements and contributing to ongoing preparatory work and the sharing of Electoral Office for Northern Ireland communications to help raise awareness and support stakeholder engagement.		
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% 100%	Mar 27 97.5% —
% of devices replaced/upgraded against Technology Refresh Implementation Plan.	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 50% 62%	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 Green * 1	Mar 27 —

Notes:	**1** Northern Ireland Cyber Security Centre (NICSC) have been engaged, through the NI Council IT Officers Group, to undertake a Cyber Security Maturity Baseline Assessment Project across Northern Ireland local councils. The project aims to establish a comprehensive picture of current cyber security maturity, resilience and risk exposure across the sector, helping to identify strengths, areas for improvement and opportunities for future collaboration and support. The NICSC will also use the findings to support future cyber resilience programmes across Local Government and NI Local Councils. NICSC are currently out to tender for professional services to support the engagement with aims to complete the assessment by February 2027.		
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 Green * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** A telephony persona matrix is currently being developed to map personas to each post across the Council. This will enable an assessment of current telephony provision, including desk phones, contact centre services, mobile phones, smartphones, softphones, and related communications technologies. The matrix will help ensure that telephony services are aligned to users' operational requirements and support future digital transformation initiatives, while identifying opportunities for standardisation, rationalisation, and service improvement.		

Progress IT requirements for the delivery of Local Government Elections taking place in May 2027.	Target Actual	Mar 27 Yes Yes * 1	
Notes:	**1** On target at this stage.		
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 Green * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** Rationalised the Digital Transformation portfolio, confirming 43 completed projects, closing 7 inactive projects and overseeing 31 active/on-hold projects. Provided governance and support for key digital transformation projects, including Website Development, Online Booking, Finance and HR initiatives.		
Further develop roadmap of new digital initiatives for the next two-year period.	Target Progress	Sep 26 Green * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** Developed the draft Digital Transformation Roadmap 2026-2030, aligned to corporate priorities and informed through engagement with CMT, stakeholders and service areas. Established a pipeline of 38 potential future digital initiatives and associated investment requirements, for future consideration through the appropriate governance structures.		
Development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy and Procedure.	Target Progress	Sep 26 Green * 1	Mar 27 —
Notes:	**1** Established the AI Adoption Working Group (3 WG meetings); developed a draft AI Policy and Procedures, progressing through the Council's Policy Development Framework. Continued to identify opportunities for AI adoption that support service improvement, efficiency and innovation.		
Increase in usage of Microsoft 365 tools across all Directorates.	Target Progress	Sep 26 Green * 1	Mar 27 —

Notes:	**1** Supported services, including AHC Leisure and the Communications and Marketing section, to increase adoption and effective use of Microsoft 365 tools, including SharePoint, Forms and Power Automate to streamline processes and improve efficiency. Progressed development of Departmental hub sites, pilot content areas and establishment of a Corporate Intranet Working Group. Continued to promote digital working practices and commenced development of Microsoft 365 usage reporting to inform future adoption and digital skills initiatives.

Capital & Procurement

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

		Sep 26	Mar 27
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	Green * 1	—
Notes:	**1** Monthly highlights, progress updates, and escalations continue to be reported to SMT. A prioritised delivery and cashflow programme has been developed collaboratively with SMT and CMT to support decision-making and resource allocation. Comprehensive project status updates are presented to all Project and Programme Boards to ensure effective governance and oversight.		
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	Sep 26	Mar 27
	Progress	Green * 1	—
Notes:	**1** Significant support has been provided to departments in identifying and developing projects for consideration within the Capital Programme. Advice has been offered on project feasibility, indicative costs, procurement routes, programme risks, affordability, and delivery timescales to support informed decision-making. Input has also been provided in support of business cases, funding applications, and programme development, with key risks and constraints identified at an early stage to improve project viability and deliverability.		
Continuation with the identification and disposal of council surplus assets, including the direct liaison with directorates, legals and external organisations. (CWB) (SCC)	Target	Sep 26	Mar 27
	Progress	Green * 1	—
Notes:	**1** Work has continued on the identification, assessment, and disposal of surplus Council assets in line with Council policy and asset management objectives. Progress on asset disposal matters has been reported through SMT / SFWG, with key issues, risks, and recommendations brought forward for consideration as required.		

		Sep 26	Mar 27
Capital projects programme and budget in line with agreed parameters and Council policy.	Target **Progress**	Green * 1	—

Notes:	**1** The Capital Programme and associated budgets have continued to be managed in line with agreed Council policies, governance arrangements, and approved financial parameters. Ongoing monitoring of project expenditure, cashflow forecasts, and programme delivery has been undertaken to ensure projects remain aligned with approved budgets and available funding. At the mid-year stage, the Capital Programme remains under active management to ensure project delivery and expenditure continue to align with approved budgets, funding conditions, Council policy, and strategic objectives.

CXS14: Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives

		Sep 26	Mar 27
Increasing supplier outreach through attendance at Meet the Buyer type events and premarket engagement. (CWB) (SCC)	Target **Progress**	Green * 1	—

Notes:	**1** Pre-market engagement has been undertaken, where appropriate, to inform procurement strategies, test market capacity, understand emerging industry trends, and ensure that procurement approaches are proportionate and capable of delivering best value. Early engagement with suppliers has helped shape procurement requirements and improve the quality of information available to both the Council and prospective bidders prior to launching tender opportunities.

		Sep 26	Mar 27
Enhancing visibility of NMDDC Tender opportunities in the marketplace through social media campaign. (CWB) (SCC)	Target **Progress**	Green * 1	—

Notes:	**1** Progress has been made in enhancing supplier engagement and improving accessibility to Council procurement opportunities, supporting increased competition and encouraging participation from local businesses on release of new council website. Procurement activity has been promoted through the appropriate tendering platforms and supplier engagement processes, ensuring opportunities are communicated openly, transparently, and in accordance with procurement regulations. Advice and support have been provided to suppliers, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to improve understanding of Council procurement processes, tender requirements, and evaluation methodologies particularly on SEUPB programmes. This has helped reduce barriers to participation and encouraged a broader range of suppliers to compete for Council contracts.

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 2 * 1	Mar 27 40 –
Notes:	**1** There were a few events scheduled which have been moved to the second half of the year		
The number of official events attended by the Chairperson / Vice Chairperson	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 100 111	Mar 27 200 –
Prepare and organise a programme of Committee meetings for 202627, 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% 100%	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 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 Yes	Mar 27 Yes –
Publication of Minutes within the target timeframe i.e. within 5 working days	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 100% 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 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 Green * 1	Mar 27 –
Notes:	**1** Planning for Local Government election count May 2027 progressing		
Ensure the project delivery complies with Council's Governance arrangements	Target Actual	Sep 26 Yes Yes * 1	Mar 27 –
Notes:	**1** Attending monthly election working group with all 11 Councils and EONI who are the lead and also linked in with the Electoral Commission		
Ensure projects are delivered within agreed budgets and timelines	Target Actual	Sep 26 Yes Yes * 1	Mar 27 –
Notes:	**1** Budget set by NI Executive Office and Council will stay within that		
Liaise with all departments to ensure collaborative approach for corporate projects	Target Progress	Sep 26 Green * 1	Mar 27 –
Notes:	**1** An internal working group has been set up to plan for Count set-up		
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 –	
Provide full induction and training for new Elected Members following the Election and subsequently as they are co-opted onto the Council	Target **Actual**	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 **Yes** * 1	Mar 27 Yes –
Notes:	**1** To take place following election count completion in May 2027.		
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 **Yes**	Mar 27 Yes –
Provide support for corporate meetings and briefings for Directors across the organisation	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 Yes **Yes**	Mar 27 Yes –
Percentage of Committee reports received on time from Directorates	Target **Actual**	Sep 26 90% **70%**	Mar 27 90% –

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	12 November 2026
Subject:	Mid Year Assessment - Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27
Reporting Officer and Job Title:	Joanna Tierney – Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
Contact Officer and Job Title:	Catherine Hughes – Acting Head of Performance and Improvement

Purpose of Report:

For Decision

1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	Through the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27 and Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, the Council makes a commitment to monitor, review and report performance on a regular basis. This report provides an overview of the Council's progress in implementing the performance improvement objectives between April-September 2026. Where possible, performance has been tracked against the targets set within the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27.
2.0	Key Issues
2.1	A significant number of 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success' within the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27 are on track to be achieved. However, progress against the following has been limited: • There was a decrease in the rate of recycling and in increase in the amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arising. • The statutory standards for processing local planning applications and enforcement cases have not been met. • A number of key economic measures have experienced a decrease however this can be attributed to the reduction in the funding package for 'Go Succeed' for 2026-27.
2.2	It should be noted that the information contained within this report may be subject to change when the results are verified, validated and reported through the annual Assessment of Performance which will be published by 30 September 2027.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To consider and agree the: • Mid Year Assessment of the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27
4.0	Resource Implications
4.1	There are no financial resource implications within this report.

5.0	Due Regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations
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	Does the proposal relate to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision No If yes, please select one of the following: Choose an item.
5.3	Proposal initiating consultation The consultation 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 Please select the consultation period: Choose an item. Rationale: Consultation not required
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs
6.1	Does the proposal relate to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service. Yes – Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed
7.0	Appendices
7.1	Appendix 1 – Mid Year Assessment - Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27
8.0	Background Documents
8.1	Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27

Performance Improvement Plan

2026-27

Mid Year Assessment

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

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Introduction

This report provides an overview of the Council's progress in implementing the performance improvement objectives between April-September 2026. Where possible, performance has been tracked against the targets set within the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27.

Performance Improvement Objectives 2026-27

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

2. **We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses, job creation and pathways to employment**

3. **We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents**

4. **We will reduce our contribution to climate change by cutting carbon emissions and improving the efficiency of our fleet and buildings**

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

Legend

Status		Legend	
☺	Target or objective achieved / on track to be achieved	△	Performance has improved since Q1/Q2 2025-26
😐	Target or objective partially achieved / likely to be achieved / subject to delay	▷	Performance is similar to Q1/Q2 2025-26
☹	Target or objective not achieved / unlikely to be achieved	▽	Performance has declined since Q1/Q2 2025-26

It should be noted that:

- For the statutory performance indicators for economic development, planning and waste management, performance has been compared to the same period in 2025-26.
- The information contained within this report may be subject to change when the results are verified, validated and reported through the annual Assessment of Performance which will be published by 30 September 2027.

Progress at a glance

Performance Improvement Objective	Progress	Status Trend
We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our local facilities and services	451,112 paid attendances recorded across five of the six Council Leisure Centres	
	2 play parks upgraded	
	11,173 leisure centre memberships recorded	
	15,511 people participating in targeted health programmes	
	£225,000 in financial assistance funding allocated to sporting clubs across the District	
We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses, job creation and pathways to employment	84.6* new jobs promoted through business start activity	
	328 participants were supported on employment pathway initiatives	
	141* business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	
	91* businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions	
	79* new enterprises created as a result of support.	
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	19 fixed penalty notices issued and 17 paid	
	100% of community clean up requests supported	
	£17k awarded towards 12 environmental projects through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' scheme	
	Recycling rate increased from 50.5% to 51.8% in Q1, a rise of 1.3 percentage points	
	Increase in the amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arising	
We will reduce our contribution to climate change by cutting carbon emissions and improving the efficiency of our fleet and buildings	Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy launched October 2026	
	8 electric vehicles now within the Council fleet with a further 9 due to be delivered in November 2026.	
	18 electric vehicle chargers installed across the District through the ORCS programme. A number are energised and ready for use.	
	12 new EV charging points currently installed across the Council estate to service Council fleet	
	76.6% of Council fleet younger than 8 years	
We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	The average processing time for local planning applications decreased to 45.8 weeks	
	The average processing time for major planning applications decreased to 23.4 weeks	
	The percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks decreased to 65.0%	
	Increase in the number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	
	Increase in the number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more	

Performance Improvement Objective 1

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

Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Active and Healthy Communities

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2026-27 the Council:

- Ran a comprehensive summer activity programme across the District during July and August.
- Continued to work with the capital estates team on progressing Jennings Park and St Marks projects with Planning applications submitted.
- Completed the Play Strategy review with year 4 works now completed.
- Sports capital financial assistance call was opened and completed in Q1/Q2.
- Appointed an ICT to design and scope the Newcastle centre

Measure of Success	2026-27 Target	Q1/Q2 Actual	Status	Explanatory note
Number of paid attendances at:	898,000	**451,112**	☺ ▷	In the first six months of 2026-27 there were a total of 451,112 paid attendances recorded across the five operating leisure centres in the District. (Kilkeel Leisure Centre has been closed for refurbishment since September 2025). This represents a slight decrease of 5.9% compared to the figure recorded for the same period last year. This decrease, however, can be attributed to the closure of Kilkeel Leisure centre as for the same period last year attendance was recorded against six leisure centres. This figure represents 50.2% of the target set. Compared to the same period last year two centres (Down Leisure Centre and the Newcastle Centre) have experienced an increase in paid attendances while Newry Leisure Centre, St. Colmans and
Newry Leisure Centre	450,000	239,895	☺ ▷	
Down Leisure Centre	270,000	144,746	☺ △	
Kilkeel Leisure Centre	21,000	0	**Centre closed**	
St. Colmans Sports Complex	60,000	22,063	☹ ▽	
Newcastle Centre & Tropicana Outdoor Swimming Complex	27,800	25,478	☺ △	

Ballymote Sports & Wellbeing Centre	40,000	18,930	😐 ▷	Ballymote have experienced a decrease in numbers.
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes	16,500	15,511	☺ ▷	During Q1 & Q2 of 2026-27 over 15,500 participants engaged in physical activity programmes and health and wellbeing initiatives within be active for life classes. This represents 94% of the annual target.
Number of attendances recorded at Donard Park Multisport Hub	30,000	16,040	☺	There has been over 16,000 attendances recorded at Donard Park Multisport Hub from April to September 2026. This represents 53.5% of the target set.
Value of Financial Assistance Funding allocated to clubs	£225,000	£225,000	☺	Financial assistance completed including major and minor options.
Number of leisure centre memberships	9,500*	11,173	☺ △	A total of 11,173 leisure centre memberships were recorded by the end of Q2 2026-27 which is an increase of 3.2% when compared to the 10,824 memberships recorded at the end of Q2 2025-26
Number of capital leisure projects progressed	7	5	☺ △	Projects complete for Donard Park 3G pitch and Dunleath accessibility steps. Kilkeel Leisure Centre works are in progress. Jennings Park and the Multi Sports Hub project at St. Marks High School, Warrenpoint are being progressed through the planning process.
Number of play parks upgraded	2	2	☺	2 Play parks all complete in Year 4, including Lismore and Mourneview Newry.

Performance Improvement Objective 2

We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses, job creation and pathways to employment

Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism

Progress

During Q1 and Q2 2026-27, the Council:

- Launched the Local Economic Partnership Revive and Reimagine Commercial Property Grant in June 2026 with a funding pot of £2,000,000 available. The Commercial Property Revive and Reimagine grant will support the regeneration of derelict, vacant and underutilised commercial properties in both rural and urban settlements. Hosted two information workshops for businesses to promote the grant.
- Received approval from DfC for Q1 and Q2 delivery of 2026-2027 Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Action Plan.
- Hosted an Employment Pathway Job Fair event on 3rd June with 49 employers; 14 support organisations; and 328 attendees, over 374 jobs were on offer and 59% of attendees were aged 19-44.
- Continued to support the startup and growth of Social Enterprises via SLA with Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency.
- Supported Social Enterprise Capacity Building, Netwalks and Down Ladies Business Network via SLA with Down Business Centre
- Delivered Go Succeed Start and Grow pillars.
- Supported DTFF grants.
- Delivered a range of Make it Local campaigns to support events across the district.
- Continued to support artisan traders via artisan markets held monthly in Downpatrick, Newcastle and Warrenpoint.

Measure of success	2026-27 Target	Q1/Q2 Actual	Status	Explanatory note
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	12	6	☺ ▷	6 new social enterprise start-ups engaged, achieving 50% of the annual target.
Number of social enterprise jobs created	12	6	☺ ▷	6 new social enterprise jobs created, (3 ft & 3 pt), achieving 50% of the annual target.
Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity	712	381	☺ ▽	Between April and September 2026, 381 people registered for the Go Succeed Programme achieving 53.5% of the annual target. These registrations were across three pillars of: Engage: 247 Foundation: 43

				Growth: 91
Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	279**	141*		141 Business Plans approved, achieving 50.5% of the annual target. These include: 105 Business Plans and 36 Enterprise Action Plans.
Number of new enterprises created as a result of support	119	79*		79 new start businesses were supported on their start up journey between April and September 2026. This accounts for 66% of the annual target.
Number of new jobs promoted through business start-up activity NI 'Go Succeed' *(statutory performance indicator)*	173***	84.6*		84.6 jobs created based on the multiplier of 0.6 as per DfE. 141 Business Plans approved, these include: 105 Business Plans and 36 Enterprise Action Plans. This accounts for 49% of the annual target
Number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions	188**	91*		91 businesses received 1-2-1 diagnostic support achieving 41% of the annual target. (90 were supported via Growth and 1 by Scaling) Mentoring is allocated depending on growth ambitions i.e. 10 hours. 15 hours and 21 hours. Average support is 15 hours
Number of participants directly supported on employment pathway initiatives	250	328		Council hosted a Job Fair on 3rd June 2026. 328 attendees were supported on employment pathway initiatives.

*The 2026/27 mid year figure is a draft number to be finalised following monitoring and verification of data by Go Succeed lead BCC

** Targets have been revised downwards as the funding package for 'Go Succeed' has been reduced for 2026-27.

*** Updated 'Go Succeed' programme target for the number of jobs promoted in Newry Mourne and Down: 173. An amendment to the standard set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 is awaiting legislative passage and approval. Methodology for calculating based on business and enterprise action plans * 0.6

Performance Improvement Objective 3

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

Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Sustainability and Environment

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2026-27, the Council:

- Received 497 service requests for incidents of littering, fly tipping and dog fouling, an increase of 3.3% compared to the 481 incidents recorded for the same period last year.
- Issued 19 fixed penalty notices (17 of which have been paid). Overall, 89.5% of fixed penalty notices have been paid to date.
- Assisted 16 voluntary organisations, community groups, sports associations, schools and individuals with community clean ups across the District.
- Supported the NI 'Live Here Love Here' scheme, through which £17,194 was awarded to 12 groups for environmental projects. These groups included a number of community associations, a men's shed and a primary and secondary school.
- Recorded an increase in the rate of recycling and a decrease in the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill.
- Recorded an increase in the amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings.

Measure of success	2026-27 Target	2026-27 Q1/Q2 Actual	Status	Explanatory note
Number of fixed penalty notices issued (littering, fly tipping and dog fouling)	100	19	☹ △	The Council issued 19 fixed penalty notices, achieving 19% of the annual target. To date, 17 of the fixed penalty notices have been paid. FPN's not paid will be referred for legal action with a higher penalty likely to apply. It should be noted that there does remain a number of vacant posts within the section.
Number of fixed penalty notices paid (littering, fly tipping and dog fouling)	80	17	☹ △	
Percentage of fixed penalty notices issued that are paid	80%	89.5%	☺ △	Overall, 89.5% of fixed penalty notices issued during the first six months of 2026-27 have been paid. This is an increase of 7% compared to the same period last year.

Percentage of community clean up requests supported	100%	100%	☺	The Council assisted with 16 community clean ups between April and September 2026, providing support to all requests from the community.
Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	No target	12	△	A total of 12 environmental projects across Newry, Mourne and Down received funding totalling £17,194 through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' small grants scheme in 2026-27.
The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling *(statutory performance indicator)*	70% by 2030	**Q1 Actual** 51.8%	😐 △	In Q1 2026-27, the rate of recycling recorded for Newry, Mourne and Down was 51.8%, which is below the target set. This falls below the regional average of 53.9% and the Council is currently ranked 8/11 across Northern Ireland. When compared to Q1 2025-26 however, this represents an increase of 1.3% in the rate of recycling, from 50.5% to 51.8%.
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled *(statutory performance indicator)*	<20,954** tonnes (2019-20 target)	117	☺ △	During Q1 2026-27, the Council sent 117 tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste to landfill which was the fourth lowest across Northern Ireland and has only used 0.6% of the NILAS* allowance. When compared to Q1 2025-26, the amount of biodegradable waste that was sent to landfill decreased by 21%, down from 148 tonnes.
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings *(statutory performance indicator)*	85,500t** (2019-20 target)	23,522	😐 ▷	During Q1 2026-27, the Council collected 23,522 tonnes of municipal waste arising which was the fourth highest across Northern Ireland. When compared to Q1 2025-26, the amount of local authority collected municipal waste arisings increased by 2.7%, from 22,914 tonnes to 23,522 tonnes. This increase is in line with the 2.2% increase experienced at the regional level when comparing these two periods.

*NILAS: Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme.
*The 2019-20 NI Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) target has been included as the Council awaits more up to date targets from DAERA.

Performance Improvement Objective 4

We will reduce our contribution to climate change by cutting carbon emissions and improving the efficiency of our fleet and buildings.

Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Sustainability & Environment

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2026-27, the Council:

- Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy was launched in October 2026.
- Progressed the action plan contained within the Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2024-30).
- Continued to implement the Fleet Replacement Programme.
- 7 new electric vans have been received and are in operation, with a further 9 due to be delivered by November 2026.
- 12 electric vehicle chargers have now been installed across Council facilities to service Council fleet.
- ORCS programme being implemented with all chargers now installed and 4 already energised.

Measure of Success	2026-27 Target	Q1/Q2 Actual	Status	Explanatory note
Reduction in carbon footprint of Council estate:	50% reduction by 2040	-	-	The Council's carbon footprint for 2025-26 is being collated and verified and will be available by year end review.
- Electricity		-	-	
- Mains Gas		-	-	
- Heating Oil (Kerosene)		-	-	
- Fleet Use (Diesel)		-	-	

- Fleet Use (Petrol)		-	-	
- HVO Use		-	-	
Increase in Renewable energy generation	5% increase	-	-	The Council's carbon footprint for 2025-26 is being collated and verified and will be available by year end review.
Percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years	75%	76.6%	☺ △	76.6% of the Council's fleet is younger than 8 years, with 47 of the 201 vehicles in the Council fleet older than eight years. This is an increase of 0.6% when compared to the 76% recorded for the same period last year.
Number of electric vehicles within the Council fleet	16	8	☺ △	Council already had 1 electric car within its fleet. 7 new electric vans have now been received and are in operation with a further 9 due to be delivered in November 2026.
Number of Council supported EV charging points	12	12	☺ △	Council currently supports 31 EV charging points across its estate. 12 electric vehicle chargers have now been installed across Council facilities to service Council fleet with 18 further chargers being installed as part of the ORCS programme.

Performance Improvement Objective 5

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

Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism

Progress:

During Q1 2026-27, the Council:

- Received 278 planning applications in total which is the second highest across Northern Ireland, behind Belfast City Council.
- The Council decided on 290 applications in Q1 2026-27, which is the highest across Northern Ireland. 268 local planning applications were approved, resulting in an approval rate of 92.4%, which is below the Northern Ireland average of 94.3%.
- Processed 4.3% of local planning applications within the statutory standard of <15 weeks, which is below the regional average of 41.1% and is the lowest across all 11 Councils. This does however represent an increase of 2.0% when compared to the 2.3% of applications processed within <15 weeks during Q1 2025-26.
- The Council received 2 major planning applications in Q1 2026-27. It also decided on and approved 4 applications during the quarter. 75% of major planning applications were processed within the statutory standard of <30 weeks which is above the regional average of 58.3%. This represents an increase of 75% compared to the 0% of applications processed within <30 weeks in Q1 2025-26.
- Opened 88 enforcement cases which is the fourth highest across NI with 60 cases concluded. As of 30 June 2026, the Council had 923 planning enforcement cases in the system, which is the highest across Northern Ireland.
- Completed extensive consultation on Draft Plan Strategies, followed by focussed and minor changes which will again be consulted on in Q3 2026.

Measure of Success	2026-27 Target	2026-27 Q1 Actual	Status	Explanatory note
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks) *(statutory performance indicator)*	<15 weeks	45.8 weeks	☹ △	During Q1 2026-27, the average processing time for local planning applications was 45.8 weeks which is above the regional average of 20.0 weeks and the highest across all 11 Councils. When compared to Q1 2025-26 however, this represents a decrease of 0.3 weeks down from 46.1 weeks, for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Average processing time of major	<30 weeks	23.4 weeks	☺	During Q1 2026-27, the average processing time for major planning applications was

planning applications (weeks) *(statutory performance indicator)*			△	23.4 weeks which is below the regional average of 26.1 weeks and is the fourth lowest across all Councils. When compared to Q1 2025-26, this represents a decrease of 31 weeks down from 54.4 weeks for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks *(statutory performance indicator)*	70%	65.0%	😐▷	During Q1 2026-27, the percentage of cases concluded within 39 weeks was 65.0% which is below the regional average of 76.2%. When compared to Q1 2025-26, this represents a decrease of 9% down from 74.4% for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Average processing time for validating application forms	3* weeks	1 week	☺	The average processing time for the validation of planning application forms is 1 week, which is well within the target of 3 weeks.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	170	496	☹▷	As of 30 June 2026, Newry, Mourne and Down had 496 planning applications in the system for 12 months or more. This represents a decrease of 23 applications when compared to March 2026 but an increase of 32 applications when compared to 30 June 2025. A reduction of 336 applications is required to achieve the target.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less	870	953	😐△	As of 30 June 2026, Newry, Mourne and Down had 953 planning applications in the system for 12 months or less. This represents a decrease of 24 applications when compared to 31 March 2026 and a decrease of 86 applications when compared to 30 June 2025. A reduction of 83 applications is required to achieve the target.
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more	580	679	☹▽	As of 30 June 2026, Newry, Mourne and Down had 679 enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more. This represents an increase of 35 cases when compared to 31 March 2026 and an increase of 71 cases when compared to 30 June 2025. A reduction of 99 cases is required to achieve the target.

*Following discussions within the planning section and the introduction of the validation checklist this target has been brought down from 6 weeks to 3 weeks.

Report to:	Strategy Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	12th November 2026
Subject:	Public Right of way from Donard Park to Summit of Slieve Donard- Works and Assertion of section alongside Glen River
Reporting Officer and Job Title:	Elaine Kirk, Assistant Director People & Legal
Contact Officer and Job Title:	Peter Rooney, Head of Legal Administration Heather Wilson, Land Management Officer

Purpose of Report:

For Decision

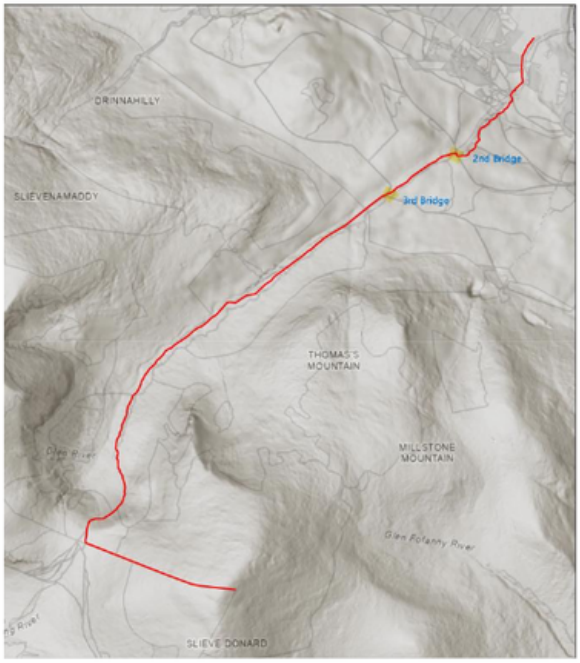
1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	The Public Right of Way (PROW) from Donard Car Park, through Donard Wood alongside the Glen River to the summit of Slieve Donard, is one of the most popular routes in the High Mournes with user counts of over 120k per annum. This high level of use is impacting the path and associated habitat. Works are proposed to enable the path to remain in a favourable condition.
2.0	Key Issues
2.1	The Glen River path was asserted under the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983 as a public right of way in 1987. The land on which the path lies is owned by the Annesley Estate and leased to Forest Service (NI) and falls within the Eastern Mourne ASSI and SAC. Due to the high level of current use, repairs are now required which can be facilitated under Article 3 (2) of the Access Order. The Mourne Heritage Trust (MHT), under its Service Level Agreement with the Council, provides a maintenance and ranger service along the route. **Proposal 1 (Map 2)** Between the 2nd and 3rd bridges the asserted route runs alongside the river which is narrow with steep drops. The public are avoiding this and have created an informal 'desire line' on higher ground and this is now suffering erosion and requires repairs to create a sustainable path. MHT are proposing the following works:- • Assertion of the 'desire line' between the 2nd and 3rd bridges • Carry out path repair to the desire line, including the construction of a small stone footbridge • Retain the existing asserted path as it would be impossible to close and would be difficult as a legal process • Initial works to build a sustainable path to be carried out by the Upland path team, funded through NIEA Environment fund • Maintained on-going under the SLA with Council Various consultations have been held with stakeholders such as Forest Service, Mourne Outdoor Recreation Forum and the National Trust. The Annesley Estate as the landowner has been consulted and have agreed to assert the 'desire line' between the 2nd and 3rd bridges and the associated works under common law and the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983.

	Proposal 2 (Map 3) A section of path from the entrance to Donard Wood to the first bridge alongside the Glen River, approximately 190m in length, has become very eroded, particularly the last 85m, with exposed tree roots and rocks, causing wider erosion as users try and avoid awkward sections and damage to the trees. MHT are proposing the following works:- • Full repair of existing PROW between entrance at Donard Wood to the 1st bridge using existing well tested techniques. • To be managed and maintained as per the existing SLA. The Annesley Estate has agreed to these proposals also. In order to facilitate both proposals, liaison with Forest Service will be required under the Licence Agreement at Donard Forest (currently being renewed) to agree locations of material dumps, access for vehicles etc. If these proposals are implemented, Tourism NI wishes to include the path as one of it's 'Signature Walks'.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	That the Council asserts the 'desire line', in agreement and to be formalised with, the Annesley Estate and to co-operate with the MHT and Forest Service in the implementation of the other works as set out, including providing all necessary information to Forest Service as required under the Donard Forest Licence Agreement.
4.0	Resource Implications
4.1	There are no financial costs to the Council. Staff time in liaising with the Annesley Estate, MHT and Forest Service.
5.0	Due Regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations
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	Does the proposal relate to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision No If yes, please select one of the following:

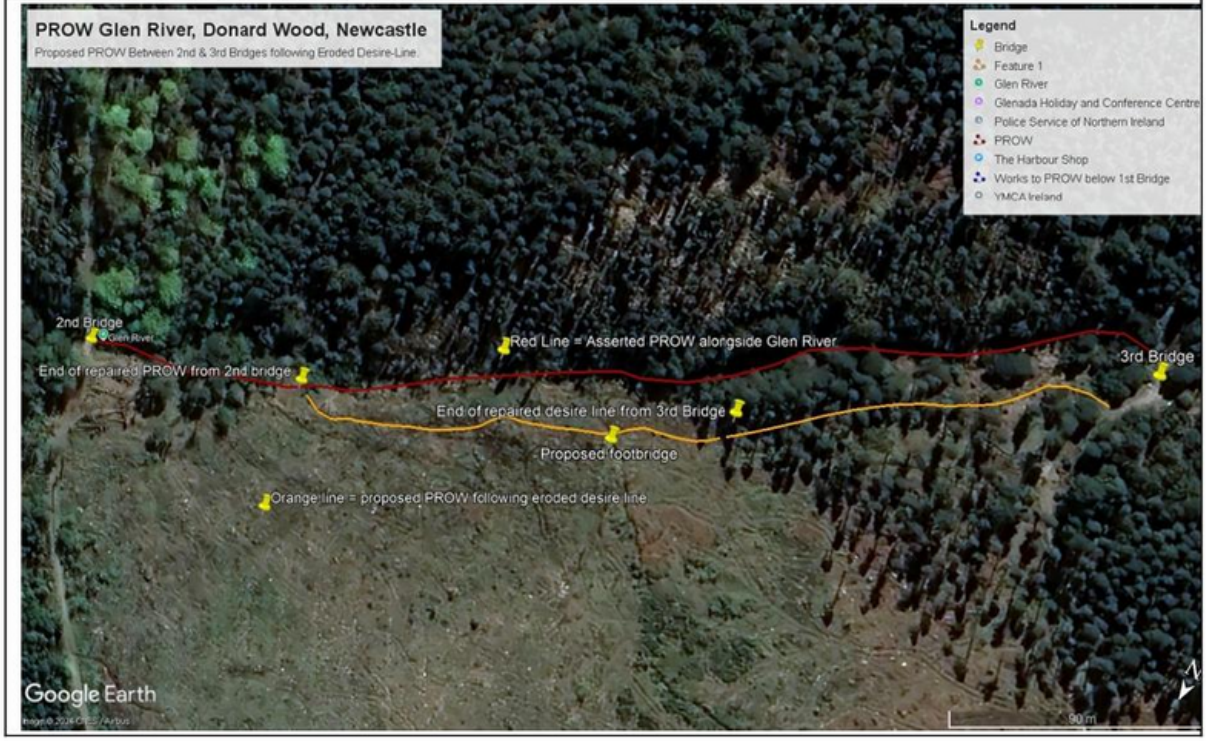
	Choose an item.
5.3	Proposal initiating consultation The consultation seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves Please select the consultation period: Choose an item. Rationale:
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs
6.1	Does the proposal relate to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service. Choose an item.
7.0	Appendices
7.1	Map 1 showing the location of the 2nd and 3rd Bridges Map 2- Proposal 1- showing location of the 'desire line'- Map 3 Proposal 2-showing the location of the proposed repairs on the lower stetch of the path from Donard park
8.0	Background Documents
8.1	

Glen River path, Newcastle

Map 1 Location of Glen River Path with 2nd and 3rd bridges marked



Map 2 Shows the line of the designated PROW alongside the river edge and the proposed line of the new PROW following the desire-line, and associated path repair.



Map 3 Proposed Path Repair to the PROW below the 1st Bridge



Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	12 November 2026
Subject:	Licence Agreement for PEAT+ Survey Works on Forest Service Lands at Slieve Gullion
Reporting Officer and Job Title:	Elaine Kirk - Assistant Director: Legal and People Legal and People
Contact Officer and Job Title:	Aveen McVeigh - Head of Regeneration and Business Development Darren Rice – AONB and Geopark Manager

Purpose of Report:

For Decision

1.0	**Purpose and Background**
1.1	Purpose To approve the recommendations in 3.1 of this report. Background PEAT+ is a PEACEPLUS-funded cross-border environmental restoration project focused on peatland conservation, climate resilience and biodiversity enhancement. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is a delivery partner in the project and is responsible for implementing project activities within Council's area in accordance with PEACEPLUS requirements and Council procedures.
2.0	**Key Issues**
2.1	The PEAT+ Project received a Letter of Offer from PEACEPLUS in September 2025. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is a delivery partner in the PEAT+ Project and has responsibility for managing licensing and procurement activities within the Slieve Gullion and Mourne project areas in accordance with established Council policies and procedures. The baseline surveys represent a critical first stage of project delivery and are required to inform restoration planning, guide nature recovery actions and establish baseline environmental conditions against which future project outcomes can be measured. Delays in securing the Licence Agreement may impact the project programme and the achievement of PEACEPLUS milestones and outputs.

	A proportion of the survey work is required on lands owned and managed by the Forest Service within Slieve Gullion Forest Park. The Forest Service has requested that a formal Licence Agreement is in place before survey works can commence. Whilst many of the proposed activities comprise survey and assessment work, a number of elements require temporary monitoring infrastructure to be installed on site, including piezometers, water-level monitoring equipment and data loggers. The Licence Agreement will provide the necessary permissions for site access, survey activities and the installation, maintenance and subsequent removal of this monitoring infrastructure on Forest Service lands. The proposed surveys include: • Site survey and monitoring • Walkover hydrological survey • Ecology survey • Peat stability risk assessment • Manual peat depth surveys • Water table depth monitoring, including installation of piezometers and data loggers • Drain surveys and drain-blocking impact assessments • Fixed-point photography • Drone and remote-sensing surveys • Breeding bird surveys • Invertebrate surveys • Archaeological surveys
3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	It is recommended to: 1. Approves the Licence Agreement between Council and the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs and 2. Authorises the Chairperson and Chief Executive to enter into and execute the Licence Agreement and any ancillary documentation required to facilitate the survey works associated with the PEAT+ Project.
4.0	**Resource Implications**
4.1	All survey costs associated with this licence agreement are fully funded through the PEAT+ Project under the PEACEPLUS programme. No additional financial contribution is required from Council.
5.0	**Due Regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations**
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	Does the proposal relate to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision No

	If yes, please select one of the following: Choose an item.
5.3	Proposal initiating consultation The consultation 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 Please select the consultation period: Choose an item. Rationale:
6.0	**Due regard to Rural Needs**
6.1	Does the proposal relate to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service. No – The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs
7.0	**Appendices**
7.1	
8.0	**Background Documents**
8.1	

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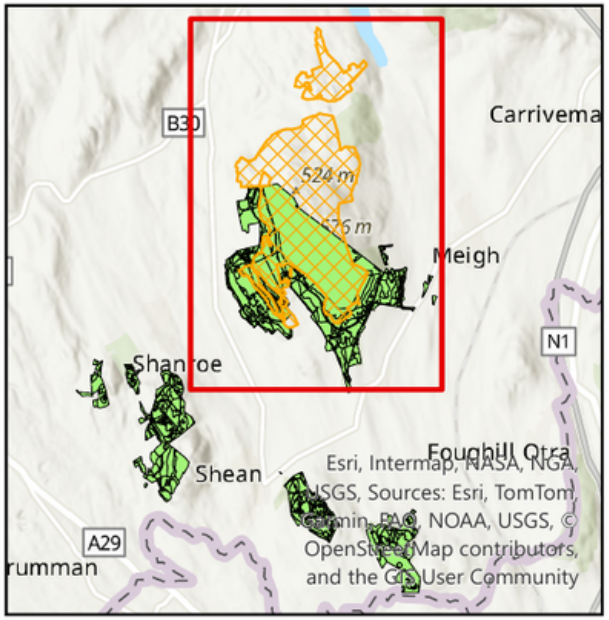
An Agency within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
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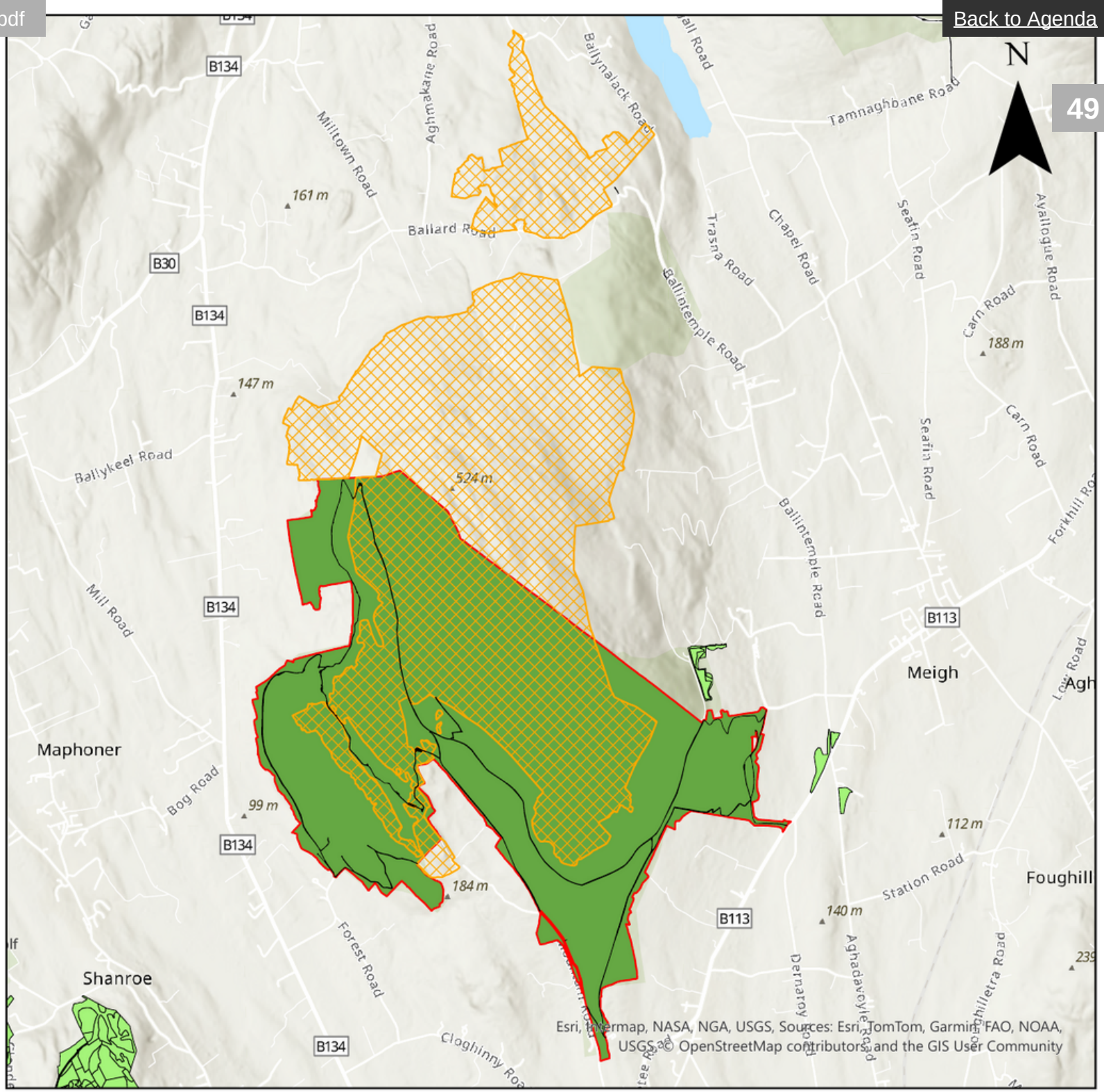
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Licence with Newry Mourne and District Council Planned Survey Activities Slieve Gullion Forest 2026

- Forest Road
- Slieve Gullion Forest
- SAC
- Licence Area

0 0.4 0.8 1.6 Kilometers





Report to:	Strategy Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	12 November 2026
Subject:	DAERA funding for air quality equipment
Reporting Officer and Job Title:	Sinead Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment
Contact Officer and Job Title:	James Campbell, Head of Environmental Health (Residential).

Purpose of Report:

For Decision

1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide members with detail on 100% grant funding from DAERA to enable Council to install new air monitoring equipment at the current Downpatrick air quality station. This will enable particulate monitoring to occur.
1.2	Councils in Northern Ireland currently monitor air quality and within Newry Mourne and Down District Council automatic air quality stations are in place in Downpatrick town centre and Newry City centre. Council have recently been advised that funding in 2026/27 has been approved to upgrade the Downpatrick site. This follows the 2025/26 funding received from DAERA to upgrade the Newry air quality station, which monitors Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10). It is recognised that Particulate Matter (PM2.5) of particle size 2.5 $\mu g/m^3$ are incredibly small and can penetrate deep into the lungs posing significant health risks like heart disease, lung cancer and respiratory issues. These particles can come from several sources including vehicle exhausts, industry or the burning of fuels. After discussions with DAERA, they have offered to 100% fund the installation of a new enclosure and equipment to monitor for PM2.5 and PM10 in Downpatrick. This funding amounts to £45,000.
2.0	Key Issues
2.1	Procurement and installation: The funding letter of offer from DAERA requires the equipment to be installed and operational by 31 March 2027. The Environment Department of Council will commence the tender process to ensure that this deadline is achieved.
2.2	Additional works to the current air quality station: It is envisaged that several upgrades to the current air station location will be needed, for example, larger base and electrical outlets. These costs are expected to be small, less than £5000, and will be accounted for within the current 2026/27 budgets.

3.0	Recommendations
3.1	Members are asked to note the report and approve the procurement and installation of the upgraded air station, as detailed in 2.1 and 2.2 of this report.
4.0	Resource Implications
4.1	The equipment and installation are 100% funded by DAERA. There will be a small outlay to bring the current air station location to standard (<£5000)
5.0	Due Regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations
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	Does the proposal relate to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision No If yes, please select one of the following: Choose an item.
5.3	Proposal initiating consultation The consultation 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 Please select the consultation period: Choose an item. Rationale:
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs
6.1	Does the proposal relate to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service. No – The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs
7.0	Appendices
7.1	None
8.0	Background Documents
8.1	None

Report to:	Strategic, Policy and Resource Committee
Date of Meeting:	12th November 2026
Subject:	Delamont Caravan Park Provision 2027
Reporting Officer and Job Title:	Amanda Smyth Assistant Director of EGT
Contact Officer and Job Title:	Michelle Boyle Head of Tourism Product Development & Visitor Experience

Purpose of Report:

For Decision

1.0	**Purpose and Background**
1.1	Purpose To approve the recommendations set out at section 3 of this report. Background Delamont Country Park, Caravan Site offers 57 caravan pitches and 10 tent pitches. The Council had a 25-year lease with The Camping & Caravan Club Ltd for the portion of Delamont Country Park which provides caravan and camping services. The lease expired on 1st March 2026 and following review by the Camping & Caravan Club Ltd they advised Council at the end of January 2026 they would not be renewing the lease At SPR in March 2026 the Council agreed to operate the service for the 2026 season and review thereafter for 2027.
2.0	**Key Issues**
2.1	**NMDDC Operation for 2026 season** • The Council operated the service daily from 14 June until 31 August • The Council operated the service at weekends from 5th September until 28 September. • The occupancy levels during the operating season are set out in appendix 1. • The income and costs for Council to operate the site June - Sept 2026 are set out in appendix 1.
2.2	**2027 Caravan Park Operation** Option 1 - NMDDC Operation in 2027. • In assuming direct operation of the facility, Council will adopt a similar operating model as 2026 which will require a budget for operational and staffing costs.

	• The service would operate in line with the scheduled opening of caravan and camping facilities in Castlewellan and Kilbroney:
	  ○ Opening Easter week
	  ○ April & May weekends inc. Bank Holiday
	  ○ June – August daily
	  ○ September – October weekends only
	
	• The staffing requirements associated with this option is outlined in appendix 1. Also outlined is projected income and operational costs based on pilot 2026 season.
	
	• If implemented, this option would be reviewed at the end of the season for any learnings and amendment to the service operating hours if required.
	
	<u>Option 2 – Appointment of an External Operator</u>
	
	External Operation via a third-party operator in 2027/28 under a 5-year contract
	
	• External Operation via a third-party operator following a procurement. Income based on valuation as outlined in appendix 1.
	
	• A third-party operator would assume responsibility for the day-to-day management of the site. This approach would allow the council to retain ownership of the asset while benefiting from professional management focused on maximising the site's potential.
	
	• An external provider would bring sector expertise, established marketing networks, and operational experience within the caravan and camping industry all of which could help increase occupancy and revenue.

3.0	**<u>Recommendations</u>**
3.1	To approve the implementation of option 1 for Delamont Caravan Park Provision 2027
4.0	**<u>Resource Implications</u>**
4.1	As outlined in appendix 1
5.0	**<u>Due Regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations</u>**
5.1	General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes Choose an item.
5.2	Does the proposal relate to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision Choose an item. If yes, please select one of the following:

	Choose an item.
5.3	Proposal initiating consultation The consultation 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 Please select the consultation period: Choose an item. Rationale:
6.0	**Due regard to Rural Needs**
6.1	Does the proposal relate to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service. Choose an item.
7.0	**Appendices**
7.1	**This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.** 1). Appendix 1: Delamont Caravan Park Provision 2027
8.0	**Background Documents**
8.1	

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resource Committee
Date of Meeting:	12th November 2026
Subject:	Update on Newry Portadown Canal Working Group & Locks Survey Project
Reporting Officer and Job Title:	Conor Mallon Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism
Contact Officer and Job Title:	Michelle Boyle Head of Tourism, Product Development and Visitor Experience

Purpose of Report:

For Decision

1.0	**Purpose and Background**
1.1	Purpose To approve the recommendation in 3.1 of this report Background Newry Canal is a Scheduled Monument jointly owned by NMDDC and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. NMDDC is responsible for the section of Canal from Victoria Lock to just outside Poyntzpass village. The Newry Canal Regeneration Working Group has been established by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to investigate and advance the regeneration potential of the Newry Canal. The Working Group will provide a dedicated mechanism for cross-council engagement and coordinated delivery to consider options for regeneration of the canal and to maximise its benefits for the region as a key recreation, tourism, biodiversity, and economic development asset.
2.0	**Key Issues**
2.1	Overview of Key Activity since the Notice of Motion was passed and the establishment of the working group • A desk exercise reviewing best practice and lessons learned or key success factors in waterway regeneration has been completed • A Terms of Reference and Vision Statement has been developed and agreed by the Working Group • The Working Group have met 3 times since inception • The Working Group received a presentation from Waterways Ireland to inform Waterways Regeneration • A request has been sent to Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs regarding establishment of a Canal Regeneration taskforce. Both Ministers have agreed to meet with the Working Group and dates for early in the New Year have been proposed

- The Working Group have recommended the completion of a Study to consider the opportunity for Newry Canal, Council Officers have had an initial engagement with Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon BC in undertaking a joint study for the entire geography of the Newry Portadown Canal
- Conservation Statement & Visual Condition Survey of Lock Chambers 2,3,4,7 and 8 on Newry Canal have been completed
- Restoration work on Lock 6 is due to commence imminently with the contract expected to last circa 10-12 weeks with restoration complete for Spring 2027

2.2 <u>Detail arising from each meeting of the work group</u>

The first meeting of the working group took place in September 2025, with the working group represented by the below membership from NMDDC.

- Killian Feehan (Chair)
- Helena Young
- Aidan Mathers
- Glyn Hanna

At the first meeting in members agreed the following actions:

- Extend an invitation to members of ABCBC to join the working group
- Review of the actions arising from a Notion of Motion regarding the working group
- Review Draft Terms of Reference for the working group
- Review of a funding opportunity to Historic Environment Fund Regeneration Stream for a conservation statement and visual survey on lock infrastructure – Locks 2, 3, 4, 7, 8

Members of ABC Council joined the second meeting in November 2025 of the working group. Membership from ABCBC is as follows:

- Cllr Sarah Duffy
- Cllr Lavelle McIiwrath (Joint Chair)
- Cllr Jude Mallon
- Cllr Tim McClelland

At the second meeting November 2025

- Members agreed Terms of Reference of the working group
- Members agreed a Vision Document / statement for the working group setting out Vision, aims and objectives
- An update was provided on a Peace Plus project being delivered: Engineering Our Shared Past – Newry Canal Heritage & STEM Exploration and how members / wider community can get involved
- Members agreed Corresponded issued to Waterways Ireland with an invitation to attend a future meeting on regeneration opportunities for the Canal
- Members were updated on on-going and planned maintenance along the Canal

	• Members were updated on the securement of £10,000 from the Historic Environment Fund Regeneration Stream for a conservation statement and visual survey on lock infrastructure – Locks 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 At the third meeting in June 2026 • Members agreed the issue of correspondence to Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs regarding establishment of a Canal Regeneration taskforce and opportunity to meet to discuss same • An update was provided on the findings on the Visual Assessment of Locks in NMD - Locks 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 • It was agreed that NMDDC Officials would bring a paper to SPR seeking a capital budget to undertake a detail structural assessment and costing for repair of Lock 7. A budget of £10,000 was requested. • Members were updated on on-going and planned maintenance along the Canal • Members were updated on correspondence issued to NI Waterways Ireland • Members were updated on a forthcoming capital project focusing on the restoration of lock 6, due to commence Nov – Dec 2026 for 12 weeks. At the fourth meeting in Sept 2026 • Members hosted NI Waterways Ireland for a presentation and wider discussion on regeneration opportunities for Canal restoration and examples of restoration projects across the island of Ireland. • Members were advised both Ministers would be available to meet with the joint working group and suitable dates were to be advised • Members agreed to consider a joint feasibility study between ABCBC and NMDDC that could consider potential and feasible regeneration projects
2.3	<u>Locks</u> Funding was previously obtained from the Historic Environment Fund Regeneration Stream to undertake a 'Conservation Statement & Visual Condition Survey of Lock Chambers 2,3,4,7 and 8 on Newry Canal'. The report outlines the historical significance of the Scheduled Monument and provides the baseline dataset to inform future use, repair, alteration, development, and management of the Lock Chambers. Based on the findings of the Conservation Statement and Visual Condition Survey, a recommendation is now being put forward to progress with a detailed survey of all 5 Locks to inform a restoration plan as per Lock 6 and the requested financial provision has been included as part of the request in Section 4.
3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	To note the progress of work under the direction of the working group.
3.2	To approve a budget on the capital plan required to progress the detailed surveys on Locks 2, 3, 4, 7, 8.
3.3	To approve procurement and appointment of consultancy services as required to deliver the detailed surveys on Locks 2, 3, 4, 7, 8.

4.0	**Resource Implications**
4.1	To make additional provision in the Capital Programme as outlined In Appendix 2
5.0	**Due Regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations**
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	Does the proposal relate to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision No If yes, please select one of the following: Choose an item.
5.3	Proposal initiating consultation **N/A** The consultation 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 Please select the consultation period: Choose an item. Rationale:
6.0	**Due regard to Rural Needs**
6.1	Does the proposal relate to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service. No – The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs
7.0	**Appendices**
7.1	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 business)** and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business. 1) Business Case 2) Financial Provision

8.0	**Background Documents**
8.1	N/A

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: BRCD/2026

Minutes of BRCD Tourism Project Board Meeting
Monday 26th October 2026, 4pm
Boardroom, Warrenpoint Town Hall

In Attendance:

Project Board Members:

Councillor M Ruane (Chair)
Councillor D Murphy
Councillor P Byrne
Councillor L Devlin
Councillor J Truesdale

NMDDC Officials in Attendance:
Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism
Ms M Boyle, Head of Tourism Product Development and Visitor Experience
Ms T Clarke, Corporate Relationship Officer

BRCD/008/2026: INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor J Tinnelly

BRCD/009/2026: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT UPDATE – PHASE 3

Read: Report from A Smyth - Update on Stakeholder Engagement (Copy circulated).

Ms A Smyth advised Public Engagement from 12th October – 6th November 2026 was currently underway and feedback so far has been mostly positive.

- Briefing activities have taken place with the following sectors:
  Councillors;
  - DAERA Forest Service;
  - Tourism Group (incl Tourism NI, Failte Ireland, Ireland Association of Adventure Tourism);
  - Louth County Council;
  - Accessibility Group;
  - NIEA, HED, Planning;
  - Tourism NI Finance & Casework Committee.

- Public Engagement Email Correspondence – notifying 700 tourism business and 150 groups/organisations of upcoming engagement dates.
- Social media promotion of engagement events continues up to 6th November
- Press release issued
- Dedicated webpage with all information is being kept updated
- Site walks with a range of key agencies arranged for Kilbroney Park, Slieve Gullion Forest Park and Delamont Country Park.
- Pop up sessions at Delamont Country Park and Slieve Gullion Forest Park scheduled.
- Drop in sessions at Cloughmore Centre and Warrenpoint Town Hall scheduled.

The wider team are working with consultants to develop a stimulus market testing piece to garner feedback and insight which will form part of the proposals critical for BRCD and DfE investment priorities. Testing period will be 16 weeks and catered for tour operators in 5 markets; RoI, GB, France, Germany and USA.

Mr C Mallon advised that the engagement feedback at each stage informs the next approach and focus for the next stage, for example, what we learnt from phase 1 informed how we developed phase 2 etc.

Mr Mallon referred to an email Project Board members received from Councillor Tinnelly requesting his concerns be addressed and recorded accurately at today's meeting. Cllr Tinnelly reported that **"numerous local residents who have told me there is no clear option with the online survey to register their rejection"...."throughout it there are 2 options to agree to the development, 3 options to be iffy about the development and no options to disagree"** Cllr Tinnelly said this fails the public sector rules for engagement and has requested **"the options to oppose the desecration of Kilbroney in particular are made clear and obvious within the online survey and accurately recorded at the drop-in events".** Mr Mallon confirmed to members that opportunity exists within each section of the online survey to include comments in the free text box, there is also a hard copy of the survey available for whomever wants to complete it in hard copy format, again with free text boxes for comments

In relation to the Stimulus Market testing, Cllr Truesdale stated the 16 week completion period would take the project further beyond the proposed OBC submission date in December. Mr Mallon said a first draft OBC will be completed in December and the market testing piece will be added as the document is developed.

Cllr Truesdale asked what the attendance figures were at the pop up session at Delamont Country Park? Ms M Boyle said there were approximately 30 attendees and advised the drop in session at Warrenpoint Town Hall was currently underway since 2pm today and the vision boards were on display with the Consultants in attendance to answer any queries. Mrs Smyth confirmed there has been a steady flow of attendees so far this afternoon.

Cllr Ruane asked if there was anyone doing surveys with visitors on site at Kilbroney Park? Mr Mallon said surveys are online, via drop in sessions or paper copy available at Kilbroney Park, Warrenpoint Town Hall and other Council sites. Mrs Smyth said the display boards and a gazebo would be situated at Kilbroney Park during the drop in session

Mr Mallon said Council are very aware of the need for comprehensive engagement and have gone out to a broad forum of stakeholders and at this stage we are consulting on ideas and concepts to shape finalised designs.

Cllr Devlin said she welcomes the extensive consultation as it represents value for money in the long run.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor P Byrne, seconded by Councillor L Devlin it was agreed to note the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy update.**

BRCD/010/2026: **OBC Development Update**

Ms Smyth said the team continue to work on developing the OBC with focus on economic and financial progression with the intention of having first draft prepared and submitted in December thereafter discussions with TNI will continue on further development.

Mr Mallon advised a meeting had taken place with TNIs Finance Committee to discuss the OBC and they welcome early engagement on our proposal. Ms Smyth said officers will also present to BRCD Executive Board next week.

BRCD/011/2026: **Project Finance**

Mr Mallon said officers continue to monitor finances and an updated report will be taken to the Project Board at the next meeting which will include costs relating to the stakeholder engagement and design to date.

EXEMPT ITEMS:

BRCD/012/2026: **Risk Register**
Read: Risk Register – NMDDC Tourism Project (Copy circulated)

Ms Smyth talked through any high risks and provided an explanation for each one along with planned mitigation to address the risk.

Mr Mallon advised that the accuracy of the information released is important Mr Mallon also advised the proposed development for Kilbroney Park is aligned with the 2015

Kilbroney Park Masterplan which was developed and based on community feedback. The Masterplan could be shared with the Project Board members if required.

Cllr Devlin said it would be good if the Kilbroney Park Masterplan could be shared with members. Cllr Devlin asked if there were any lands within Delamont Country Park not in Council ownership that we will not be using as part of the development? It was confirmed that we are developing proposals within Council controlled land in Delamont

Cllr Devlin also asked about DAERA lands within Kilbroney Park. Mr Mallon advised that Council are engaging with DAERA on these matters.

In relation to Engagement, Cllr Truesdale asked why the risk rating hadn't changed for Sept – Oct? Mr Mallon advised that as we are still in the engagement stage, the risk status remains unchanged.

Cllr Truesdale asked why the Risk Register cannot be brought to SPR Committee?

Cllr Ruane said he had no issue with other Councillors having access to the Risk Register but Councillors who are not members of the Project Board do not get an opportunity to speak to the senior officials to answer any queries or clarify any matters in the way members of the Project Board can and therefore things could be misunderstood.

Cllr Byrne had no issue with non project board councillors viewing the Risk Register but he had concerns over governance. He said the reason there is a Project Board is for members to have the opportunity to hear the detail on the project, ask questions as they arise and report detail back to the Party that they are representing on the Board. He said members sign up and abide by the Terms of Reference of the Project Board. He agreed access could be granted on request in a controlled environment.

Cllr Truesdale asked Mr Mallon for clarification if Cllr Tinnelly was representing other Independents. Mr Mallon confirmed Cllr Tinnelly was nominated to represent Independents and UUP.

Cllr Ruane said request to view the Risk Register can be submitted to Officers.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Byrne it was agreed to note the Risk Register.**

BRCD/013/2026: **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed: 18th November 2026, 4pm Warrenpoint Town Hall.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 4.40pm
For approval by BRCD Project Board.
For noting at SPR Committee