



June 9th, 2025

**Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Thursday, 12th June 2025** at **6:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre.**

**Committee Membership 2025-26**

Councillor O Hanlon **Chairperson**

Councillor D McAteer **Deputy Chairperson**

Councillor P Byrne

Councillor C Enright

Councillor M Hearty

Councillor R Howell

Councillor T Howie

Councillor C King

Councillor A Lewis

Councillor A Mathers

Councillor S O'Hare

Councillor H Reilly

Councillor M Rice

Councillor G Sharvin

Councillor D Taylor

# Agenda

## 1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

## 2.0 Declarations of Interest

## 3.0 Action Sheet arising from Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 May 2025

 *SPR-Action Sheet arising from 2025 05 15.pdf*

*Page 1*

## 4.0 To Agree Start Times for Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meetings 2025-2026

 *Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meetings 2025-26.pdf*

*Page 3*

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### *For Discussion/Decision*

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## 5.0 Performance Improvement Plan 2025 - 2026

*For Decision*

 *SPR Cover Report PIP 2025-26.pdf*

*Page 4*

 *Appendix 1 - Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.pdf*

*Page 7*

 *Appendix 2 - Consultation and Engagement Report 2025-26.pdf*

*Page 42*

 *Appendix 3 -Draft Objective Delivery Plans 2025-26.pdf*

*Page 53*

## 6.0 Directorate Business Plans

*For Decision*

 *SPR Cover Report Directorate Business Plans.pdf*

*Page 67*

 *Appendix 1 - CX-CS Directorate Annual Assessment of Business Plan 2024-25.pdf*

*Page 70*

 *Appendix 2 - Chief Executive - Corporate Services Business Plan 2025-26 .pdf*

*Page 100*

## 7.0 Section 75 Statutory Duties Compliance: Revised Equality Scheme - Five-year Review of Council's Equality Scheme

*For Decision*

 *Report on Section 75 statutory duty compliance - Five-year review of Council's Equality Scheme.pdf*

*Page 131*

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

### 8.0 Lease of Lands at Drumaness Playing Fields

#### 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.

SPR 12 June 2025 Lease of Drumaness Playing Fields.pdf

Not included

DDC095-G-1-11 Drumaness.pdf

Not included

### 9.0 Lease of Cloughreagh Playing Fields

#### 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.

SPR 12 June 2025 Lease of Cloughreagh Playing Fields Bessbrook.pdf

Not included

MAP\_For Cloughreagh Playing Fields.pdf

Not included

### 10.0 Lease of Lands at Lismore Park, Crossmaglen

#### 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.

SPR 12 June 2025 Lease of Lands at Lismore Park Crossmaglen.pdf

Not included

NM057-G-1-00 Lismore.pdf

Not included

### 11.0 Lease of Lands at Station Road, Castlewellan

### *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.

 ***SPR 12 June 2025 Lease of Lands at Station Rd Castlewellan.pdf***

***Not included***

 ***DDC037-G-1-00 Station Rd Cwellan.pdf***

***Not included***

## **12.0 Public Path Extension, Killeavy**

### *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.

 ***SPR 12 June 2025 Public Path Extension Killeavy.pdf***

***Not included***


 ***2024-03-14 Killeavy -Mapped Routes.pdf***

***Not included***

## **13.0 Renewal of Licence for Advertising Hoardings, Newry**

### *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.

 ***SPR 12 June 2025 Renewal of Licence for Advertising hoardings at William St Newry.pdf***

***Not included***

 ***SPR Map June 2025 William St Newry.pdf***

***Not included***

## **14.0 Conacre Arrangements Rostrevor & Kilbroney**



### *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.

 ***SPR 12 June 2025 Conacre Arrangements for Lands adjacent to Rostrevor***

***Not included***



|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
|  <b>Appendix 8 Kilbroney Day Meadow for Cemetery Map.pdf</b> | <b>Not included</b> |
|  <b>NM248-G-1-20A Conacre Kilbroney.pdf</b>                  | <b>Not included</b> |

## 15.0 Easement at Main Avenue, Derrybeg, Newry

### *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.

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
|  <b>SPR 12 June 2025 Easement at Main Avenue Derrybeg Newry.pdf</b> | <b>Not included</b> |
|  <b>Drainage Bond 01 Map April 2025.pdf</b>                         | <b>Not included</b> |

## 16.0 Camlough Lake Recreational 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.

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
|  <b>SPR - Camlough Lake Recreational Hub (002).pdf</b> | <b>Not included</b> |
|---|---------------------|

## 17.0 Newry Canal Restoration Works - Lock 6

### *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.

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
|  <b>SPR Report Lock 6 Newry Canal.pdf</b> | <b>Not included</b> |
|  <b>Appendix 1 Lock 6 Newry Canal.pdf</b> | <b>Not included</b> |

## 18.0 Castlewellan Treetop Walk - OBC

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.

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
|  <b>SPR Report Treetop Walk Castlwellan Forest Park.pdf</b> | <b>Not included</b> |
|--|---------------------|

## **19.0 Kilkeel Lower Square and River Walk EI Scheme**

### *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.

 **SPR Report Kilkeel Lower Sq & River Walk.pdf**

**Not included**

 **Appendix 1 Kilkeel Lower Sq & River walk.pdf**

**Not included**

## **20.0 Digital Innovation and Regeneration Unit**

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.

 **SPR Report Digital Innovation and Regeneration Unit.pdf**

**Not included**

 **Appendix 1- Digital Innovation and Regeneration Unit Structure.pdf**

**Not included**

## **21.0 Procurement of an ICT to progress Delamont Country Park Development**

### *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.

 **SPR Report Delamont Country Park.pdf**

**Not included**

 **Appendix 1 Delamont Country Park.pdf**

**Not included**

## **22.0 Automated Charged Parking Installation**

### *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.

 **SPR Report Automated parking system.pdf**

**Not included**

## 23.0 Fleet Management

### *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.

SPR report - Fleet Replacement Programme Update June 2025\_.pdf

Not included

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

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## 24.0 Exempt Minutes of Mourne Mountain Gateway Project – Programme Board Meeting 1st April 2025

### *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.

Minutes of Mourne Mountain Gateway Project - Programme Board Mtg 01.04.2025 (closed).pdf

Not included

## 25.0 Minutes of SFWG Working Group held 20 May 2025

### *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.







SFWG Minutes - 20.05.2025.pdf

Not included

## 26.0 Draft Management Year End Accounts 2024-25

### *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.

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
|  <b>Management Accounts 202425 - SPR.pdf</b>  | <b>Not included</b> |
|  <b>Appendix 1 - Draft Income &amp; Expend.(By Director) at 31.03.2025.pdf</b>      | <b>Not included</b> |
|  <b>Appendix 2 - Draft Income &amp; Expend.(By Asst Director) at 31.03.2025.pdf</b> | <b>Not included</b> |
|  <b>Appendix 3 - Income &amp; Expend. (By Expense Type) at 31.3.25 - Draft.pdf</b>  | <b>Not included</b> |
|  <b>Appendix 4 - Payroll Report as at 31.03.25 (Draft).pdf</b>                      | <b>Not included</b> |
|  <b>Appendix 5 - 202425 Summary Capital Spend v Budget.pdf</b>                      | <b>Not included</b> |

## 27.0 Debt Write Off as at March 2025


### *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.

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
|  <b>SPR - Debt Write Off - March 2025.pdf</b> | <b>Not included</b> |
|  <b>Appendix 1 - Debt write off.pdf</b>       | <b>Not included</b> |
|  <b>Appendix 2 - debt write off.pdf</b>       | <b>Not included</b> |

## 28.0 Chief Executive Appraisal

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.

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
|  <b>Chief Executive Appraisal SPRC Report 2025.pdf</b> | <b>Not included</b> |
|---|---------------------|

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### **For Noting**

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## 29.0 Compliance End of Year Report

### *For Information*

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
|  <b>SPR Report - Compliance Team 2024-25 Year End Report.pdf</b> | <b>Page 192</b> |
|  <b>FOI-EIR- DP 2023-24 Stats.pdf</b>                            | <b>Page 195</b> |
|  <b>FOI-EIR-DP 2024-25 Stats.pdf</b>                             | <b>Page 196</b> |

## **30.0 Planning Department Update**

## **31.0 Minutes of Mourne Mountain Gateway Project – Programme Board Meeting 1 April 2025 and 2 May 2025**

*For Information*

## **32.0 Assessment of Community Wealth Building Actions and Measures – Directorate Business Plans 2024-2025**

*For Information*

# Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Cllr Callum Bowsie

Fionnuala Branagh

Cllr Jim Brennan

Mr Gerard Byrne

Cllr Pete Byrne

Cllr Philip Campbell

Cllr William Clarke

Cllr Laura Devlin

Ms Louise Dillon

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Killian Feehan

Cllr Doire Finn

Ms Joanne Fleming

Cllr Conor Galbraith

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Cllr Valerie Harte

Cllr Martin Hearty

Cllr Roisin Howell

Cllr Tierna Howie

Ms Catherine Hughes

Ms Marina Hughes

Cllr Jonathan Jackson

Cllr Geraldine Kearns

Miss Veronica Keegan

Mrs Josephine Kelly

Cllr Cathal King

Cllr Mickey Larkin

Cllr David Lee-Surginor

Cllr Alan Lewis

Cllr Oonagh Magennis

Mr Conor Mallon

Cllr Aidan Mathers

Cllr Declan McAteer

Ms Carol McClean

Cllr Leeanne McEvoy

Mr Colin Moffett

Maureen/Joanne Morgan/Johnston

Cllr Declan Murphy

Cllr Kate Murphy

Cllr Selina Murphy  
.....  
Cllr Siobhan O'Hare  
.....  
Mr Andy Patterson  
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Cllr Áine Quinn  
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Cllr Henry Reilly  
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Cllr Michael Rice  
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Mr Peter Rooney  
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Cllr Michael Ruane  
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Cllr Gareth Sharvin  
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Conor Smyth  
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Donna Starkey  
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Sarah Taggart  
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Cllr David Taylor  
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Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly  
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Cllr Jill Truesdale  
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Mrs Marie Ward  
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Mr Conor Woods  
.....  
Cllr Helena Young  
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| <u>Minute Ref</u>   | <u>Subject</u>  | <u>Decision</u>  | <u>Lead Officer</u> | <u>Actions taken / progress to date</u> | <u>Remove from Action Sheet? Y/N</u> |
|---|---|--|---------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) –</b><br><b>Thursday 15 May 2025</b> |   |  |                     |   |                                      |
| SPR/072/2025  | Action sheet of meeting held 17/04/2025                             | It was agreed to note the action sheet   | J Kelly             | <b>Agreed</b>                           | Y                                    |
| SPR/073/2025  | Approach to City, Town and Village Signage                          | <p>the following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That Option 3 was the preferred option when erecting signage that was not located on Council property, as outlined at section 2.1 of the Officer's Report i.e. the sole use of Council logo on signage.</li> <li>• That Option 1 was the preferred option when replacing existing or erecting new signage not on Council property as outlined at section 2.2 of the Officer's Report i.e. bilingual signage be used.</li> <li>• That signage on Council property be erected in line with Council's Brand Identity Guidelines, i.e. bilingual.</li> </ul> | C Moffett           | <b>Agreed</b>                           | Y                                    |
| SPR/074/2025  | Renewal of Lease at Martin's Lane, Newry                            | it was agreed to lease the New Lands at Martin's Lane as outlined in red on Map 2 attached to the report for a term of 25 years from 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2017 subject to the premium as outlined within the Officer's Report.   | P Rooney            | <b>Agreed</b>                           | Y                                    |
| SPR/075/2025  | License of the Monument Building and Yard, Castlewellan Forest Park | it was agreed to grant the company named in the Officer's Report a short-term licence of the Monument Building and Yard as outlined in red and hatched orange on Map 2 attached to the report for a period of 2 months and thereafter from month to month until the proposed lease is signed subject to a market value licence fee.  | P Rooney            | <b>Agreed</b>                           | Y                                    |
| SPR/076/2025  | Treasury Management and Accounts                                    | it was agreed to approve the Direct Award Contracts as noted in Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report until 30 June 2026.   | G Byrne             | <b>Agreed</b>                           | Y                                    |
| SPR/077/2025  | Direct Award Contracts  | it was agreed to approve the Direct Award Contracts as noted in Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report until 30 June 2026.   | J Kelly             | <b>Agreed</b>                           | Y                                    |
| SPR/078/2025  | DBEC Summit 2025  | it was agreed to accept the officer's recommendations.   | C Mallon            | <b>Agreed</b>                           | Y                                    |



|              |  |   |           |        |   |
|--------------|--|---|-----------|--------|---|
| SPR/079/2025 | Port Health Resources  | It was agreed to note the contents of the report and the preferred operating model as set out in sections 2.3 and 2.4 of the officer's report   | S Murphy  | Agreed | Y |
| SPR/080/2025 | Statutory Reporting – Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report for period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 | It was agreed to note the completed Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report for period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 (Appendix 1) and submit to DAERA to meet their requested deadline of 20 June 2025. | C McClean | Agreed | Y |

# **STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

| Date              | Time    | Location                            |
|-------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|
| 12 June 2025      | 6.00 pm | Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre |
| 14 August 2025    | 6.00 pm | Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre |
| 11 September 2025 | 6.00 pm | Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre |
| 16 October 2025   | 6.00 pm | Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre |
| 13 November 2025  | 6.00 pm | Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre |
| 11 December 2025  | 6.00 pm | Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre |
| 22 January 2026   | 6.00 pm | Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre |
| 12 February 2026  | 6.00 pm | Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre |
| 12 March 2026     | 6.00 pm | Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre |
| 23 April 2026     | 6.00 pm | Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre |
| 14 May 2026       | 6.00 pm | Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Report to:</b>                                   | Strategy Policy and Resources Committee                            |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>                             | 12 June 2025   |
| <b>Subject:</b>                                     | Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26                               |
| <b>Reporting Officer<br/>(Including Job Title):</b> | Josephine Kelly – Director of Corporate Services                   |
| <b>Contact Officer<br/>(Including Job Title):</b>   | Catherine Hughes – Head of Performance and Improvement<br>(Acting) |

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

| For decision | X | For noting only |  |
|--------------|---|-----------------|--|
| <b>1.0</b>   |   |                 | <b>Purpose and Background</b>  |
| 1.1          |   |                 | The purpose of this report is to recommend the final version of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26. This plan is supported by the Consultation and Engagement Report 2025-26 and Delivery Plans which have been developed for each Performance Improvement Objective 2025-26.  |
| 1.2          |   |                 | Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 sets out a General Duty of Improvement for local government, whereby all District Councils are required to put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. Each financial year, Councils are required to set performance improvement objectives for the services they provide. The guidance states that performance improvement is more than quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or in the internal effectiveness of an organisation. Improvement should focus on activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for communities. |
| 1.3          |   |                 | The Performance Improvement Plan is a key strategic document which drives all improvement activity across the organisation. It features within the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and is directly aligned to the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and Directorate Business Plans.  |
| <b>2.0</b>   |   |                 | <b>Key issues</b>  |
| 2.1          |   |                 | <p>In accordance with statutory requirements, the Council is required to publish the Performance Improvement Plan by 30 June 2025.</p> <p>The Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 is attached at <b>Appendix 1</b>, and includes the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance improvement objectives 2025-26</li> <li>• Statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management</li> <li>• Self imposed performance indicators, as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2024-27</li> </ul>  |
|              |   |                 | <b>Public Consultation and Engagement 2025-26</b>  |
| 2.2          |   |                 | <p>The development of the performance improvement objectives 2025-26 is based on a robust and reliable evidence base which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 764 responses to the Residents Survey (September 2022)</li> </ul>  |

|            |   |
|------------|---|
|            | <p>This was supplemented by an eight week public consultation and engagement process around the proposed performance improvement objectives 2025-26, which took place between 14 March – 09 May 2025 and consisted of the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>33 responses to the survey on the draft performance improvement objectives, published on the consultation section of the Council's website</li> <li>Engagement with 60 stakeholders through the Newry DEA Forum, Downpatrick DEA Forum, Rowallane DEA Forum, Slieve Croob DEA Forum, Cedar Foundation and Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice</li> </ul> <p>Overall, the feedback from the consultation and engagement process revealed that the majority of respondents support the proposed performance improvement objectives, as outlined in <b>Appendix 2</b>.</p> |
|            | <b>Objective Delivery Plans 2025-26</b>   |
| 2.4        | <p>Delivery plans for each performance improvement objective have been developed, as outlined in <b>Appendix 3</b>. They seek to demonstrate how the Council will manage the effective delivery of each objective, in terms of resources, risk management and governance arrangements. These plans are a 'work in progress' and will be reviewed and updated on a continuous basis to support the delivery of each performance improvement objective.</p>   |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 3.1        | <p>To consider and agree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 (including the five performance improvement objectives), Consultation and Engagement Report 2025-26 and Objective Delivery Plans 2025-26.</li> <li>That in order to meet the statutory deadline, authority is given by the SPR committee to publish the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 before 30 June 2025, ahead of full Council ratification.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Resource implications</b>  |
| 4.1        | There are no financial resource implications within this report.  |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>  |
| 5.1        | <p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>   |
| 5.2        | <p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p>  |

|     |  |
|-----|--|
|     | <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>  |
| 5.3 | <p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i><br/>At the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meeting in March 2025, it was agreed to implement an eight-week consultation and engagement process, in order to meet the statutory deadline of 30 June 2025 for publishing the Performance Improvement Plan.</p> |
| 6.0 | <b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>  |
| 6.1 | <p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>  |
| 7.0 | <b>Appendices</b>  |
|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appendix 1</b> – Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26</li> <li>• <b>Appendix 2</b> – Consultation and Engagement Report 2025-26</li> <li>• <b>Appendix 3</b> – Objective Delivery Plans 2025-26</li> </ul>   |
| 8.0 | <b>Background Documents</b>  |
|     | Performance Improvement Plans 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25   |

# Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26



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



## Contents

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| Foreword   | 3    |
| Introduction   | 4    |
| Our District, Our Organisation, Our Performance  | 5    |
| <b>Performance Improvement Objective 1</b><br>We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services  | 6    |
| <b>Performance Improvement Objective 2</b><br>We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation  | 8    |
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## Foreword



An Cathaoirleach  
Chairperson  
Councillor Philip Campbell

Welcome to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26. Having listened to our communities, we are retaining all our objectives for this year with a number of new measures and actions to support them which we feel will benefit both our people and place. As we focus on the continued revitalisation of our district we can look back and be proud of our achievements.

The Council worked determinedly to deliver services and implement the performance improvement objectives, particularly in the face of serious adverse issues including Storm Eowyn which caused damage and destruction across our District, particularly in our Forest Parks.

Our residents and visitors continued to embrace their health and wellbeing with nearly 740,000 paid attendances at our leisure centres and over 20,000 participating across our targeted health programmes. We supported 100% of all community clean up requests and issued fixed penalty notices to address environmental crime in the district.

Through our economic development programmes, we supported 233 local businesses and social

enterprises and helped to create 222 local jobs. We also reduced the average processing time of major planning applications within the District.

However, whilst much has been achieved, there is still more to do to make Newry, Mourne and Down a great place to live, work, visit and invest in. Through this year's performance improvement objectives, we will continue to focus on what matters most to you - improving the quality of our leisure facilities and services, contributing to the growth of the local economy, improving the cleanliness of our District and promoting recycling, improving our sustainability by reducing our impacts in relation to climate change and improving the performance of our Planning Service.

We remain committed to working closely with communities and partners to deliver high quality, efficient and effective services and will continue to work hard to improve the quality of life for all local communities and build a District we can all be proud of.



An  
Príomhfheidhmeannach  
Chief Executive  
Marie Ward



## Introduction

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 sets out a General Duty of Improvement for local government, whereby all district councils must put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. The Council is required to set annual improvement objectives for the services it provides and to have in place arrangements to achieve these objectives. The Council recognises 'improvement' to mean activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities.

The performance improvement objectives do not describe every improvement the Council plans to make during 2025-26. Alternatively, they provide an overview of how the Council will address the issues which matter most to local communities. The Performance Improvement Plan outlines the Council's objectives for improvement, how performance will be measured and what positive outcomes stakeholders can expect as a result of improvement activity. It represents the Council's commitment to achieving continuous improvement in the delivery of key services.

### Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26

- 1. We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services**
- 2. We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation**
- 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 improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change**
- 5. We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme**

These objectives have been developed within the context of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. They are:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| ✓ | Linked to the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and Directorate Business Plans |
| ✓ | Based on a robust and reliable evidence base, including performance trends  |
| ✓ | Aligned to the seven strategic aspects of improvement                       |
| ✓ | Legitimate, clear, robust, deliverable and demonstrable                     |





# Performance Improvement Objective 1

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

### Why this matters

You told us that:

- One of the top priorities for improving your local area was 'Improving people's health and wellbeing (and reducing health inequalities)
- 17% of our residents are not active for a single day each week.
- The third most important health and wellbeing opportunity you would like to see more of was 'physical activity opportunities such as leisure centres, gyms and sports facilities'
- Between 2018 and 2022 there has been an increase in the number of residents satisfied with the leisure centres across the District, however residents did comment on issues such as the need for modernisation and improving cleanliness
- 65% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey agreed with this objective

We know that keeping fit and active can help improve a person's health and wellbeing both physically and mentally and the provision of leisure facilities is key to achieving this. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council plays a key role in helping local communities to live long and healthy lives. The Council remains committed to promoting physical, mental and emotional well-being and encouraging residents to make healthy and informed lifestyle choices and as part of this we need to always be striving to improve our leisure facilities and offerings.

### Looking Back: What we did in 2024-25



737,439 paid attendances across the 6 leisure facilities



Recorded 196,333 visits across a total of 10 community trails.



10,050 memberships across the indoor leisure facilities















Progress is continuing on key Capital projects with support from Council's Estates and Capital Projects Team.



20,421 people participating in targeted health programmes

### Looking Forward: What we will do in 2025-26

- Sustain the number of paid attendances at indoor leisure facilities.
- Continue to deliver a range of targeted, sustainable health programmes to encourage participation in physical activity.
- Progress the leisure projects agreed within the Capital Programme
- Provide funding through financial assistance for capital projects for sports clubs.
- Work towards Leisure-Safe Accreditation for all indoor leisure facilities
- Implement a 'Mystery Visitor' programme for Indoor Leisure

| How we will measure success                                     | 2021-22 Actual  | 2022-23 Actual  | 2023-24 Actual | 2024-25 Actual       | Status Trend   | 2025-26 Target  |
|---|---|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|--|-----------------|
| Number of paid attendances recorded at:                         |   | 698,864         | 768,842        | 737,439              | <br> | <b>757,500</b>  |
| Newry Leisure Centre  | 183,224   | 307,153         | 331,546        | 244,929              |   | 335,000         |
| Down Leisure Centre   | 177,496   | 246,978         | 259,473        | 273,783              |   | 275,000         |
| Kilkeel Leisure Centre  | 66,987  | 69,797          | 63,811         | 74,988               |   | 15,000          |
| St. Colmans Sports Complex                                      | 36,717  | 54,024          | 58,491         | 68,662               |   | 68,700          |
| Newcastle Centre & Tropicana Outdoor Swimming Complex           | 33,801  | 25,517          | 27,765         | 39,128               |   | 27,800          |
| Ballymote Sports and Wellbeing Centre                           | 10,309  | 15,365          | 27,756         | 35,949               |   | 36,000          |
| Number of people participating in targeted health programmes    | 322*  | 9,309           | 10,805         | 20,421               |   | <b>22,000</b>   |
| Value of Financial Assistance funding allocated to sports clubs | New measure   |                 |                |                      | -  | <b>£225,000</b> |
| Number of leisure centre memberships                            |   | 9,534           | 9,923          | 10,050               | <br> | <b>10,100</b>   |
| Number of capital leisure projects progressed                   | New measure   |                 | 3              | 4                    |    | <b>2</b>        |
| Number of Play parks upgraded                                   | New Measure   |                 |                |                      | -  | <b>2</b>        |
| What you will see by March 2026                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 757,500 paid attendances at our six leisure centres by the end of 2025-26</li><li>• Increase in the number of people participating in targeted health programmes to 22,000.</li><li>• Increase the number of memberships being taken out to 10,100.</li><li>• 2 play parks upgraded</li><li>• 2 new build and/or upgraded capital leisure projects progressed.</li><li>• Works to be commenced on Kilkeel centre upgrade.</li><li>• Planning permission and contract tender agreed for Jennings park upgrade</li><li>• Financial assistance allocated for sports clubs to the value of £225,000 for capital projects.</li><li>• Leisure-Safe Accreditation being worked towards for all indoor leisure facilities.</li><li>• 'Mystery Visitor' Programme implemented and baseline established</li></ul> |                 |                |                      |  |                 |
| Alignment   |   |                 |                |                      |  |                 |
| Corporate Plan 2024-27  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District.</li></ul>   |                 |                |                      |  |                 |
| Community Plan  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing</li></ul>  |                 |                |                      |  |                 |
| Programme for Government  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cut health waiting times</li></ul>  |                 |                |                      |  |                 |
| 7 aspects of improvement  | Strategic effectiveness   | Service quality |                | Service Availability | Fairness   |                 |
| Responsible Officer   | Director: Active and Healthy Communities  |                 |                |                      |  |                 |



## Performance Improvement Objective 2

### We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation

#### Why this matters

You told us that:

- 'Improving skills, employability and job prospects' was your top priority for improving the local area in the 2022 residents survey
- 'Supporting local businesses, attracting investment and jobs' is in your top three priorities for improvement
- Investment to grow the economy, create jobs and attract tourists is the most important form of investment
- 69% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey agreed with this objective

Continuing to support and grow the economy of Newry, Mourne and Down remains a key priority for the Council. Council continues to support the growth of both new business start-ups and the growth of existing businesses through the collaborative delivery of the Go Succeed Programme. 'Go Succeed' is Northern Ireland's go-to source for free expert business advice focusing on the three pillars of starting, growing and scaling your business or business idea.

The NMD Labour Market partnership (LMP) is vital for delivery against skills and employability, addressing economic inactivity, and supporting the up-skilling and re-skilling of residents in line with the demand for skills. The LMP has delivered a range of employment academies, careers fairs and jobs fairs, working closely with key stakeholders across the private and public sector.

Delivery against the Belfast Regional City Deal investment areas continues, with ambitions for job creation and the stimulation of private sector investment across the district.

Council is leading on the implementation of a DfE "Regional Balance Fund" establishing a Local Economic Partnership which will develop an action plan and deliver £4.5 million of investment over a 3-year period, that will drive the creation of good jobs, productivity growth, sustainability and decarbonisation.

#### Looking Back:

What we did in 2024-25



175 new enterprises created as a result of support and 206 new jobs promoted through business start-up activity



12 new social enterprise start-ups supported, and 16 new social enterprise jobs created
















221 businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions



Delivered several Make it Local campaigns throughout the District and wider region. Make it Local is an initiative that is designed to encourage people within the district to shop locally and support local businesses. Artisan markets held in Downpatrick, Newcastle and Warrenpoint continue supporting the local artisan and craft micro businesses of the District.

#### Looking Forward:

- Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme






|   |   |                 |                |                      |   |                |
|---|---|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|---|----------------|
| What we will do in 2025-26  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Support the establishment of new businesses through the 'Go Succeed' Programme</li><li>Support the growth of existing businesses and creation of new jobs through the 'Go Succeed' Programme</li><li>Invest in employability and skills through the implementation of the LMP Action Plan.</li><li>Invest in the creation of good jobs, productivity growth, decarbonisation and regional balance through the implementation of a Local Economic Partnership action plan</li></ul>  |                 |                |                      |   |                |
| How we will measure success   | 2021-22 Actual  | 2022-23 Actual  | 2023-24 Actual | 2024-25 Actual       | Status Trend  | 2025-26 Target |
| Number of social enterprise start-ups supported                                   | 12  | 12              | 12             | 12                   |       | 12             |
| Number of social enterprise jobs created  | 13  | 12              | 14             | 16                   |       | 12             |
| Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity                   | New measure   |                 |                | 839                  |    | 712            |
| Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises | 358   | 361             | 150            | 334                  |       | 289            |
| Number of jobs promoted via business start-up activity                            | 215   | 155             | 90             | 206                  |       | 173            |
| Number of new enterprises created as a result of support                          | 215   | 195             | 90             | 175                  |     | 119            |
| Number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions  | 373   | 220             | 351            | 221                  |   | 220            |
| What you will see by March 2026   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>289 business plans created for Start-Up businesses and employer enterprises</li><li>Over 700 participants engaged across all Go Succeed activity</li><li>Support provided to 220 existing businesses to progress growth and scaling ambitions</li><li>173 new jobs promoted via business start-up activity.</li><li>12 social enterprise start-ups supported and 12 social enterprise jobs created</li><li>Continued support for new and established local businesses</li><li>Continued support for the growth of new employment opportunities</li><li>Continued support to grow a labour market that is economically active and prosperous</li></ul> |                 |                |                      |   |                |
| Alignment   |   |                 |                |                      |   |                |
| Corporate Plan 2024-27  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Support the continued growth and development of our local economy</li></ul>   |                 |                |                      |   |                |
| Community Plan  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities</li></ul>  |                 |                |                      |   |                |
| Programme for Government  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy</li></ul>   |                 |                |                      |   |                |
| 7 aspects of improvement  | Strategic effectiveness   | Service quality |                | Service availability | Innovation  |                |
| Responsible Officer   | Director: Economy, Regeneration and Tourism   |                 |                |                      |   |                |


\*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



# 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Why this matters</b>                            | <p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog mess and dog fouling and rubbish or litter lying around are your top two perceived problems in your local area</li> <li>• 6% of the residents surveyed were dissatisfied with the cleansing service provided by the Council.</li> <li>• 91% of residents said recycling is important to them, an increase of 5% on the 2018 residents survey figure.</li> <li>• 75% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey agreed with this objective</li> </ul> <p>Issues around street cleanliness continue to escalate largely as a result of the increased number of illicit dumping, littering and dog fouling incidents reported to the Council.</p> <p>To improve the overall cleanliness of the District, the Council is currently reviewing cleansing operations to design a more effective model of service provision. The Council also remains committed to collaborating with partner organisations and local communities to promote responsible dog ownership, address issues around littering and illicit dumping and generate local pride in having a cleaner, greener District for everyone to enjoy.</p> |
| <b>Looking Back:</b> What we did in 2024-25        |  Issued 31 fixed penalty notices, 26 of which were paid  |
|  |  Supported 100% of community clean-up requests   |
|  |  15 environmental projects funded through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' Scheme with a total of £30,469.40 awarded to local groups   |
|  |  Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out   |
|  |  Maintained the rate of recycling, at 50.1%  |
| <b>Looking Forward:</b> What we will do in 2025-26 | <p>Address issues around recycling, littering, illicit dumping and dog fouling by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to implement the Enforcement Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity and social media campaigns</li> <li>• Encouraging residents to bring properly sorted surplus recyclable waste to our Household Recycling Centres</li> <li>• Supporting local community clean ups</li> <li>• Continued implementation of a Paint Re-Use Scheme at a further 2 Household Recycling Centres</li> <li>• Exploring options to determine levels of street cleanliness and identify emerging issues and hotspots</li> <li>• Rollout an environmental awareness campaign displayed on Council fleet highlighting simple messages on recycling, littering and dog fouling</li> </ul> <p>Work in partnership with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the 'Live Here Love Here' campaigns</li> </ul>   |

|   |   |                      |                |                 |  |                           |
|---|---|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|--|---------------------------|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Encourage community groups to 'Adopt a Spot'</li><li>Highlight the impact of littering on the marine environment</li></ul>  |                      |                |                 |  |                           |
| How we will measure success   | 2021-22 Actual  | 2022-23 Actual       | 2023-24 Actual | 2024-25 Actual  | Status Trend   | 2025-26 Target            |
| Number of fixed penalty notices issued  | 118   | 110                  | 25             | 31              | <br> | 100                       |
| Number of fixed penalty notices paid  | 100   | 91                   | 19             | 26              | <br> | 80                        |
| Percentage of issued fixed penalty notices that are paid                                    | New measure   |                      |                |                 | -  | 80%                       |
| Percentage of community clean up requests supported   | New measure   |                      |                | 100%            |   | 90%                       |
| Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects                                      | 18  | 10                   | 9              | 15              |   | No target                 |
| The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling | 49.1%   | 49.6%                | 50.1%          | 50.1% (Q1-Q3)   | <br> | 70% by 2030 (55% by 2025) |
| The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled    | 2,685t  | 2,319t               | 932t           | 366t (Q1-Q3)    | <br> | <20,954 tonnes (2019-20)  |
| The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings                            | 87,336t   | 82,842t              | 84,636t        | 65,048t (Q1-Q3) |    | No target                 |
| What you will see by March 2026   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increase in the number of fixed penalty notices issued and paid</li><li>Responsible dog ownership and reduced levels of dog fouling, littering and illicit dumping</li><li>Improved opportunities to report littering, dog fouling and illicit dumping</li><li>Reduction in the disposal of paint from our Household Recycling Centre sites</li><li>Opportunities to engage in community clean ups</li><li>Increased awareness of environmental messaging on issues including recycling, dog fouling and littering</li><li>A cleaner, greener District, with improved civic and community pride</li><li>Street cleanliness inspection systems identified for use within Council</li></ul> |                      |                |                 |  |                           |
| Alignment   |   |                      |                |                 |  |                           |
| Corporate Plan 2024-27  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future</li></ul>  |                      |                |                 |  |                           |
| Community Plan  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment</li></ul>  |                      |                |                 |  |                           |
| Programme for Government  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment</li></ul>  |                      |                |                 |  |                           |
| 7 aspects of improvement  | Strategic effectiveness   | Service availability | Innovation     |                 | Sustainability   |                           |
| Responsible Officer   | Director: Sustainability and Environment  |                      |                |                 |  |                           |
















\*The Q1-Q3 2024-25 data for the statutory waste management performance indicators remains provisional and will be finalised when the year-end data is validated and published by DAERA.






\*\*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 improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change.





|   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Why this matters</b>   | <p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing waste, reducing climate change, investing in renewable energy etc. was important to you.</li> <li>Green technology skills were the second most important training support needed to improve the growth of resident employability.</li> <li>91% of residents said recycling is important to them, an increase of 5% on the 2018 residents survey figure.</li> <li>59% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey agreed with this objective</li> </ul> <p>Our climate is changing, and we need to prepare. Greenhouse gas emissions cause the Earth's atmosphere to hold more radiation from the sun which increases the overall temperature of the planet. This change in temperature is altering our climate and causing one of the greatest threats of our time. In October 2019 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council declared a 'Climate Emergency'.</p> <p>NMDDC is acutely aware of how intrinsic sustainability and care of our district is to its future. Within our new Council structure, a Sustainability Department has been created. This is led by a dedicated Assistant Director with responsibility for issues such as Energy, Council Fleet, Facilities Maintenance and Biodiversity.</p> <p>Environmental sustainability has become a key objective in the development of our capital projects, providing economic growth for the region in an inclusive and sustainable way. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council aims to embed the ethos of sustainability throughout its operations and to provide leadership for the community.</p> <p>The Council also forms part of the Local Government Climate Action Network which is helping to deliver the NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme. This network will enable us to collaborate with other Councils and relevant statutory partners to develop a strategic approach for climate action.</p> |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Looking Back:</b><br>What we did in 2024-25                                      | <table> <tr> <td></td><td>79% of Council fleet younger than 8 years old</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>2024-24 fleet replacement programme completed</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Progressed the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Biodiversity Strategy 2024-30 approved and launched</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Continued the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan</td></tr> </table>  |  | 79% of Council fleet younger than 8 years old |  | 2024-24 fleet replacement programme completed |  | Progressed the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy |  | Biodiversity Strategy 2024-30 approved and launched |  | Continued the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan |
|  | 79% of Council fleet younger than 8 years old  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|  | 2024-24 fleet replacement programme completed  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|  | Progressed the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|  | Biodiversity Strategy 2024-30 approved and launched  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|  | Continued the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Looking Forward:</b><br>What we will do in 2025-26                               | <p>Address issues around climate change and sustainability by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completing the draft Sustainability and Climate Change strategy ready for consultation, review, approval and then publication.</li> <li>Publishing the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Plan</li> <li>Implementing the newly published biodiversity strategy 2024-30</li> <li>Complete and implement the Council's Tree Strategy</li> </ul>   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |







|  |   |                |                |                |  |                |
|--|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|--|----------------|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Supporting the continued implementation of new Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points</li><li>Undertaking a baseline assessment of the Council's carbon footprint and renewable energy output</li><li>Review the Council's active travel master plan alongside colleagues in the ERT Department</li><li>Continue to implement Council's fleet replacement programme</li><li>Preparing the Climate Change Mitigation Report in accordance with The Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024</li></ul>  |                |                |                |  |                |
| How we will measure success  | 2021-22 Actual  | 2022-23 Actual | 2023-24 Actual | 2024-25 Actual | Status Trend   | 2025-26 Target |
| Carbon footprint of Council estate   | To be established   |                |                |                | -  | -              |
| Renewable energy generation  | To be established   |                |                |                | -  | -              |
| Energy Consumption baseline  | To be established   |                |                |                | -  | -              |
| Percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years                                 | New measure   |                | 75%            | 79%            | <br> | 85%            |
| Number of vehicles within the Council fleet that have an alternative fuel source | New measure   |                | 1              | 1              |   | 10             |
| Number of trees planted on Council managed estate                                | New measure   |                | 2,800          | 257            |   | 2,800          |
| Number of Council supported EV charging points                                   | New measure   |                | 20             | 0              |    | 18             |
| What you will see by March 2026  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Publication of the Council's Climate Change and Sustainable Development strategy and Climate Change Adaptation Plan</li><li>Implementation of the new Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2024-2030)</li><li>Publication of Council's Tree Strategy</li><li>2,800 new trees planted across the District</li><li>Carbon baseline established for Council estate</li><li>Renewable energy baseline established for Council estate</li><li>Energy consumption baseline established for Council estate</li><li>Increase in the percentage of younger, less polluting vehicles within the Council fleet</li><li>A reviewed Active Travel Master plan</li><li>New electric vehicles operating within Council fleet</li><li>Publication of the Climate Change Mitigation Report in accordance with The Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024</li></ul> |                |                |                |  |                |
| Alignment  |   |                |                |                |  |                |
| Corporate Plan 2024-27   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future</li></ul>  |                |                |                |  |                |
| Community Plan   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment</li></ul>  |                |                |                |  |                |
| Programme for Government   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment</li></ul>  |                |                |                |  |                |
| 7 aspects of improvement   | Strategic effectiveness   | Efficiency     | Innovation     | Sustainability |  |                |
| Responsible Officer  | Director: Sustainability and Environment  |                |                |                |  |                |



## Performance Improvement Objective 5

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

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Why this matters</b>   | <p>Delivering a more efficient and effective Planning Service for customers is a key priority for improvement for the Council. Planning plays a significant role in promoting sustainable development, regeneration, economic prosperity, investment and job creation for present and future generations of our District. 72% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey also agreed with this objective.</p> <p>The new portal, which launched in December 2022, allowing customers to submit applications online and track live planning applications, is now fully operational and amendments and changes remain ongoing as per agreed structures.</p> <p>Work continues on the Planning Improvement Programme and following discussions with SOLACE and DFI, the programme will be reviewed and updated during 2025-26 to be more reflective of the challenges currently facing planning across NI.</p> <p>Staff retention and recruitment remains challenging with vacancies remaining in the planning team across all functions as per agreed structures. Recruitment remains ongoing. This has had, and continues to have, a significant impact on targets and performance. This remains a priority for Council and Senior Management with ongoing review and monitoring.</p> <p>The Council has not yet achieved the statutory standards for 2024-25 but remain committed to delivering further improvements and providing a high-quality service to all customers.</p> |  |  |
| <b>Looking Back:</b><br>What we did between April-December 2024 |    | 45.1% of live enforcement cases in the system longer than 2 years, which is below the regional average of 70.3%                |  |
|   |    | Average processing time of 45.2 weeks for local planning applications, which is above the regional average of 19.2 weeks       |  |
|   |    | Average processing time of 34.6 weeks for major planning applications, which is better than the regional average of 39.7 weeks |  |
|   |    | Received 878 local planning applications, which is the third highest across Northern Ireland                                   |  |
| <b>Looking Forward:</b><br>What we will do in 2025-26           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases which have been in the system for over 12 months.</li><li>• Ongoing work with agents and architects to improve the standard of planning applications submitted.</li><li>• Support employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries.'</li><li>• Launch the Draft plan Strategy by Q2 2025-26</li></ul>  |  |  |

| How we will measure success  |   | 2021-22<br>Actual    | 2022-23<br>Actual | 2023-24<br>Actual | 2024-25<br>Q1-Q3<br>Actual | Status<br>Trend   | 2025-26<br>Target |
|--|---|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)      |   | 18.3                 | 21.6              | 33.7              | 45.2                       |  | <15 weeks         |
| Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)       |   | 49.8                 | 89                | 154.8             | 34.6                       |  | <30 weeks         |
| Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks  |   | 46.9%                | 58.6%             | 60.0%             | 45.1%                      |  | 70%               |
| Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more* |   | 187                  | 228               | 352               | 437                        |  | 150*              |
| Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less* |   | 825                  | 934               | 1,154             | 1,092                      |  | 700*              |
| Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more*         |   | 486                  | 503               | 599               | 593                        |  | 450*              |
| What you will see by March 2026                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A more efficient and effective planning service</li><li>• Improved processing times for local and major planning applications</li><li>• Improved processing times for planning enforcement cases</li><li>• Reduction in the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases in the system</li><li>• An empowered and motivated workforce</li><li>• Increased confidence in the Planning system</li><li>• Sustainable development and regeneration of the District</li><li>• Commencement of public representation on the Draft Plan Strategy</li></ul> |                      |                   |                   |                            |   |                   |
| Alignment  |   |                      |                   |                   |                            |   |                   |
| Corporate Plan 2024-27   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliver sustainable services</li></ul>  |                      |                   |                   |                            |   |                   |
| Community Plan   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities</li></ul>  |                      |                   |                   |                            |   |                   |
| Programme for Government   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing</li><li>• Reform and Transformation of Public Services</li></ul>  |                      |                   |                   |                            |   |                   |
| 7 aspects of improvement   | Strategic effectiveness   | Service availability | Service quality   |                   | Efficiency                 |   |                   |
| Responsible Officer  | Director: Economy, Regeneration and Tourism   |                      |                   |                   |                            |   |                   |

\*The 2025-26 targets have been carried forward from 2024-25.



## Strategic Alignment

| <b>Performance Improvement Objective</b>   | <b>Corporate Objective(s)</b>                                      | <b>Community Planning Outcome(s)</b>   | <b>Duty of Improvement</b>   |
|--|--|--|--|
| We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services  | Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district       | All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing                             | Strategic effectiveness<br>Service quality<br>Service availability<br>Fairness   |
| We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation  | Support the continued growth and development of our local economy  | All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities                       | Strategic effectiveness<br>Service quality<br>Service availability<br>Innovation |
| We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents | Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future | All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment | Strategic effectiveness<br>Service availability<br>Innovation<br>Sustainability  |
| We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change  | Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future | All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment | Strategic Effectiveness<br>Efficiency<br>Innovation<br>Sustainability            |
| We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme     | Deliver sustainable services                                       | All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities                         | Strategic effectiveness<br>Service availability<br>Service quality<br>Efficiency |

## Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards

Section 89 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the Council to publish the results of the performance indicators and standards that are set by central government around economic development, planning and waste management.

The seven statutory performance indicators and standards, as outlined in the Local Government Performance Indicators and Standards Order (2015), are set out below:

| Ref                         | Statutory Performance Indicator  | Annual Standard                     |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Economic Development</b> |  |                                     |
| ED1                         | The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity   | >155<br>173*<br>(updated target)    |
| <b>Planning</b>             |  |                                     |
| P1                          | The average processing time of major planning applications   | <30 weeks                           |
| P2                          | The average processing time of local planning applications   | <15 weeks                           |
| P3                          | The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks  | 70%                                 |
| <b>Waste Management</b>     |  |                                     |
| W1                          | The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse) | 70% by 2030<br>Interim: 55% by 2025 |
| W2                          | The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled                               | <20,954 tonnes<br>(2019-20 target)  |
| W3                          | The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings   | 85,500 tonnes                       |

\*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.

The Council has put in place the following arrangements to monitor progress against the standards set for the statutory performance and indicators:

- Inclusion within the Performance Improvement Plan, with progress being monitored on a bi-annual basis by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.
- Inclusion within Directorate Business Plans, with progress being monitored on a bi-annual basis by the relevant Council Committee.
- Data submissions to Government Departments, with reports being issued to monitor the performance of each Council, outlining regional trends and comparisons.



## Self-Imposed Performance Indicators

The Council has identified the following self-imposed performance indicators to measure progress in delivering the Corporate Plan 2024 - 27.

| Draft Corporate Objective  | Draft Measure of Success  |
|--|---|
| Support the continued growth and development of our local economy                              | Number of jobs created and businesses supported through Council programmes  |
|  | Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity  |
|  | Amount of investment secured and distributed by Council   |
| Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district                                   | Number of people participating in targeted health programmes  |
|  | Number of attendances at Council indoor leisure facilities  |
|  | Number of users of community trails   |
| Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future                             | Level of street cleanliness across the District (Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Street Cleanliness Index)                      |
|  | Level of compliance with Sustainable Development Duty   |
|  | Percentage of waste recycled  |
|  | Percentage of EV charging points  |
| Support regenerative tourism opportunities which promote our culture, heritage and environment | Level of visitor spend  |
|  | Number of overnight stays   |
|  | Level of visitor satisfaction   |
|  | Number of visitors to Council's Arts Centres and Museums  |
| Empowering communities to play an active part in civic life                                    | Percentage of residents who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together |
|  | Percentage of residents who agree the Council consults with, and listens to the views of local people                           |
|  | Percentage of residents who feel they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area                          |
|  | Number of financial assistance projects funded.   |
|  | Number of people accessing the Ethnic Minority Support Office services  |
| Develop and revitalise our district  | Number of BRCD projects delivered.  |
|  | Number of small settlement schemes delivered.   |
|  | Number of new/upgraded public conveniences.   |
| Deliver sustainable services   | Level of citizen satisfaction.  |
|  | Compliance with the Duty of Improvement.  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Represent the voice of the District with our partners | Number of users registered to Council corporate social media channels.             |
|   | Number of visits to Council's corporate website.                                   |
|   | Compliance with the Duty of Community Planning                                     |
|   | Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live |
|   | Number of training events provided to elected members                              |

The Council has put in place the following arrangements to monitor progress against the self-imposed performance indicators:

- Inclusion within the Performance Improvement Plan, with progress being monitored by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee through the annual Assessment of Performance.
- Some performance indicators are included within Directorate Business Plans, with progress being monitored on a bi-annual basis by the relevant Council Committee.

These performance indicators are aligned to community planning outcomes. This will ensure the Council continues to address the needs and aspirations of local communities and deliver sustainable outcomes for all, now and in the future.



## Identifying the Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26

All the five performance improvement objectives 2025-26 have been carried forward from 2024-25, as they remain relevant and meaningful. A number of changes and additions have been made however, to the actions and measures that support these objectives. They have been developed, reviewed and updated in close liaison with Elected Members, Senior Management Team, Corporate Management Team and employees across the organisation. Each objective is underpinned by a suite of 'supporting actions', 'measures of success' and outcomes for stakeholders. They are clearly aligned to the Community Plan and Corporate Plan 2024-27, as well as other regional and local plans, particularly the Council's Business Plans which have been developed by each Directorate. These plans influence and guide the overall direction of travel for the organisation.

- Programme for Government 2024-2027
- Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down 2017-2030, Priority Action Areas and District Electoral Area (DEA) Action Plans
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan 2024-27
- Thematic plans and strategies, including the IT Strategy and Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy
- Annual Directorate Business Plans 2025-26

The Council has also taken into consideration performance information from the following sources to support the development of the performance improvement objectives:

- The Northern Ireland Audit Office Audit and Assessment Reports and 'proposals for improvement', which are currently being progressed
- The Assessment of Performance 2024-25, including progress against performance improvement objectives, measures of success within the Corporate Plan 2024-27 and statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management.

The reasons for objectives being carried forward and/or amended are detailed in the table below:

| PIO's - 2024-25  |  | PIO's 2025-26 | Progress / Rationale  |  | Status Proposed   |
|--|--|---------------|---|--|---|
| <b>PIO 1:</b><br>We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services | <b>PIO 1:</b><br>We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services |               | During 2024-25 progress was made against a number of key actions under this objective including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase in the number of paid attendances at some of Council's 6 main leisure centres.</li><li>• Increase in the number of people participating in targeted health programmes .</li><li>• Increase in the number of leisure centre memberships</li></ul> However, there is still improvements to be made, and the 2022 residents survey ranked 'Improving people's health and wellbeing (and reducing health inequalities) as a high priority for improving the local area.                                       |  | <b>Retain</b><br>This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2025-26. |
| <b>PIO 2:</b><br>We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation                 | <b>PIO 2:</b><br>We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation                 |               | During 2024-25 progress was made against a number of key actions including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises</li><li>• Number of jobs promoted via business start-up activity</li><li>• Number of new enterprises created as a result of support</li></ul> However there is still improvements to be made, and the 2022 residents survey ranked 'improving skills, employability, and job prospects' and 'supporting local businesses, attracting investment and jobs' as the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> highest priorities for improving the local area. |  | <b>Retain</b><br>This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2025-26. |



|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p><b>PIO 3:</b><br/>We will improve the cleanliness of our district by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling incidents</p> | <p><b>PIO 3:</b><br/>We will improve the cleanliness of our district by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling incidents</p> | <p>During 2024-25 progress was made against some key actions under this objective including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity campaigns and dog licences</li><li>• Promoting the 'Live Here, Love Here' campaign through the funding of 15 environmental projects.</li></ul> <p>However, improvement is still needed in a number of areas including increasing the Council's recycling rate and decreasing the level of municipal waste arising.</p> <p>The 2022 residents survey ranked 'dog mess and fouling' and rubbish or littering lying around' as the top two perceived problems in their local areas by residents.</p> | <p><b>Retain</b><br/>This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2025-26.</p> |
| <p><b>PIO 4:</b><br/>We will improve our sustainability by reducing our impacts in relation to climate change</p>   | <p><b>PIO 4:</b><br/>We will improve our sustainability by reducing our impacts in relation to climate change</p>   | <p>During 2024-25 some progress was made against a number of key actions and measures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Progressing the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy</li><li>• Completing the 2024-25 fleet replacement programme</li></ul> <p>However, more improvement is still needed. The number of Council vehicles with an alternative fuel source needs to increase and a number of baselines need to be established in relation to the Council's carbon footprint and energy consumption.</p>   | <p><b>Retain</b><br/>This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2025-26.</p> |

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>PIO 5:</b><br>We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme.                                      | <b>PIO 5:</b><br>We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme | <p>During 2024-25 progress continued to be made against a number of key actions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working with agents and architects to improve the standard of planning applications submitted.</li><li>• Supported employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries'.</li><li>• Decrease in the average processing time of major planning applications</li></ul> | <b>Retain</b><br>This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2025-26 |
| <p>However, much improvement is still required as the statutory standards for the average processing times of major and local planning applications and enforcement cases is still not being met.</p> |   |  |  |



## Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down

The Community Plan has been developed and agreed by the Community Planning Partnership Board. Entitled 'Living Well Together', the Community Plan provides a framework for collaborative working to deliver positive change for our communities, and sets out the following long term overarching vision for the District:

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

The Community Plan sets out the following five positive outcomes:

### Our Outcomes

These are the positive outcomes we all wish to see in our community:



## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan 2024-27

The Corporate Plan 2024-27 sets out the following mission statement and eight strategic objectives:

### Council Mission Statement

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

### Council Strategic Objectives

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  <p><b>Support the continued growth and development of our local economy</b></p>  |  <p><b>Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district</b></p>                                  |
|  <p><b>Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future</b></p> |  <p><b>Support regenerative tourism opportunities which promote our culture, heritage and environment</b></p> |
|  <p><b>Empowering communities to play an active part in civic life</b></p>      |  <p><b>Develop and revitalise our district</b></p>   |
|  <p><b>Deliver sustainable services</b></p>                                     |  <p><b>Represent the voice of the district with our partners</b></p>                                       |

### Alignment with the Strategic Aspects of Improvement

In accordance with the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, each performance improvement objective seeks to bring about improvement in at least one of the following aspects:

- Strategic effectiveness
- Service quality
- Service availability
- Fairness
- Sustainability
- Efficiency
- Innovation



The table below outlines how Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's performance improvement objectives 2025-26 are aligned with the seven specified aspects of improvement:

| Performance Improvement Objective  | Seven Aspects of Improvement |                 |                      |          |                |            |            |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------|----------------|------------|------------|
|  | Strategic Effectiveness      | Service Quality | Service Availability | Fairness | Sustainability | Efficiency | Innovation |
| We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services  | ✓                            | ✓               | ✓                    | ✓        |                |            |            |
| We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation  | ✓                            | ✓               | ✓                    |          |                |            | ✓          |
| We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and reducing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling                           | ✓                            |                 | ✓                    |          | ✓              |            | ✓          |
| We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change  | ✓                            |                 |                      |          | ✓              | ✓          | ✓          |
| We will improve the average processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the recommendations from the Planning Service Review | ✓                            | ✓               | ✓                    |          |                | ✓          |            |

The Council has also assessed the performance improvement objectives against the following criteria, and considers them to be:

- Legitimate
- Clear
- Robust
- Deliverable
- Demonstrable

## Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment

In accordance with the Section 75 requirements of the Northern Ireland Act (1998), whereby the Council must carry out its functions having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard for the desirability to promote good relations, the Performance Improvement Plan has been subject to an equality screening. The outcome of the equality screening process determined that the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 is not subject to an equality impact assessment, with no mitigating measures required.

In accordance with the Rural Needs Act Northern Ireland (2016), the Council has given due regard to rural needs by carrying out a Rural Needs Impact Assessment of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.



## Consultation and Engagement

The Council is committed to listening to local people and taking on board their views. Since 2017, the Council has carried out extensive consultation and engagement, inviting key stakeholders, including Elected Members, residents, local businesses and community planning partners to put forward their views on the proposed performance improvement objectives.

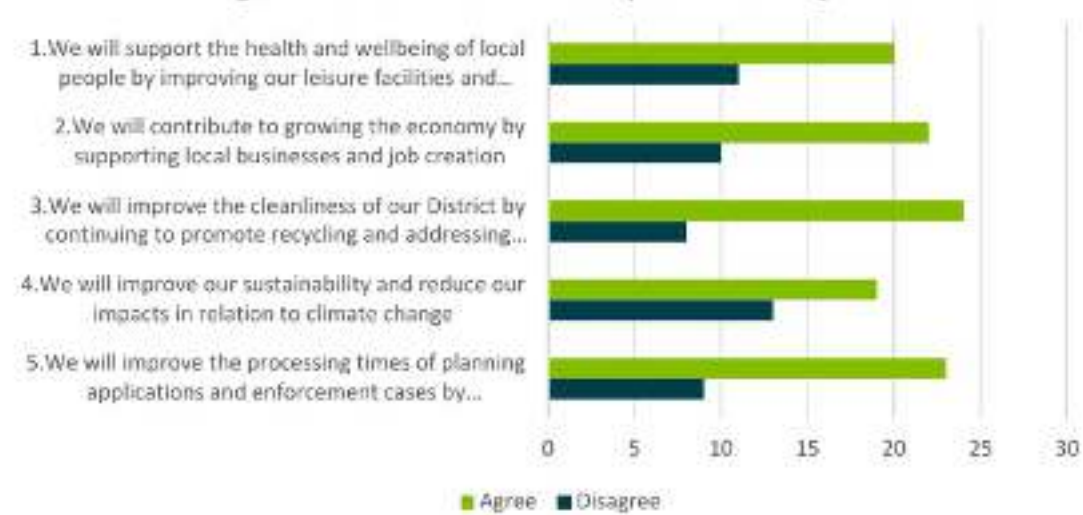
The Council website was host to the consultation and engagement process. Under the consultations section of the website, an electronic survey in relation to the draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26 was published and promoted. The consultation and engagement process was promoted further through the Council's social media channels and circulated to key internal and external stakeholders.

The overall consultation and engagement process resulted in 33 completed surveys and engagement with 60 stakeholders through the Newry DEA Forum, Downpatrick DEA Forum, Slieve Croob DEA Forum and Rowallane DEA Forum, Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice and the Cedar Foundation. These responses have been supplemented by the input of 764 respondents to the Residents Survey in 2022.

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Electronic documentation, survey on the draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26 on the consultation section of the Council website                         | Survey: 33 responses |
| Engagement with the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 75 groups, including the Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice and the Cedar Foundation</li> </ul> | 23 consultees        |
| Engagement with : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 DEA's across the District</li> </ul>   | 37 members           |
| Residents Survey (September 2022)   | 764 respondents      |

The consultation responses revealed support for the proposed performance improvement objectives, with the majority of respondents agreeing with each of the five objectives.

Agreement on Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26



The areas for improvement and issues raised through the overall consultation and engagement processes are clearly aligned to the five performance improvement objectives 2025-26, and will be addressed through the Performance Improvement Plan, and as part of the Council’s business planning process.

## Achieving Continuous Improvement

Transforming and improving how the Council delivers services is a key objective within the Corporate Plan. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to developing a 'can do' culture, where managing performance and achieving improvement is everyone's responsibility. In pursuing the corporate vision and objectives, the Council has identified the following five draft core values:

| What this means: |   |
|------------------|---|
| Respect          | We will demonstrate respect for all people in our attitudes, behaviours and working relationships.  |
| Transparency     | We will be transparent in how we make decisions.  |
| Excellence       | We will take pride in our work and be passionate about the standards we strive to achieve.  |
| Integrity        | We want the people of our district to trust us to do the right thing.   |
| Accountability   | We will be accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. We will be accountable for how we plan and use resources sustainably. |

The Council has put in place a number of frameworks and systems to drive forward continuous improvement and facilitate a performance improvement culture. These include the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, Policy Development Framework, Equality Scheme, Governance Framework and Risk Management Policy.

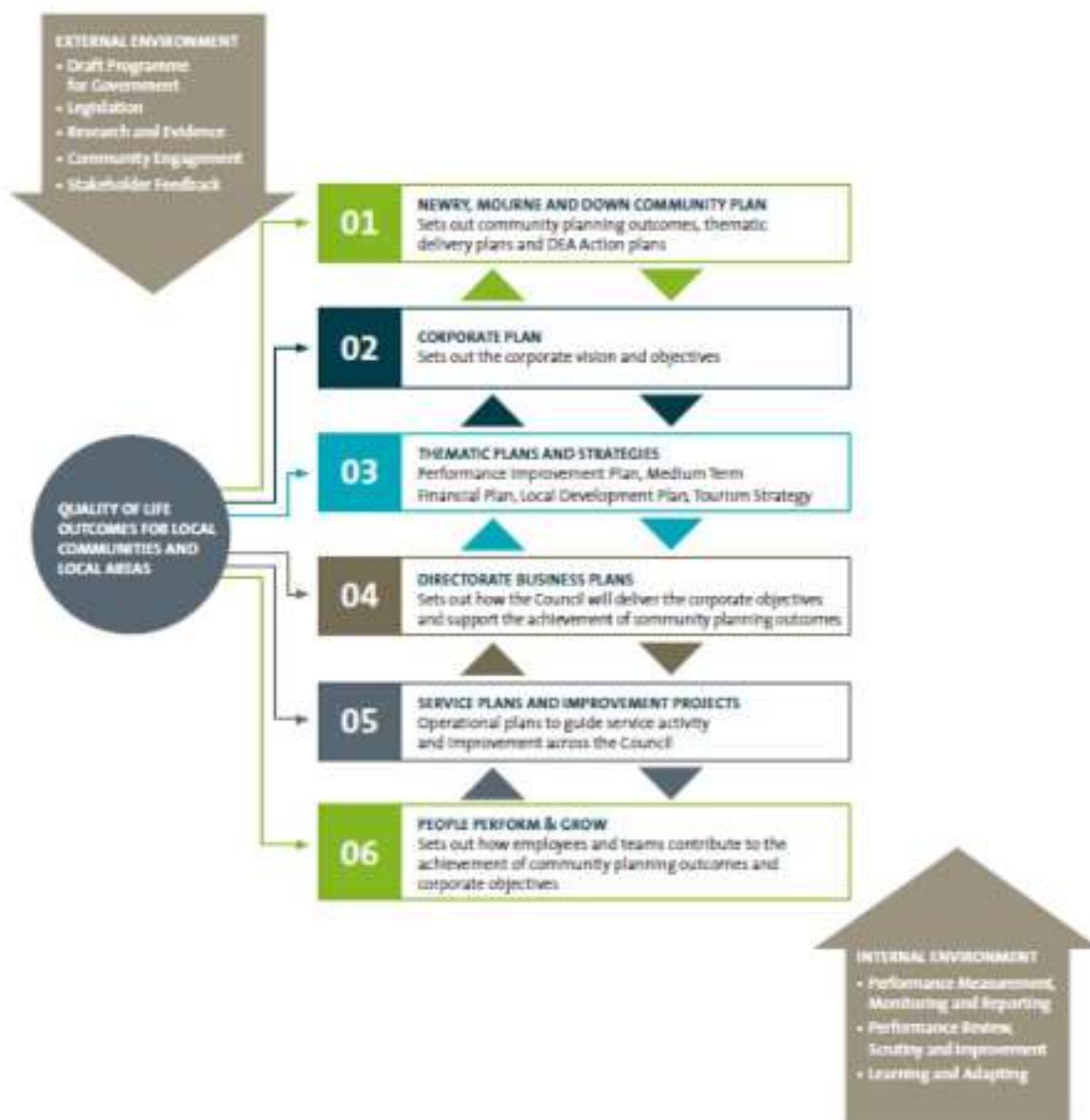
The Council also assesses how performance compares with other Councils. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is working with the Association of Public Service Excellence to benchmark performance against the performance of Councils across Northern Ireland and other jurisdictions. This information is being used to collate a robust and reliable evidence base, to help identify and address future areas for improvement.

The Performance Improvement Plan underpins the Council's overall approach to effective performance management. It supports the Council in identifying more efficient and effective ways of working to facilitate the achievement of community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and Directorate objectives, which together support the continued implementation of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework.



# Business Planning and Performance Management Framework

The Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework drives and provides assurance that community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and performance improvement objectives are being delivered, with the primary goal of making life better for our citizens.



The Community Plan and Corporate Plan sit within a hierarchy of plans that informs the Council's overall direction of travel and guides all activity within the organisation. Community planning outcomes and corporate objectives are cascaded across the organisation through thematic plans and strategies and Directorate Business Plans. Performance indicators continue to be developed at all levels across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, in order to ensure performance is measured, monitored and evaluated on a continuous basis.

During 2025-26, the Council will continue to progress and mainstream the development, implementation and review of Service Plans and roll out of Individual Performance (People Perform Grow), both of which seek to demonstrate the 'line of sight' between the work of employees and how they contribute to the achievement of community planning outcomes and corporate objectives.

Through the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, the Council will manage performance at all levels across the organisation, in order to ensure the necessary steps are taken to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions. Each level of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework is, and will be, accompanied by a relevant set of performance measures to monitor and assess the Council's progress in improving the quality of life for local communities.

The table below provides a description of the various plans and strategies that form part of the Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework.

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Community Plan                | The Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down sets out the long-term vision for improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the District. Developed in collaboration with partners across the statutory, business and voluntary sectors, the Community Plan is underpinned by Priority Actions Areas and seven DEA Action Plans, which seek to deliver the five community planning outcomes at a local level. Progress in implementing the Community Plan is reviewed on a biennial basis. |
| Corporate Plan                | The Corporate Plan 2024-27 sets out the proposed vision, values and strategic objectives for the Council. Each strategic objective is underpinned by 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success'. Progress in delivering the Corporate Plan is reported annually through the Assessment of Performance.   |
| Thematic Plans and Strategies | The Council has put in place a number of Thematic Plans and Strategies to support the implementation of the Community Plan and Corporate Plan, including the Performance Improvement Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan and Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy. These plans provide the strategic context for multiple programmes of work across the organisation.   |
| Directorate Business Plans    | Business Plans are developed annually to demonstrate how Directorates contribute to the achievement of community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and performance improvement objectives. Directorate Business Plans include suites of key performance measures to  |



|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | measure progress and drive continuous improvement, with performance being monitored and reviewed bi-annually by the relevant Committee.   |
| Service Plans and Improvement Projects | Service Plans and Improvement Projects are operational and set out the direction for service areas across the Council. They outline how each service contributes to the delivery of community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and performance improvement objectives, include key performance measures and provide a mechanism to manage performance consistently across the organisation.                          |
| People Perform Grow                    | The Council recognises the significant role employees play in contributing to the achievement of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Thematic Plans and Strategies, Directorate Business Plans and Service Plans. People Perform Grow demonstrates the link between the work of employees and how they contribute to the achievement of key plans and strategies, as well as the outcomes experienced by local communities. |

The Business Planning and Performance Management Framework is complemented by the integrated cycle of activity outlined in the diagram below.



# Governance Arrangements

Reviewing performance and reporting progress to Elected Members and other key stakeholders is very important, as it facilitates transparency, accountability and improvement in everything the Council does. The governance arrangements to develop, monitor, report and review the Council's progress in implementing the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 are outlined below:



The Council must publish an Assessment of Performance by 30 September 2025 which will provide an overview of how the Council has performed during 2024-25. The Assessment of Performance will be published on the Council's website and is supplemented by the Mid Year Progress Report for the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.

The arrangements the Council has put in place to secure continuous improvement are subject to an annual audit and assessment by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. Subject to the General Duty of Improvement being met, the Northern Ireland Audit Office will issue a Letter of Assurance to both the Council and Department for Communities.

## How to Propose New Performance Improvement Objectives

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Newry, Mourne and Down District Council welcomes your ongoing feedback on the performance improvement objectives 2025-26, as well as any suggestions you may have on how services can be improved in the future.

The Council can be contacted in the following ways:

**In writing:** Catherine Hughes  
Head of Performance and Improvement (Acting)  
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
Co Down  
BT35 8DJ

**Telephone:** 0300 013 2233

**Email:** [performance@nmandd.org](mailto:performance@nmandd.org)



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

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**Newry Office**  
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Newry BT35 8DJ

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



# Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

## Consultation and Engagement Report on the Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26



## Introduction

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 sets out a General Duty of Improvement, whereby all District Councils must put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions and set performance improvement objectives for each financial year. Each Council also has a statutory duty to consult key stakeholders on the proposed performance improvement objectives.

The five draft performance improvement objectives were considered and approved by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in March 2025. This was followed by an extensive consultation and engagement process which encouraged key stakeholders, including residents, Elected Members and partner organisations to have their say on the proposed performance improvement objectives.

This report provides an overview of the consultation and engagement methodology and an analysis of the responses which were received.

## Consultation and Engagement Activity

Between 14 March – 09 May 2025, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council carried out an eight week consultation and engagement process with key stakeholders on the draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26, with pre-engagement consultation also carried out through the following mechanisms:

- Electronic survey and documentation on the consultations section of the Council website, which was promoted through the Council's social media channels
- Public Notices in local newspapers
- Engagement with the following stakeholders:
  - Newry DEA
  - Slieve Croob DEA
  - Downpatrick DEA
  - Rowallane DEA
  - Newry and Mourne and Down Youth Voice
  - Cedar Foundation

This process was further supplemented by the consultation and engagement which was carried out to support the development of the Corporate Plan 2024-27.

- Residents Survey (September 2022)
- Consultation and engagement on the Corporate Plan 2024-27 (March – May 2024)
- Consultation and engagement on the draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-25

## Analysis Methodology

A total of 33 surveys were received in response to the consultation and engagement on the Council's draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the draft performance improvement objectives and if they had any comments to make regarding each objective. Respondents were also asked to put forward their suggested priorities for future improvement.

In carrying out the quantitative and qualitative consultation and engagement, a structured process was used to capture responses around each of the five draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26. This was supplemented by an engagement process with 60 key stakeholders, as outlined below:

| Consultation and Engagement           | Details  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Newry DEA Forum                       | 11 participants – 01 May 2025  |
| Downpatrick DEA Forum                 | 12 participants – 08 April 2025  |
| Rowallane DEA Forum                   | 8 participants – 24 April 2025   |
| Slieve Croob DEA Forum                | 6 participants – 29 April 2025   |
| Newry and Mourne and Down Youth Voice | 14 participants – 06 May 2025  |
| Cedar Foundation User Forum           | 9 participants – 08 April 2025   |
| Residents Survey (September 2022)     | 764 residents aged 16+ with quotas applied for age, gender, social class and District Electoral Area |

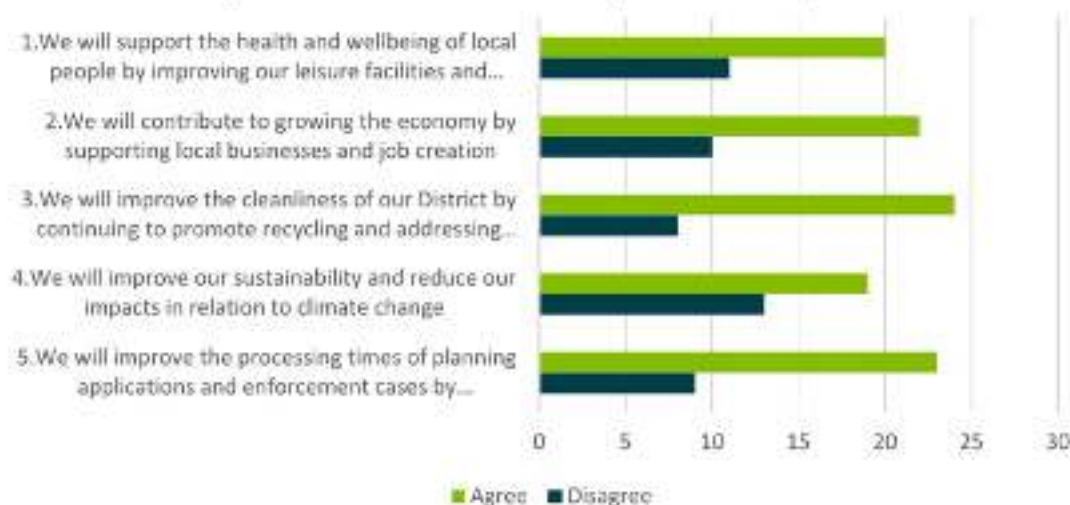
## Consultation and Engagement Findings

### Analysis of Findings

Responses to the draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26 have been received from residents, elected members, local community organisations, statutory organisations and others including those that work in and visit the district. There has been a positive response to the five proposed performance improvement objectives, with the majority of respondents agreeing with each objective.



### Agreement on Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26

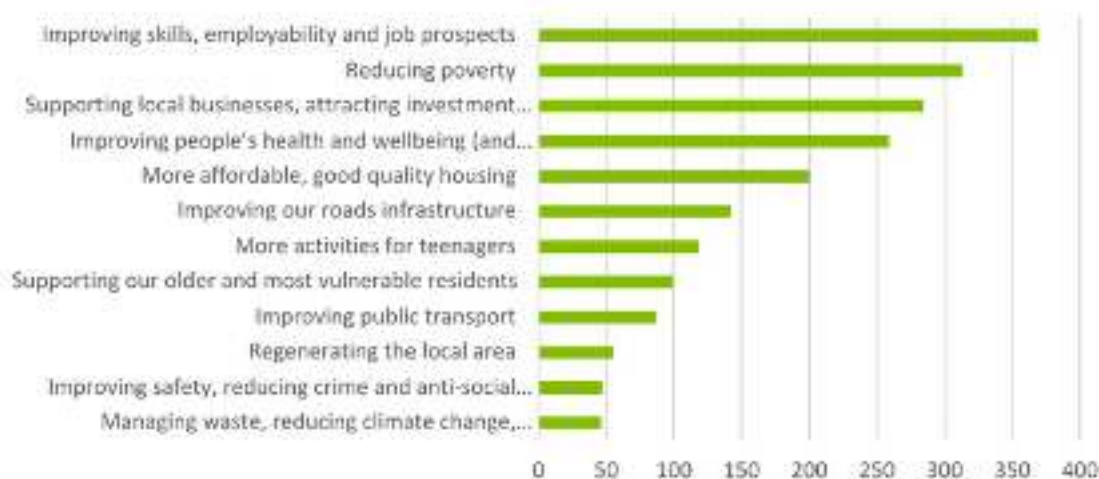


### Residents Survey (2022)

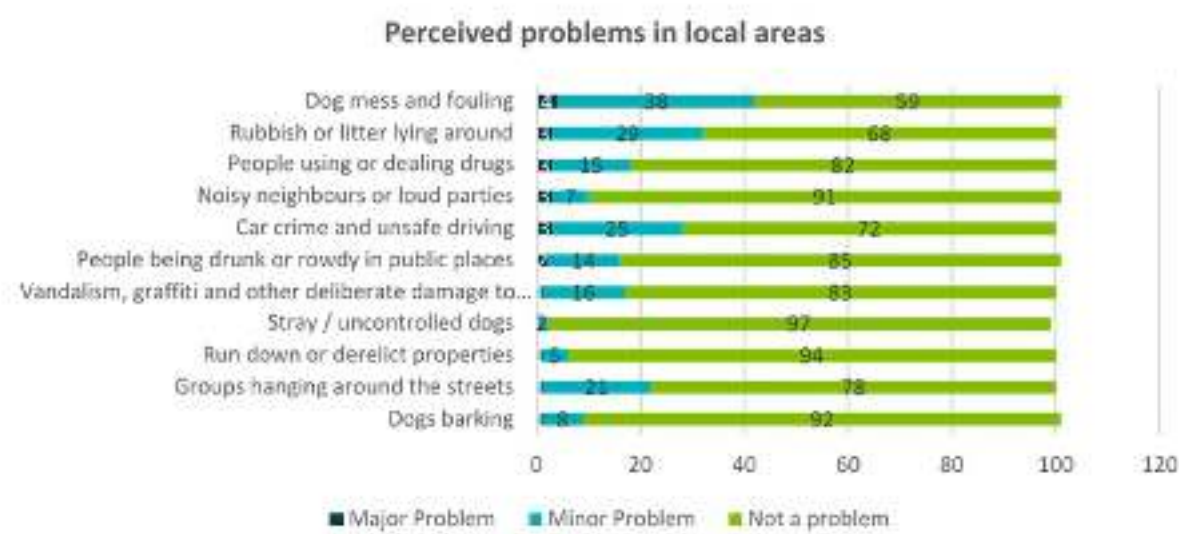
These findings are further endorsed by the results of the Residents Survey which indicate that the performance improvement objectives broadly address the top improvements identified to make somewhere a good place to live.

- The local economy, health and wellbeing, housing, infrastructure, public transport, protecting the environment, climate change and managing waste are amongst the top priorities for improvement.
- Supporting communities, educational provision, accessible leisure centres, accessible arts centres/theatres and museums and opportunities for volunteering are amongst the lesser priorities for improvement.

### Top priorities for Improving the local area



These findings are further reinforced by the fact that residents identify dog mess and littering as the top perceived problems in the local area.



You Said, We Did - Overview of Consultation Feedback

Performance Improvement Objectives

An analysis of the consultation and engagement findings indicates that the issues raised will be addressed through the proposed 2025-26 performance improvement objectives, 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success', or as part of the Council's business planning process. An overview of the amendments and revisions that have been made to the performance improvement objectives, throughout the consultation and engagement process are highlighted below.

|   | You Said | We Listened | We Did  |
|---|----------|-------------|---|
| We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services |          |             | <div>Included a new measure on 'Value of Financial Assistance funding allocated to sports clubs'</div> <div>Included a new measure on 'The number of play parks upgraded'</div> |

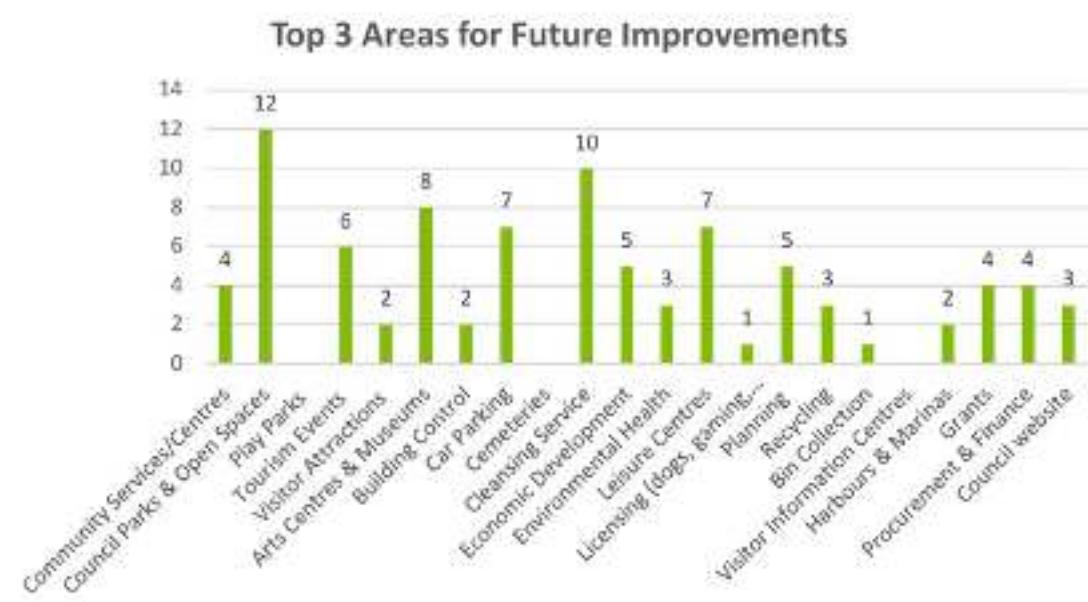
|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
|   | <p>The CEDAR user forum which were consulted on the draft performance objectives raised a number of queries in relation to leisure activities for those with a disability.</p> <p>A suggestion was made by members of the CEDAR user forum to be 'mystery shoppers' in the Council's leisure facilities</p> |  | <p>Council's Leisure Services have organised to meet directly with the user forum to look at addressing where possible the issues they raised.</p> <p>Council are keen to use the forum members as 'mystery shoppers' for the leisure centres and have included it as a new action that they aim to implement in 2025-26</p> |
| <b>We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation</b>  |   |  | <p>Targets for economic development programmes have been revised to reflect the current environment</p>  |
| <b>We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents</b> |   |  | <p>Figures for fixed penalty notices issued and paid have been revised to better reflect resourcing issues within the section.</p> <p>New recycling target of 70% by 2030 and the interim target of 55% by 2025 has been included as per the Recycling – Climate Change Act</p>  |



|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
|   | 'Household recycling opening hours need extended back to pre covid levels'  |  | (Northern Ireland) 2022<br><br>Council intend to design and launch a baseline customer satisfaction survey of the Household Recycling centre users in 2025-26  |
| <b>We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change</b>  | 'Sustainable Transportation: Further investment in public transport, active travel infrastructure, and electric vehicle incentives would support both local mobility and the reduction of emissions across the District.' |  | Council have included a new action under the sustainability and climate change objective with regards to reviewing with our colleagues in the economy, regeneration and tourism department Council's active travel masterplan. |
| <b>We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme</b> |   |  |  |

### Suggested Areas for Improvement

As part of the survey, and similar to previous years, respondents were asked to put forward their suggested areas for improvement. 'Council parks and open spaces', 'Visitor Attractions', 'Tourism Events' and 'Leisure Centres' are the top priorities for improvement in 2025-26.



### Next Steps

Based on the feedback obtained through the consultation and engagement process, as well as the ongoing developmental work around each performance improvement objective 2025-26, there has been some amendments to the 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success', as outlined in the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.

The Consultation and Engagement report will be published on the Council's website by 30 June 2025, alongside the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26. It will also be circulated to key stakeholders to support the business planning process.

A summary of the consultation and engagement feedback is provided below.

## Summary of Consultation and Engagement Feedback

### Performance Improvement Objective 1

- Not enough dedicated sessions, classes or activities for people with a disability
- Clear and visible information on pricing and memberships needed on website
- More focus on outdoor leisure for improving health and wellbeing
- Not enough leisure facilities in Newcastle
- More leisure services in rural areas.
- More advertising needed about the teen gym as not enough known about it.
- More monitoring and maintenance of leisure facilities.

### Performance Improvement Objective 2

- Rates too high and main streets are empty
- Towns need to develop more multi-use buildings where a number of different smaller businesses can operate and share rates
- More work and engagement with exhibitors to ensure the careers fair is a more useful and engaging session for students.
- More permanent jobs for younger people needed.
- More focus on supporting rural businesses.
- Gondola project not needed.

### Performance Improvement Objective 3

- Issue with fly posting around Newry.
- Getting community clean up equipment needs to be easier so more communities can avail of it
- Issues with littering especially vapes
- Dog fouling a major issue and needs to be improved
- More staff needed to enforce littering, dog fouling and fly tipping
- More bins needed across the District for general waste as well as recycling and dog poo.
- More education needed on recycling and on separation of rubbish into correct bins
- Household Recycling Centres to be opened longer
- Better reporting processes for report incidents of dog fouling, littering and fly tipping.
- More cleansing needed especially in key tourist areas



#### Performance Improvement Objective 4

- A lot of damage to the trees from the storm and a loss of trees from disease in Slieve Gullion park, needs to be addressed
- opportunity to link with the EA and the various youth groups to assist in the planting of trees across the district.
- More biodiversity friendly practices across the Council area.
- More awareness raising and education on climate change and sustainability.
- Council buildings need to be more energy efficient.
- Gondola project too environmentally damaging.

#### Performance Improvement Objective 5

- Planning takes too long to get approved
- More staffing needed to achieve targets
- Prioritise planning applications using a fast track system
- More transparency needed in planning
- 

#### Other comments

- More public engagement needed
- More transparency, openness and accountability
- Mourne Gateway project not needed or wanted
- Public monthly reports needed
- No paid parking for town centre

#### Other improvements

- Fast track system for planning
- Access to grants to be easier
- Dog Exercise Areas
- Focus on Geopark and AONB's
- Progress on Rights of Ways needed
-



## Objective Delivery Plans 2025-26

Delivery Plans have been developed to demonstrate the arrangements which have been put in place to support the effective implementation of each performance improvement objective. They provide an overview of:

- Responsible Officers
- Alignment with the Community Plan and Draft Corporate Plan
- Governance arrangements for the Performance Improvement Plan
- Meeting the seven legislative criteria
- 'Supporting actions' and 'measures of success'
- Links to existing plans and strategies
- Resources
- Governance arrangements

In recognition of the dynamic nature of the information included within the Objective Delivery Plans, they should be considered as a 'work in progress', subject to change to a continuous basis.



## Performance Improvement Objective 1

| We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services |   |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Responsible Officers  | <b>Director:</b> Activity and Healthy Communities<br><b>Assistant Director:</b> Leisure and Sport   |  |   |  |
| Link to Community Plan  | All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing  | Link to Corporate Plan 2024-27   |   | Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District   |
| Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.</li><li>Annual Assessment of Performance to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.</li></ul>   |  |   |  |
| Meeting the legislative criteria  | <b>Strategic Effectiveness:</b> Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives. Achieving this objective will deliver real benefits and outcomes for local communities and other key stakeholders.<br><b>Service Quality:</b> The quality of services will continue to improve through the planned increase in the number and variety of classes being offered, as well as health promotions taking place.<br><b>Service Availability:</b> The continued progression and delivery of Council leisure projects will improve access to and availability of key leisure services and contribute towards the improvement of people's health and wellbeing.<br><b>Fairness:</b> Includes opportunities for people across Section 75 categories to access the Council's leisure centres. |  |   |  |
| What we are going to do   |   |  |   |  |
| Supporting Action   | Link to existing Plan/Strategy  | Measures of Success  | Resources                                   | Governance Arrangements  |
| Progress the leisure projects agreed within the capital programme   | AHC Business Plan 2025-26<br><br>Capital Works Programme  | The number of new build and/or upgraded capital projects progressed in 2025-26 | Amount agreed under the capital plan.       | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan 2025-26<br><br>Ongoing monitoring of projects within the Capital Plan          |
| Sustain the number of paid attendances at indoor leisure facilities                                       | AHC Business Plan 2025-26   | Target set at <b>757,500</b> across the 6 leisure sites for 2025-26            | Within the resources of the AHC Directorate | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan 2025-26<br><br>Assistant Director Healthy Living<br><br>Head of Indoor Leisure |

|   |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Continue to deliver a range of targeted, sustainable health programmes to encourage participation in physical activity. | AHC Business Plan 2025-26                                | Target of <b>22,000</b> people to be participating in targeted health programmes | In partnership with the Southern and South Eastern Health Trusts | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan 2025-26<br>Reporting back to Health Trusts | Assistant Director<br>Healthy Living<br>Head of Indoor Leisure<br>Sports Development Officer |
| Provide funding through financial assistance for capital projects for sports clubs.                                     | AHC Business Plan 2025-26<br>Healthy Living Service Plan | Target of <b>£225,000</b> allocated to sports clubs across the District          | Within the resources of the AHC Directorate                      | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan and Service Plan 2025-26 2025-26           | Assistant Director<br>Healthy Living<br>Head of Programmes                                   |
| Upgrade a number of play parks across the District  | AHC Business 2025-26<br>Healthy Living Service Plan      | Target of <b>2</b> play parks to be upgraded                                     | Within the resources of the AHC Directorate                      | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan and Service Plan 2025-26 2025-26           | Assistant Director:<br>Healthy Living<br>Head of Outdoor Leisure                             |
| Work towards Leisure-Safe Accreditation for all indoor leisure facilities   | AHC Business Plan 2025-26<br>Healthy Living Service Plan | Leisure-Safe Accreditation achieved  | Within the resources of the AHC Directorate                      | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan and Service Plan 2025-26                   | Assistant Director:<br>Healthy Living<br>Head of Indoor Leisure                              |

| Implement a 'Mystery Visitor' programme for Indoor Leisure             | AHC Business Plan 2025-26<br>Healthy Living Service Plan | Programme implemented and baseline established   | Within the resources of the AHC Directorate | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan and Service Plan 2025-26 | Assistant Director:<br>Healthy Living<br>Head of Indoor Leisure |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| Risk Management  |  |  |   |  |   |
| Risks  |  | Actions to Mitigate Risks  |   |  |   |
| Leisure facilities do not achieve the projected paid attendance levels |  | Targeted promotional and publicity campaigns including online campaigns are being carried out. |   |  |   |
| Targeted groups do not engage in physical activity programmes          |  | Programmes are managed, monitored and publicised effectively across the District.              |   |  |   |
| Capital Projects do not go ahead                                       |  | Budgets have been set to include the leisure centre capital projects.                          |   |  |   |



## Performance Improvement Objective 2

| We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation  |  |   |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Senior Responsible Officer   | <b>Director:</b> Economy, Regeneration and Tourism<br><b>Assistant Director:</b> Economy, Growth and Tourism   |   |   |   |
| Link to Community Plan   | All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities   | <b>Link to Corporate Plan 2024-27</b>   | Support the continued growth and development of our local economy |   |
| Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.</li><li>Annual Assessment of Performance to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.</li></ul>  |   |   |   |
| Meeting the legislative criteria   | <b>Strategic Effectiveness:</b> Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives, and will deliver tangible benefits to citizens, local businesses and social enterprises.<br><b>Service Quality:</b> The quality of services available to businesses and stakeholders will improve through the broad range of economic development programmes available.<br><b>Service Availability:</b> The continued roll-out of programmes to businesses, social enterprises and fishing dependent communities will improve access to and availability of key services, as well as the overall quality of life in the District.<br><b>Innovation:</b> Implicit within this objective are innovative, forward looking ways to promote / create new jobs and support businesses / social enterprises across the District. |   |   |   |
| What we are going to do  |  |   |   |   |
| Supporting Action  | Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy   | Measures of Success   | Resources   | Governance Arrangements   |
| Support the creation of new businesses, support existing businesses, and promote new jobs through the new 'Go Succeed' programme | Corporate Plan 2024-27   | Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activities                 | NMD contribution: £167k   | Monthly meetings of the regional Management Team                  |
|  | Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2020-25   | Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises | Regional programme led by Belfast City Council                    | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan 2025-26 |
|  | ERT Business Plan 2025-26  | Number of new jobs promoted through business start-up activity                    |   | Head of Regeneration and Business Development                     |
|  | EGT Service Plan 2025-26   |   |   |   |

|   |   |  |  |   |   |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|
|   |   |  |  | Number of new enterprises created as a result of support<br>Number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions<br>Number of social enterprise start ups supported<br>Number of social enterprise jobs created | Social Enterprise Programme: £51k<br>Waiting on Letter of Offer for 2025-26 | Quarterly meetings with Newry Enterprise Agency<br>Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan 2025-26 | Assistant Director: Economy, Growth and Tourism<br>Head of Regeneration and Business Development<br>Enterprise Development Officers<br>Assistant Director: Economy, Growth and Tourism<br>Head of Regeneration and Business Development |  |
| Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme                                    |   |  |  |   |   |  |   |  |
| Invest in employability and skills through the implementation of the LMP Action Plan.                   | ERT Business Plan 2025-26<br>EFT Service Plan 2025-26 | Implementation of the LMP Action Plan  |  |   |   |  |   |  |
| <b>Risk Management</b>  |   |  |  |   |   |  |   |  |
| <b>Risks</b>  |   | <b>Actions and Controls to Mitigate Against Risks</b>  |  |   |   |  |   |  |
| Failure to deliver the economic development programmes to support the economic recovery of the District |   | All programmes to be in place with robust management and governance arrangements.                      |  |   |   |  |   |  |
| The impact of Brexit on delivering the various economic development programmes and achieving targets    |   | Ongoing monitoring of key influences and economic development support adjusted to meet local demand.   |  |   |   |  |   |  |
| Lack of interest in and applications made to participate in programmes                                  |   | Publicity campaigns delivered through online and social media platforms. Signposting service in place. |  |   |   |  |   |  |



## 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 |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Senior Responsible Officer   | Director: Sustainability and Environment<br>Assistant Directors: Environment / Sustainability  |  |  |  |
| Link to Community Plan   | All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities   | Link to Corporate Plan 2024-27                                     | Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future |  |
| Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee</li><li>Annual Assessment of Performance to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee</li></ul>  |  |  |  |
| Meeting the legislative criteria   | <p><b>Strategic Effectiveness:</b> Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives and will deliver real benefits and outcomes to local citizens.</p> <p><b>Service Availability:</b> The availability of key services will improve, through support for community led initiatives and access to funding through 'Live Here Love Here' campaigns.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> The Council has introduced innovative ways to improve civic and community pride across the District, as evidenced through support for Community Clean ups, Enforcement Improvement Plan, continued engagement with Keep NI Beautiful and the development of mobile apps to report and record environmental crime, identify emerging issues and address 'hotspots' across the District.</p> <p><b>Sustainability:</b> Initiatives to encourage public participation in key campaigns, promote responsible dog ownership and reduce levels of littering, fly tipping and dog fouling will empower residents and support the delivery of a more sustainable service and cleaner District in the future.</p> |  |  |  |
| What we are going to do  |  |  |  |  |
| Supporting Action  | Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy   | Measure of Success   | Resources  | Governance Arrangements  |
| Address issues around littering, fly tipping and dog fouling by:<br><br>Implementing the Enforcement Improvement Plan                    | Corporate Plan 2024-27<br><br>Enforcement Action Plan  | Number of fixed penalty notices issued (littering and dog fouling) | Within existing resources  | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plan 2025-26 |
|  | Sustainability and Environment   |  |  | Assistant Director: Environment<br><br>Head of Waste Processing  |



|  |   |  |                                  |   |   |
|--|---|--|----------------------------------|---|---|
| <p>Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity and social media campaigns</p> <p>Working with Louth County Council to raise awareness of the impact of fly tipping along the border area</p> <p>Encouraging residents to bring properly sorted surplus recyclable waste to our Household Recycling Centres</p> | <p>Directorate Business Plan 2025-26</p> <p>Environment Service Plan 2025-26</p>    | <p>Number of fixed penalty notices paid (littering and dog fouling)</p> <p>Percentage of issued fixed penalty notices that are paid</p> <p>The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling</p> <p>The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled</p> <p>The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings</p> |                                  | <p>Ongoing assessments of the Dog Fouling Strategy and Enforcement Action Plan</p>                | <p>Head of Waste Management</p>   |
| <p>Continued implementation of a Paint Re-Use Scheme at a further 2 Household Recycling Centres</p>  | <p>SE Directorate Business Plan 2025-26</p> <p>Environment Service Plan 2025-26</p> | <p>Reduction in the disposal of paint from our Household Recycling Centre sites,</p>   | <p>Within existing resources</p> | <p>Annual and bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business &amp; Service Plan 2025-26</p> | <p>Assistant Director; Environment</p> <p>Head of Waste Processing</p>  |
| <p>Support local community clean ups, Participate in the Keep NI Beautiful 'Live Here Love Here' campaign</p>  | <p>Sustainability &amp; Directorate Business Plan 2025-26</p>                       | <p>Percentage of community clean up requests supported</p>   | <p>Within existing resources</p> | <p>Annual and bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business &amp; Service Plan 2025-26</p> | <p>Assistant Director; Sustainability</p> <p>Head of Sustainability</p> |

| Encourage community groups to 'Adopt a Spot'  | Environment Service Plan 2025-26                                 | Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects<br>Number of community groups to 'Adopt a Spot' |   |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| Exploring options to determine levels of street cleanliness and identify emerging issues and hotspots                                       | SE Directorate Business Plan 2025-26                             | Work commenced on researching companies that provide cleanliness inspection systems                    | Within existing resources   | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business & Service Plan 2025-26 | Assistant Director: Environment<br>Head of Waste Processing |
| Highlight the impact of littering on the marine environment   | Environment Service Plan   | Work commenced in relation to littering and the marine environment                                     |   |  |   |
| Rollout an environmental awareness campaign displayed on Council fleet highlighting simple messages on recycling, littering and dog fouling | SE Directorate Business Plan 2025-26<br>Environment Service Plan | A number of bin lorries painted with environmental and recycling messages to carry out bin collections | Within existing resources   | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business & Service Plan 2025-26 | Assistant Director: Environment<br>Head of Waste Processing |
| Risk Management   |  |  |   |  |   |
| Risks   |  |  | Actions to Mitigate Against Risks   |  |   |
| Stakeholders do not get involved in community clean up's and 'Live Here Love Here' campaigns  |  |  | All initiatives are promoted and publicised across the District, through social media, website, liaison with Council employees and word of mouth.   |  |   |
| Failure to improve the level of street cleanliness and reduce the level of littering, dog fouling and fly tipping                           |  |  | The Council has a number of initiatives in place to encourage civic pride in the local area, promote responsible dog ownership, report littering and use enforcement action.<br>Council is now looking into other cleanliness monitoring systems due to lack of data from the LEAMS survey. |  |   |
| Failure to achieve the statutory targets for waste management   |  |  | Programmes are in place to increase the rate of recycling and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.  |  |   |

## Performance Improvement Objective 4

| We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change |  |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| Senior Responsible Officer  | Director: Sustainability and Environment<br>Assistant Director: Sustainability   |  |  |   |
| Link to Community Plan  | All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment   | Link to Corporate Plan 2024-27                               | Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future |   |
| Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee</li></ul>   |  |  |   |
| Meeting the legislative criteria  | <b>Strategic Effectiveness:</b> Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives and will deliver real benefits and outcomes to citizens.<br><b>Efficiency:</b> The procurement and availability of younger, less polluting cars as well as cars with alternative fuel sources will provide a more efficient and effective service to our customers as well as working towards protecting our environment.<br><b>Innovation:</b> Innovative mechanisms to allow more people access electric cars by providing more electric charging points will hopefully assist in the increase of cars with alternative fuel sources<br><b>Sustainability:</b> Implementing the Council's fleet replacement programme to ensure younger, less polluting cars as well as cars with alternative fuel sources are within our fleet which allows for the delivery of a more sustainable service across the District. |  |  |   |
| What we are going to do   |  |  |  |   |
| Supporting Action   | Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy   | Measure of Success   | Resources  | Governance Arrangements   |
| Continue the implementation of the Council's Fleet Replacement Program                  | Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26  | % of Council fleet younger than 8 years                      | Within existing resources  | Annual and Bi-annual assessment of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26 |
|   | Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26  | Number of cars in Council fleet with alternative fuel source |  | Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee   |
|   |  |  |  | Director: Sustainability and Environment<br>Assistant Director: Sustainability              |



|  |  |   |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| Publication of the following strategies and plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate change and sustainable development strategy</li> <li>Climate Change Adaptation Plan</li> </ul> | Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26<br><br>Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26 | All strategies and plans published  |  | Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26<br><br>Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee | Director: Sustainability and Environment<br>Assistant Director: Sustainability |
| Implementation of the newly published Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2028  | Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26<br><br>Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26 | Actions and Objectives within the Strategy implemented within specified timelines |  | Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26<br><br>Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee | Director: Sustainability and Environment<br>Assistant Director: Sustainability |
| Support the continued implementation of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points  | Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26<br><br>Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26 | Number of Council supported EV charging points                                    |  | Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26<br><br>Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee | Assistant Director: Sustainability   |
| Undertaking a baseline of the Council's carbon footprint   | Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26<br><br>Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26 | Baseline established  |  | Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26<br><br>Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee | Director: Sustainability and Environment<br>Assistant Director: Sustainability |

|   |  |  |   |   |  |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| Undertake a baseline of the Council's energy consumption                        | Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26<br>Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26 | Baseline established   | Within existing resources   | Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26  | Director: Sustainability and Environment<br>Assistant Director: Sustainability |
| Establishing a baseline of current renewable energy generation by Council sites | Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26<br>Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26 | Baseline established   | Within existing resources   | Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan 2025-26  | Director: Sustainability and Environment<br>Assistant Director: Sustainability |
| Completion of the Council's Tree Strategy for publication                       | Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26<br>Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26 | Number of trees planted on Council managed estate  | Working with external partners as well as within existing resources | Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26<br><br>Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee | Assistant Director: Sustainability   |
| <b>Risk Management</b>  |  |  |   |   |  |
| <b>Risks</b>  |  | <b>Actions to Mitigate Against Risks</b>   |   |   |  |
| Delivery issues with vehicles ordered   |  | Getting approval for vehicles in time and ordering early to mitigate against time delays on delivery   |   |   |  |
| Trees not taking root and dying   |  | Planting the whips and trees at the appropriate time for the best results and maintaining care throughout the planting process                       |   |   |  |
| Too many plans and strategies to be complete and not getting done on time       |  | Timetabling the process and adding additional resources when required.   |   |   |  |
| Carbon footprint and energy baselines not established                           |  | Having approval in place to procure services and researching service providers to ensure the work is able to be carried out within agreed timeframes |   |   |  |

## 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: Economy, Regeneration and Tourism<br>Assistant Director: Regeneration<br>Chief Planner |                              |   |                         |                                  |                      |  |
| Link to Community Plan   |                                   | All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities  |   | Link to Corporate Plan 2024-27 |  | Deliver sustainable services |   |                         |                                  |                      |  |
| Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26   |                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee</li><li>Annual Assessment of Performance 2024-25 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee</li></ul>   |   |                                |  |                              |   |                         |                                  |                      |  |
| Meeting the legislative criteria   |                                   | <b>Strategic Effectiveness:</b> Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives and will deliver real benefits to citizens.<br><b>Service Quality:</b> The implementation of the Planning Service Improvement Programme and the new planning portal has, and will continue to improve the quality of the service provided by reducing the processing times of applications.<br><b>Service Availability:</b> Improved availability of the Planning Service, focused on reducing processing times, will contribute to the sustainable development of Newry, Mourne and Down.<br><b>Efficiency:</b> The purpose of the Planning Service Improvement Programme is to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the service, by seeking to make better use of the resources available. |   |                                |  |                              |   |                         |                                  |                      |  |
| What we are going to do  |                                   |   |   |                                |  |                              |   |                         |                                  |                      |  |
| Supporting Action  |                                   | Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy  |   | Measure of Success             |  | Resources                    |   | Governance Arrangements |                                  | Responsible Officers |  |
| Reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases which have been in the system for over 12 months | ERT Business Plan 2025-26         |   | Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks) |                                | Within existing resources  |                              | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26 |                         | Assistant Director: Regeneration |                      |  |
|  | Regeneration Service Plan 2025-26 |   | Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)  |                                |  |                              |   |                         | Chief Planner                    |                      |  |
| Work with agents and architects to improve   |                                   |   | Percentage of planning enforcement cases                        |                                |  |                              |   |                         |                                  |                      |  |



| the standard of planning applications submitted<br><br>Support employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries' |  | progressed within 39 weeks<br><br>Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more<br><br>Number of planning applications in the system for less than 12 months<br><br>Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more |                           |   |                                  |
|---|--|---|---------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Launch the Draft Plan Strategy  | ERT Business Plan 2025-26<br><br>Regeneration Service Plan 2025-26 | Draft Plan Strategy launched  | Within existing resources | Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26 | Assistant Director: Regeneration |
| Risks   |  | Risks Management  |                           |   |                                  |
| Risks   |  | Actions to Mitigate the Risks   |                           |   |                                  |
| Failure to meet the statutory performance standards for processing planning applications, enforcement cases.  |  | The Planning Service Improvement Programme outlines the key areas for improvement, with progress being monitored and reported on a regular basis.   |                           |   |                                  |
| The Council does not reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases in the system  |  | The Planning Service Improvement Programme outlines the key areas for improvement, with progress being monitored and reported on a regular basis.   |                           |   |                                  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Report to:</b>                                   | Strategy Policy and Resources Committee  |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>                             | 12 June 2025   |
| <b>Subject:</b>                                     | Directorate Business Plans   |
| <b>Reporting Officer<br/>(Including Job Title):</b> | Marie Ward – Chief Executive<br>Josephine Kelly – Director: Corporate Services |
| <b>Contact Officer<br/>(Including Job Title):</b>   | Marie Ward – Chief Executive<br>Josephine Kelly – Director: Corporate Services |

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

| <b>For decision</b> | <b>X</b> | <b>For noting only</b> |   |
|---------------------|----------|------------------------|---|
| <b>1.0</b>          |          |                        | <b>Purpose and Background</b>   |
| 1.1                 |          |                        | <p>Directorate Business Plans provide an overview of planned activity for the year ahead, and contribute to the delivery of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and other key plans and strategies. They form an essential part of the Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, which demonstrates how corporate objectives are cascaded across the organisation and provides assurance that they are being delivered.</p> <p>As Directorate Business Plans are directly aligned to the achievement of the Corporate Plan, they remain fairly high level, and do not necessarily capture the core, business as usual activity that is undertaken by individual departments. Alternatively, they provide an insight into the key, overarching objectives, supporting actions and measures of success for each Directorate in the year ahead, whilst setting the context for the development of departmental Service Plans which are operational in nature.</p> |
| <b>2.0</b>          |          |                        | <b>Key issues</b>   |
| 2.1                 |          |                        | <p><b>Assessment of Directorate Business Plans 2024-25</b></p> <p>In order to improve transparency and accountability, and facilitate a performance led approach to business planning, each Directorate has undertaken an assessment of their Business Plan 2024-25. These assessments provide an overview of the performance of each Directorate and have been used to influence the development of the 2025-26 Business Plans. This exercise is an important part of the Council's statutory responsibility to strengthen the way performance is monitored, reviewed and reported across the organisation.</p> <p>The assessment of the Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2024-25 are attached at Appendix 1</p>   |
| 2.2                 |          |                        | <p><b>Directorate Business Plan 2025-26</b></p> <p>Directorate Business Plans 2025-26 outline the key objectives, actions and measures each Directorate will work towards and are aligned to the objectives within the Corporate Plan 2024-27. Directorate Business Plans 2025-26 are now aligned to the new organisational structure following completion of the planning for the future process.</p> <p>The Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2025-26 is attached at Appendix 2.</p>   |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 2.3        | It should be noted that further improvements to the business planning process are underway across the Council, particularly in relation to cascading corporate objectives in a meaningful way to employees through the introduction and roll-out of Service Plans and People Perform Grow. This process seeks to improve the use of performance measures at all levels of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and create a clear 'line of sight' between the work of individuals, teams and departments, and how they contribute to the achievement of Directorate Business Plans and the Corporate Plan. |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>   |
| 3.1        | <p>To consider and agree the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of the Chief Executive's - Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2024-25</li> <li>Chief Executive – Corporate Services Business Plan 2025-26</li> </ul>   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Resource implications</b>   |
| 4.1        | There are no financial resources implications within this report.  |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>   |
| 5.1        | <p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>  |
| 5.2        | <p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>  |
| 5.3        | <p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p>  |



|            |   |
|------------|---|
|            | <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i><br/>Consultation not required.</p>  |
| <b>6.0</b> | <b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>   |
| 6.1        | <p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <b>7.0</b> | <b>Appendices</b>   |
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appendix 1</b> – Assessment of the Chief Executive’s -Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2024-25</li> <li>• <b>Appendix 2</b> – Chief Executive – Corporate Services Business Plan 2025-26</li> </ul>   |
| <b>8.0</b> | <b>Background Documents</b>   |
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directorate Business Plans 2025-26</li> <li>• Assessments of Directorate Business Plans 2024-25</li> </ul>   |

# Chief Executive - Corporate Services

## Annual Assessment Business Plan 2024-25

## Introduction

This report provides an overview of progress in delivering the Chief Executive-Corporate Services Business Plan 2024-25 across the following service areas:

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



The delivery of the Chief-Executive -Corporate Services Business Plan 2024-25 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  |
|--|
| <p><b>People &amp; Legal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations</li> <li>• Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations.</li> <li>• Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.</li> <li>• Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery.</li> <li>• Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p><b>Finance and Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making.</li> <li>• Support the development of a performance culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements</li> </ul> <p><b>Digital and Communications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service</li> <li>• Provide a highly available, accessible and secure Information Technology environment to support Council services</li> <li>• To provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated and compliant for all stakeholders that meet the corporate objectives.</li> </ul> <p><b>Capital and Procurement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan &amp; Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.</li> <li>• Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability &amp; social value objectives.</li> </ul> <p><b>Democratic Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council</li> </ul> |

| People & Legal   |  | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN   |     |          |                      |
|--|--|---|-----|----------|----------------------|
| Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations.   |  | Deliver sustainable services  |     |          |                      |
|  |  |   |     |          |                      |
|  |  | CS1 : 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  | 95% | Actual   | 95%<br>96%<br>-1     |
| Notes:   |  | 1 If's a 1% decrease in performance from last year, which is due to reduction in capacity within the Team but still an excellent result |     |          |                      |
| Review and update current Retention and Disposal practices across Council, implementing methods to manage the review, retention and disposal of records. (SOC) |  | Target  |     | Progress | Amber<br>Amber<br>-1 |
| Notes:   |  | 1 Work has commenced with the Information Governance Group and is ongoing   |     |          |                      |
| Review and update the Corporate Privacy Notice to help everyone understand how Council processes personal data   |  | Target  |     | Progress | Red<br>Amber<br>-1   |
| Notes:   |  | 1 Work is currently in progress with regards to a revised and updated Privacy Notice  |     |          |                      |

| People & Legal   |   |                               |             |             |
|--|---|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations.                             |   | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN |             |             |
|  |   | Deliver sustainable services  |             |             |
| CS2 : Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations.                       |   |                               |             |             |
| Embed NIPSO policies, procedures and monitoring arrangements to ensure compliance with NIPSOs statutory Model Complaints Handling Procedure. | Target  | Progress                      | Green<br>+1 | Green<br>+2 |
|  | Notes:<br>1 Council is compliant with the MCHP<br>2 Council is compliant with the MCHP  |                               |             |             |
| Deliver a Professional Registration Service providing quality customer service standards for the delivery of births, deaths and marriages.   | Target  | Progress                      | Green<br>+1 | Green<br>+2 |
|  | Notes:<br>1 Service is currently being provided to a professional standard.<br>2 Service is currently being provided to a professional standard |                               |             |             |



| People & Legal  |   |
|---|---|
| Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.   | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN                   |
|   | Deliver sustainable services                    |
| CS3 : Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.   |   |
| Complete a Retention and Disposal review of historical legal files extracting information which requires to be retained (R/BS and store review) (SCC) | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> |
|   | <div><div></div><div></div></div> Amber         |
| Work with Evidence Section to ensure all relevant Council assets are included on the ARC GIS system.  | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> |
|   | <div><div></div><div></div></div> Amber         |
| In line with Council's 'Digital First' approach move as far as possible to electronic files versus paper-based files (SCC)                            | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> |
|   | <div><div></div><div></div></div> Amber         |

| People & Legal  |        |   |       |       |
|---|--------|---|-------|-------|
| Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery.       |        | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN   |       |       |
| CS4 : Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery. |        | Deliver sustainable services  |       |       |
| To finalise NMDDC Corporate Plan 2024-2027  |        |   |       |       |
|   | Notes: | Target  | Green | Green |
|   |        | Progress  | ++    | ++    |
|   | Notes: | 1 Corporate Plan agreed at August SPR meeting and ratified at full Council meeting September 2024.<br>2 Corporate Plan agreed at August SPR meeting and ratified at full Council meeting September 2024.  |       |       |
|   |        | Target  | Green | Green |
|   | Notes: | 1 Ongoing implementation<br>2 Annual reports to ECNI and DAERA in relation to implementation of Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties submitted by required deadlines. Quarterly Policy Screening reports tabled for noting with Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and placed on Council website and available for download. |       |       |
|   |        | Target  | Green | Green |

|  |  |                                       |                                   |                                   |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Progress the use of the Irish language in civic life                         |  | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> | <div>Green</div> <div>Green</div> | <div>Green</div> <div>Green</div> |
| Notes:   | <div>1 Ongoing implementation</div> <div>2 94 Irish Language translation requests submitted on the on-line system</div> <div>243 Irish Language Bursaries awarded Professional training for 11 employees in Irish Language</div> <div>17 videos developed for NMDDC YouTube channel / 1046 views</div> |                                       |                                   |                                   |
| Agreed Corporate Plan 2024-2027  |  | <div>Target</div> <div>Actual</div>   | <div>Yes</div> <div>Yes</div>     | <div>Yes</div> <div>Yes</div>     |
| Notes:   | <div>1 Agreed at August 2024 SFR meeting</div> <div>2 Corporate Plan agreed at August SFR meeting and ratified at full Council meeting September 2024</div>  |                                       |                                   |                                   |
| Corporate Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties compliance |  | <div>Target</div> <div>Actual</div>   | <div>Yes</div> <div>Yes</div>     | <div>Yes</div> <div>Yes</div>     |
| Notes:   | <div>1 Ongoing implementation of statutory duties compliance</div> <div>2 All annual reports to ECNI and DAERA in relation to implementation of Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties submitted by required deadlines</div>  |                                       |                                   |                                   |



| People & Legal   |  |   |             |             |
|--|--|---|-------------|-------------|
| Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities.               |  | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN   |             |             |
| Deliver sustainable services   |  |   |             |             |
| CS5 : Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities          |  |   |             |             |
| Development of a Leadership Charter demonstrating our core values and an implementation action plan for roll out |  | Target  |             |             |
|  |  | Progress  | Amber<br>+1 | Green<br>+2 |
| Notes:   |  | 1 SLT development day delivered on 2 May 2024. Draft Leadership Charter and action plan developed and will be presented to SMT on 12 November 2024. Preparations are being made to deliver items from action plan. Further SLT development days are planned for December and January to support the delivery of the Charter and action plan.  |             |             |
|  |  | 2 SLT Leadership Charter developed and published. Associated action plan activities in progress   |             |             |
| Review statutory and mandatory training for the organisation, identifying key timelines                          |  | Target  |             |             |
|  |  | Progress  | Green<br>+1 | Green<br>+2 |
| Notes:   |  | 1 Review of all essential training has taken place. to include categorization of all essential corporate and departmental training and agreement reached on statutory, mandatory and specific job specific training for NMDDC. Consequently a structured process has been developed to collate annual requests for training based on the agreed list and also to identify additional statutory/mandatory requirements |             |             |
|  |  | 2 Essential training matrix used to profile / collate 25-26 Statutory and mandatory training requirements.  |             |             |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Refresh, Rebrand and Relaunch the eLearning portal   | <div><div>Tarjett</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div>Green</div><div>Green</div></div> <div><div>+1</div><div>+2</div></div> |
| Notes:<br><br>1 New eLearning Portal developed with provider and launched on 1 August 2024. Pre and post launch roadshows delivered to S & E and Leisure Line Manager webinars launched and delivered in October 2024. 2 L & D Newsletters published, including testimonials for personal and professional development. L & D will continue to further develop the eLearning portal.<br><br>2 Corporate Mandatory e-learning compliance has increased from 13%-62%. Over 300 employees attended eLearning Roadshows. Over 50 line managers attended 'Line Manager Webinar' to showcase SkillGate functionality for managers. 6 central eLearning booths now available throughout the district  |  |   |
| Continue to support Directorates to implement PPG for all staff across the organisation  | <div><div>Tarjett</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div>Amber</div><div>Green</div></div> <div><div>+1</div><div>+2</div></div> |
| Notes:<br><br>1 Engagement has taken place with CMT to highlight the importance of the PPG process and to encourage timely completion of PPGs. Review of the PPG process has taken place with CMT, including the documentation and tracker. Further promotion of PPG is planned to ensure completion for all levels in the organization.<br><br>2 Learning & Development team continue to promote the implementation of the PPG process. This has included, 12 PPG roadshows delivered reaching over 300 employees and mandatory PPG training module completed by over 550 skilgate users. There has been an increase in the number of PPG conversations undertaken in 24/25, however, there is further work to promote and encourage line managers to complete PPG conversations in 25/26. This work will continue. |  |   |

| People & Legal  |   |
|---|---|
| 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.       | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN<br>Deliver sustainable services   |
| CS6 : 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. |   |
| Develop and implement a recruitment plan Q3   | <div> <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> </div> <div> <div>Amber</div> <div>* 1</div> </div>   |
| Notes:  | <p>1 Service Areas are currently working with HR to establish annual resourcing requirement. Improvements have been made for streamlined approval processes for multiple generic posts e.g. student placements. Work will continue to develop an annual recruitment plan. The HR continue to respond to and support emerging resourcing needs.</p>  |
| Support Directorates to ensure staff absence is effectively managed to ensure appropriate and timely support for staff Q1-Q4  | <div> <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> </div> <div> <div>Amber</div> <div>* 1</div> </div> <div> <div>Green</div> <div>* 2</div> </div>  |
| Notes:  | <p>1 HR Business Partnering continue to support line managers with staff absence and ensuring compliance with the Managing Attendance Policy and associated procedures. Recommendations from the absence management audit 23/24 are being progressed through the working group. Actions relating to data are progressing and the number of outstanding return to work are reducing.</p> <p>2 Regular reporting of sickness absence in place for SMT and CMT. Absence reporting has been improved and HRBPs reviewing new absence reports on a monthly basis to promote compliance with the absence procedures and to provide tailored support to Line Managers within their designated Directorates. Days lost reduced by 8.64% (Dec 23 – Dec 24)</p> |



|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| Develop an Industrial Relations Framework and agree a workplan with Joint Trade Union Side Q2                         | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>   | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Red</div>   | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Red</div>   |
| Notes:  | <p>1 A draft IR Framework has been developed and consultation is ongoing</p> <p>2 The IR Framework is in draft and consultations remain ongoing.</p>  | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Red</div>   | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Red</div>   |
| Procure new systems and develop a project plan for new ways of working and efficient use of resources Q4              | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>   | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Red</div>   | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Red</div>   |
| Notes:  | <p>1 Outline business case was approved in April 2025. Next step is recruitment to appoint a project manager.</p>   | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Red</div>   | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Red</div>   |
| Review and analyse current employment data and develop KPIs Q2 Q4   | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>   | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Green</div> | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Green</div> |
| Notes:  | <p>1 Employment data remains under review to identify KPI. This will be key consideration in the new HR system.</p> <p>2 Review of available employment data and reporting capabilities has been completed and improvements have been made to extend the scope of reporting capabilities</p>  | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Green</div> | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Green</div> |
| Identify ways to increase the number of people from disadvantaged communities who are employed by council Q2 Q4 (CWB) | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>   | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Green</div> | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Green</div> |
| Notes:  | <p>1 Employment data from statutory returns relating to appointments is under review to support identification of strategy to increase the number of people from disadvantaged communities employed within council.</p> <p>2 Focus on attraction of candidates for employment from under represented community. This has included: attendance at labour market partnership job fairs, attendance at careers fairs and reintroducing work experience placements to promote NMDC as an employer, enhanced use of social media, improved and engaging recruitment packs and selection process. Work will continue in 25/26</p> | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Green</div> | <div>Target</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>Green</div> |

| Finance and Performance  |        |  |                               |              |              |
|--|--------|--|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations.       |        |  | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN |              |              |
| Deliver sustainable services   |        |  |                               |              |              |
| C57 : 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  | Target | 90%  | Actual                        | 90%          | 95%<br>+ 2   |
|  |        |  |                               | 95%<br>+ 1   |              |
| Unqualified financial audit opinion  | Notes: | 1 95% in Q1 and 94% in Q2<br>2 Q1 - 95%, Q2 - 95%, Q3 - 95% - Q4 TBC   |                               |              |              |
|  |        | Target   | Yes                           | Actual       | Yes<br>+ 1   |
| Commence Payroll Service Review  | Notes: | 1 Accounts Certified and published to Council website on the 30 September 2024 with an unqualified Audit Opinion<br>2 Accounts certified with unqualified opinion prior to 30 September 2024 - Accounts published on Council website |                               |              |              |
|  |        | Target   | Progress                      | Green<br>+ 1 | Green<br>+ 2 |
|  | Notes: | 1 Approval sought from SMT in October 2024<br>2 Approval sought from SMT in October 2024   |                               |              |              |
|  |        |  |                               |              |              |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Standardisation of Payroll Procedures Q4                                       | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div>CIF to 2025/26 Business Plan</div><div>Amber</div><div>-1</div></div>                             |
|  | Notes:  | 1 In progress - further work needed - CIF to 2025/26 Business Plan  |
| New Expense Management system to be introduced Q2                              | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div></div><div>Amber</div><div>+1</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Green</div><div>+2</div></div>     |
|  | Notes:  | 1 ongoing - go live date is now 1 December 2024<br>2 New Expense System 'Capture' went live on 1 April 2025 |
| All Payslips to communicated electronically, where possible                    | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div></div><div>—</div><div>+1</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Amber</div><div>+2</div></div>         |
|  | Notes:  | 1 not due until Q4 - process is ongoing<br>2 ongoing, but HR to discuss with TU as advised by SMT           |
| P2P Procedures to be updated (PECOS) and working procedures to be developed Q3 | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div></div><div>Green</div><div>+1</div></div>   |
|  | Notes:  | 1 Pecos Procedures updated and included within the 'r' drive  |



|  |   |                     |                                |  |
|--|---|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Accounts Receivable Procedures to be finalised, including Debt Recovery Q2         |   | <div>Target</div>   | <div>Amber</div> <div>+1</div> | <div>CIF to 2025/26</div> <div>Amber</div> <div>+1</div>             |
|  | Notes:<br>1 not yet complete - work ongoing<br>2 Draft Accounts Receivable procedures currently being reviewed. Further additions necessary in relation to BID procedures. CIF to 2025/26 Business Plan                                     | <div>Progress</div> |                                |  |
| Commence service review of General Finance/Accounts Q4                             |   | <div>Target</div>   | <div>Red</div> <div>+1</div>   | <div>CIF to 2025/26 Business Plan</div> <div>Red</div> <div>+1</div> |
|  | Notes:<br>1 CIF to 2025/26 Business Plan  | <div>Progress</div> |                                |  |
| Review of Finance System – Possibility of Contract Management Project/Item Code Q2 |   | <div>Target</div>   | <div>Green</div> <div>+1</div> | <div>Green</div> <div>+2</div>                                       |
|  | Notes:<br>1 Meeting held with Core Finance - improvements to current system discussed in detail and demo of Contract Management System to take place in Q3<br>2 Demo of new finance system undertaken - Business Case to be brought to ITPG | <div>Progress</div> |                                |  |
| Review and update Financial Regulations of Council Q4                              |   | <div>Target</div>   | <div>Red</div> <div>+1</div>   | <div>CIF to 2025/26 Business Plan</div> <div>Red</div> <div>+1</div> |
|  |   | <div>Progress</div> |                                |  |

| Finance and Performance   |  |                               |  |
|---|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making, while aiding decision making. |  | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN |  |
| Deliver sustainable services  |  |                               |  |
| CS8 : Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making.                         |  |                               |  |
| Review and update of Whistleblowing / Raising Concern Procedure Q2  |  | Target                        |  |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div><div>Green</div><div>+1</div></div> |
|   | Notes:<br><br>1 Completed - Policy Approved at September 2024 Audit Committee and now on Council Website<br>2 Completed - Policy Approved at September 2024 Audit Committee and now on Council Website   | Target                        |  |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div><div>Green</div><div>+2</div></div> |
| Review and update Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan   |  | Target                        |  |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div><div>Green</div><div>+1</div></div> |
|   | Notes:<br><br>1 Completed - Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan approved at the July 2024 Audit Committee and now on Council Website<br>2 Completed - Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan approved at the July 2024 Audit Committee and now on Council Website | Target                        |  |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div><div>Red</div><div>-1</div></div>   |
| E-Learning Governance Training for Staff/Members Q4   |  | Target                        |  |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div><div>Red</div><div>-1</div></div>   |
|   | Notes:<br><br>1 To be completed by 30 September 2025   | Target                        |  |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div><div>Red</div><div>-1</div></div>   |
| Fraud Risk Assessment to be completed for Council Q3  |  | Target                        |  |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div><div>Red</div><div>-1</div></div>   |
|   | Notes:<br><br>1 To be completed by 30 September 2025   | Target                        |  |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div><div>Red</div><div>-1</div></div>   |

| Finance and Performance   |       |  |             |
|---|-------|--|-------------|
| Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements                           |       | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN  |             |
| Deliver sustainable services  |       |  |             |
| CS9 : Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements                     |       |  |             |
| Compliance with statutory Duty of Improvement   |       | Target   | Yes         |
|   |       | Actual   | Yes<br>+1   |
|   | Notes | 1 MIAO certified the improvement audit for the Council with an unqualified opinion in November 2024. In terms of the Assessment, they concluded that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) during 2024-25   |             |
| Implementation of a new electronic Performance Management System throughout Council and embed the system through training of relevant officers Q2 |       | Target   | Green<br>+1 |
|   |       | Progress   | Green<br>+2 |
|   | Notes | 1 The performance management system was implemented at the end of Q4 2023-24. All the actions and measures across the suite of Council plans and strategies has been uploaded onto the system and training has been provided to all relevant staff.<br><br>2 The Mid Year Assessment of the Directorate Business Plans and the performance Improvement Plan were carried out on the system in October/November 2024 with the reports from the system sent to Committee for approval. |             |



|   |        |  |  |  |        |  |          |  |
|---|--------|--|--|--|--------|--|----------|--|
| Strengthen the alignment across Business Planning, Community Planning and Performance Management Framework and coordinate the business and service planning process | Target |  | Progress   |  | Target |  | Progress |  |
|   |        |  |  |  |        |  |          |  |
| Unqualified performance audit opinion   | Notes: |  | 1 The alignment across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework continues to strengthen through the Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan, Directorate Business Plans, Service Plans and People Perform Grow which enables teams and employees to identify their contribution to achieving strategic outcomes and objectives.<br>2 The alignment across Business Planning, Community Planning and Performance Management continues to strengthen across the organisation. The Head of Performance provided a session on the Council's business planning framework for participants in both ILM Level 2 and 3, highlighting the golden thread that exists and how employees fit within it. |  | Target |  | Yes      |  |
|   |        |  |  |  | Actual |  | Yes      |  |
|   | Notes: |  | 1 MIAO certified the improvement audit for the Council with an unqualified opinion in November 2024  |  | Target |  | Yes      |  |
|   |        |  |  |  | Actual |  | Yes      |  |

| Digital and Communications  |        |  |          |       |
|---|--------|--|----------|-------|
| Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service                 |        | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN  |          |       |
| Deliver sustainable services  |        |  |          |       |
| CS10 : Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service          |        |  |          |       |
| 90% of media requests for information responded to within the agreed timeframes                   | Notes: | Target   | 90%      | 90%   |
|   |        | Actual   | 90%      | 90%   |
| Finalise the structures of the Digital and Communications Department Q3-Q4                        | Notes: | 1 Target met.<br>2 Target met  | 90%      | 90%   |
|   |        | Target   | Progress | Green |
| Support the development and implementation of the Council's Digital Transformation Projects (SCC) | Notes: | 1 Phase 1 of the Departmental Restructuring is finalized and recruitment process to commence in Qtr1-2   | 90%      | 90%   |
|   |        | Target   | Progress | Green |
|   | Notes: | 1 Draft Digital Transformation Strategy 2030 and associated Draft Digital Projects Procedures have been developed<br>2 Digital Transformation Strategy 2030 and IT Strategy 2030 approved by SPRC, January 2025. Ongoing implementation of current projects; ITPG consideration of new projects for 2025/26. | 90%      | 90%   |
|   |        | Target   | Progress | Green |

|  |  |                                       |  |   |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Review and update Corporate Communications Strategy and Action Plan 2025 – 2027 Q2-Q3                      |  | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> | <div>Q4</div> <div>Green</div> <div>+1</div>         | <div>Ongoing</div> <div>Green</div> <div>+2</div> |
|  | Notes:<br>1 Ongoing<br>2 Review of Corporate Communications Strategy and Action Plan completed.  |                                       |  |   |
| Support the communications and marketing of principle projects within the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027 (p23) |  | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> | <div>Ongoing</div> <div>Green</div> <div>+1</div>    | <div>Ongoing</div> <div>Green</div> <div>+3</div> |
|  | Notes:<br>1 Actions are updated and completed on a monthly basis in conjunction with SMT and CMT via the monthly PR Planner<br>2 Communications and Marketing support provided to all corporate plan priority projects with clear deliverables achieved. |                                       |  |   |
| Progress Tenders for: • Photography/Videography • Graphic Design   |  | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> | <div>Q4 ongoing</div> <div>Green</div> <div>+1</div> | <div>Ongoing</div> <div>Green</div> <div>+2</div> |
|  | Notes:<br>1 Q2 - Graphic Design with procurement Q3 – Review photography/videography RFQ<br>2 ITT completion and evaluation completed in March 2025, awaiting Procurement to issue award notice, anticipated date early April 2025.                      |                                       |  |   |





|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Upgrade virtual server Operating Systems  | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div>Green</div><div>Amber</div></div> |
| Notes:<br>1 In progress and on-target to migrate those applications/services that support Windows Server 2022.<br>2 Progress constrained by delays to: 1. Implementation of the new Capture Expense solution 2. Implementation of new HR solution 3. Upgrade of Finance solutions |   |   |
| Implement Privileged Access Management System   | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div>Green</div><div>Green</div></div> |
| Notes:<br>1 Not started, but should still be achievable within target date<br>2 Technical tooling obtained and under gradual implementation across enterprise and line of business systems that can be supported  |   |   |
| Plan and prepare to migrate client devices to Windows 11 Q2-Q4  | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div>Green</div><div>Green</div></div> |
| Notes:<br>1 Testing underway and business case will be presented to IPTG regarding equipment replacement and timeliness for active testing/deployment   |   |   |

| Digital and Communications   |   |   |                     |
|--|---|---|---------------------|
| ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN  |   |   |                     |
| To provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects to help deliver sustainable services   | Deliver sustainable services  |   |                     |
|  |   |   |                     |
| To provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated and compliant for all stakeholders that meet the corporate objectives. | CS12 : To provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated and compliant for all stakeholders that meet the corporate objectives. |   |                     |
|  | Finalise and seek approval of the new Digital Strategy Q1-Q2  | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>   | <div>Green +1</div> |
| Establish and implement a governance structure for Digital (including IT)  | Notes   | 1 Draft Digital Transformation Strategy 2030 has been developed.<br>2 Approved by SFRC, January 2025  |                     |
|  |   | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>   | <div>Green +1</div> |
| Prioritisation of IT Projects and Target Completion Dates  | Notes   | 1 Draft Digital Projects Procedure has been developed<br>2 Approved by SMT, 10 December 2024  |                     |
|  |   | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>   | <div>Green +1</div> |
|  | Notes   | 1 Draft Prioritisation Plan has been developed. Next step is to categorise projects and assign priority and budget.<br>2 Digital Projects approved by ITFG and progressing accordingly. |                     |
|  |   | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>   | <div>Green +1</div> |



| Capital and Procurement   |   |          |                                      |                  |               |
|---|---|----------|--------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.  |   |          | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN        |                  |               |
| Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future  |   |          |                                      |                  |               |
| CS13 : Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.   |   |          |                                      |                  |               |
| Capital projects programme and budget in line with agreed parameters and Council policy   |   |          | Target                               | Yes<br>Yes<br>+1 | Yes<br>—<br>— |
| Achieving outline planning permission on 75% of the surplus assets prior to disposal  | Notes:<br><br>Some projects have experienced delays as a result of planning process. budget increases are in accordance with council governance and policy.   | Target   |                                      |                  |               |
|   |   | Actual   | 75%<br>70%<br>+1<br>75%<br>80%<br>+2 |                  |               |
| Deliver approved Capital projects through design, procurement and delivery stages providing regular updates and reports to directorates, project boards and committees. (CWB) (SCC) | Notes:<br><br>Planning will be dependant on the surplus asset being disposed of.<br>Planning will be dependant on the surplus asset being disposed of.  | Target   |                                      |                  |               |
|   |   | Progress | Green<br>+1<br>Green<br>+2           |                  |               |
|   | Notes:<br><br>NMDDC Capital Projects and Strategic Capital Projects are progressing with reporting provided to internal and external stakeholders in accordance to each projects Terms of Reference.<br>NMDDC Capital Projects and Strategic Capital Projects are progressing with reporting provided to internal and external stakeholders in accordance to each projects Terms of Reference. There have been delays in some projects due to a number of factors | Target   |                                      |                  |               |
|   |   | Progress |                                      |                  |               |

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| 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)                 | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div>Green</div><div>+1</div></div> | <div><div>Green</div><div>+2</div></div> |
| Notes:<br><br>1 This is ongoing. Reports and costs are provided to directorates to inform committee reports and decision making.<br>2 This is ongoing. Reports and costs are provided to directorates to inform committee reports and decision making. |   |  |  |
| Continuation with the identification and disposal of council surplus assets, including the direct liaison with directorates, legals and external organisations (CWB) (SCC)   | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div>Green</div><div>+1</div></div> | <div><div>Green</div><div>+2</div></div> |
| Notes:<br><br>1 Ongoing between directorates and consultation with DTNI regarding assets going through the DT process<br>2 Ongoing between directorates and consultation with DTNI regarding assets going through the DT process                       |   |  |  |

| Capital and Procurement   |  |  |              |       |
|---|--|--|--------------|-------|
| Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives  |  | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN  |              |       |
| Deliver sustainable services  |  |  |              |       |
| CS14 : Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives   |  |  |              |       |
| Procurement policy fully implemented  |  | Target   | No           | Yes   |
|   |  | Actual   | No           | Yes   |
| Notes:  |  | 1 New Procurement Policy will be brought to SPR in December. The Procurement Act was delayed to Feb 2025 as a result of central government not having their Procurement Policy Statement in place. NMDDC will need to further review and revise procurement policy in 2025 following publication of central governments.<br>2 An updated Procurement Policy was brought to SPR in March 2025 for approval. The Procurement Act was delayed to Feb 2025 as a result of central government not having their Procurement Policy Statement in place. NMDDC will need to further review and revise procurement policy in 2025 following publication of central governments. |              |       |
| Ensure in-depth training on new Procurement Act 2023 for Procurement team is completed before legislation comes into effect including Certified E-learning from cabinet office and Procurement law workshops. Promote Knowledge Drops corporately to enhance awareness of new legislation |  | Target   | September 24 |       |
|   |  | Progress   | Green        | Amber |
| Notes:  |  | 1 All formal training completed by the procurement team<br>2 Procurement team has undertaken some training including Certified E-learning from cabinet office to corporately enhance awareness of new legislation. In depth training on the Procurement Act 2023 has been scheduled in May & June 2025   |              |       |



|   |   |   |                             |
|---|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Increasing supplier outreach through attendance at Meet the Buyer type events and premarket engagement (CWB) (SCC)  | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div>Green</div><div>Amber</div></div>       |                             |
| Notes:<br><br>1 Procurement Manager presented at Supplier event to promote NMDDC and encourage local SME engagement with our tender opportunities.<br>2 Further events will be scheduled in 2025/26 as part of the review of the implementation of the Act and a review of systems. |   |   |                             |
| Enhancing visibility of NMDDC Tender opportunities in the marketplace through social media campaign Q4 (CWB) (SCC)  | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div>Amber</div></div>                       |                             |
| Notes:<br><br>1 Procurement have liaised with Marketing team to create relevant templates for social media campaigns. These are targeted for released in 2025/26  |   |   |                             |
| Develop new Procurement Policy. Once training on new legislation is complete overhaul the Procurement Policy to incorporate all the changes into NMDDC processes and supporting documentation Q2 (CWB) (SCC)  | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div>Amber</div><div>December 24</div></div> | <div><div>Amber</div></div> |
| Notes:<br><br>1 This has started and is progressing<br>2 An updated Procurement Policy has been approved by SPR in March 2025. Procedures have been updated and will be further updated in 2025/26 with the implementation of the revised Policy and the Procurement Act.           |   |   |                             |
| Develop new Contract Management Procedure   | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div>Amber</div></div>                       | <div><div>Red</div></div>   |
| Notes:<br><br>1 This is aligned with the update to the Procurement Policy.  |   |   |                             |

| Democratic Services   |  |  |          |
|---|--|--|----------|
| Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council        |  | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN  |          |
| Represent the voice of the district with our partners                                 |  |  |          |
| CS15 : Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council |  |  |          |
| The number of events hosted on behalf of the Chairperson / Vice Chairperson           |  | Target   |          |
|   |  | Progress   | Green +1 |
| Notes:  |  | 1 Chairperson has hosted 9 events so far this year including his Civic Awards and a joint Civic Reception for Armagh GAA All-Ireland winners   |          |
|   |  | 2 From October 2024-April 2025 the Chairperson has hosted 15 civic receptions including school visits and receptions for world champions.      |          |
| The number of official events attended by the Chairperson / Vice Chairperson          |  | Target   |          |
|   |  | Progress   | Green +1 |
| Notes:  |  | 1 The Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson along with Chairs of Committees deputising have attended 129 events so far this term.                    |          |
|   |  | 2 From October 2024-April 2025 the Chairperson, his deputy or Chairs of Committees deputising on his behalf have attended 181 official events. |          |





|   |                                       |                                       |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Develop Elected Member Development induction, training and capacity building programme to support Elected Members in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities  | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> |
| Notes:<br><br>1 The department continues to support Elected Members in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.<br>2 The department continued to support Elected Members in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities throughout the year   |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Develop pathway towards the reattainment the Elected Member Development Charter Q4  | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> |
| Notes:<br><br>1 Personal Development Plans have been re-sent to all Elected Members   |                                       |                                       |                                       |
| Support the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson in carrying out their role(s) as First Citizen(s)  | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> | <div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div> |
| Notes:<br><br>1 The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson have a designated resource within the Council to support them in fulfilling their role(s) as First Citizen(s).<br>2 The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson have a designated resource within the Council to support them in fulfilling their role(s) as First Citizen(s) who has supported them in hosting 24 civic receptions |                                       |                                       |                                       |

# Chief Executive / Corporate Services Directorate

## Annual Business Plan 2025-26



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

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## 1.0 Introduction

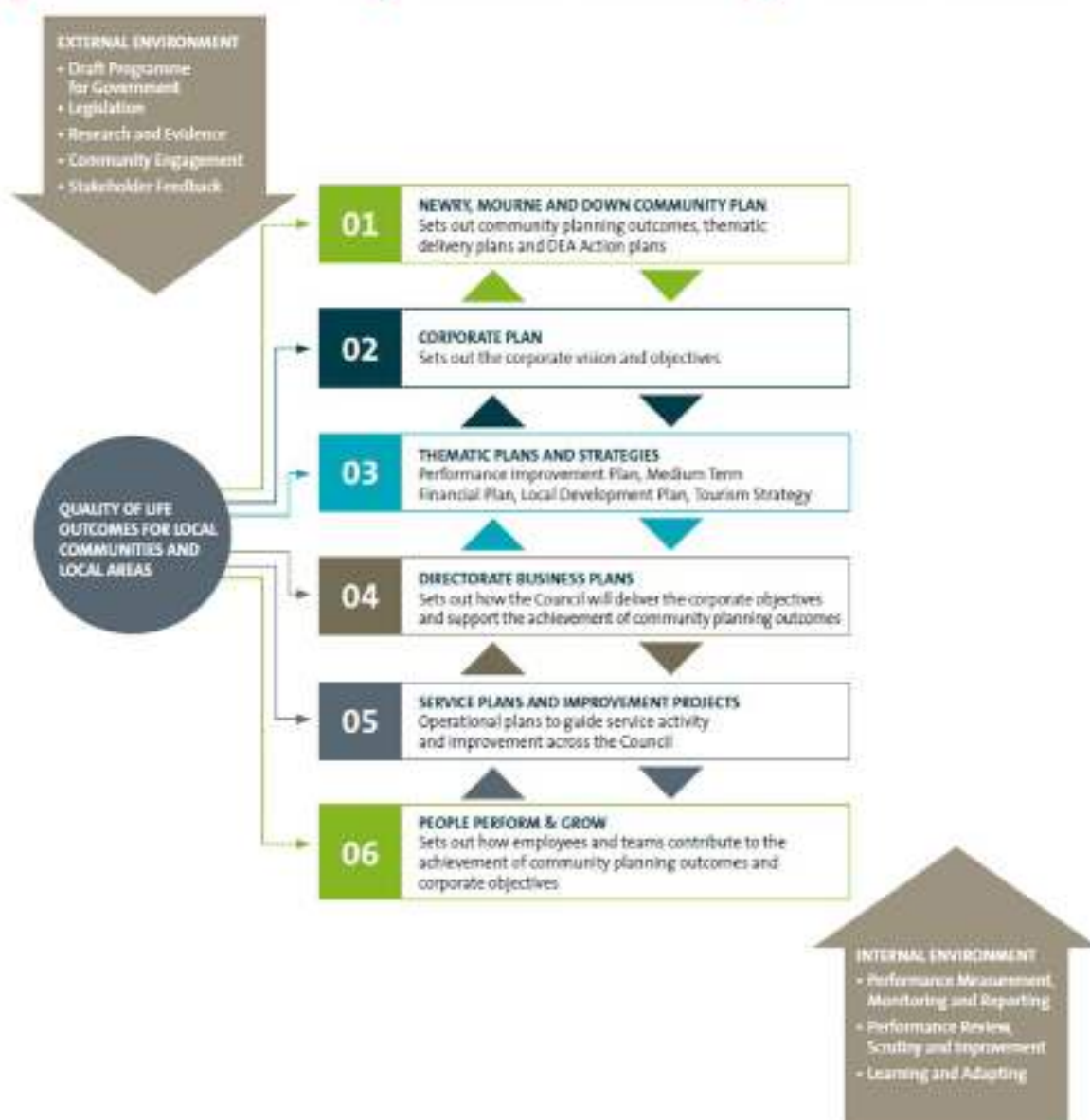
- 1.1 The Chief Executive / Corporate Services Directorate is responsible for supporting the organisation to achieve the strategic objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan 2024-27. The Directorate is responsible for the overall management of the Council's staff, finances and elected members and plays a key role in providing professional advice and guidance to support and improve the services provided. The Directorate provides services directly to the public through corporate communications and marketing, as well as providing registration, digital and telephony, emergency advice and customer services.
- 1.2 The core responsibilities of the Department are:
  - **Finance, including Performance**
  - **Human Resources**
  - **Corporate Planning and Policy**
  - **Communications and Marketing**
  - **Information Technology**
  - **Administration, including Legal Services, Compliance and Registration Services**
  - **Estates and Capital projects, including Procurement**
  - **Democratic Services**

## 2.0 Background and Context

- 2.1 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan is developed within the context of the Community Plan and Corporate Plan 2024-27 and Performance Improvement Plan. The Community Plan sets out the long-term outcomes for the District, based on the needs and aspirations of local people. The Corporate Plan sets out the key strategic objectives for the Council between 2024-27, and how it will contribute to achieving the community planning outcomes. The Performance Improvement Plan highlights the improvements stakeholders can expect to see through the annual performance improvement objectives, which are clearly aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives
- 2.2 The Community Plan and Corporate Plan are cross cutting and strategic in nature. They guide all activity within the organisation, as well as the subsequent allocation of resources, and sit within a hierarchy of plans, as outlined in the 'Business Planning and Performance Management Framework' (Figure 1).
- 2.3 The Business Planning and Performance Management Framework drives and provides assurance that the Council is delivering its corporate vision and priorities, whilst securing continuous improvement in the exercise of functions. It provides a mechanism to join up and cascade the various plans and strategies across the organisation, demonstrating how employees

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

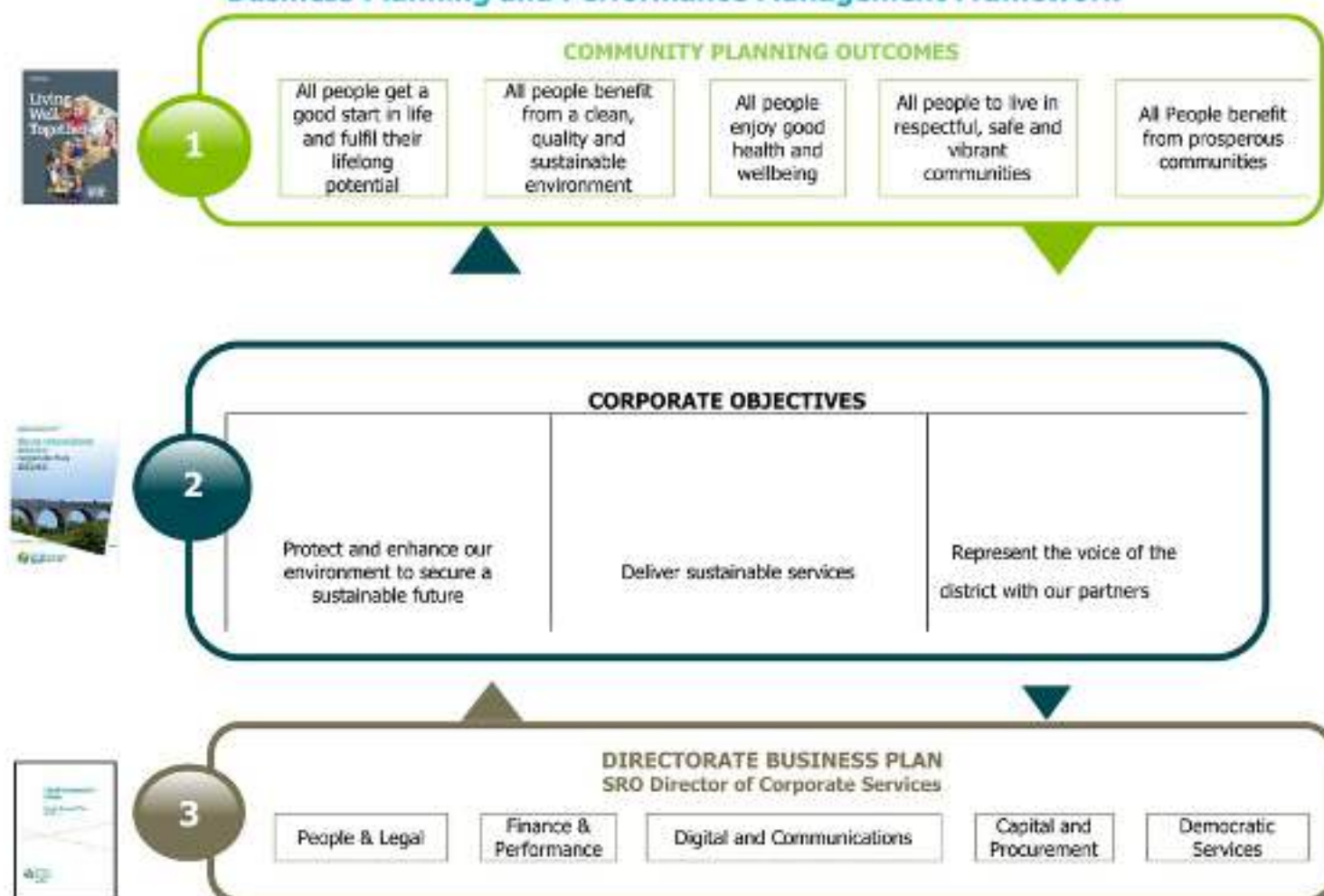
**Figure 1: Business Planning and Performance Management Framework**



- 2.4 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan provides an overview of the key operational activities for the coming year. These activities are explicitly linked to corporate objectives and coupled with 'business as usual' service delivery, provide clear direction for all employees within the Directorate (Figure 2). Directorate Business Plans are supported by Service Plans and the 'People Perform and Grow' initiative.
- 2.5 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan is published annually and is the basis upon which performance is managed and reviewed by full Council, the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Senior Management Team.



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



## 3.0 Purpose and Values

### 3.1 Purpose

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

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

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

### 3.1 Values

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

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

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

## 4.0 Challenges and Opportunities

- 4.1 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Directorate was established in December 2014, as part of the organisational design of the new Council, to centralise the management of a number of existing Council functions as well as support new powers which were transferred to the Council on the 1 April 2015. From 1 April 2017, the functional areas of Corporate Planning and Policy, and Estates and Capital Projects have become part of the Corporate Services Directorate. For the purposes of efficiency, democratic services under the Chief Executives department is now reported through the Chief Executive/Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan.
- 4.2 The Directorate continues to develop in line with organisational change. Over the course of this financial year, the Directorate will continue to develop and embed the necessary corporate frameworks, policies, processes and systems to deliver strategic improvement across the organisation, specifically in the areas of human resources, finance, communications and information technology.



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

##### External Environment

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

##### Internal Environment

- **Management:** Successfully establishing the Directorate in terms of its structure, governance and internal processes and increased responsibilities.
- **Resources:** Identifying and securing the financial and non-financial resources needed for the Directorate to successfully develop.
- **Estate Planning and Asset Management:** Successfully developing and implementing the necessary frameworks, policies and processes to support the effective and efficient management of the Council's Estate.
- **Transformation & Efficiencies:** Successfully developing and implementing transformational change that drives out the efficiencies and improvements that both Members and the public demand.
- **Information Management:** Ensuring adequate policies and procedures are in place to effectively manage our information in accordance with legislative requirements.
- **Information Technology:** Establishing robust information technology infrastructure to support business transformation.
- **Compliance:** Establishing the necessary policies and procedures and monitoring arrangements to ensure corporate legislative compliance in respect of key statutory obligations, including Equality, Disability, Rural Needs, Employment and Procurement legislation.
- **Risk Management:** Managing potential risks and opportunities in achieving the key actions outlined in the CX/CS Business Plan by adhering to the Corporate Risk Management Policy and reviewing the CX/CS Risk Register on a quarterly basis.
- **Performance Management:** Managing Council performance, highlighting areas of high-performance, identifying areas for intervention, developing a performance led approach to business and service planning and facilitating the development of a performance improvement culture.
- **Corporate Communications and Marketing:** Developing and delivering relevant communications activities, aligned to the corporate strategic priorities and agreed approach, ensuring staff, members, residents and other stakeholders are kept well informed about the work of the Council and other

relevant activities in the district, in an appropriate, accessible and engaging manner.

## 5.0 Cross-Cutting Themes and Actions

There are a number of cross cutting actions aligned to the Community Planning Partnership priorities, Community Wealth Building and Sustainability and Climate Change that span across all Directorates and contribute to the fulfillment of Directorate Objectives, Corporate Objectives and ultimately Community Planning Outcomes.

Officers should indicate where their actions are contributing to the fulfillment of CPP, CWB or SCC actions by putting the relevant acronym in the column.

These actions should be identified in liaison with the relevant officers (CPP – Alan Beggs; CWB – Colin Moffett; SCC – Conor Sage) and relevant annual assessments of service plans forwarded to the above officers.

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

### Community Planning Partnership Priorities

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

Relevant priorities should:

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

### Community Wealth Building

Community Wealth Building is an approach to the way that economies function, retaining more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people.

Key actions in relation to CWB should deliver on the 5 recommendations and sub-recommendations contained within the CLES/DTNI report – Newry, Mourne and Down pioneering the potential of community wealth building.

## Sustainability and Climate Change

Sustainability and the climate change emergency continues to be a key driver of Council with the key objective of improving the lives and livelihoods of the people who live and work here. Approval to develop a Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy was agreed in June 2023



## 6.0 Directorate Objectives and Supporting Actions

### Key Office Objectives / Actions

#### **People & Legal –**

Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations.

Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations.

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

Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery. Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities.

Provide efficient and professional HR services ensuring compliant integrated and sustainable services for all stakeholders that meet the corporate priorities and contractual obligations of the Council.

#### **Finance and Performance –**

Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations.

Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making.

Support the development of a performance culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements 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

| People & Legal   |                               |     |     |  |
|--|-------------------------------|-----|-----|--|
| Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations.   | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN |     |     |  |
|  | Deliver sustainable services  |     |     |  |
|  |                               |     |     |  |
| CX S1 : 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                        | 95% | 95% |  |
|  | Actual                        | —   | —   |  |
| 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                      | —   | —   |  |
| Continue to review and update the Corporate Privacy Notice to help everyone understand how Council processes personal data   | Target                        |     |     |  |
|  | Progress                      | —   | —   |  |

| People & Legal   |          |                               |  |  |
|--|----------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations.   |          | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN |  |  |
|  |          | Deliver sustainable services  |  |  |
|  |          |                               |  |  |
| CX S2 : 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 |                               |  |  |
| Continue to embed NIPSO policies, procedures and monitoring arrangements to ensure compliance with NIPSOs statutory Model Complaints Handling Procedure. | Target   |                               |  |  |
|  | Progress |                               |  |  |



| People & Legal  |   |
|---|---|
| Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.   | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN                   |
|   | Deliver sustainable services                    |
| CX33 : Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.  |   |
| Continue to review Retention and disposal of historical legal files extracting information which requires to be retained (SCC) (Q4)                                     | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> |
| Continue to work with Evidence Section to ensure all relevant Council assets are included on the ARC GIS system.  | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> |
| In line with Council's 'Digital First' approach continue to minimise physical paper and progress towards electronic files versus paper-based files where possible (SCC) | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> |

| People & Legal   |   |
|--|---|
| Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery.        | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN   |
|  | Deliver sustainable services  |
| CX34 : Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery. |   |
| Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties implementation                     | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div><div></div><div></div></div> |
| Progress the use of the Irish language in civic life                                       | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div><div></div><div></div></div> |
| Corporate Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties compliance               | <div><div>Target</div><div>Actual</div><div></div><div></div></div>   |

| People & Legal  |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities.                    | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN |
|   | Deliver sustainable services  |
| CX55 : Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities              |                               |
| Continue to support Directorates to implement PPG for all staff across the organisation                               | Target                        |
|   | Progress                      |
| Continue to develop a Leadership Charter demonstrating our core values and an implementation action plan for roll out | Target                        |
|   | Progress                      |
| Review statutory and mandatory training for the organisation, identifying key timelines                               | Target                        |
|   | Progress                      |
| Refresh, Rebrand and Relaunch the eLearning portal  | Target                        |
|   | Progress                      |
| People Perform Grow, rolled out across the organisation   | Target                        |
|   | Progress                      |



| People & Legal   |  |
|--|--|
| 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.        | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN                              |
|  | Deliver sustainable services                               |
| CX36 : Provide efficient and professional HR services ensuring compliant integrated and sustainable services for all stakeholders that meet the corporate priorities and contractual obligations of the Council. |  |
| Support Directorates to ensure staff absence is effectively managed to ensure appropriate and timely support for staff Q1-Q4   | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div><div></div></div> |
| Continue to develop an Industrial Relations Framework and agree a workplan with Joint Trade Union Side Q4  | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div><div></div></div> |
| Procure new systems and develop a project plan for new ways of working and efficient use of resources Q4   | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div><div></div></div> |
| Continue to review and analyse current employment data and develop KPIs Q2-Q4  | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div><div></div></div> |
| Continue to identify ways to increase the number of people from disadvantaged communities who are employed by council Q2-Q4 (CWB)  | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div><div></div></div> |
| Implement and maintain a recruitment plan (Q3)   | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div><div></div></div> |

| Finance and Performance   |                               |          |      |      |
|---|-------------------------------|----------|------|------|
| Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations.        | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN |          |      |      |
|   | Deliver sustainable services  |          |      |      |
| CX57 : 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   | 90%  | 90%  |
|   |                               |          | 100% | 100% |
| Unqualified financial audit opinion (Q4)  | Target                        | Actual   |      |      |
|   |                               |          | 100% | 100% |
| Standardisation of Payroll Procedures Q4  | Target                        | Progress |      |      |
|   |                               |          | 100% | 100% |
| Payslips to be communicated electronically, where possible  | Target                        | Progress |      |      |
|   |                               |          | 100% | 100% |
| Accounts Receivable Procedures to be finalised, including Debt Recovery and Newry BID (Q4)  | Target                        | Progress |      |      |
|   |                               |          | 100% | 100% |
| Commence service review of General Finance/Accounts Q4  | Target                        | Progress |      |      |
|   |                               |          | 100% | 100% |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Review and update Financial Regulations of Council Q4   | <div><div></div><div>Target</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div></div><div>Target</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Progress</div></div> |
| Business Case to be developed and approved for new Finance Solution and procurement to be progressed (Q4) | <div><div></div><div>Target</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div></div><div>Target</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Progress</div></div> |

| Finance and Performance  |   |
|--|---|
| Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making.        | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN   |
|  | Deliver sustainable services  |
| CXs8 : Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making. |   |
| Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment (Q4)   | <div><div></div><div>Target</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Progress</div></div> |
| NIAO Effective Audit and Risk Assurance Committees best practice guides templates to be completed  | <div><div></div><div>Target</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Progress</div></div> |
| Audit Module to be embedded and all recommendations to be uploaded as reports are finalised  | <div><div></div><div>Target</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Progress</div></div> |



| Finance and Performance   |                               |             |             |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements   | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN |             |             |
|   | Deliver sustainable services  |             |             |
| CX59 : Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements  |                               |             |             |
| Compliance with statutory Duty of Improvement   | Target                        | <div></div> |             |
|   | Actual                        | <div></div> |             |
| Continue to strengthen the alignment across Business Planning, Community Planning and Performance Management Framework and coordinate the business and service planning process | Target                        | <div></div> | <div></div> |
|   | Progress                      | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| Unqualified performance audit opinion   | Target                        | <div></div> |             |
|   | Actual                        | <div></div> |             |

| Digital and Communications  |  |
|---|--|
| Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service   | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN                              |
| Deliver sustainable services  |  |
| CX510 : Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service   |  |
| 90% of media requests for information responded to within the agreed Procedures   | <div><div>Target</div><div>Actual</div><div></div></div>   |
| Review and assessment of the corporate website, including Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to inform future requirements. (Q4)   | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div><div></div></div> |
| Review of Media Policy and Procedures. (Q4)   | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div><div></div></div> |
| Review of Social Media and Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures. (Q4)   | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div><div></div></div> |
| Support the communications and marketing of principle projects within the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027 (Newry City Centre Regeneration, Downpatrick Regeneration, Belfast Region City Deal Projects, Warrentpoint Health and Wellbeing Centre, Local Development Plan Strategy and organisational transformation and delivery of sustainable services | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div><div></div></div> |

| Digital and Communications   |                               |          |       |       |
|--|-------------------------------|----------|-------|-------|
| Provide a highly available, accessible and secure Information Technology environment to support Council services           | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN |          |       |       |
|  | Deliver sustainable services  |          |       |       |
| CX\$11 : Provide a highly available, accessible and secure Information Technology environment to support Council services  |                               |          |       |       |
| 97.5% System "UP" Time   | Target                        | Actual   | 97.5% | 97.5% |
|  |                               |          | —     | —     |
| Procure SOC/SIEM/XDR Cyber Security Service  | Target                        | Progress |       | —     |
|  |                               |          |       |       |
| Progress the User Access Management Action Plan (Q3)   | Target                        | Progress |       | —     |
|  |                               |          |       |       |
| Undertake Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) baseline assessment and develop action plan to begin journey to compliance (Q4) | Target                        | Progress |       | —     |
|  |                               |          |       |       |
| Develop a new IT Policy Suite in line with audit recommendations following CAF guidelines (Q3)                             | Target                        | Progress |       | —     |
|  |                               |          |       |       |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Procure IT Equipment for Technology Refresh Project (Q4)                         | <div><div>Target</div><div>Progress</div></div> | <div><div></div><div></div></div>                                     |
| 4 Targeted Cyber Security Training Modules in Year                               | <div><div>Target</div><div>Actual</div></div>   | <div><div>2</div><div>4</div></div> <div><div></div><div></div></div> |
| 4 Targeted Phishing Simulations in Year  | <div><div>Target</div><div>Actual</div></div>   | <div><div>2</div><div>4</div></div> <div><div></div><div></div></div> |
| 4 Services with established Teams/SharePoint Data and Collaboration Repositories | <div><div>Target</div><div>Actual</div></div>   | <div><div>2</div><div>4</div></div> <div><div></div><div></div></div> |
| 3 Facilitated M365 User Clinics  | <div><div>Target</div><div>Actual</div></div>   | <div><div>1</div><div>3</div></div> <div><div></div><div></div></div> |



| Digital and Communications  |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 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.          | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN |
|   | Deliver sustainable services  |
| CX S12 : Provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated, and compliant for all stakeholders, ensuring adherence to good governance and alignment with corporate objectives. |                               |
| Progress the implementation of the Departmental Structural Changes (Phase 1) (Q4)   | Target                        |
|   | Progress                      |
| Progress approved IT Transformation Programme Projects  | Target                        |
|   | Progress                      |
| Advise and assist Departments in the identification of projects for consideration in the Digital Transformation Programme   | Target                        |
|   | Progress                      |
| Identify Policy gaps in relation to Digital Transformation (Q4)   | Target                        |
|   | Progress                      |

| Capital and Procurement  |  |          |        |          |
|--|--|----------|--------|----------|
| Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.   | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN                                      |          |        |          |
|  | Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future |          |        |          |
| CXS13 : Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.   |  |          |        |          |
| Deliver approved Capital projects through design, procurement and delivery stages providing regular updates and reports to directorates, project boards and committees. (CWB) (SCC)  | Target   | Progress | Target | Progress |
|  |  |          |        |          |
| Advise and assist departments in the identification of projects for consideration in the capital programme, including advising of project feasibility, costs, programme risks informing decision making and funding applications (CWB) | Target   | Progress | Target | Progress |
|  |  |          |        |          |
| Continuation with the identification and disposal of council surplus assets, including the direct liaison with directorates, legals and external organisations. (CWB) (SCC)  | Target   | Progress | Target | Progress |
|  |  |          |        |          |
| Capital projects programme and budget in line with agreed parameters and Council policy  | Target   | Progress | Target | Progress |
|  |  |          |        |          |

| Capital and Procurement   |  |                               |             |             |
|---|--|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives.         |  | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN |             |             |
| Deliver sustainable services  |  |                               |             |             |
| CX\$14 : Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives |  |                               |             |             |
| Procurement policy fully implemented  |  | Target                        |             |             |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| To undertake in-depth training on the Procurement Act 2023  |  | Target                        |             |             |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| Increasing supplier outreach through attendance at Meet the Buyer type events and premarket engagement. (CWB) (SCC)   |  | Target                        |             |             |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| Enhancing visibility of NIMDDC Tender opportunities in the marketplace through social media campaign. (Q4) (CWB) (SCC)                                      |  | Target                        |             |             |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| In line with the revised Procurement Policy, develop updated procedures and review systems. (CWB) (SCC)   |  | Target                        |             |             |
|   |  | Progress                      | <div></div> | <div></div> |

| Democratic Services   |   |
|---|---|
| Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council  | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN                         |
|   | Represent the voice of the district with our partners |
| CX515 : 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  |
| The number of official events attended by the Chairperson / Vice Chairperson  | Target  |
|   | Progress  |
| Establish a Corporate Support Role on behalf of all Directorates across Council (CPP)                                     | Target  |
|   | Progress  |
| To digitally transform the operations of Democratic Services by adopting modern, secure, and accessible technologies (Q3) | Target  |
|   | Progress  |



| Democratic Services   |          |                               |  |  |
|---|----------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Provide support for Project delivery at a Corporate Level                           |          | ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN |  |  |
|   |          | Deliver sustainable services  |  |  |
| CXS16 : Provide support for Project Delivery at a Corporate Level                   |          |                               |  |  |
| Progress the delivery of the project assigned                                       | Target   |                               |  |  |
|   | Progress |                               |  |  |
| Ensure the project delivery complies with Council's Governance arrangements         | Target   |                               |  |  |
|   | Progress |                               |  |  |
| Ensure projects are delivered within agreed budgets and timelines                   | Target   |                               |  |  |
|   | Progress |                               |  |  |
| Liaise with all departments to ensure collaborative approach for corporate projects | Target   |                               |  |  |
|   | Progress |                               |  |  |

## 7.0 Performance

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

### Chief Executive/ Corporate Services Plans and Strategies

- 7.2 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Directorate is responsible for leading the development, implementation and review of the following plans and strategies, which influence the work of the Office and Council:
- Medium Term Financial Plan
  - Treasury Management Strategy
  - Equality Action Plan
  - Disability Action Plan
  - Irish Language Strategy
  - Corporate Communications Strategy
  - Corporate Digital Communications Strategy
  - Information Technology Strategy
  - Digital Transformation Strategy
  - Estates and Asset Management Strategy
  - Performance Improvement Plan
  - Business Planning and Performance Management Framework
  - Performance Improvement Policy
  - Constitution

## 8.0 Organisation and Office Structure

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

## 9.0 Financial Information

| Net estimated expenditure (£) (2025-26)                       |           |
|---|-----------|
| People & Legal  | 2,723,852 |
| Finance & Performance   | 1,438,185 |
| Digital & Communications                                      | 972,583   |
| Capital & Procurement   | 697,580   |
| Democratic Services   | 217,615   |
| TOTAL: Corporate Services/Chief Executive (including payroll) | 6,791,681 |

## 10.0 Governance Arrangements

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

**Figure 4: Governance Arrangements**

### **Full Council**

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

### **Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee / Audit Committee**

- Scrutiny and challenge around the Duty of Improvement
- Provide assurance that performance management arrangements are robust and effective

### **Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee**

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

### **Senior Management Team**

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

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

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Newry BT35 8DJ

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

Downpatrick BT30 6GQ



|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Report to:</b>         | Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee  |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>   | 12 June 2025  |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Section 75 statutory duties compliance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised Equality Scheme - Five-year review of Council's Equality Scheme</li> </ul> |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Carol McClean, Assistant Director Legal & People  |
| <b>Contact Officers:</b>  | Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy<br>Suzanne Rice, Corporate Policy and Equality Officer  |

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

|                     |          |                        |
|---------------------|----------|------------------------|
| <b>For decision</b> | <b>X</b> | <b>For noting only</b> |
|---------------------|----------|------------------------|

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose and Background</b>   |
| 1.1        | Members are asked to consider and approve Council's revised Equality Scheme.<br><br>Further to approval, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland will be informed of the outcome of the review.  |
| 1.2        | As set out within Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, Council is required to conduct a five-year review of our approved equality scheme.<br><br>The purpose of a five-year review is to examine how those arrangements have been Applied and to assess how effective they have been in assisting the Council comply with the Section 75 statutory duties.<br><br>Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme was approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 25 March 2015 and Council's revised Equality Scheme is contained in Appendix I. |
| 1.3        | The review has been undertaken in line with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's " <i>Guidance on conducting a 5 year review of an equality scheme (July 2016)</i> ", and has evaluated the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions.   |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Key issues</b>   |
| 2.1        | In relation to changes to an equality scheme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council is not obliged to make changes to our equality schemes following the review, but they may consider if it is appropriate to do so.</li> <li>An equality scheme may need to be amended to ensure that it is up to date to reflect any changes that have been made to a public authority's organisational structure, functions or contact details. While such changes should be communicated to</li> </ul>  |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
|            | <p>consultees, these changes would not require that a new scheme be developed for Commission approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the proposed changes are more substantive, relating to the public authority's arrangements regarding consultation, assessment, monitoring or publishing the impact of policies, staff training, or ensuring access to information and services, then this would be treated as a wholly new equality scheme with a requirement to consult on it and to submit it to the Commission for approval.</li> <li>• The form and content of an equality scheme, including a revised scheme, must conform to guidelines issued by the Commission.</li> </ul>  |
| 2.2        | <p>Following review, the Council's Equality Scheme has been revised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The name of the Council Chairperson has been updated in the Foreword.</li> <li>• Council Officer names, job titles, email addresses and phone numbers have been updated.</li> <li>• Appendix 1 has been amended to reflect the current list of Councillors.</li> <li>• Appendix 2 has been amended to reflect the proposed change to the Council's Management Structure.</li> <li>• Appendix 5 reflects an updated list of consultees.</li> <li>• The timetable for proposed measures has been updated (Appendix 6).</li> </ul>   |
| 2.3        | <p>It is Officers' view that the proposed changes outlined in section 2.2 are not substantive, and the revised equality scheme should therefore not be treated as a wholly new equality scheme requiring consultation and submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland for approval.</p>   |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Recommendation</b>  |
| 3.1        | <p>Members are asked to consider and approve Council's revised Equality Scheme, and that further to approval, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland be informed of the outcome of the review.</p>   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Resource implications</b>   |
| 4.1        | <p>Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 places legal obligations and commitments upon Council, wherein Council is required to commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the equality scheme is implemented effectively and on time.</p> <p>Council's revised Equality Scheme sets out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to the discharge of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of its organisation and will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council equality scheme can be implemented effectively. (Chapter 1, paragraph 1.3)</i></li> </ul> |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>   |
| 5.1        | <p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p>   |

|     |  |
|-----|--|
|     | It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  |
| 5.2 | <p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| 5.3 | <p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>  |
| 6.0 | <b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>  |
| 6.1 | <p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>   |
| 7.0 | <b>Appendices</b>  |
|     | <p>Appendix I: Revised Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Equality Scheme (2025)</p> <p>Appendix II: Five-year review report for period 2020-2025</p>   |
| 8.0 | <b>Background Documents</b>  |
|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance on conducting a 5 year review of an equality scheme, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, July 2016</li> </ul>  |

# **Equality Scheme for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council** (revised 2025)

***Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of  
the Northern Ireland Act 1998***



***This document is available in a range of formats on request.  
Please contact us with your requirements (see page 6 for  
contact details).***

Marie Ward  
Chief Executive  
Newry, Mourne and Down  
District Council



## Foreword

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act<sup>1</sup>.

In our revised equality scheme we set out how Newry, Mourne and Down District Council proposes to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.

We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the equality scheme is implemented effectively, and on time.

We commit to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring our effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progress.

We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our Councillors and staff are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. We will advise our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments as detailed in our equality scheme.

We, the Chairperson and Chief Executive of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of our revised equality scheme.

We realise the important role that the community and voluntary sector and the general public have to play to ensure the Section 75 statutory duties are effectively implemented. Our equality scheme demonstrates how determined we are to ensure there are opportunities, for people affected by our work, to positively influence how we carry out our functions in line with our Section 75 statutory duties.

We support and endorse this equality scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Commission guidelines.

Councillor Philip Campbell  
Chairperson

Marie Ward  
Chief Executive

12 June 2025

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<sup>1</sup> See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme

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Please note: Foreword and Appendices 5 and 6 form part of this equality scheme.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

### Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

- 1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to comply with two statutory duties:

#### Section 75 (1)

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

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

#### Section 75 (2)

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

"Functions" include the "powers and duties" of a public authority. This includes our employment and procurement functions. Please see below under "Who we are and what we do" for a detailed explanation of our functions.

### **How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 Duties in relation to the relevant functions of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council**

- 1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires Newry, Mourne and Down District Council as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. It is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and details the plan for their implementation.
- 1.3 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to the discharge of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of its organisation and will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council equality scheme can be implemented effectively.



## Who we are and what we do

The roles and functions of Councils, established in the Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill 2014 and in other legislation, falls into three types:

- **Direct** - Councils are responsible for the provision and management of services
- **Representative** - Council nominees sit on statutory bodies
- **Consultative** - Councils reflect community views in the operation of a range of statutory bodies, community concerns or give views on proposed administrative decisions

Most Council's carry out the functions outlined below. However, not every Council will have the entire range of services, depending upon its geographical location and size:

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is responsible for:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Refuse Collection and Disposal               | Recycling and Waste Management            |
| Civic Amenity Provision                      | Grounds Maintenance                       |
| Street Cleansing                             | Cemeteries                                |
| Public Conveniences                          | Food Safety                               |
| Health & Safety                              | Environmental Protection                  |
| Environmental Improvement                    | Estates Management Building & Maintenance |
| Design Building Control                      | Inspection/Regulation of New Construction |
| Dog Control                                  | Sports and Leisure Services               |
| Community Centres                            | Recreational Facilities                   |
| Sundry Licensing                             | Planning                                  |
| Parks, Open Spaces, Playgrounds              | Community Planning                        |
| Arts, Heritage and Cultural Facilities       |   |
| Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages |   |

Council also have a role in

- Enterprise, Employment and Regeneration
- Community Development
- Community Safety
- District Policing
- Sports Development & Summer Schemes
- Tourism

Section 75 is mainstreamed across all of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's business areas. The Council's Senior Management

Team is responsible for ensuring that Section 75 obligations are taken into account in developing and implementing Council functions.

## Chapter 2      **Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 duties (Schedule 9 4 (2) (a) )**

- 2.1      Some of our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other relevant parts of this equality scheme. Consultation is in chapter 3, monitoring arrangements, assessment of impact of policies and publication arrangements in chapter 4, staff training in chapter 5, access to information in chapter 6, the Council's complaints procedure in chapter 8, and publication and Review of Council's Equality Scheme in chapters 9 and 10.

In addition, we have the following arrangements in place for assessing our compliance:

### **Responsibilities and Reporting**

- 2.2      We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.
- 2.3      The Chief Executive is accountable to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the equality scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.
- 2.4      If you have any questions or comments regarding our equality scheme, please contact:

Colin Moffett  
Head of Corporate Policy  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

Suzanne Rice  
Corporate Policy & Equality Officer  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
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BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0330 137 4388  
Email: [colin.moffett@nmandd.org](mailto:colin.moffett@nmandd.org)

Telephone: 0330 137 4887  
Email: [suzanne.rice@nmandd.org](mailto:suzanne.rice@nmandd.org)

- 2.5      Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans.
- 2.6      Employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and

implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant. The personal performance plans are subject to appraisal in the annual performance review.

- 2.7 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council prepares an annual report on the progress we have made on implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge our Section 75 statutory duties (Section 75 annual progress report).

The Section 75 annual progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission.

Progress on the delivery of Section 75 statutory duties will also be included in our annual report.

- 2.8 The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on our website, or by contacting:

Colin Moffett  
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Monaghan Row  
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Telephone: 0330 137 4887  
Email: [suzanne.rice@nmandd.org](mailto:suzanne.rice@nmandd.org)

- 2.9 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our revised equality scheme is maintained.
- 2.10 All Council's policies whether new or revised will be screened to ensure compliance with this equality scheme

### **Action plan/action measures**

- 2.11 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will develop an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.
- 2.12 The action measures that will make up our action plan will be relevant to our functions. They will be developed and prioritised on the basis of an audit of inequalities. In line with the Equality Commission's guidance the Council will carry out an Audit of Inequalities. The Audit of Inequalities will inform which Newry, Mourne and Down District Council functions are addressed in terms of inequalities in relation to Section 75 groups. It will enable Council to identify potential functional areas for further or better discharge of its Section 75 duties and will inform its key strategic actions.



The Audit will reveal where the Council has information gaps and allow the development of action measures to take forward the work required to deal with the issues and inequalities highlighted by the Audit. Many of the Council's functions are statutory in nature and cut across many of the Section 75 categories. However, there are some areas of Council work that may have an impact on certain Section 75 groups. During the development of the Council's Action Plan all council services and functions will be reviewed and a recommendation made for key areas of activity.

As part of the Council's annual equality report to the Equality Commission NI, the Action Plan will be reviewed to identify key areas of inequalities that require to be addressed in the incoming period.

- 2.13 Action measures will be specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. Action measures will include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.
- 2.14 We will develop action plans for a period of between one and five years in order to align them with our corporate, business and planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures will be incorporated into our business planning process.
- 2.15 We will seek input from our stakeholders and consult on our action plan before we send it to the Equality Commission and thereafter when reviewing the plan as per 2.16 below.
- 2.16 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.
- 2.17 Once finalised our action plan will be available on our website, or by contacting:

Colin Moffett  
Head of Corporate Policy  
O'Hagan House  
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Newry  
BT35 8DJ

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Telephone: 0330 137 4887  
Email: [suzanne.rice@nmandd.org](mailto:suzanne.rice@nmandd.org)

If you require it in an alternative format please contact us on the details provided.



## **Chapter 3      Our arrangements for consulting (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a)) – on matters to which a duty (S75 (1) or (2) is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted)**

**(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b) on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by us on the promotion of equality of opportunity.**

- 3.1 Council recognises the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.
- 3.2 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*'):
  - 3.2.1 All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter / policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

Initially all consultees (see Appendix 5), as a matter of course, will be notified (by email or post) of the matter / policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of our and our consultees' resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the matter/policy being consulted upon and to whom the matter/policy is of particular relevance. This may include for example regional or local consultations, sectorial or thematic consultation etc.

- 3.2.2 Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. We will ask our consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Methods of consultation could include:
  - Face-to-face meetings
  - Focus groups
  - Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
  - Questionnaires
  - Information/notification by email
  - Internet discussions or

- Telephone consultations.

- 3.2.3 This list is not exhaustive and we may develop other additional methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon.

We will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation we use in order to remove barriers to the consultation process. Specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate with all section 75 categories e.g. with children and young people, people with disabilities (in particular people with learning disabilities) and minority ethnic communities. We take account of existing and developing good practice, including the Equality Commission's guidance *Lets Talk Lets Listen-Guidance for public authorities on consulting and involving children and young people* (2008).

All relevant information will be made available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation and we will ensure that all consultees have equal time to respond and adequate time is allowed for groups to consult among themselves. Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats, in a timely manner, usually within 7 days. We will ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.

- 3.2.4 Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.
- 3.2.5 To ensure effective consultation with consultees on Section 75 matters, we will develop a programme of awareness raising on the Section 75 statutory duties and the commitments in our equality scheme by undertaking presentations to community groups, disability groups and forums.
- 3.2.6 The consultation period lasts for a minimum of twelve weeks to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view. However, in exceptional circumstances when this timescale is not feasible (for example implementing EU Directives or UK wide legislation, meeting Health and Safety requirements, addressing urgent public health matters or complying with Court judgements), we may shorten timescales to eight weeks or less before the policy is implemented. We may continue consultation thereafter and will review the policy as part of our monitoring commitments.

Where, under these exceptional circumstances, we must implement a policy immediately, as it is beyond our authority's control, we may consult after implementation of the policy, in order to ensure that any impacts of the policy are considered.

- 3.2.7 If a consultation exercise is to take place over a period when consultees are less able to respond, for example, over the summer or Christmas break, or if the policy under consideration is particularly complex, we will give consideration to the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation.
- 3.2.8 We are conscious of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. We will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. We will consider for example the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer and / or interpreter is necessary, and whether the provision of childcare and support for other carers is required.
- 3.2.9 We will make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This includes detailed information on the policy proposal being consulted upon and any relevant quantitative and qualitative data.
- 3.2.10 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.
- 3.2.11 We will provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report is prepared which includes summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of our consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback is provided in formats suitable to consultees (Please see also 6.3)
- 3.3 A list of our consultees is included in Appendix 5, or a copy can be obtained by contacting:

Colin Moffett  
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Email: [colin.moffett@nmandd.org](mailto:colin.moffett@nmandd.org)

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Monaghan Row  
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BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0330 137 4887  
Email: [suzanne.rice@nmandd.org](mailto:suzanne.rice@nmandd.org)

- 3.4 Our consultation list is not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

We welcome enquiries from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact:

Colin Moffett  
Head of Corporate Policy  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

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BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0330 137 4887  
Email: [suzanne.rice@nmandd.org](mailto:suzanne.rice@nmandd.org)

to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted or have your name/details removed or amended. Please also inform us if you would like information sent to you in a particular format or language.



## Chapter 4 Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of Policies (Schedule 9 4. (2) (b); Schedule 9 4. 92) (C); Schedule 9 4 (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1); Schedule 9 9. (2))

### Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity Schedule 9 4. (2) (b))

- 4.1 In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is very broadly defined and covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this revised equality scheme, the term policy is used for any (proposed / amended / existing) strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision, whether written or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, e.g. 'draft', 'pilot', 'high level' or 'sectoral'.
- 4.2 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 9. (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- 4.3 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council uses the tools of **screening** and **equality impact assessment** to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. In carrying out these assessments we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow Equality Commission guidance:
  - the guidance on screening, including the screening template, as detailed in the Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*' and
  - on undertaking an equality impact assessment as detailed in the Commission's guidance '*Practical guidance on equality impact assessment (February 2005)*'.

### Screening

- 4.4 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and / or good relations.
- 4.5 Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development / review process. Policies which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at various stages during implementation.

- 4.6 The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy decision maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy. However, screening will also involve other relevant team members, for example, equality specialists, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.
- 4.7 The following questions are applied to all our policies as part of the screening process:
- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor / major / none)
  - Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
  - To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor / major / none)
  - Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?
- 4.8 In order to answer the screening questions, we gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Any screening decision will be informed by this evidence.
- 4.9 Completion of screening, taking into account our consideration of the answers to all screening questions, will lead to one of the following three outcomes:
1. the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment
  2. the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
  3. the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
- 4.10 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'minor' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may on occasion decide to proceed with an equality impact assessment, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted we will nonetheless consider measures that might mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Where we mitigate we will outline in our screening template the reasons to support this decision together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.

This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

- 4.11 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'major' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and / or good relations categories, we will normally subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.
- 4.12 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'none', in respect of all of the equality of opportunity and / or good relations categories, we may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, we will give details of the reasons for the decision taken. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.
- 4.13 As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening template, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, will be made available on our website, and on request by contacting:

Colin Moffett  
Head of Corporate Policy  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0330 137 4388  
Email: [colin.moffett@nmandd.org](mailto:colin.moffett@nmandd.org)

Suzanne Rice  
Corporate Policy & Equality Officer  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0330 137 4887  
Email: [suzanne.rice@nmandd.org](mailto:suzanne.rice@nmandd.org)

- 4.14 If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.
- 4.15 Our screening reports are published quarterly (see below at 4.20 – 4.22 and 4.23 for details)

## Equality Impact Assessment

- 4.16 An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of the policy. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a policy upon the

Section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a policy and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

- 4.17 Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.
- 4.18 Any equality impact assessment will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage(s). (For details see above Chapter 3 'Our Arrangements for Consulting').

### **Our arrangements for publishing the results of the assessments of the likely impact of policies we have adopted or propose to adopt on the promotion of equality of opportunity**

- 4.19 We make publicly available the results of our assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations

### **What we publish**

#### **4.20 Screening reports**

These are published quarterly. Screening reports detail:

- All policies screened by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council over the three month period
- A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- Screening decisions, i.e.:
  - whether the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment
  - whether the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
  - whether the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
- Where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments
- A link to completed screening template(s) on our website

#### **4.21 Screening templates**



For details on the availability of our screening templates please refer to 4.13

#### 4.22 Equality impact assessments

EQIA reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports include:

- A statement of the aim of the policy
- Information and data collected
- Details of the assessment of impact(s)
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
- Consultation responses
- The decision taken
- Future monitoring plans

#### How we publish the information

- 4.23 All information we publish is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see section 6.3.

#### Where we publish the information

- 4.24 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are available on our website.

Colin Moffett  
Head of Corporate Policy  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0330 137 4388  
Email: [colin.moffett@nmandd.org](mailto:colin.moffett@nmandd.org)

Suzanne Rice  
Corporate Policy & Equality Officer  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0330 137 4887  
Email: [suzanne.rice@nmandd.org](mailto:suzanne.rice@nmandd.org)

- 4.25 In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients) which include all policies screened over a 3 month period are also sent directly to all consultees on a quarterly basis
- 4.26 We will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as press releases where appropriate.

## **Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity**

- 4.27 Monitoring can assist us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring Section 75 information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc). In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council follows guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.
- 4.28 We monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. We are also committed to monitoring more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Equality Commission guidance.
- 4.29 The systems we have established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations are:
- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
  - The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
  - An audit of existing information systems within one year of approval of this equality scheme, to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action to address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions.
  - Undertaking or commissioning new data if necessary
- 4.30 If over a two-year period monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, we will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.
- 4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. Other monitoring information is reviewed with each policy review, all Council policies are reviewed on a four year cycle.

## **Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring**

- 4.32 Schedule 9.4 (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:

4.33 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report (see 2.7).

4.34 Results of Council EQIA monitoring can be viewed on our website or by contacting:

Colin Moffett  
Head of Corporate Policy  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0330 137 4388  
Email: [colin.moffett@nmandd.org](mailto:colin.moffett@nmandd.org)

Suzanne Rice  
Corporate Policy & Equality Officer  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0330 137 4887  
Email: [suzanne.rice@nmandd.org](mailto:suzanne.rice@nmandd.org)

4.35 All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see below at 6.3 for details.

## **Chapter 5      Staff training (Schedule 9 4. (2) (e))**

### **Commitment to staff training**

- 5.1    Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises that awareness-raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.
- 5.2    Our Chief Executive wishes to positively communicate the commitment of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.

To this end we have introduced an effective communication and training programme for all staff and will ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.

### **Training objectives**

- 5.3    The Council has a detailed training plan for its staff which is supported by personal development and appraisal procedures to ensure:
  - awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff fully understand their role in implementing the scheme
  - provide staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
  - to provide staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with our equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively
  - to provide staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
  - to provide those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

### **Awareness raising and training arrangements**

- 5.4    The following arrangements are in place to ensure all Councillors and Council staff are aware of and understand our equality obligations.



- We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.
- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all Councillors and staff and ensure any queries or questions of clarification are addressed effectively.
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council staff will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within the Core Brief and Team Meeting process once the revised scheme has been approved
- Section 75 statutory duties form part of induction training for new full time and seasonal staff via a presentation titled "Equality Matters".

Focused training is provided for key staff within Newry, Mourne and Down District Council who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments e.g. those involved in research and data collection, policy development, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation.

- Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure Councillors and staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups.
- When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure Councillors and staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.

- 5.5 Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and our staff.

In order to share resources and expertise, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

- 5.6 Our training programmes are subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- We evaluate the extent to which all participants in Council training programmes have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.
- The extent to which training objectives have been met are identified for individual staff through the Annual Performance and Development Review. Objectives will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, a copy of is sent to the Equality Commission.

## **Chapter 6                      Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide (Schedule 9 4. (2) (f))**

- 6.1     Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to ensuring the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that this remains the case.
- 6.2     We are aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others.

In particular:

- People with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities may require printed information in other formats.
- Members of ethnic minority groups, whose first language is not English.
- Children and young people may not be able to fully access or understand information.

### **Access to information**

- 6.3     To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council liaises with representatives of young people and disability and minority ethnic organisations and takes account of existing and developing good practice. We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner normally within 7 days.

- 6.4     In disseminating information through the media we will seek to advertise in the press where appropriate.
- 6.5     Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories and adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

### **Access to services**

- 6.6     All Council services are provided so as to ensure public access by all members of the community

- 6.7 Council works with the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) to ensure the public is aware of the services and how to avail of them.

### **Assessing public access to information and services**

- 6.8 We monitor across all our functions on an annual basis in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.
- 6.9 We carry out regular satisfaction surveys in regard of the use and access of Council services by the public and analyse, report and take action regarding complaints, comments and compliments received regarding both access to and use of these services and information.

## **Chapter 7                      Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme (Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))**

- 7.1    Appendix 6 outlines our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our business planning process.
- 7.2    This timetable is different from and in addition to our commitment to developing action plans/action measures to specifically address inequalities and further promote equality of opportunity and good relations. We have included in our equality scheme a commitment to develop an action plan. Accordingly, this commitment is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 6. For information on these action measures please see above at 2.11 – 2.18.



## Chapter 8 Our complaints procedure (Schedule 9 paragraph 10)

- 8.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is responsive to the views of members of the public. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us.
- 8.2 A person can make a complaint to a public authority if the complainant believes he or she may have been directly affected by an alleged failure of the authority to comply with its approved equality scheme. If the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complaint can be raised with the Equality Commission.
- 8.3 A person wishing to make a complaint that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact:

Colin Moffett  
Head of Corporate Policy  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0330 137 4388  
Email: [colin.moffett@nmandd.org](mailto:colin.moffett@nmandd.org)

Suzanne Rice  
Corporate Policy & Equality Officer  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0330 137 4887  
Email: [suzanne.rice@nmandd.org](mailto:suzanne.rice@nmandd.org)

- 8.4 We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint in line with the Councils Complaints, Comments and Compliments policy.
- 8.5 The Council's Corporate Policy Section (Head of Corporate Policy and Corporate Policy and Equality Officer) will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and will respond substantially to the complainant within 20 working days of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. Under certain circumstances, if the complexity of the matter requires a longer period, the period for response to the complainant may be extended to 40 working days. In those circumstances, the complainant will be advised of the extended period within 20 working days of making the complaint.
- 8.6 During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and of any outcomes.
- 8.7 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under sub-paragraph 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

- 8.8 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Equality Commission investigation.

## Chapter 9 Publication of the Equality Scheme (Schedule 9 4. (3) (c) )

- 9.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's equality scheme is available free of charge in electronic, print form and alternative formats from:

Colin Moffett  
Head of Corporate Policy  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

Suzanne Rice  
Corporate Policy & Equality Officer  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0330 137 4388  
Email: [colin.moffett@nmandd.org](mailto:colin.moffett@nmandd.org)

Telephone: 0330 137 4887  
Email: [suzanne.rice@nmandd.org](mailto:suzanne.rice@nmandd.org)

- 9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on the following website:

[www.newrymournedown.org](http://www.newrymournedown.org)

- 9.3 The following arrangements are in place for the publication in a timely manner of our equality scheme to ensure equality of access:

- We will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.
- We will email a link to our approved equality scheme to our consultees on our consultation lists. Other consultees without e-mail will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the equality scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner usually seven days.
- Our equality scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.
- The Council will communicate to children, young people and people with disabilities via youth forums, the Council education officer and disability forums operating in the district.

- 9.4 For a list of our consultees please see Appendix 5 of the revised equality scheme, visit our website or contact the Equality Officer (see contact details on page 6).

## **Chapter 10      Review of the Equality Scheme (Schedule 9 8. (3))**

- 10.1 As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will conduct a thorough review of this revised equality scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of this equality scheme to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland.

- 10.2 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission. A report of this review will be made public through advertising its existence, placing a copy on the Council's website, provision of copies on request and a copy sent to the Equality Commission.



## Appendix 1 – Council Committee Structure

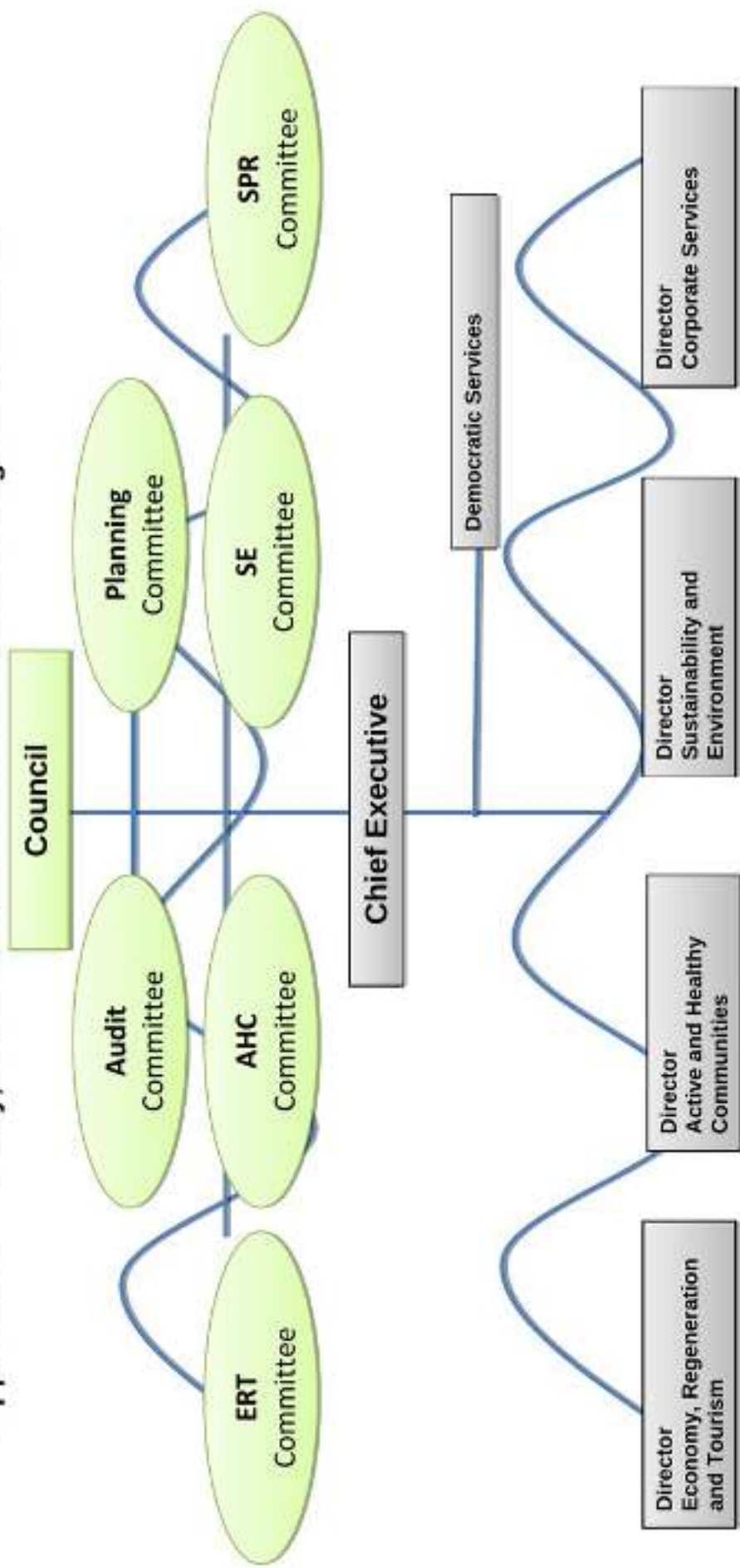
The main Committees of Council are as follows:

- Council (full meeting)
- Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
- Active and Healthy Communities Committee
- Sustainability and Environment Committee
- Planning Committee
- Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
- Audit Committee

Council consists of 41 Councillors (as listed below)

|            |           |                |             |
|------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| J Brennan  | Sinn Féin | T Andrews      | SDLP        |
| P Campbell | Sinn Féin | P Byrne        | SDLP        |
| W Clarke   | Sinn Féin | L Devlin       | SDLP        |
| O Hanlon   | Sinn Féin | K Feehan       | SDLP        |
| V Harte    | Sinn Féin | D Finn         | SDLP        |
| M Hearty   | Sinn Féin | C Galbraith    | SDLP        |
| R Howell   | Sinn Féin | D McAteer      | SDLP        |
| G Kearns   | Sinn Féin | G Sharvin      | SDLP        |
| C King     | Sinn Féin | C Enwright     | Alliance    |
| M Larkin   | Sinn Féin | T Howie        | Alliance    |
| L McEvoy   | Sinn Féin | D Lee-Surginor | Alliance    |
| O Magennis | Sinn Féin | J Truesdale    | Alliance    |
| A Mathers  | Sinn Féin | H Young        | Alliance    |
| D Murphy   | Sinn Féin | C Bowsie       | DUP         |
| K Murphy   | Sinn Féin | G Hanna        | DUP         |
| S Murphy   | Sinn Féin | J Jackson      | DUP         |
| A Quinn    | Sinn Féin | H Reilly       | DUP         |
| M Rice     | Sinn Féin | A Lewis        | DUP         |
| M Ruane    | Sinn Féin | D Taylor       | UUP         |
| S O'Hare   | Sinn Féin | M Gibbons      | Independent |
|            |           | J Tinnelly     | Independent |

Appendix 2 - Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Management Structure



## Appendix 3 - Example groups relevant to Section 75

Please note: This list is for illustration purposes only, it is not exhaustive.

| Category                       | Example groups   |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Religious belief               | <p>Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths.</p> <p>For the purposes of Section 75, the term "religious belief" is the same definition as that used in the <i>Fair Employment &amp; Treatment (NI) Order</i><sup>2</sup>. Therefore, "religious belief" also includes any <i>perceived</i> religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any "similar philosophical belief".</p> |
| Political opinion <sup>3</sup> | Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.   |
| Racial group                   | White (British, Irish, Polish, Roma, Irish Traveller, other white), Black (Caribbean, African, other), Asian (Chinese, Indian sub-continent, other), Mixed ethnic background, or ethnic group  |
| Men and women generally        | Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls).  |
| Marital status                 | Civil partners or people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people.  |
| Age                            | Children and young people; older people.   |
| Persons with a disability      | Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.  |
| Persons with dependants        | Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.   |
| Sexual orientation             | Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.   |

<sup>2</sup> See Section 98 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which states: "In this Act... "political opinion" and "religious Belief" shall be construed in accordance with Article 2(3) and (4) of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

## Appendix 4 – Screening Proforma

### Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Screening Form

#### Policy Information

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name of the policy   |  |
| Is this an existing, revised or new policy?  |  |
| What is it trying to achieve (aims/outcomes)   |  |
| Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy? |  |
| If so, explain how.  |  |
| Who initiated or wrote the policy?   |  |
| Who owns and who implements the policy?  |  |

#### Implementation factors

|   | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision? |     |    |
| If yes, are they Financial  |     |    |
| If yes, are they Legislative  |     |    |
| If yes, and they are Other please specify:  |     |    |

#### Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

|                                   | Yes | No |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----|
| Staff                             |     |    |
| Service users                     |     |    |
| Other public sector organisations |     |    |
| Voluntary/community/trade unions  |     |    |
| Other, please specify:            |     |    |

#### Other policies with a bearing on this policy

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| What are they |  |
| Who owns them |  |

#### Available evidence



What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for relevant Section 75 categories.

| Section 75 Category     | Details of evidence / information |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Religious belief        |                                   |
| Political opinion       |                                   |
| Racial group            |                                   |
| Age                     |                                   |
| Marital status          |                                   |
| Sexual orientation      |                                   |
| Men and women generally |                                   |
| Disability              |                                   |
| Dependants              |                                   |

## Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

| Section 75 Category     | Details of needs/experiences/priorities |
|-------------------------|---|
| Religious belief        |   |
| Political opinion       |   |
| Racial group            |   |
| Age                     |   |
| Marital status          |   |
| Sexual orientation      |   |
| Men and women generally |   |
| Disability              |   |
| Dependants              |   |

## Screening Questions

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 grounds? **Minor/Major/None**

| Section 75 category | If Yes, provide details | If No, provide details |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Religious belief    |                         |                        |
| Political opinion   |                         |                        |
| Racial group        |                         |                        |
| Age                 |                         |                        |
| Marital status      |                         |                        |
| Sexual orientation  |                         |                        |

|                         |  |  |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Men and women generally |  |  |
| Disability              |  |  |
| Dependants              |  |  |

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?

| Section 75 category     | If Yes, provide details | If No, provide details |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Religious belief        |                         |                        |
| Political opinion       |                         |                        |
| Racial group            |                         |                        |
| Age                     |                         |                        |
| Marital status          |                         |                        |
| Sexual orientation      |                         |                        |
| Men and women generally |                         |                        |
| Disability              |                         |                        |
| Dependants              |                         |                        |

3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

**Minor/Major/None**

| Good relations category | If Yes, provide details | If No, provide details |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Religious belief        |                         |                        |
| Political opinion       |                         |                        |
| Racial group            |                         |                        |

4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

| Good relations category | If Yes, provide details | If No, provide details |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Religious belief        |                         |                        |
| Political opinion       |                         |                        |
| Racial group            |                         |                        |

## Additional considerations

### Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities? (For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

Screening Decision

In light of your answers to the previous questions, do you feel that the policy should (please underline one):

- 1. Not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required)
- 2. Not be subject to an EQIA (with mitigating measures /alternative policies)
- 3. Be subject to an EQIA

If 1. or 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons why:

If 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), in what ways can identified adverse impacts attaching to the policy be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced?

In light of these revisions, is there a need to re-screen the revised/alternative policy? Yes / No. If No, please explain why

If 3. (i.e. to conduct an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons:

Timetabling and prioritising EQIA

If 3., is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? YES / NO  
If YES, please provide details:

Please answer the following questions to determine priority for timetabling the EQIA. On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for EQIA.

| Priority criterion | Rating (1-3) |
|--------------------|--------------|
|--------------------|--------------|

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations |  |
| Social need  |  |
| Effect on people's daily lives                       |  |
| Relevance to a public authority's functions          |  |

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for EQIA. This list of priorities will assist you in timetabling the EQIA. Details of your EQIA timetable should be included in the quarterly Section 75 report.

Proposed date for commencing EQIA: \_\_\_\_\_

Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impacts arising from the policy which may lead you to conduct an EQIA, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

Approval and Authorisation

| Screened by: | Position/Job Title | Date |
|--------------|--------------------|------|
|              |                    |      |
|              |                    |      |
| Approved by: |                    |      |
|              |                    |      |

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on your website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.



## Appendix 5 - List of consultees (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

*This consultation list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our Council's functions and policies.*

Belfast City Council  
 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council  
 Derry City and Strabane District Council  
 Fermanagh and Omagh District Council  
 Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council  
 Lisburn and Castlereagh Borough Council  
 Mid and East Antrim Borough Council  
 Mid Ulster District Council  
 Armagh Banbridge, Craigavon Borough Council  
 Ards and North Down Borough Council  
 Local Government Staff Commission for NI  
 Northern Ireland Housing Executive  
 NI Local Government Association  
 Committee on the Administration of Justice  
 Cedar  
 Autism NI  
 Community Relations Council  
 South Eastern Regional College  
 Southern Regional College  
 Education Authority  
 Action Cancer  
 Action Mental Health  
 Arts Council NI  
 Equality Commission for Northern Ireland  
 Disability Action  
 Disability Sports NI  
 Youth Council for NI  
 Carers UK  
 Department of Infrastructure  
 Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs  
 Department of Finance  
 Department of Education  
 Department of Health  
 Department for the Economy  
 Department for Communities  
 The Executive Office  
 Department of Justice  
 Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC)  
 Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)  
 Children and young Peoples Commissioner  
 Ulster Scots Agency  
 Victim Support

Women's Resource and Development Agency  
 National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)  
 County Down Rural Community Network  
 Confederation of Community Groups  
 Social Democratic and Labour Party  
 Sinn Féin  
 Democratic Unionist Party  
 Ulster Unionist Party  
 Alliance Party of Northern Ireland  
 Traditional Unionist Voice  
 Rainbow Project  
 Conradh na Gaeilge  
 Irish Congress of Trade Unions Northern Ireland Committee (ICTUNI)  
 Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA)  
 Pobal  
 Foras na Gaeilge

## Appendix 6 - Timetable for Proposed Measures (Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

| Measure   | Lead responsibility  | Timetable   |
|---|--|---|
| Section 75 Annual Progress Report                               | Head of Corporate Policy / Chief Executive                     | 31 August (annually)  |
| Revised Equality Scheme submitted to Equality Commission for NI | Head of Corporate Policy / Chief Executive                     | July 2025   |
| Implement Equality Action Plan 2023-2027                        | Head of Corporate Policy / Corporate Policy & Equality Officer | January 2023 onward   |
| Develop Equality Action Plan 2028-2032                          | Corporate Policy & Equality Officer                            | December 2027   |
| Consultation list reviewed and updated                          | Corporate Policy & Equality Officer                            | September (annually)  |
| Policy Screening  | Policy Owner / Corporate Policy & Equality Officer             | Ongoing   |
| Screening Reports   | Head of Corporate Policy                                       | Quarterly Policy Screening Report listing policies screened and the outcomes published. Tabled for consideration at Council's Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee, placed on the Council's website and forward to equality consultee list. |
| Training  |  |   |
| Council employees   | Human Resources / Corporate Policy & Equality Officer          | Employee training requirements are identified through the annual appraisal process / changes to procedures and statutory requirements. The  |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Seasonal workers                             | Human Resources / Corporate Policy & Equality Officer                            | requirements are scheduled in the Council's annual training programme<br><br>Training provided to all new and seasonal employees as part of their induction training.  |
| Elected Members (Councillors)                | Democratic Services / Corporate Policy & Equality Officer                        | Elected Member training requirements are identified through elected member development / changes to procedures and statutory requirements.<br>Requirements are scheduled in the Councillors' annual elected member development training programme. |
| Assessing access to information and services | Information / service owner / Corporate Policy & Equality Officer                | Annually   |
| Communication of revised Equality Scheme     | Head of Corporate Policy / Corporate Policy & Equality Officer                   | Mailing to consultees (see appendix 5 for list).<br><br>Copy of revised equality scheme on Council website.  |
| Five-year review of equality scheme          | Head of Corporate Policy / Corporate Policy & Equality Officer / Chief Executive | March 2030   |



## Appendix 7 – Glossary of Terms

### Action Plan

A plan which sets out actions a public authority will take to implement its Section 75 statutory duties. It is a mechanism for the realisation of measures to achieve equality outcomes for the Section 75 equality and good relations categories.

### Action Measures and Outcomes

Specific measures to promote equality and good relations for the relevant Section 75 and good relations categories, linked to achievable outcomes, which should be realistic and timely.

### Adverse Impact

Where a Section 75 category has been affected differently by a policy and the effect is less favourable, it is known as adverse impact. If a policy has an adverse impact on a Section 75 category, a public authority must consider whether or not the adverse impact is unlawfully discriminatory. In either case a public authority must take measures to redress the adverse impact, by considering mitigating measures and/or alternative ways of delivering the policy.

### Affirmative Action

In general terms, affirmative action can be defined as being anything consistent with the legislation which is necessary to bring about positive change. It is a phrase used in the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (NI) 1998 to describe lawful action that is aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities in Northern Ireland.

### Article 55 Review

Under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, all registered employers must conduct periodic reviews of the composition of their workforces and of their employment practices for the purposes of determining whether members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities are enjoying, and are likely to continue to enjoy, fair participation in employment in each employer's concern. These reviews, which are commonly known as Article 55 Reviews, must be conducted at least once every three years.

### Audit of Inequalities

An audit of inequalities is a systematic review and analysis of inequalities which exist for service users and those affected by a public authority's policies. An audit can be used by a public authority to inform its work in relation to the Section 75 equality and good relations duties. It can also enable public authorities to assess progress on the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties, as it provides baseline information on existing inequalities relevant to a public authority's functions.



## **Consultation**

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (i.e., service users, staff, and the general public) for their views on how the policy could be implemented more effectively to promote equality of opportunity across the 9 categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

## **Differential Impact**

Differential impact occurs where a Section 75 group has been affected differently by a policy. This effect could either be positive, neutral or negative. A public authority must make a judgement as to whether a policy has a differential impact and then it must determine whether the impact is adverse, based on a systematic appraisal of the accumulated information.

## **Discrimination**

The anti-discrimination laws prohibit the following forms of discrimination:

- . Direct Discrimination
- . Indirect Discrimination
- . Disability Discrimination
- . Victimisation
- . Harassment

Brief descriptions of these above terms follow:

### **Direct Discrimination**

This generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, on one or more of the statutory non-discrimination grounds. A decision or action that is directly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless: (a) in an age discrimination case, the decision can be objectively justified, or (b) in any other case, the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it – such as a genuine occupational requirement exception; or, a positive action exception which permits an employer to use “welcoming statements” or to take other lawful positive action to encourage participation by under-represented or otherwise disadvantaged groups.

### **Indirect Discrimination**

The definition of this term varies across some of the antidiscrimination laws, but indirect discrimination generally occurs where a public authority applies to all persons a particular provision, criterion or practice, but which is one that has the effect of placing people who share a particular equality characteristic (e.g. the same sex, or religious belief, or race) at a particular disadvantage compared to other people. A provision, criterion or practice that is indirectly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless (a) it can be objectively justified, or (b) the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it.

### **Disability Discrimination**

In addition to direct discrimination and victimisation and harassment, discrimination against disabled people may also occur in two other ways: namely, (a) Disability-related Discrimination, and (b) failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

(a) Disability-related Discrimination generally occurs where a public authority, without lawful justification, and for a reason which relates to a disabled person's disability, treats that person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) other people to whom that reason does not (or, would not) apply.

(b) Failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments:

One of the most notable features of the disability discrimination legislation is that in prescribed circumstances it imposes a duty on employers, service providers and public authorities to take such steps as are reasonable to remove or reduce particular disadvantages experienced by disabled people in those circumstances.

### **Victimisation**

This form of discrimination generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, because the person has previously exercised his/her rights under the anti-discrimination laws, or has assisted another person to do so. Victimisation cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

### **Harassment**

Harassment generally occurs where a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that is related to a non-discrimination ground with the purpose, or which has the effect, of violating their dignity or of creating for them an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

### **Economic Appraisal**

An economic appraisal is a systematic process for examining alternative uses of resources, focusing on assessment of needs, objectives, options, costs benefits, risks, funding and affordability and other factors relevant to decisions.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The mechanism underpinning Section 75, where existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories. Equality impact assessments require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

### **Equality of Opportunity**

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people on grounds of characteristics including sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependants, race and sexual orientation. The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive measures to be taken to secure equality of opportunity between the categories identified under Section 75.



## **Equality Scheme**

A document which outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with its Section 75 obligations. An Equality Scheme must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, screening, and equality impact assessments, monitoring, training and arrangements for ensuring access to information and services.

## **Good Relations**

Although not defined in the legislation, the Commission has agreed the following working definition of good relations: 'the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms'.

## **Mainstreaming Equality**

The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the every day work of public authorities from the outset. In other words, mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning, rather than being bolted on at the end. Mainstreaming can help improve methods of working by increasing a public authority's accountability, responsiveness to need and relations with the public. It can bring added value at many levels.

## **Mitigation of Adverse Impact**

Where an equality impact assessment reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories; this is known as mitigating adverse impact.

## **Monitoring**

Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating a policy to assess its impact on the Section 75 categories. Monitoring must be sensitive to the issues associated with human rights and privacy. Public authorities should seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring systems. Monitoring consists of the collection of relevant information and evaluation of policies. It is not solely about the collection of data, it can also take the form of regular meetings and reporting of research undertaken. Monitoring is not an end in itself but provides the data for the next cycle of policy screening.

## **Northern Ireland Act**

The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.

## **Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA)**

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). They provide statistical and research information regarding Northern Ireland

issues and provide registration services to the public in the most effective and efficient way.

### **Policy**

The formal and informal decisions a public authority makes in relation to carrying out its duties. Defined in the New Oxford English Dictionary as 'a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business or individual'. In the context of Section 75, the term policies covers all the ways in which a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland. Policies include unwritten as well as written policies.

### **Positive Action**

This phrase is not defined in any statute, but the Equality Commission understands it to mean any lawful action that a public authority might take for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity for all persons in relation to employment or in accessing goods, facilities or services (such as health services, housing, education, justice, policing). It may involve adopting new policies, practices, or procedures; or changing or abandoning old ones. Positive action is not the same as positive discrimination. Positive discrimination differs from positive action in that positive action involves the taking of lawful actions whereas positive discrimination involves the taking of unlawful actions. Consequently, positive action is by definition lawful whereas positive discrimination is unlawful.

### **Qualitative Data**

Qualitative data refers to the experiences of individuals from their perspective, most often with less emphasis on numbers or statistical analysis. Consultations are more likely to yield qualitative than quantitative data.

### **Quantitative Data**

Quantitative data refers to numbers, typically derived from either a population in general or samples of that population. This information is often analysed by either using descriptive statistics, which consider general profiles, distributions and trends in the data, or inferential statistics, which are used to determine 'significance' either in relationships or differences in the data.

### **Screening**

The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to improving these policies. Screening requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.

### **Schedule 9**

Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out detailed provisions for the enforcement of the Section 75 statutory duties, including an outline of what should be included in an Equality Scheme.

**Section 75 Investigation**

An investigation carried out by the Equality Commission, under Schedule 9 of the NI Act 1998, arising from the failure of a public authority to comply with the commitments set out in its approved Equality Scheme.

There are two types of Commission investigation, as follows:

1. An investigation of a complaint by an individual who claims to have been directly affected by the failure of a public authority to comply with its approved Equality Scheme;
  2. An investigation initiated by the Commission, where it believes that a public authority may have failed to comply with its approved Equality Scheme.
-



## **Five - Year Review of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme**

### **1 Introduction**

In accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is obligated, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across the categories specified within the legislation.

To fulfil these statutory duties, the Council has developed and implemented an Equality Scheme, which outlines the framework through which equality of opportunity and good relations are mainstreamed within its functions and decision-making processes

In compliance with the requirement set out in Chapter 10, paragraph 10.1 of the Equality Scheme—mandating a review at least once every five years—the Council has undertaken a formal review of the Scheme. This review has been conducted in accordance with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance titled *"Guidance on Conducting a 5-Year Review of an Equality Scheme"* (July 2016).

### **2 Review**

The purpose of the review is to examine the arrangements that have been in place and how effective Council has been in complying with its section 75 duties.

The Equality Commission has stated that a review should be based on evidence, and in its guidance details examples of evidence that Council may wish to consider when undertaking the review.

In the following section, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has detailed several examples of good practice and outlined how Council is meeting the requirements set out by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI).





## **Five - Year Review of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme**

### **3 Evidence examples**

#### ***Section 75 annual progress reports that the public authority has completed***

- (i) Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has submitted Section 75 annual progress reports in line with The Equality Commission's guidelines each year. The reports are compiled with the support and information of Council Officers from across the Council's Directorates and outlines how each section is meeting the requirements of the Equality Scheme. The completed annual report is presented to the Council's Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee for recommendation followed by ratification at the Council's monthly meeting. During the reporting period all annual reports on progress were submitted to the ECNI before the 31 August deadline.

#### ***Evidence that senior staff are complying with their scheme commitments and providing appropriate leadership***

- (i) The Head of Corporate Policy regularly attends meetings of the Council's Senior Management Team and Corporate Management Team to advise, guide and update officers on Council's statutory obligations. The guidance is then disseminated across departments and to officers to ensure Council meets its obligations.
- (ii) Officers continue to utilise the council's corporate reporting template which was introduced during the previous five-year review period. The reporting template enables officers to confirm they have given due regard to the any equality and good relations matters and that an equality screening has been completed, if required.

Officers can also detail in the report any consultations proposed to be undertaken will meet the requirements as set out within the Council's Equality Scheme. This template also allows the Corporate Policy and Equality Officer to follow up with officers on the completion of equality screenings and consultations.



### Five - Year Review of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme

- (iii) Council continues to provide equality screening training for Council officials. This training is provided to new employees as well as refresher courses for other officers.
- (iv) One-to-one guidance, advice and support is also provided to officers as and when required by the Head of Corporate Policy and the Corporate Policy and Equality Officer.
- (v) The Council's new online E Learning Platform also provides greater access and availability for council employees to avail of all training. Examples of training provided over the five-year period is detailed below:

| Training Programme   | Participants  |
|--|---|
| Introduction to Health and Safety                            | For all employees   |
| Equality Screening and Equality Impact Assessments           | Senior management, Heads of Service, employees  |
| Equality Scheme and diversity awareness                      | Compulsory for all employees  |
| Dignity at Work  | For all employees   |
| Code of Conduct  | For all employees   |
| Recruitment and Selection                                    | Compulsory for staff with line management responsibility and involved or likely to be involved in Recruitment & Selection |
| Investigations Officer                                       | Nominated employees   |
| Modern slavery and human trafficking                         | For all employees   |
| Safeguarding awareness training                              | For all employees   |
| Women in leadership – building your potential                | Nominated employees   |
| Irish Language training                                      | Nominated employees   |
| Let's talk Menopause   | Any employee who wished to attend   |
| Online training on domestic abuse and sexual violence policy | Nominated employees   |





## Five - Year Review of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Queer possibility & LGBT+   | Open to any employee who wished to attend  |
| Disability Awareness – delivered by CEDAR Foundation                | Nominated employees                        |
| Ulster Scots training – delivered by Ulster Scots Community Network | Open to any employees who wished to attend |

As the reporting period covered the COVID pandemic years many of the training programmes were delivered online.

Training undertaken to date has been aimed at increasing awareness and greater understanding of emerging issues, in addition to the Council's statutory equality duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and to ensuring improved delivery of our services.

The Council's Learning and Development Manager undertakes evaluation of the Council's corporate training.

- (vi) The Chief Executive's Equality and Good Relations Reference Group continues to be the Council's vehicle for considering and discussing politically sensitive issues with a view of reaching a common understanding, agreement and actions. The Reference Group operates under Chatham House Rules and are not formally minuted meetings. Recommendations from the Reference Group are provided in Officer reports to the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee. The Reference Group has held twenty-two meetings during the five-year review period.
- (vii) In line with its commitment to accessibility and communication the Council's Bilingualism Policy sets out the Council's commitment to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish language and the English language in the Council area. In promoting its civic leadership role, the Council continues to mainstream the use of the Irish Language as part of its overall Corporate Communications Strategy through the principle of progressive realisation. This enables the use of Irish to be an effective means of communication for citizens. Within Council, an online service has been developed by the Irish Language unit to allow council employees to request translations for



## **Five - Year Review of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme**

council services and communications in an effective and efficient timeframe.

### ***Evidence that decision – makers are aware of their obligations***

- (i) The Council's Directorate Business Plans makes direct reference to the Section 75 statutory duties and actions relating to the implementation of the Council's Equality Scheme.
- (ii) To ensure that Council is fulfilling its statutory obligations, the following responsibilities are included in all job descriptions of Council employees:
  - Promote diversity across the organisation and in the Department by adhering to the Council's Equal Opportunity policies and procedures and avoiding all forms of discrimination both as an employer and a service provider.
  - Promote Equality and Diversity across the organisation by demonstrating an open commitment to and actively promoting and celebrating diversity, promoting social inclusion and community cohesion.
- (iii) Elected members also continue to participate in various training programmes including Equality and Good Relations, Code of Conduct, Equality Screening and Cultural Awareness training. The training equips Elected members with the relevant expertise and knowledge ensuring that consideration is given to section 75 in the decision-making process within Council.
- (iv) The Corporate Policy Section has produced guidance and direction on policy development and policy review processes. The importance of policy development and reviews is directed by the Council's Senior Management Team and Officers must comply and review within a four-year period or sooner if required. To ensure access to information, all policies are placed on the Council's website as well as the Intranet and the Council's R Drive.





## **Five - Year Review of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme**

### ***Good Practice measures undertaken by public authorities***

- (i) Newry, Mourne and Down District Council continues to be an active member of the Local Government Staff Commission Statutory Duty Network. This network continues to be a space for officers from all councils to meet to share examples of best practice and provide advice, guidance, knowledge and expertise on issues relating to equality related matters. Since the last five-year review, the Council's nominated officer has worked with colleagues from various Councils to produce a Diversity Ambassadors Network which has been endorsed by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.
- (ii) The Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Shared Schools programme is a district wide scheme which brings together young people from different community backgrounds to deliver programmes with the aim of building relationships and provide a greater understanding of diversity and inclusion.
- (iii) Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Directorate have continued to work to ensure that events held across the district are inclusive. Accessible toilet facilities are available at several events including the St Patrick's day events in Newry and Downpatrick, Wake the Giant in Warrenpoint, the Eats and Beats Festival in Newcastle and the Newry Christmas light switch on event. Other examples of inclusivity include the Footsteps in the Forest festival held sensory sessions, Irish language specific sessions and Newry Arts Festival held musical workshops focusing on sensory development and people with dementia.
- (iv) Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Active and Healthy Communities Directorate continue to provide specific leisure programmes for people with disabilities. Programmes of support include dedicated Autism swim sessions, youth disability multi sports sessions, the Step into Health – Physical Activity Referral Programme, and a Buddy Card system.



### **Five - Year Review of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme**

- (v) The twenty-two meetings of the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group held over the five-year reporting review covered a variety of issues and discussions. Notice of Motions referred to the Reference Group for consideration included the impact of misogyny and transmisogyny, school uniform policy, ending violence against women and girls and support for the development of Ulster Scots. The Reference Group also considered and developed a process and policy for considering requests to place artworks/sculptures on Council property as well as detailed discussions on town and village signage. Members also reached consensus on recommending additional financial assistance funding programmes for the community which included a fund to commemorate the Centenary of Northern Ireland and King Charles III Coronation funds.
- (vi) Newry, Mourne and Down District Council continues its participation in the Local Government Staff Commission's Equality and Diversity in Local Council's initiative and appointment of Diversity Ambassadors. One officer and four councillors are the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Diversity Ambassadors.
- (vii) Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's District Electoral Area Forums are the Council's model of engagement and provide opportunities for all sections of the community to participate in discussions and operate as part of the decision-making process. Initiatives undertaken include building resilience courses for primary school aged children, positive aging events and warm space open house schemes as well as addressing multi agency approaches to local issues.





## **Five - Year Review of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme**

### ***Examples of collaborative working in relations to scheme development, screening, impact assessment, consultation and monitoring***

- (i) As previous detailed, Council's Head of Corporate Policy and Corporate Policy and Equality Officer provide training, advice and guidance on equality screening policies as well as dedicated independent training programmes. During the five-year review period 124 equality screenings were completed. Quarterly policy screening reports are tabled at the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee. All equality screenings are available to access on the Council's website. Consultees on the equality database are also notified by email.
- (ii) In relation to consultation, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Consultation and Engagement toolkit sets out Council's commitment to ensuring a comprehensive corporate approach is taken to actively encourage participation. During the review period, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council developed two Corporate Plans (2021- 2023 and 2023-2027). The Corporate Plans outline the Council's commitment and promise to deliver services to residents. Comprehensive consultation undertaken included an online public survey alongside a represented sample of over 700 residents aged 16 plus from across the district to gather views on issues such as services, health and well-being and the economy. Workshops were also held with specific section 75 groups and officers from the Corporate Policy Section also attended each of the Council's DEA Forums to engage with members.
- (iii) When undertaking the Council's new Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan 2023-2027, Council undertook a robust consultation process to ensure that all voices were heard. An online comprehensive survey, prepared by the Council's Evidence and Research team was available on all council online media channels for resident and targeted consultation workshops with young people and people with disabilities were also held.



## **Five - Year Review of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme**

*Any investigations that the Commission has conducted in relation to any such complaints and any resulting recommendations that the commission has made.*

- (i) No Investigations have taken place during the review of the five-year period.

*Complaints received under an equality scheme's complaints procedure*

- (i) Newry, Mourne and Down District Council did not receive any complaints under the equality scheme's complaint procedure during the reporting period.

### **Conclusion and Lessons learned**

This review has been conducted in a manner broadly aligned with the process used for preparing the Council's Annual Progress Reports, as required under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. However, beyond fulfilling a statutory requirement, the review has also provided Newry, Mourne and Down District Council with a valuable opportunity for strategic reflection on how the Equality Scheme has been embedded into the organisation's policies, practices, and culture over the past five years.

Through this process, the Council has examined key actions taken to promote Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations, enhanced staff training and awareness, and ensuring equality considerations are consistently integrated into policy development and service delivery.

The Council acknowledges the continuous and evolving nature of its responsibilities under Section 75 and is committed to further embedding equality and good relations into all aspects of its governance. The revised Equality Scheme reflects this commitment and sets out clear actions and monitoring frameworks designed to support full compliance with statutory duties.





## **Five - Year Review of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme**

Looking ahead and lessons learned from undertaking the review, the Council will continue to engage with internal and external stakeholders to ensure its approach remains inclusive, transparent, and responsive to emerging needs. The commitments outlined in the revised Scheme will also guide the Council's efforts to track progress, evaluate impact, and drive continuous improvement in promoting equality and good relations across the district.

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.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Report to:</b>                                   | Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee             |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>                             | 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2025                           |
| <b>Subject:</b>                                     | 2024/25 FOI/EIR/DPA/RM monitoring statistics         |
| <b>Reporting Officer<br/>(Including Job Title):</b> | Carol McClean<br>Assistant Director Legal and People |
| <b>Contact Officer<br/>(Including Job Title):</b>   | Sally Andree<br>Records Manager                      |

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

|            | For decision  | For noting only | X |
|------------|---|-----------------|---|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose and Background</b>   |                 |   |
| 1.1        | <p>The purpose of this paper is to present the monitoring statistics for the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 in relation to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>710 requests for information (RFI) received to Council and processed under either the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000, Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004, Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018; and</li> <li>Internal Records Management project.</li> </ul>   |                 |   |
| 1.2        | <p>20 Breach Reviews are also included within the 710 count for FOI/EIR/DPA RFI. Breach reviews are conducted in line with Council's Breach Management Plan. They ascertain if there has been a breach in Data Protection, capture learning to enhance compliance of the legislation and whether Council needs to inform the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Details of each individual breach are reported in the Corporate Services Quarterly Assurance Statement under the section risks realised.</p>  |                 |   |
| 1.3        | <p>Analysis for FOI/EIR/DPA RFI commenced in the 2018/19 financial year. 2020/21 was the first year we reported progress on our Records Management work. The monitoring statistics for 2024/25 show the number of requests made under each regime. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, there have been 111 requests under the Data Protection Act compared to 129 the previous year. There were 283 requests under the Freedom of Information Act compared to 342 the previous year. There were 285 requests under the Environmental Information Regulations compared to 280 the previous year.</p> |                 |   |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Key issues</b>   |                 |   |
| 2.1        | <p>The collection and reporting of this information will enable Council to establish trends in requests for information and records management, allocate resource and determine staff training needs.</p>   |                 |   |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |                 |   |
| 3.1        | <p>Councillors are asked to note the monitoring statistics.</p>   |                 |   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Resource implications</b>  |                 |   |

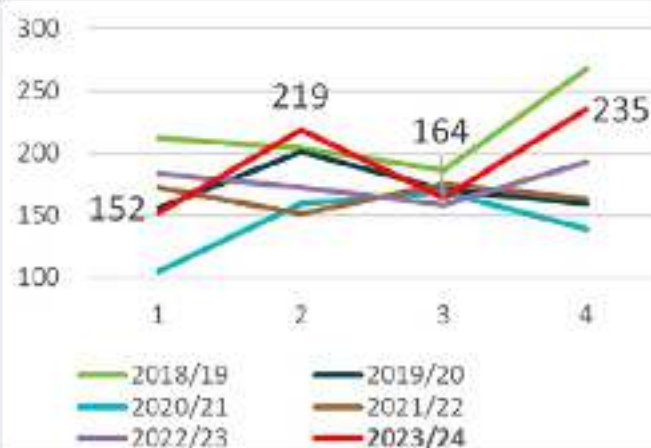
This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 4.1 | None.   |
| 5.0 | <b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>  |
| 5.1 | <p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>   |
| 5.2 | <p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| 5.3 | <p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>   |
| 6.0 | <b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>   |
| 6.1 | <p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>  |

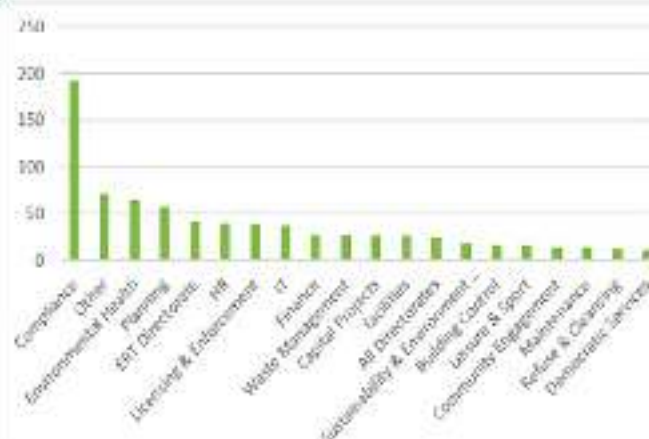
This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

|     |  |
|-----|--|
|     | <div>If yes, please complete the following:</div> <div>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></div>                |
|     | N/A  |
| 7.0 | <b>Appendices</b>  |
|     | FOI/EIR/DP and Records Management monitoring statistics for 2024/25.<br>FOI/EIR/DP and Records Management monitoring statistics for 2023/24. |
| 8.0 | <b>Background Documents</b>  |
|     | N/A  |

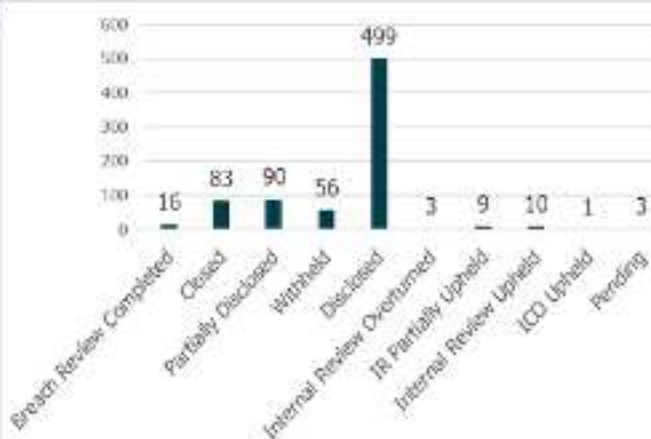




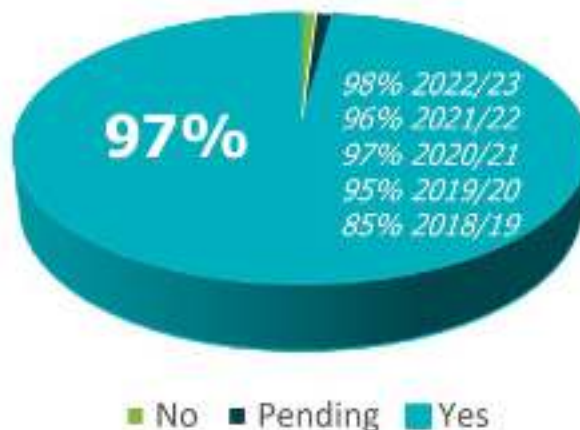
Number of annual requests for information from 1 April – 31 March 2024 per quarter.



Number of requests for information from 1 April – 31 March 2024 per lead Department.



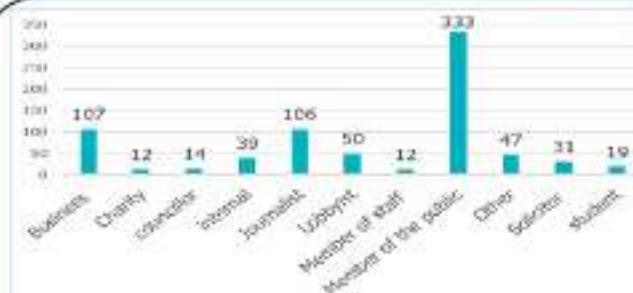
Decisions on the number of requests for information from 1 April – 31 March 2024.



Percentage of requests for information from 1 April – 31 March 2024 responded within the deadline.

#### Most common reasons for withholding information:

- Information already publicly available
- Commercial information
- Personal information



Type of Requester from 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2024

342  
FOI

280  
EIR

129  
DP

Number of requests for information from 1 April – 31 March 2024 per regime.

Number of Data Breach reviews conducted from 1 April – 31 March 2024.

17



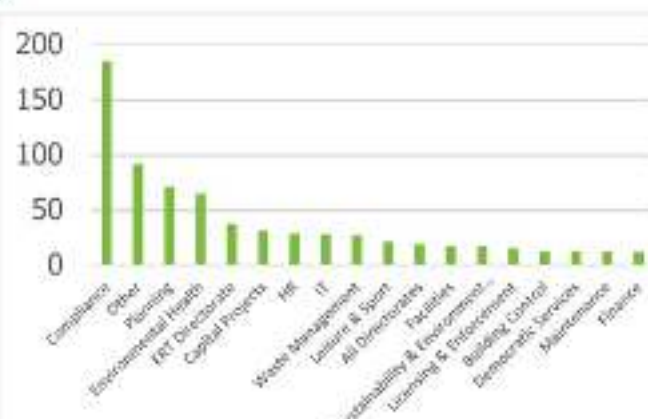
Number of ICO decisions from 1 April – 31 March 2024:

1

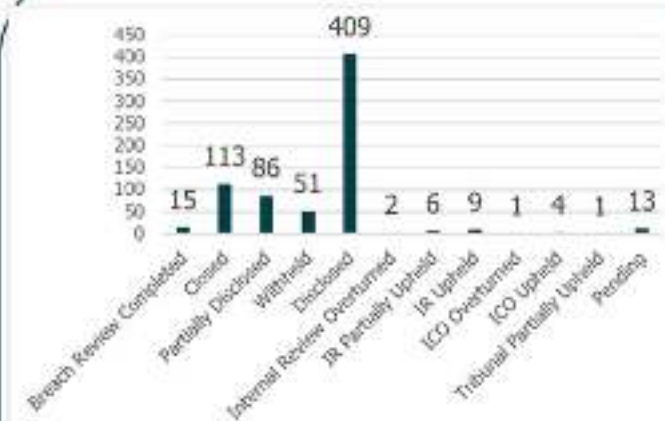
See decisions results above.  
1 Tribunal case pending



Number of annual requests for information from 1 April – 31 March 2025 per quarter.



Number of requests for information from 1 April – 31 March 2025 per lead Department.



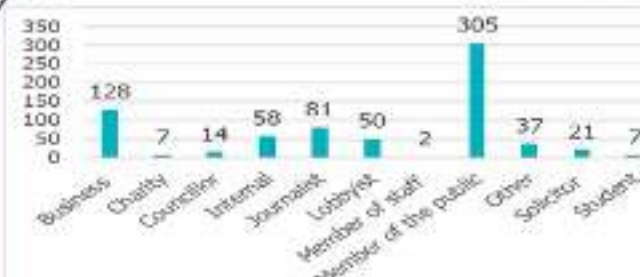
Decisions on the number of requests for information from 1 April – 31 March 2025.



Percentage of requests for information from 1 April – 31 March 2025 responded within the deadline.

Most common reasons for withholding information:

- **Commercially sensitive**
- **Manifestly unreasonable**
- Information already publicly available



Type of Requester from 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2025

283  
FOI

285  
EIR

111  
DP

Number of requests for information from 1 April – 31 March 2025 per regime.

Number of Data Breach reviews conducted from 1 April – 31 March 2025.

20



Number of ICO & Tribunal cases from 1 April – 31 March 2025:

11



## Records Management 2023-24

### Confidential Waste Paper Disposal

| Year    | Collections | Cost      | Weight (approx.) | Trees Saved |
|---------|-------------|-----------|------------------|-------------|
| 2021/22 | 7           | £518.06   | 7200 kg          | 122.75      |
| 2022/23 | 12          | £1,467.50 | 25345 kg         | 436         |
| 2023/24 | 11          | £1,013.00 | 22005 kg         | 375         |

A Value for Money exercise was carried out in September 2023 with contract awarded on 16 October 2023 to a new supplier, Bailey Waste Recycling Limited. Spend reduced by £387 in the 6 months to 31 March 2024 on the previous contract.

### Policy and Procedure

Updated Records Management Policy and Procedure V2.0 approved by Council on 04 September 2023.

Face to face Records Management training delivered to 405 Councillors and staff across Council in quarters 3 and 4 and a training video developed for the new eLearning platform.

### Retention and Disposal

The latest version of the Retention and Disposal Schedule including the updated Planning schedule (V1.3), approved by Council on 05 December 2022 is still awaiting ratification by NI Assembly. However V1.2, approved by Council on 10 January 2022, was ratified on 14 February 2024 and this is currently in use with the 2016 Planning retention rules in place. Once V1.3 has been approved by the NI Assembly it shall become V2.0 and will be available to members of the public via the Council website.

Annual Comparison on Confidential Waste Paper Disposal

| Year    | Collections | Cost      | Weight (approx.) | Trees Saved |
|---------|-------------|-----------|------------------|-------------|
| 2022/23 | 12          | £1,467.50 | 25345 kg         | 436         |
| 2023/24 | 11          | £1,013.00 | 22005 kg         | 375         |
| 2024/25 | 18          | £779.00   | 10170 kg         | 174         |

Year two of contract with Bailey Waste Recycling Limited.

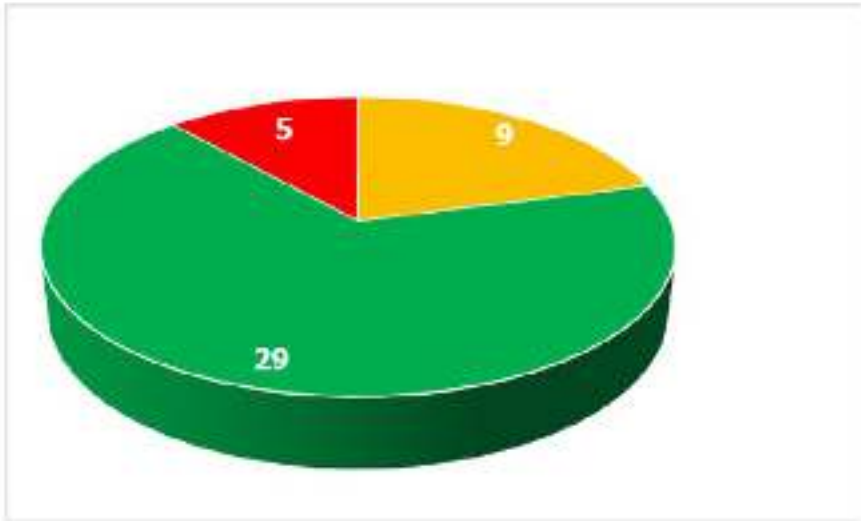
Policy and Procedure

Training video launched with the new eLearning platform, Skillgate, as mandatory training.

Retention and Disposal

Version 2.0 of the Retention and Disposal Schedule approved by Council on 05 December 2022 was ratified by the NI Assembly on 18 September 2024 and launched to staff with a short training video. The Schedule is available to members of the public via the Council website.

A review of the retention rules is in progress across the Council.



Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status on the number of teams who have completed a records management task.



|   |  |
|---|--|
| Report to:                                  | SPR Committee                                    |
| Date of Meeting:                            | 12 June 2025                                     |
| Subject:                                    | Planning Department Update                       |
| Reporting Officer<br>(Including Job Title): | Jonathan McGilly Assistant Director Regeneration |
| Contact Officer<br>(Including Job Title):   | Jonathan McGilly Assistant Director Regeneration |

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

For decision

For noting only

x

| 1.0           | <b>Purpose and Background</b>   |                          |                           |                          |                           |                         |              |         |   |   |   |             |           |   |   |   |               |         |   |   |   |              |         |   |   |   |              |        |   |   |   |             |          |   |   |   |
|---------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------|---|---|---|-------------|-----------|---|---|---|---------------|---------|---|---|---|--------------|---------|---|---|---|--------------|--------|---|---|---|-------------|----------|---|---|---|
| 1.1           | Following consideration of Planning performance paper at previous SPR committee an update report has been prepared to update members on activity since last report and reflecting data from report for Q3 2024/2025 published in April 2025   |                          |                           |                          |                           |                         |              |         |   |   |   |             |           |   |   |   |               |         |   |   |   |              |         |   |   |   |              |        |   |   |   |             |          |   |   |   |
| 2.0           | <b>Key issues</b>   |                          |                           |                          |                           |                         |              |         |   |   |   |             |           |   |   |   |               |         |   |   |   |              |         |   |   |   |              |        |   |   |   |             |          |   |   |   |
| 2.1           | <div><b>NISRA Statistics</b><br/>(Excludes those not validated and PADs, PAN, Certificates of lawfulness, discharge of Conditions)</div> <div><div><b>Live Planning application 31 December 2023</b></div><div><b>Live Planning application 31 March 2024</b></div><div><b>Live Planning application 30 June 2024</b></div><div><b>Live Planning application 30 September 2024</b></div><div><b>Live Planning application 31 December 2024</b></div></div> <div><b>1442</b></div> <div><b>1506</b></div> <div><b>1505</b></div> <div><b>1466</b></div> <div><b>1529</b></div> <div><b>Major applications</b></div> <table><tr><th>Period</th><th>Av processing time</th><th>Nr Applications received</th><th>Nr Applications withdrawn</th><th>Nr Applications decided</th></tr><tr><td>QE Sept 2023</td><td>421 wks</td><td>3</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>QE Dec 2023</td><td>133.8 wks</td><td>3</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>QE March 2024</td><td>115 wks</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>QE June 2024</td><td>118 wks</td><td>6</td><td>0</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>QE Sept 2024</td><td>34 wks</td><td>4</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>QE Dec 2024</td><td>21.7 wks</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr></table> | Period                   | Av processing time        | Nr Applications received | Nr Applications withdrawn | Nr Applications decided | QE Sept 2023 | 421 wks | 3 | 0 | 1 | QE Dec 2023 | 133.8 wks | 3 | 0 | 1 | QE March 2024 | 115 wks | 0 | 0 | 4 | QE June 2024 | 118 wks | 6 | 0 | 4 | QE Sept 2024 | 34 wks | 4 | 0 | 2 | QE Dec 2024 | 21.7 wks | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Period        | Av processing time  | Nr Applications received | Nr Applications withdrawn | Nr Applications decided  |                           |                         |              |         |   |   |   |             |           |   |   |   |               |         |   |   |   |              |         |   |   |   |              |        |   |   |   |             |          |   |   |   |
| QE Sept 2023  | 421 wks   | 3                        | 0                         | 1                        |                           |                         |              |         |   |   |   |             |           |   |   |   |               |         |   |   |   |              |         |   |   |   |              |        |   |   |   |             |          |   |   |   |
| QE Dec 2023   | 133.8 wks   | 3                        | 0                         | 1                        |                           |                         |              |         |   |   |   |             |           |   |   |   |               |         |   |   |   |              |         |   |   |   |              |        |   |   |   |             |          |   |   |   |
| QE March 2024 | 115 wks   | 0                        | 0                         | 4                        |                           |                         |              |         |   |   |   |             |           |   |   |   |               |         |   |   |   |              |         |   |   |   |              |        |   |   |   |             |          |   |   |   |
| QE June 2024  | 118 wks   | 6                        | 0                         | 4                        |                           |                         |              |         |   |   |   |             |           |   |   |   |               |         |   |   |   |              |         |   |   |   |              |        |   |   |   |             |          |   |   |   |
| QE Sept 2024  | 34 wks  | 4                        | 0                         | 2                        |                           |                         |              |         |   |   |   |             |           |   |   |   |               |         |   |   |   |              |         |   |   |   |              |        |   |   |   |             |          |   |   |   |
| QE Dec 2024   | 21.7 wks  | 0                        | 0                         | 2                        |                           |                         |              |         |   |   |   |             |           |   |   |   |               |         |   |   |   |              |         |   |   |   |              |        |   |   |   |             |          |   |   |   |

## LOCAL APPLICATIONS

| Period        | Av processing time | Nr Applications received | Nr Applications Withdrawn | Nr Applications decided |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| QE Sept 2023  | 29.6 wks           | 320                      | 17                        | 208                     |
| QE Dec 2023   | 31.6 wks           | 289                      | 14                        | 210                     |
| QE March 2024 | 42.4 wks           | 305                      | 17                        | 206                     |
| QE June 2024  | 43 wks             | 278                      | 10                        | 271                     |
| QE Sept 2024  | 46.4 wks           | 283                      | 15                        | 247                     |
| QE Dec 2024   | 50.1 wks           | 295                      | 34                        | 202                     |

Average for year to date 46.5 weeks

Processing times for local applications remains above target and NI Average.

Q1-3 in current year 719 decisions issued, for same period in previous year 669 applications were determined and as a result of applications largely being processed in date order processing times will increase as result of the backlog.

During this period NMD received the third highest number of applications in NI equating to approximately 12.7% of NI total

## CURRENT ANALYSIS

Based on latest **available data as of 1/6/25:**

**1782 live applications** – (This includes ALL applications that are not captured and reflected in NISRA stats)

### Made up as follows:

1278 applications are allocated & processing, approx. 25% are awaiting consultee responses.

504 awaiting allocation,

114 new applications to be validated.

For period April 2024 – March 2025, 1408 applications were determined. (23.5% increase)

For same period April 2023 – March 2024, 1140 applications were determined.

## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Revised Development Plan timetable was agreed by Council in June 2023 and by the Department in September 2023.

Draft Plan strategy was presented and agreed by Council on 31 March 2025 and will be formally launched on 27 June and will be followed by 12 week consultation period with a series of consultation sessions and venues agreed across the District.

### **ENFORCEMENT**

The NI target for the Enforcement is that 70% of enforcement cases are concluded within 39 weeks of receipt.

For Q3 October – December 2024, 54% closed within target this has improved from 36.5% in Q2

For period April to December 2024, 213 cases were closed, by comparison 170 were closed in all of 23/24.

For period April to December 2024, 200 new cases have been opened which broadly equates to the same number as were closed.

### **Challenges**

Challenges remain with respect to performance against statutory targets and the number of applications live in the system is also well above manageable levels.

A number of ongoing challenges continue to impact on service delivery, in summary these are;

#### Statutory consultation

This remains a challenge across ALL consultees and has been discussed with DfI at a strategic level

#### Application quality

The poor quality of some submissions continues to be an issue and given that several consultations are required with poor applications any changes required results in a delay in response times this adds to the challenges.

**Validation checklists** were presented in draft to February Committee, there followed a period of public consultation and 2 workshops with agents. Feedback has been received and a final proposal will be presented to Committee in June 2025, subject to approval implementation and training will be rolled out over July to September.

### **Recruitment Actions:**

From August 2022 to October 2023 there have been 9 separate recruitment exercises to appoint a range of posts across all levels within the Planning Department. Staff retention and recruitment continues to be an industry wide challenge in both Local Councils and the private sector.

From October 2023 to March 2024 there have been a further 4 recruitment exercises for, BSM ,BSO, Planning Assistants and Principal Planning Manager (LDP and Enforcement)

Since September 2024 there has been a further 3 recruitment exercises completed.

In March a recruitment for Senior planners resulted in no appointments being made and an internal trawl for acting up for 2no Senior planners is currently underway. If successful this will provide a career development opportunity for staff but will result in a temporary loss of potential 2 Planning Officers.

Work is ongoing with HR and Professional bodies to review JD Criteria and there will be a further trawl thereafter to permanently fill the 3 vacant posts and hopefully establish reserve lists.

## **Performance Management –**

### **Current performance improvement actions**

- Majors and Legacy applications are being reviewed monthly with an agreed action plan to determine / close applications that have been in the system before 2020
- Ongoing performance meetings with Senior Planning staff to review performance and agree actions to address challenges.
- Ongoing engagement with statutory consultees around response times.
- Senior Planners have developed workplans with all team members to be reviewed weekly/fortnightly to plan for weekly determination figures

### **Additional performance improvement actions**

- It is accepted that the performance improvement within the department in respect of development management is not progressing at the speed to deal with the backlog. As a result additional performance improvement actions have been introduced within the department.
- Dedicated training/mentoring programme to build capacity of new Planning Assistants, this is being delivered by part time Principal Planning Officer.
- Ongoing review of applications district wide. Allocation of case loads on the basis of application complexity to ensure caseloads are reflective of experience of each individual, eg
  - A more flexible allocation of cases, not based purely on geographical boundaries of planning teams.
  - Allocation of applications out of sequence ie not based on the date received



|            |   |
|------------|---|
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocation of projects with Economic development impact, grant funding, medical considerations etc.</li> </ul> <p>This has commenced however will increase when the full compliment of additional Planning Officers are in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stringent application of how many times applicants are given opportunities to resubmit information to address application shortcomings and missing information. If outstanding or revised information is not provided within specified timeframe, then will move the application to a decision. – This has been introduced and is resulting in formation being provided but needs to be monitored and implemented more extensively</li> <li>Introduction of individual team performance management with individual performance targets to ensure output is managed at an individual level as well at a department level – Ongoing</li> <li>Reviewing consultations to ensure we only consult with statutory partners where necessary. – This is ongoing, lead by Seniors.</li> <li>Following engagement with NIW a pilot has been introduced to help reduce the number of NIW consultations relating to rural applications.</li> <li>Continue to review staff complement and react to emerging resource challenges.</li> <li>Options outside of staff recruitment are currently being explored to address challenge of backlog and will be presented to Committee.</li> </ul> |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 3.1        | Note the content of the report  |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Resource implications</b>  |
| 4.1        | NA  |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>  |
| 5.1        | <p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>   |
| 5.2        | <p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>  |

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

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**Minutes of Mournes Gateway Project - Programme Board Meeting  
Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, 3.00pm  
Downshire Civic Centre/MS Teams**

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**In Attendance:**

**Programme Board Members**

**Councillor Glynn Hanna (Chair)**  
**Councillor Jill Truesdale**  
**Councillor Oonagh Hanlon**  
**Councillor Laura Devlin (Teams)**  
**Councillor Pete Byrne (Teams)**

**NMDDC Officials**

**Conor Mallon, Director - Economy, Regeneration & Tourism**  
**Josephine Kelly, Director – Corporate Services**  
**Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director - Economy, Growth & Tourism**  
**Michelle Boyle - Head of Tourism, Product Development & Visitor Experience**  
**Conor Woods - Strategic Capital Projects Manager**  
**Tracie McLoughlin – PA, ERT Dept.**

**MMGP/044:      Welcome and Apologies**

No apologies.

**MMGP/045      Draft Minutes of Mourne Mountain Gateway Programme Board Meeting held 17 December 2024  
(Item 2.0 as circulated)**

**Matters Arising:**

Councillor Truesdale advised she had requested an amendment to meeting record, she had stated that in Item 2.0 of the 17 December 2024 Agenda 'Minutes of previous meetings', were difficult to make sense of as there were no appendices or reports to accompany the minutes and she had also asked for details of the 8 compensation and early warning events.

Mr Mallon advised Item 2.0 of the December meeting referred to Reports of Project Board meetings, he said the full agenda pack of Project Board meetings which included the appendices and reports Councillor Truesdale was referring to, would not be

included in the Agenda pack of the Programme Board. Only the report of the Project Board meeting is circulated to the Programme Board for noting.

With reference to the details of CEs and EWs, Mr Mallon advised detail will be provided in Item 8 Project Manager's Report in today's meeting.

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor P Byrne , seconded by Councillor O Hanlon, it was agreed that the Minutes of the Mourne Mountain Gateway Programme Board Meeting held on 17 December 2024 be approved and Councillor Truesdale's comments are noted within the minutes of today's meeting.

**MMG/046** Reports of Mourne Mountain Gateway Project Board/BRCD Meetings held on 12 Dec 2024, 16 Jan 2025 and 13 Feb 2025.  
(Item 3.0 as circulated)

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor L Devlin, seconded by Councillor O Hanlon, it was agreed to 'Note' the MMGP/BRCD reports dated:  
12 Dec 2024  
16 Jan 2025  
13 Feb 2025

**MMG/047** Report of MMGP Stakeholder Forum Meeting held 27 Jan 2025  
(Item 4.0 as circulated)

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor O Hanlon, seconded by Councillor L Devlin it was agreed to Note the Report of MMGP Stakeholder Forum Meeting held on 27 Jan 2025.

**MMG/048** Stakeholder Engagement Report  
(Item 5.0 and 5.1 as circulated)

Mr Mallon advised that the Stakeholder Engagement Report presents an overview of the public and stakeholder engagement activities undertaken as part of the Mourne Mountains Gateway Project. He asked the members to note the contents of the report and agree the report can be shared on the MMGP section of the Council website.

In relation to the Report, Councillor Truesdale asked if it could be recorded who said the comments as opposed to references to quotes. Councillor Devlin advised that it is better not to publicise names to encourage all members to speak openly. Councillor Hanna agreed.



Mr Mallon said stakeholder group members are anonymised where possible. He said the purpose of the group is to capture engagement and positions of key stakeholders. Councillor Byrne agreed and said this matter was also discussed as part of the Newry City Centre Regeneration stakeholder group and it was agreed members comments should remain anonymous.

With reference to Item 5.1 Arup Stakeholder Engagement Report, Councillor Truesdale raised the following queries:

Page 7, Section 3.1 Business Webinar – Councillor Truesdale said she was advised there was an issue with the online poll at the end of the Business Webinar that meant questions couldn't be answered at the end of the session. She asked had this issue been sorted?

Mr Mallon advised that this would be confirmed

Page 7, Section 3.2 Public Engagement Event – Councillor Truesdale said reference is made to "two online campaign groups" who had "actively advertised the event to members and encouraged attendance to oppose/protest the proposals" and she asked if there was any evidence of this?

Mr Mallon said there was no reason to doubt the reported contents, as this is a factual representation of the engagement

Page 9, Section 4.1.1 Constraints of the Feedback Data – Councillor Truesdale referred to the 'Bias in Participation' and the comments that some attendees at the business webinar felt intimidated due to protestors, Councillor Truesdale said she attended the business webinar and there were no protestors present.

Councillor Hanlon said the business webinar wasn't the only feedback session and highlighted the report references the public event also.

Mr Mallon said that the report relays factual comments, opinions and feeling of the participants both in support and in opposition to the project, that is the intention of the stakeholder engagement event and it is not for others to discount the feelings or opinions of other people attending the event.

**Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor P Byrne, seconded by Councillor L Devlin it was agreed to:**

- i. Note the contents of the Stakeholder Engagement Report, and;**
- ii. Agree the sharing of the Stakeholder Engagement Report in the MMGP section of Council Website, and;**

- iii. **Officers to seek confirmation on accessibility of the online poll at the end of the Business webinar;**

**MMG/049 Active Travel Funding Update**

(Item 6.0 as circulated)

Mr Mallon advised Council were successful in their application to Department for Infrastructure (DfI) for capital grant funding for the Newcastle Active Travel Project. DfI have confirmed via Letter of Offer, funding in the sum of £334,889.44 in 2024/25 and £324,224.15 in 2025/26.

Councillor Devlin congratulated officers for the work they put into this successful application and welcomed the letter of offer from DfI. She asked if the list is definitive or is there a possibility of adding projects to it, if so, what format is required to seek approval of additions. Mr Mallon said we are at feasibility stage and there will be an opportunity to build on existing infrastructure or create new links if needed. He advised the Castlewellan to Newcastle road was already an existing priority route in DfI's own plans. Mr Mallon recommended a workshop is arranged to allow members to submit suggestions.

Councillor Hanna also congratulated the officers and asked that his thanks be relayed to those officers involved in preparing and submitting the successful application.

**Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor L Devlin, seconded by Councillor O Hanlon it was agreed:**

- a) **To note the Letter of Offer from Dept for Infrastructure confirmed funding in the sum of £659,113.59 for Newcastle Active Travel Project.**
- b) **Officers arrange a workshop to allow members to submit suggestions for active travel projects.**

**EXEMPT ITEM****MMG/050 National Trust Correspondence**  
(Item 7.0 as circulated)

Mr Mallon said it was important that members are aware of the recent communication with National Trust (NT) but reiterated these communications are confidential and their content is not to be shared outside of the Programme Board.

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor L Devlin, seconded by Councillor O Hanlon it was agreed that Officers' seek the current position of National Trust with regard to the agreed and signed Memorandum of Understanding.

**EXEMPT ITEM****MMG/051 Project Manager Update Report**  
(Item 8.0 as circulated)

Mr C Woods provided an update on the current progress of the RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design element of the project as set out in the report circulated.

Mr Mallon advised in relation to a) RIBA Stage 2 costs that a meeting with the Programme Board will be scheduled to present costs when finalised.

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor L Devlin, seconded by Council G Hanna it was agreed:

- a) To 'note' the Project Manager's Update
- b) Members to be updated on the RIBA Stage 2 costs at the next meeting.
- c) Members to be updated regarding the EW005 Gondola Foundations Design Scope.

**MMG/052 Date for Next Meeting.**

The next meeting to be arranged post Easter.

**Approved by the Mourne Mountains Gateway Programme Board.  
For Noting at Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting**

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**


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**Minutes of Mournes Gateway Project - Programme Board Meeting  
Friday 2 May 2025 1pm - MS Teams**


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**In Attendance:****Programme Board Members****Councillor Willie Clarke (Chair)****Councillor Jill Truesdale****Councillor Oonagh Hanlon****Councillor Pete Byrne****Councillor Laura Devlin****Councillor Glyn Hanna****Councillor David Taylor****NMDDC Officials****Conor Mallon, Director - Economy, Regeneration & Tourism****Josephine Kelly – Director of Corporate Services****Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director - Economy, Growth & Tourism****Conor Woods - Strategic Capital Projects Manager****MMGP/053:        **Welcome and Apologies****

There were no apologies.

**MMGP/054        **Verbal Update Following National Trust Announcement****

Mr. Mallon advised that the meeting was arranged to discuss the recent National Trust (NT) announcement with the Programme Board Members and to provide an update of actions taken since.

Mr. Mallon advised that he received correspondence from the NT on 21 March 2025 with nothing further until the email received at 9.05am on 1<sup>st</sup> May, this was followed by a call with the CEO at 9.15am that confirmed the communication was embargoed until 9.30am that same day, this left Senior Management with little time to advise elected representatives prior to the press release

Mr. Mallon advised that the previously signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and subsequent communication with the NT confirmed that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report was required by the NT prior to making a decision on



whether to agree to a lease at the Thomas Quarry Site or not. He advised that NT have now made their decision in advance of the EIA Report being completed.

Mr. Mallon advised that Senior Management had contacted the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) partners, the Department for Economy (DfE) and Tourism NI to discuss next steps in light of the NT announcement and arranged meetings for the following week (w/c 5 May 2025). He stressed the importance of these meetings to identify the current position regarding the project and to discuss next steps. He advised that currently, the project in its current form, which had secured BRCD funds of £30m, could not go ahead without the lease.

Mr. Mallon clarified that the £14m allocated within the Council Capital Plan had been agreed on the basis of match funding to lever the £30m from BRCD. He further advised that DfE had clarified that it will be for the BRCD partners to propose an alternative use of the funding allocated for the Mournes Gateway Project. Any proposal will also require the agreement of the Department for the Economy and the NI Executive." He reminded Members that the funding allocated to the project and the district was now at significant risk.

Mr. Mallon advised that officers will be working to ensure that the funding was not lost to the District and were taking all actions necessary to retain the funding.

Councillor Clarke noted that it was his understanding that should any alternative proposal be allowed to be put forward, it would have to go through the scoring mechanism and judgement process as previously conducted, with 6 Councils, 2 Universities and the treasury all having to agree. He advised that given the existing reserve list of projects from other Councils, it was unlikely that any new proposal would be agreed and the funding could be lost. He further noted that while the current position was through no action of the Council, there could possibly be some potential works in regard to Donard Park but it was the gondola project that had helped the project score so highly to obtain the funding originally. He stressed that the decision now lay with BRCD as to how to allocate the funding, noting that given inflation and the reserve list of other projects, there was risk that the funding had been lost to the District.

Councillor Devlin thanked Mr. Mallon for the update, noting her disappointment that based on the NT statement the £30m of external funding for the current project might not be secured, especially as the MOU had been agreed by both parties and outlined that a decision would not be made until such time as the EIA Report had been completed. She noted that in their statement, the NT referenced concerns they raised 8 years ago and that in recent weeks they withdrew engagement on the project. She clarified that it had been the NT who drafted the MOU and queried whether the NT had been attending and participating in projects meetings or had adopted a more passive role. She further queried what had happened between the NT signing the MOU, their statement regarding pausing engagement and their statement as of yesterday to make them essentially change their minds on the project.

Mr. Mallon advised that the NT had been attending the joint working group meetings and were a member of the stakeholder forum. He reminded Members that the MOU had been drafted by the NT, and agreed by both parties and section 5.4 stated that:

*"if the conservation impact has been assessed and if found acceptable by the Trust, the joint working group will aim to reach a consensus, in principle, on the key terms and conditions of a lease agreement...."*

Mr. Mallon further advised that in the correspondence tabled at the April Programme Board, the NT had reiterated their concerns, and that further consideration would be given to the agreement of a lease following the completion of the EIA report.

Councillor Devlin noted that in light of the NT announcement, it was important to hear directly from the NT and she proposed to invite the NT to a Special Council meeting to allow them the opportunity to provide clarity regarding the reasons for their change of position. She stated that Council had spent a significant amount of money on an EIA report following the agreement of the MOU and as the NT had rejected the idea of a lease prior to this EIA being completed, they needed to communicate with Council the reasons why. This was seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

Councillor Clarke confirmed that all Members were in agreement with the proposal.

Councillor Devlin referenced the social media commentary over the past 24 hours following the NT announcement and requested clarity that when the Outline Business Case (OBC) had been agreed and it had been approved unanimously by all Parties, that the OBC included the gondola as part of the project.

Mr. Mallon confirmed that the approved OBC was the current project including the gondola element.

Councillor Hanlon noted her disappointment following the announcement, given that the requested EIA Report had not been completed yet, that £30m external investment in the District had potentially been lost. She noted that the NT announcement seemed to be light in detail, referencing the Donard Recovery Report as a main reason not to agree to the lease and stressed that this should have been a critical conversation to have with the Council.

Councillor Hanlon asked Councillor Truesdale about the narrative from the Alliance Party and shared by Councillor Truesdale that Alliance had stopped the gondola, changed the route, that they would secure an alternative and the District would receive the money. She queried whether Councillor Truesdale understood the work that had been undertaken to get the project to the current stage, and that the funding was now at risk, or whether she believed that the stakeholders would wait for Council to come up with an alternative despite other projects being on a reserve list for the funding.

Councillor Truesdale advised that she didn't agree with the post and had asked the Alliance Party press office to remove the post.

Councillor Hanlon added that she thought that there should be corrected press release from the Alliance Party and while she understood that the NT had potentially put an end to the project and the Alliance Party may see this as a victory, it was potentially a death knoll for the tourism industry for the District. She also queried whether the Alliance Party had any suggested alternatives, as nothing had been put forward to date.

Councillor Truesdale noted that Mountaineering Ireland had put forward alternatives, but it was essentially not her role to offer alternatives as she was not an engineer.

Councillor Clarke stated that Mountaineering Ireland's suggestions were unlikely to be viable as they would not score high enough to secure the funding, further noting that there were projects on the reserve list for the funding and questioned what the Alliance Party had hoped to convey by putting the narrative out on social media that they could secure an alternative option for the funding.

Councillor Hanna noted his disappointment that the funding was now at risk, echoing Councillor Clarke's sentiments on the ability to secure the funding. He referenced Councillor Truesdale's radio piece where she had stated publicly that an alternative could be to have electric trains up the side of the mountain. He said that it was irresponsible to suggest such ideas to the public when they were not viable as an electric train would result in a substantial engineering infrastructure.

Councillor Truesdale acknowledged she had mentioned electric trains on the radio but stated that she was not putting the option forward as an alternative, merely stating that it had been suggested by Mountaineering Ireland, stressing that it was not her job to think of alternatives.

Councillor Hanna asked the following questions:

- Would the project be allowed to reset to allow for alternative ideas to be investigated, or was it time limited?
- Why had the NT wait so long and allowed Council to spend the money on the requested EIA report to then back out of the MOU that had previously been signed?
- Why had Council not released information to the public informing them of the risk to the funding now, and when would this be rectified?

Mr. Mallon responded with the following:

- Meetings had been arranged for the following week for with DfE, Tourism NI and BRCD, but he was unable to answer the question as yet regarding a time frame. He noted that today was essentially day one following the announcement and that Council had reacted quickly to engage with partners to discuss next steps.
- He was unable to answer the question regarding the NTs actions or decisions.



- Mr Mallon confirmed that further communications would be released following meetings with BRCD partners next week

Councillor Hanna stated that he believed that the NT should be asked to explain their decision making process to Council, and that the Community needed to understand what was at risk as the £30m may never be available to the District again.

Councillor Taylor also referenced the Alliance Party social media posts, noting his disbelief at the implication that it was the Alliance Party who had stopped the project despite Councillor Truesdale having stated that she had asked for it to be taken down.

Councillor Taylor asked the following questions:

- Was there any indication of the reason for the NT sudden decision, given they had agreed to the MOU and await the EIA Report? He stated that the NT needed to be open and clear in their communication regarding their decision making process.
- As the project was now in jeopardy, what would potentially happen to the funding – would Council be allowed to consider alternatives, or would the Treasury simply reallocate the funding elsewhere?
- As Council had to make an attempt to retain the funding, what alternatives were available to allow the funding to remain – would it have to remain within the Mournes area, or could it be redistributed to the District and was there any associated time frames?

Mr. Mallon responded as follows:

- He was unaware of the reason for the NT decision at this time, referencing the MOU and reminding Members that the EIA report was ongoing. He advised that these questions could be asked of the NT should they agree to meet with Council.
- He was unsure at this time of any timeframe implications regarding a decision relating to the funding allocation, reminding Members of the scheduled meetings next week with stakeholders.
- Regarding alternatives, a clearer picture should be available after the upcoming meetings but to retain the funding in the District any alternative would need to deliver on the same regional economic benefit and the overall objectives of the current approved project.

A discussion ensued regarding the graphic on the Alliance Party website, the result of which was Councillor Truesdale stating that she had already advised that she would request again that the graphic be removed, and Councillor Taylor advising that it was still misleading as there was a difference in outlining opposition to a project and actually stopping a project.

Councillor Truesdale made a statement that the Alliance Party had voted against the Gondola from the outset , this resulted in disagreement from all members present.



Councillor Byrne noted that in line with governance and transparency and the respect that Members should hold officers to, it was disingenuous of Councillor Truesdale to request that the Alliance Party press remove something from their page that she still had shared on her own social media.

Councillor Byrne further stated that Councillors try to secure investment from numerous avenues in an attempt to create more jobs, noting that two of the seven projects within the Tourism & Regeneration pillar of the BRCD project were located within this Council. He expressed his disbelief at the graphic shared on social media and questioned the merit of stating that the Party had actively stopped £30m of investment into the District.

Councillor Byrne questioned what conflict may exist under the Terms of Reference for a Programme Board, where a Member of the Board is in direct opposition to the project, and asked how BRCD could be confident in allocating funding to Council when it was clear that some Parties were adamant that funding be stopped.

Councillor Truesdale confirmed that she was merely questioning the work to date, and was not adamant that funding be stopped, she was merely scrutinizing the data provided and questioning the decisions made to date.

Councillor Byrne expressed his wish for Members to be open and honest, noting that in 2021 when the decision was made regarding the OBC the outcome was unanimous support. He stated that in order to make an informed decision, experts were to be employed to help collate and explain all factors in a clear and concise manner for Members to understand the impact of a project, and expressed his belief that it was extremely arrogant for anyone to jump this process to state that they knew better than the experts currently compiling all the information.

Councillor Byrne then queried whether the NT was in breach of the signed MOU considering that Council was still awaiting the ongoing EIA Report,

as section 5.2 of the MOU stated

"the joint working group will meet regularly, at least once a quarter and will report to senior management, and if appropriate, governing bodies of both parties on their progress and recommendations"

and section 5.4 of the MOU stated

"if the conservation impact has been assessed and if found acceptable by the Trust, the joint working group will aim to reach a consensus, in principle, on the key terms and conditions of a lease agreement..."

He stated that the NT needed to be clear in the outlining of their reasons for their decision, as they had requested the independent EIA Report and stated that if political pressure was a reason for their decision, then they needed to be clear on that.

Councillor Byrne expressed his disappointment that the Alliance Party were stopping investment and jobs coming into the District and celebrating it as a political win, and further requested clarity from Councillor Truesdale regarding the project, referencing a post on her social media from a number of years back that supported a gondola from Donard Park, noting in particular her expressed hope that it did not extend beyond the quarry.

Councillor Truesdale interrupted to state that she did not wish to be spoken to in such a manner, to which Councillor Byrne confirmed that he was merely highlighting a discrepancy and asked for Members to be responsible and back up their own messages to the public.

Councillor Truesdale stated that having no lease on the land was classed as a severe risk and that no one had offered an alternative "Plan B".

Councillor Clarke called for order and asked that Councillor Byrne be allowed to finish his comments, noting that Councillor Truesdale's Facebook was public and accessible to anyone to review.

Councillor Truesdale stated that she felt victimized by the comments

Councillor Clarke noted that the Alliance Party had supported the project, including the gondola so to state differently now was misleading to the public.

Councillor Byrne stressed that he had not interrupted anyone while they were addressing the board and stated that he was not victimizing anyone, he was stating fact. He further stated that as the NT had requested the EIA Report, they should have at least waited to see the report before making their decision.

Councillor Byrne requested clarity from Mr. Mallon that Council had done all in its power to adhere to the terms of the MOU and confirmed that all terms had been agreed to on behalf of Council, to which Mr. Mallon advised that he believed Council had.

Councillor Hanlon acknowledged Councillor Truesdale's comments but did not agree that she was being victimized, noting that the comments from Members today were a testament to the heightened emotion at the thought of the District potentially losing £30m of investment, especially considering the narrative being shared from the Alliance Party that they had stopped the project. She noted that if the graphic shared was incorrect then a corrective post should be forthcoming to address the misinformation. She highlighted her concern that the graphic and narrative surrounding it was that Council was not being fiscally responsible with rate payers money, which was wholly incorrect.

Councillor Devlin requested clarity on the decision-making process and highlighted the onus on all Elected Members to be honest with the public. She recognised that while Councillor Truesdale was not an Elected Member in 2021, her Party colleague Patrick Brown was. She requested confirmation of the voting that had taken place in 2021 and

requested clarification that the Alliance Party had voted in support of the project, which included the gondola.

Councillor Truesdale argued that what was voted on in 2021 was a concept, to which Councillor Clarke stated that the Outline Business Case (OBC) had been tabled and included the gondola, not just a concept.

Mr. Mallon confirmed that in 2021, the OBC included the base station, gondola and visitor centre.

Councillor Truesdale requested confirmation on the Committee that it was tabled at, with Mr. Mallon confirmed that it was SPR Committee.

A discussion ensued regarding the 2021 decision making process, during which Councillor Truesdale advised that she was not a Member of Council at that time and Councillor Clarke advised that while she may not have been an Elected Representative, her Party had been in support of the project at the time.

Councillor Truesdale then stated that more information was now available, and people were more aware of the ramifications of the project.

Councillor Byrne noted his frustration that while more information may be available now, the Alliance Party had attempted to block the appoint of the Integrated Consultant Team to deliver the EIA Report. He reiterated that while Members may disagree on the projects, to be celebrating the potential loss of a project and associated funding was not respectful to officers or residents of the District. He further expressed his concern that BRCD could lose confidence in Council to be able to deliver the projects.

Councillor Truesdale acknowledged Councillor Byrne's statement regarding conflict of interest and stated that should Members feel she was in breach of the Terms of Reference then she be removed from the Board, noting that she had not requested to be on the Board, and further that she was there to provide scrutiny on the work to date.

Councillor Byrne expressed his disgust for anyone who would take to social media to blame Council and officers for potentially having lost the funding for the project when he believed the NT were in breach of the MOU.

Councillor Clarke reiterated his statement from the beginning of the meeting, noting that the decision on the funding lay with BRCD, stressing that he had every confidence that officers would do their best for the benefit of the residents of the District.

Councillor Clarke noted Councillor Truesdale's feelings of victimization, noting he didn't believe that was the case and that this was evidence of the frustration of Board members given that there was a lot of misinformation in the public realm as to next steps, especially when the decision was ultimately out of Council's hands with regard to how the money could be spent if it was not allocated to the project. He reiterated

that false information should not be put into the public domain regarding alternatives to the project. He further advised that he had been contacted by a number of businesses regarding their concerns for the loss of major investment in the area, which left them unsure as to their own investment in their businesses.

Councillor Clarke acknowledged a potential conflict of interest in relation to Councillor Truesdale being a member of the Programme Board while actively lobbying against the project.

Councillor Clarke further advised that he worked within the local environment and stated that he believed the NT had done a disservice to the MOU agreement, essentially stopping £30m investment in the area. He noted that the NT statement referenced the Wildfire Recovery Report, advising that he had read the report and confirmed that it did not impact either the quarry or Donard Wood. He reiterated that the NT should outline their decision making process to the Council, noting his belief that the timeframe given to officers to prepare for their announcement was disrespectful.

Councillor Hanna noted his confusion that the NT could have come to a decision prior to the requested EIA Report being completed, querying if it was political pressure from a specific Party. He stated his confusion that a Newcastle Councillor would be actively lobbying against investment in their area, noting the detrimental impact the loss of investment would have on numerous businesses in the area. He queried whether the Active Travel plan funding was also at risk for the area.

Councillor Taylor left the meeting – 2.09pm

Councillor Truesdale responded by stating that she had been contacted by numerous residents in opposition to the project, not just businesses. She reiterated that she was not responsible for the decision of the NT, stressing that the lease had always been at risk, and while she did not want to see £30m investment lost, she stressed that there should have been more thought put into a Plan B. She stated that the NT did not seem to have ever been on board, so the decision should not come as a shock to Members.

Councillor Hanlon left the meeting – 2.10pm

Councillor Clarke noted that the Wildfire Recovery Report related to the uplands and peatlands, and the Gateway project had potential to mitigate visitors from venturing into those areas, ensuring that people were not roaming all over the mountain as it was a sensitive area. He noted that considerations had been given to linking the quarry to the ice house to encourage people further up the mountain to help alleviate concerns. He stressed that the quarry was located in a brownfield site and was outside the sensitive zone and reiterated his belief that the NT had been disingenuous regarding the detail in their statement.

Mr. Mallon noted that a further update meeting would be convened following the meetings with stakeholders. He advised that the active travel plan would not be impacted as it had been secured through DFI funding.



Meeting ended: 14.13

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon it was agreed to invite the National Trust to a meeting of Full Council to discuss their decision not to offer a lease for Thomas Quarry site.

**Approved by the Mourne Mountains Gateway Programme Board.  
For Noting at Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting**

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Report to:</b>         | Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee  |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>   | 12 June 2025  |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Assessment of Community Wealth Building Actions and Measures – Directorate Business Plans 2024-2025   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Carol McClean, Assistant Director Legal and People  |
| <b>Contact Officers:</b>  | Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy<br>Alan Beggs, Head of Evidence and Research<br>Suzanne Rice, Corporate Policy and Equality Officer |

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

|                     |                        |          |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------|
| <b>For decision</b> | <b>For noting only</b> | <b>X</b> |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------|

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose and Background</b>  |
| 1.1        | <p>A CLES / DTNI Report – Newry, Mourne and Down Pioneering the potential of community wealth building was considered and approved at the 11 August 2022 Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee.</p> <p>This Report set out key actions to deliver upon five recommendations and sub-recommendations which meaningfully progressed what was agreed in respect of the following two notices of motion: SPR/146/2020 Notice of Motion – Social Value Strategy, and C/205/2021 Notice of Motion – Community Wealth Building.</p> <p>As a practical way forward for Council to mainstream the principles of Community Wealth Building (CWB), CWB is now one of three cross-cutting themes within all Directorate Business Plans.</p> <p>The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an assessment of the Directorate Business Plan CWB actions and measures for the period 2024-2025.</p> |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Key issues</b>  |
| 2.1        | <p><b>Community Wealth Building</b> is an approach to the way that economies function, retaining more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people.</p> <p><b>Social Value</b> refers to the wider financial and non-financial impacts on the wellbeing of individuals, communities and the environment. Themes include increasing secure employment and skills; building ethical and resilient supply chains; delivering zero carbon; and promoting wellbeing.</p>  |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>   |
| 3.1        | Members are asked to note the Assessment of Community Wealth Building Measures 2024-2025 as set out in Appendix I.   |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Resource implications</b>   |
| 4.1        | The majority of the key actions relate to current ongoing activities of Council which will be assessed to demonstrate their contribution to community wealth building.   |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>   |
| 5.1        | <p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>  |
| 5.2        | <p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> |
| 5.3        | <p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>  |
| <b>6.0</b> | <b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>  |
| 6.1        | <p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>   |

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 7.0 | Appendices  |
|     | Appendix I: Assessment of Community Wealth Building Measures 2024-2025                            |
| 8.0 | Background Documents  |
|     | CLES / DTNI Report – Newry, Mourne and Down Pioneering the potential of community wealth building |



Community Wealth Building (CWB) Actions & Measures – Business Plans 2024-25

Active & Health Communities

Promote increased levels of activity and develop targeted programmes to support improved health and wellbeing outcomes

8. Review outdoor leisure and sports facilities in line with CWB and Council's asset management strategy to maximise participation by community stakeholders Q2-Q4 (CWB)

OWNER  
Andy Patterson (Mr)

Green

| Result Due          | Target | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status |
|---------------------|--------|----------|--|-------|--------|
| 30th September 2024 |        | Amber    | Project to be concluded in Q4.   | -     | Amber  |
| 31st March 2025     |        | Green    | A sports facility review was completed on the Council's previous Sports Facility Strategy and recommendations have been established for progression. | -     | Green  |

Work with partners to lead the implementation of the Community Plan and deliver better outcomes for local people

4. Review and implement effective coordination between Community Planning, DEA Fora and other existing partnerships Q3 (CWB)

OWNER  
Allison Robb (Ms)

Green

| Result Due          | Target                            | Progress | Notes   | Files | Status |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 30th September 2024 |                                   | Amber    | Ongoing   | -     | Amber  |
| 31st March 2025     | Demonstrable Initiatives/evidence | Green    | Ongoing examples include TILT, Housing Action Plan, Health & Wellbeing Summit and DEA Workshops | -     | Green  |

➤ **Develop a robust and reliable evidence base to underpin and inform future decision-making and policy development processes**

- ▼

1. Work in partnership with the Capital Projects team to update asset mapping, incorporating Partner assets where available. (CWB)

OWNER  
Allison Robb (Ms)

Green

| Result Due      | Target | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status |
|-----------------|--------|----------|--|-------|--------|
| 31st March 2025 |        | Green    | Review of Council assets has taken place with Capital Estates & Projects team to update the GIS base layer. Review ongoing. Continue to work with LPS (NIP) to access other public sector data | -     | Green  |

➤ **Create a strong base to engage, empower and build the capacity of local communities, ensuring their views inform the work of the Council and its partners.**

- ▼

8. Progress a model for the future delivery of Council's Community Facilities, aligned with CWB and Council's Asset Management Strategy (CWB) (SCC)

OWNER  
Allison Robb (Ms)

Amber

| Result Due          | Target   | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status |
|---------------------|--|----------|--|-------|--------|
| 30th September 2024 | By Q4 progress a model for the future delivery of Council's Community Facilities | Amber    | Being undertaken as part of Community Development Strategy. Draft brief being finalised prior to procurement. Update report provided to AHC Committee 21/10/24 | -     | Amber  |
| 31st March 2025     |  | Amber    | Process has commenced - currently information gathering process and benchmarking against other Councils models   | -     | Amber  |

Chief Executive / Corporate Services

➤ Provide efficient and professional HR services ensuring compliant integrated and sustainable services for all stakeholders that meet the corporate priorities and contractual obligations of the Council.

- ▼

6. Identify ways to increase the number of people from disadvantaged communities who are employed by council Q2-Q4 (CWB)

OWNER  
Marina Hughes (Ms)

Green

| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes   | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Amber    | Employment data from statutory returns relating to appointments is under review to support identification of strategy to increase the number of people from disadvantaged communities employed within council.  | -     | Amber  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | Focus on attraction of candidates for employment from under represented community. This has included: attendance at labour market partnership job fairs, attendance at careers fairs and reintroducing work experience placements to to promote NMDDC as an employer, enhanced use of social media, improved and engaging recruitment packs and selection process. Work will continue in 25/26. | -     | Green  |

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

- ▼ 3. Deliver approved Capital projects through design, procurement and delivery stages providing regular updates and reports to directorates, project boards and committees. (CWB) (SCC)
- OWNER  
Caolain Boyd (Mr)
- Amber
- 

| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|--|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | NMDDC Capital Projects and Strategic Capital Projects are progressing with reporting provided to internal and external stakeholders in accordance to each projects Terms of Reference.   | -     | Green  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Amber    | NMDDC Capital Projects and Strategic Capital Projects are progressing with reporting provided to internal and external stakeholders in accordance to each projects Terms of Reference. There have been delays in some projects due to a number of factors. | -     | Amber  |

- ▼ 4. 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)
- OWNER  
Caolain Boyd (Mr)
- Green
- 

| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|--|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | This is ongoing. Reports and costs are provided to directorates to inform committee reports and decision making. | -     | Green  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | his is ongoing. Reports and costs are provided to directorates to inform committee reports and decision making.  | -     | Green  |



- ▼

5. Continuation with the identification and disposal of council surplus assets, including the direct liaison with directorates, legals and external organisations. (CWB) (SCC)

OWNER  
Caolain Boyd (Mr)

Green

| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|--|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | Ongoing between directorates and consultation with DTNI regarding assets going through the D1 process. | -     | Green  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | Ongoing between directorates and consultation with DTNI regarding assets going through the D1 process. | -     | Green  |

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

- ▼

3. Increasing supplier outreach through attendance at Meet the Buyer type events and premarket engagement (CWB) (SCC)

OWNER  
Caolain Boyd (Mr)

Amber

| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes   | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | Procurement Manager presented at Supplier event to promote NMDDC and encourage local SME engagement with our tender opportunities . | -     | Green  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Amber    | Further events will be scheduled in 2025/26 as part of the review of the implementation of the Act and a review of systems.         | -     | Amber  |

- ✓

5. Develop new Procurement Policy. Once training on new legislation is complete overhaul the Procurement Policy to incorporate all the changes into NMDDC processes and supporting documentation Q2 (CWB) (SCC)

OWNER  
Carolain Boyd (Mr)



Amber

| Result Due       | Target      | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status |
|------------------|-------------|----------|--|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 | December 24 | Amber    | This has started and is progressing.   | -     | Amber  |
| 1st April 2025   |             | Amber    | An updated Procurement Policy has been approved by SPR in March 2025. Procedures have been updated and will be further updated in 2025/26 with the implementation of the revised Policy and the Procurement Act. | -     | Amber  |



Economy Regeneration & Tourism

Engage & collaborate with key stakeholders to support economic growth and prosperity across the district

4. Implementation of Go Succeed – entrepreneurial support service (community outreach, diagnostic, mentoring, masterclasses, grants, peer to peer networks). (CWB)

OWNER  
Amanda Smyth (Mrs)

Green



| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes   | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Amber    | Direct Contract award issued to SENTINUS via Community Outreach for Go Succeed. Masterclasses and workshops continue either in person and online. Council has engaged with Full Circle to assist with the administration of grants.   | -     | Amber  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | Council hosted in person Masterclasses and networking events in Retail, Craft and Construction. Additional support for the Construction and Tourism/Hospitality sectors was provided via mentoring. Enterprise Week was delivered across the district. Engagement with Newry Women's Business Group. Sentinus Digital Makers Programme concluded on 21st March 2025 with 5 post primary schools pitching an app for development. A Peer to Peer support network was delivered with Savour Mourne. | -     | Green  |



6. Implementation of LMP 24/25 action plan to improve employability and skills via engagement with business and education (subject to funding) (CWB) (CPP)

OWNER  
Amanda Smyth (Mrs)

Green



| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes   | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Amber    | NMD LMP received funding for operational spend on 28 August and have since commenced operational delivery to include Enterprise Pathway Programme; Transport Employability Academy; Employer Engagement Events; Upskilling for Growth Programmes and Employment Pathway event. Remaining initiatives as outline in 24/25 Action Plan will be delivered over the course of 24/25 Q3 and Q4, in addition to Q1 of 25/26. Engagement with businesses, education and training providers and key stakeholders has continued since Q1 24/25.  | -     | Amber  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | NMD LMP continued with the delivery of the Enterprise Pathway Programme; Transport Employability Academy; and Upskilling for Growth Programmes in Q3 and Q4, along with additional delivery to include a major Skills Conference focusing on the workforce challenges and opportunities within the NMDDC area; Classroom Assistant Employability Academy; Childminding Employability Academy; Digital Skills Academy; Childcare Employability Academy; and Warehousing and Manufacturing Academy. A pre-employment support programme, Get Work Ready was launched and continues to be delivered. Several events were conducted in Q3 And Q4 such as two Careers Fairs for all post primary school students throughout the District; Springboard Takeover Day; Bring IT On - Get Into Tech event; along with sponsorship of SERC Excellence Awards, namely Apprentice of the Year; and SERC's Big Apprenticeship Event. NMD LMP engaged with Ulster University Economic Policy Centre to conduct a review of the Strategic Assessment to inform the 25/26 Action Plan which also entailed engagement with local businesses, education and training providers and key stakeholders. | -     | Green  |





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8. Lead the secretariat and work in partnership with all member councils and universities of DBEC to deliver on the strategic aims and actions plans for the corridor. (CWB) (CPP)

OWNER  
Amanda Smyth (Mrs)

Green



| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes   | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | NMDDC on behalf of the DBEC Partnership (8 Councils & 2 Universities) provide a key role in progressing actions as per the DBEC Governance Structure organising, servicing, and progressing actions from DBEC Director, CEO, and Political Advisory Group Steering Group meeting. Key activities progress across 3 core themes focusing on Sustainable and innovation-led growth, Skills Development and Engagement & brand development.  | -     | Green  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | NMDDC is the administrative lead Council on behalf of the DBEC Partnership (8 Councils & 2 Universities) and continues to provide a key role in progressing actions as per the DBEC Governance Structure, organising, servicing, and progressing actions from the DBEC Director, CEO, and Political Advisory Group Steering Group meeting. Key activities progressed in the last 6 months include the launch of a new DBEC website, the delivery of a major DBEC Summit, launch of a new Investment Proposition for the region, enhanced DBEC brand development (printed and digital media), ongoing engagement with key stakeholder and progression of project development and funding bids. | -     | Green  |



▼

9. Support local business development and growth via a range of initiatives including artisan markets, social economy, marketing initiatives, events, international relations and digital engagement. (CWB)

OWNER  
Amanda Smyth (Mrs)

Green

| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes   | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | Artisan Markets are hosted monthly in Newcastle, Downpatrick and Newry. Make it Local campaign was delivered in Newcastle to coincide with Eats and Beats and Amgen Irish Open. Social Enterprises are supported via NMEA (SLA). Digital engagement is via ezines and Fbook.  | -     | Green  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | Artisan markets continue in Downpatrick, Newcastle and Warrenpoint supporting local crafters and makers. Social Economy Programme delivered by NMEA continues. An event was held in conjunction with Go Succeed and SENI in December 2024, the Social Economy Action plan was launched. Staff have received training on SE engagement. A Christmas Make It Local and two Spring Make It Local campaigns were delivered resulting in engagement with over 30 businesses. | -     | Green  |

▼

10. Liaise and work with Invest NI on the implementation of Decarbonisation project. (CWB) (SCC)

OWNER  
Amanda Smyth (Mrs)

Green

| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|--|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | Event hosted on 19th June with over 40 stakeholders and businesses represented | -     | Green  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | Invest NI liaised with S&E regarding website updates                           | -     | Green  |

▼

11. Progress Skills, Employability and innovation pillars under BRCD. (CWB) (CPP)

OWNER  
Amanda Smyth (Mrs)

Green

✎

| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes                               | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|-------------------------------------|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | Board meetings continue under BRCD. | -     | Green  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | Board meetings continue under BRCD. | -     | Green  |

▼

12. Development and management of the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund under FFNI across all Councils providing financial assistance for Digital Transformation in micros/small businesses. (CWB) (SCC)

OWNER  
Amanda Smyth (Mrs)

Green

✎

| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes   | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 | Green  |          | <div>• DTFF is an important programme delivered right across all of Northern Ireland. It has been designed to stimulate Digital Transformation and innovation in our small and micro businesses. These types of business generally do not have the capital reserves or resources to start to experiment, prototype and deliver new products or services using new and emerging technologies. • DTFF officially launched in November 2023 and to date has delivered three successful calls. The project is due to run until March 2026 with a further 4 calls planned. • To date the project has issued 172 Letters of Offer with an average grant of £15k. The estimated value of all Letters of Offer from Calls 1-3 is approx. £2.5m. • Within the NMDDC area the project has funded approx. 300K to local businesses allowing them to introduce emerging technologies as part of their digital transformational plans. • DTFF compliments and aligns with a number of other projects in the Digital and innovation pillars and is an important step forward in Councils positioning their intent to drive their local economies with an increasing focus on innovation support for our local businesses.</div> | -     | Green  |

Digital Transformation Flexible Fund The Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) is a key programme delivered across all of Northern Ireland and is led by Newry, Mourne, and Down District Council. With a capital budget of £7.5 million, the DTFF programme stands out for its unique approach, spanning all City and Growth Deals in the region. It reflects a collective ambition between central and local governments to foster digitally-driven innovation that accelerates business growth and regional economic development. Now in its fourth funding call since launching in November 2023, the DTFF has played a crucial role in helping businesses integrate emerging technologies such as AI, robotics, immersive technologies, and big data. As one of the first initiatives under the complementary fund, the programme has already delivered noticeable impacts on the ground. • The programme is currently in its fourth call, with a 66% increase in expressions of interest compared to Call 3. • Three calls have been successfully completed, and Call 4 is underway (as of April 2025). • Since its inception, the programme has: o Received 987 expressions of interest (Calls 1-4). o Invited over 439 eligible businesses to submit full applications. o Received 263 grant applications from eligible businesses. o Issued over 171 Grant Letters of Offer, totalling £2.5 million. o The average grant amount has exceeded expectations, rising from £12.5k to £16.5k. o The project is expected to run until March 2026, with four more calls planned. o In the NMDDC area, the project has issued grant offers of approximately £300k (subject to claims), enabling local businesses to adopt emerging technologies as part of their digital transformation plans. o DTFF complements and aligns with other projects under the Digital and Innovation pillars, marking a significant step in the Council's efforts to drive local economic growth with an increased focus on innovation support for businesses.

1st  
April  
2025

Green

Green





▼

13. Facilitation of Mobile Action plan NI implementation on behalf of 11 NI councils (CWB) (SCC)

OWNER

Amanda Smyth (Mrs)

Green



| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes   | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In June 2022, DfE, NILGA and OFCOM launched the Mobile Action Plan for Northern Ireland (MAPNI) to break down the barriers to mobile deployment across the Northern Ireland. • FFNI was nominated by Solace to represent all Councils. • FFNI requested that each local authority nominate digital champions to assist mobile operators at a local level following the Wireless Infrastructure Strategy and DSIT guidance. • In Sept 23 following FFNI engagement with each local authority, all Councils have nominated Digital Champions and this subgroup is led and coordinated by FFNI. • This group has met regularly to discuss current barriers to deployment and best practice around infrastructure and regeneration which is a key priority for economic growth across of local authorities and central government. • Under the Mobile Action Plan, FFNI officers within Newry, Mourne and Down currently sit on the Northern Ireland Barrier Busting (NIBBT) Oversight group, the communications subgroup, the planning subgroup and the public assets subgroup which meet regularly with other key stakeholders across central government and the mobile industry. • An elected member's best practice guide and awareness event is currently being planned by the Communications Subgroup and led by NILGA and Mobile UK to inform on the local authority role and importance of connectivity (Advanced Wireless and Fibre).</li></ul></div> | -     | Green  |



In June 2022, the Department for the Economy (DfE), the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), and OFCOM launched the Mobile Action Plan for Northern Ireland (MAPNI) to address obstacles in mobile deployment across the region.

- The Full Fibre Northern Ireland (FFNI) was nominated by Solace to represent all councils and coordinates nominated Digital Champions from each council. These champions act as single points of contact within their own council to support mobile operators in line with the Wireless Infrastructure Strategy and DSIT guidance.
- This subgroup has met regularly to discuss current deployment challenges and share best practices regarding infrastructure and regeneration –critical priorities for economic growth across local authorities and central government.
- FFNI has been working collaboratively with DfE, NILGA, and Mobile UK to create a best practice guide and awareness event for elected members, which is expected to be launched in Q2 2025.
- This awareness campaign aims to highlight the importance of connectivity (both advanced wireless and fibre) which aligns with the Growth Deal and Capital projects in Newry, Mourne, and Down, as well as throughout Northern Ireland.

1st April 2025

Green

Green



➤ Deliver infrastructure improvements across our rural and urban settlements

✓ 3. Implementation of the PEACEPLUS Local Community Regeneration and Transformation theme. (CWB) (CPP)

OWNER  
Sonya Burns (Ms)

Green



| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|--|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Amber    | Letter of offer received Feb 25. Awaiting Belfast legal services for Partnership Agreement template to issue to groups to complete capital works in facilities not owned by Council. | -     | Amber  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | LoO in place, partnership established supporting delivery which is now underway against Peace Plus terms and conditions.   | -     | Green  |



➤ **Efficient and effective provision of financial assistance to support our communities, businesses and the delivery of council services**

▼

2. The delivery of internal and external funding programme - DTFF (CWB) (CPP) (SCC)

OWNER  
Amanda Smyth (Mrs)

Green

| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes   | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | <div>• DTFF is an important programme delivered right across all of Northern Ireland. It has been designed to stimulate Digital Transformation and innovation in our small and micro businesses. These types of business generally do not have the capital reserves or resources to start to experiment, prototype and deliver new products or services using new and emerging technologies. • DTFF officially launched in November 2023 and to date has delivered three successful calls. The project is due to run until March 2026 with a further 4 calls planned. • To date the project has issued 172 Letters of Offer with an average grant of £15k. The estimated value of all Letters of Offer from Calls 1-3 is approx. £2.5m. • Within the NMDDC area the project has funded approx. 300K to local businesses allowing them to introduce emerging technologies as part of their digital transformational plans. • DTFF compliments and aligns with a number of other projects in the Digital and Innovation pillars and is an important step forward in Councils positioning their intent to drive their local economies with an increasing focus on innovation support for our local businesses.</div> | -     | Green  |

|                   |       |   |  |  |       |  |
|-------------------|-------|---|--|--|-------|--|
| 1st April<br>2025 | Green | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The programme is currently in its fourth call, with a 66% increase in expressions of interest compared to Call 3. • Three calls have been successfully completed, and Call 4 is underway (as of April 2025). • Since its inception, the programme has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Received 987 expressions of interest (Calls 1-4).</li><li>◦ Invited over 439 eligible businesses to submit full applications.</li><li>◦ Received 263 grant applications from eligible businesses.</li><li>◦ Issued over 171 Grant Letters of Offer, totalling £2.5 million.</li><li>◦ The average grant amount has exceeded expectations, rising from £12.5k to £16.5k.</li><li>◦ The project is expected to run until March 2026, with four more calls planned.</li><li>◦ In the NMDDC area, the project has issued grant offers of approximately £300k (subject to claims), enabling local businesses to adopt emerging technologies as part of their digital transformation plans.</li><li>◦ DTFF complements and aligns with other projects under the Digital and Innovation pillars, marking a significant step in the Council's efforts to drive local economic growth with an increased focus on innovation support for businesses.</li></ul></li></ul> |  |  | Green |  |
|                   |       |   |  |  |       |  |

9. Review of FA and SLA's including review of processes and procedures. (CWB) OWNER Amanda Smyth (Mrs) Green

| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|--|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Amber    | FA Review completed and results to be presented  | -     | Amber  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | New FA criteria applied to funding calls opened in Q4 24/25 (for 25/26 financial period) | -     | Green  |

10. Capacity building within community and business sectors. (CWB) (CPP) OWNER Amanda Smyth (Mrs) Green

| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes                               | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|-------------------------------------|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | Workshops on FA and Flood delivered | -     | Green  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | Workshops on FA and Flood delivered | -     | Green  |



▼

11. Implementation of the Local Co-designed Peace Plus Action Plan, (CWB) (CPP) (SOC)

OWNER  
Sonya Burns (Ms)

Green



| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes                                     | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Amber    | Action plan approved by SEUPB             | -     | Amber  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | Action Plan approved and LoO now in place | -     | Green  |

➤ **Deliver a sustainable tourism approach which supports local communities livelihoods and the environment**

▼

5. Launch & commence delivery of the new Tourism Strategy 2024 - 2029 (CWB) (CPP)

OWNER  
Amanda Smyth (Mrs)

Green



| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes   | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | The Strategy has been adopted by Council and delivery against strategy is ongoing.              | -     | Green  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | Strategy launch is planned for summer 2025. Delivery against strategy however remains underway. | -     | Green  |



11. Deliver and review the Tourism events programme and maximise opportunities from the Irish Open. (CWB)

OWNER  
Amanda Smyth (Mrs)

Green



| Result Due       | Target | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status |
|------------------|--------|----------|--|-------|--------|
| 1st October 2024 |        | Green    | Successful delivery of the 2024 events programme including the Irish Open fringe events in Newcastle. The review of the tourism events programme was presented to members on 29th October 2024 | -     | Green  |
| 1st April 2025   |        | Green    | Successful delivery of the 2024 events programme including the Irish Open fringe events in Newcastle. The review of the tourism events programme was presented to members on 29th October 2024 | -     | Green  |

Hughes, Catherine |catherine.hughes@nmanand.org|



Sustainability & Environment

- Embed and align the new functions and services within the S&E Directorate structure and across Council.
- Review and transform current operational models to deliver efficient, effective and sustainable services that continue to meet our statutory obligations.

- ▼ 2. Progress recruitment of vacant posts and increase permanent Council employed staff in order to reduce reliance on agency staff. (CWB) OWNER Sinead Murphy Amber 

| Result Due          | Target | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status |
|---------------------|--------|----------|--|-------|--------|
| 30th September 2024 |        | Amber    | S&E structure review progressed, permissions granted, with new post recruitments required in Q4 of 2024/25 | -     | Amber  |

|                 |  |       |  |   |       |
|-----------------|--|-------|--|---|-------|
| 31st March 2025 |  | Amber | Prioritised recruitment schedule to be agreed with HR. Recruitment of vacant posts in progress, including over 50 vacant Refuse and Cleansing posts being recruited as part of District Cleansing review, reducing reliance on agency staff in this section. | - | Amber |
|-----------------|--|-------|--|---|-------|

- ▼ 3. Continue the implementation of the Procurement action plan (CWB) OWNER Sinead Murphy Amber 



| Result Due          | Target | Progress | Notes   | Files | Status |
|---------------------|--------|----------|---|-------|--------|
| 30th September 2024 |        | Green    | Ongoing - recruitment of two contract and data managers has progressed this significantly in Q2 of 2024/25. | -     | Green  |

|                 |  |       |  |   |       |
|-----------------|--|-------|--|---|-------|
| 31st March 2025 |  | Amber | Two contract and data managers commenced employment in Q3 24/25, a number of contracts have been awarded and further work is ongoing on priority contracts from the PAP. | - | Amber |
|-----------------|--|-------|--|---|-------|



➤ **Develop and implement key sustainability strategies and action plans and advocate internally and externally to work towards net zero carbon through energy transformation, waste reduction, circular economy and green transportation programmes.**

▼ 6. Continue the implementation of the Sustainable Food Places Programme (CWB) (CPP) OWNER: Conor Sage (Mr) Green 

| Result Due          | Target | Progress | Notes  | Files | Status  |
|---------------------|--------|----------|--|-------|---|
| 30th September 2024 |        | Green    | Programme ongoing and SFP Officer has just been made permanent | -     | Green  |
| 31st March 2025     |        | Green    | Programme ongoing and SFP Officer has now been made permanent  | -     | Green  |

▼ 7. Develop and secure funding for a circular economy pilot project (CWB) (SCC) OWNER: Conor Sage (Mr) Red 

| Result Due          | Target | Progress | Notes                         | Files | Status  |
|---------------------|--------|----------|-------------------------------|-------|---|
| 30th September 2024 |        | Amber    |                               | -     | Amber  |
| 31st March 2025     |        | Red      | No progress with this project | -     | Red   |