



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

**2015-16 Corporate Improvement Plan**  
**Mid Ulster District Council**

**July 2015**

## Contents

• Introduction	2
• Corporate Plan 2015-2019	2
• Our Improvement Framework	4
• Consultative Arrangements	5
• Reporting on Improvement & Oversight	5
• Improvement Objectives 2015-2016	6
• Underpinning Our Improvement Objectives	8
• Council: Our Business as Usual	9

## Introduction

Mid Ulster District Council was established in June 2014 and assumed responsibility for the delivery of the full suite of local government services in the region on 1 April 2015, following the winding up of Cookstown District Council, Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council and Magherafelt District Council on 31 March 2015.

Since its establishment Council has been continuing to develop and maximise the reach of its services across the Mid Ulster region, whilst making arrangements to excel in meeting the various statutory requirements placed upon it.

This plan sets out the Council's arrangements for embedding a culture of continuous improvement across the organisation with a specific focus on continually improving the delivery of our Services and building on its 2015 - 2019 Corporate Plan commitment to embed *'a culture of continuous improvement which ensures the effective, efficient and sustained delivery of council services to the people of Mid Ulster District'*.

It sets out the framework to evidence how the Council is making arrangements to improve and support the continuous improvement in the delivery of its services. It serves as a summary of the Council's in year improvement arrangements.

## Corporate Plan 2015-2019

The Corporate Plan focuses on creating, building, delivering and sustaining what the Council does in the delivering of its themes and aligned priorities. This is the Council's guide which aligns what the Council will do during its 2015-2019 term.

Our themes and aligned priorities:

<b>Delivering for Our People</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High performing Services focused on Customer need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of quality and timely planning Decisions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase access to services and customer experiences across the district</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration of a culture of service improvement as the key to service delivery</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High quality, responsive, indoor and outdoor recreational services with increased customer satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of talent supported by continued skills building and learning opportunities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise the cultural and heritage offering with increased visitor number and satisfaction at our cultural venues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of a proactive health and wellbeing approach for all employees</li> </ul>

<b>Creating Growth</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of a local Development Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of a rolling capital investment programme</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise Opportunities to create and grow district wide business and investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of the Seamus Heaney Centre and development of a comprehensive strategy to optimise the tourism potential of Mid Ulster</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote enhancement and strategic development of a the physical infrastructure and connectivity to Mid Ulster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of employment through Business Start-Up</li> </ul>

<b>Sustaining our Environment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise potential of our natural and built attractions and facilities, building collaborative partnerships and strategic alliances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and enhance parks, play areas and open spaces to encourage physical activity in a sustainable manner to our community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realise tourism potential, being clear on opportunities and targeting resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficiencies in processing Planning Enforcement Cases</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and build a sense of civic pride in towns and villages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing dependency on landfill by increasing recycling, reusing and recovering energy from collected waste</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forming and encouraging collaborative partnerships to deliver positive outcomes for the people and the district</li> </ul>	

<b>Building Unity</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors and staff fully engaged on Council business throughout the district</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate a culture and the conditions where innovation is encouraged and excellence is expected</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural strategy and programme that celebrates and maximises the benefits of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of minority languages</li> </ul>

diverse cultures in the district	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement an organisational strategy for a modern workplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connecting communities and forming collaborative partnerships through community planning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate a culture openness and transparency where employees feel appreciated and have a sense of belonging</li> </ul>	

The themes and aligned priorities were devised following consultation and engagement with our service users, the public and our elected representatives. The corporate plan commits the Council to focusing on performance improvement by ensuring that:

*Throughout its 2015-2019 term the council will embed a culture of continuous improvement which ensures the effective, efficient and sustained delivery of council services to the people of Mid Ulster District*

## **Our Improvement Framework**

The improvement framework is built around the Council's Corporate Plan themes; delivering for Our People; Creating Growth; Sustaining our Environment; and Building Unity.

Our framework is knitted together by

Corporate Plan 2015-2019: *at the heart of our community*

Improvement Objectives: 2015 - 2016

Improvement Priorities: 2015 - 2016

Service Improvement Plans

Day to Day Council Business

Community Planning: *emerging themes*

<i>Rural Development</i>	<i>Economic Development &amp; Town Centre Regeneration</i>	<i>Health &amp; Education</i>	<i>Culture, Arts &amp; Leisure</i>	<i>Planning &amp; Environment</i>	<i>Good Relations, PEACE &amp; Community Safety</i>	<i>Social &amp; Community Development</i>
------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------	--	---------------------------------------	---	---

## Consultative Arrangements

Throughout the Council's establishment period in 2014-2015 it was engaged in various strands of consultation with representation from statutory agencies, citizens, stakeholders, the business community, prospective community planning partners and the wider communities it serves.

The public and communities the council serves were engaged through various means of consultation throughout 2014-15 to inform the future development and formulation of a new:

- Community Plan for Mid Ulster District
- Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan for the region
- Financial Assistance Programme for the Voluntary and Community sector
- Brand identity for Mid Ulster District Council

Every opportunity was taken to be inclusive in engaging as many persons as possible in the creation of the new Council.

Drawing upon the information captured from this activity the Council compiled its Corporate Plan and Improvement Objectives, forming the basis on which the improvement framework will be delivered in 2015-16. A consultation report is available but the following, drawn from the community planning consultation, provides a flavour of some engagement achieved:

Community Planning highlights:

- 800+ people participated in 13 thematic consultation events throughout October to December 2014
- 707 people responded to a survey
- 561 young people responded to a survey focused on youth
- 299 responses were received on a survey on rural issues

Community Planning findings:

- Strong community bonds
- Mid Ulster District accepted as a good place to live
- Council services and support provided are highly rated
- Broadband, mobile coverage, employment skills and service access needs addressed
- The Sperrins, Lough Neagh and engineering opportunities in the region need joined up

## Reporting on Improvement & Oversight

The Council's elected representatives were involved throughout the process of establishing the improvement framework for 2015-16, starting with the Corporate Plan.

Given the importance our elected representatives place on the need to drive continuous improvement and its statutory foundation within the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 various check-in strands and reporting arrangements are in place.

Reporting timeline:

- Quarterly Progress Reports to Management
- Quarterly Progress Reports to Policy & Resources Committee
- Six Monthly Progress Reports to Audit Committee
- Annual Progress Report to NI Audit Office

<b>2015-16 Improvement Reporting</b>		
Senior Management	3 month progress review	July 2015
Policy & Resources Committee	3 month progress review	Oct 2015
NI Audit Office	Audit & Assessment	Sept 2015
Senior Management	6 month progress review	Oct 2015
Policy & Resources Committee	6 month progress review	Nov 2015
Audit Committee	6 month update	Dec 2015
Senior Management	9 month progress review	Feb 2016
Policy & Resources Committee	9 month progress review	Mar 2016
Senior Management	12 month progress review	April 2016
Policy & Resources Committee	12 month progress review	May 2016
Audit Committee	12 month update	
Policy & Resources Committee	2015-16 Improvement Report	July 2016
Council	2015-16 Improvement Report Published	Aug 2016

Activity on the development of 2016-17 continuous improvement arrangements will commence in the autumn starting with engagement with our elected members and staff.

### **Improvement Objective 2015-16**

Consolidating and building on transitional year preparatory activity leading to full establishment in April 2015, the council's in year focus will be on standardisation to harmonise service delivery across the entire district.

#### **Improvement Objective**

To enhance Council services by adopting a standardised approach to delivery across Mid Ulster

**Improvement Objective:** To enhance Council services by adopting a standardised approach to delivery across Mid Ulster

**Why:** The Council continues to establish itself as a new local authority and believes that it is making strides in cementing a presence in the new district. The council spent considerable time in its transitional year before the winding up of its former councils in transitioning from 3 to 1 local authority.

Council wants to ensure that anyone who uses its services receives the same standard of care and attention irrespective of which part of the district they access it. It will standardise service provision at the point of delivery bringing services into line and as a result customer service improvements will be delivered by bringing all services up to the delivery method considered the best and enhancements built in, where possible.

Delivering for Our People

To enhance Council services by adopting a standardised approach to delivery across Mid Ulster

**How: Our Actions**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Registration Services Booking Arrangements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of Planning service and officers in local offices</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extended opening hours for council customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of new Customer Standards across the Council</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and delivery of new district wide Community Grants Financial Assistance Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and delivery of new Enforcement Policy for the Council</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased access to information on the new Council website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of availability of an on-line application facility for licensing and property certificates</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement common refuse collection standards across Mid Ulster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and implementation of Mid Ulster prices and charges for facilities and services</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of new telephony system to increase customer contact at Council reception points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of Advice Services across Mid Ulster</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of Leisure Card to encourage use of all leisure facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain and gauge customer feedback and satisfaction with front line services</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased accessibility of information on Council services through social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of an assets management system to realise their potential</li> </ul>

## **Underpinning our Improvement Objectives**

Informed by the Corporate Plan the Council has service improvement plans across its Services. Each service improvement plan is making a specific contribution towards the seven improvement aspects within the Local Government (NI) Act 2014. The success of our service improvement plans will be measured by the actions achieved during 2015-16.

- Strategic Effectiveness
- Service Quality
- Service Availability
- Fairness
- Sustainability
- Efficiency

## Council: Our Business as Usual

In addition to the objectives and aligned actions the Council is using to measure its performance the NI Assembly has set performance measures (Indicators and Standards) for the Council on which it will report annually. The Council has also set a number of corporately focused performance measures.

Taken together these are considered as forming part our day to day business and act as a barometer of how the Council is doing corporately.

Statutory Indicators – Set for Us	Statutory Standards – Set for Us
Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity	To promote 210 jobs through business start-up activity
Average processing time of major planning applications	Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 30 weeks
Average processing time of local planning applications	Local applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 15 weeks
Percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks	70% of all enforcement cases progressed to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint
Percentage of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for recycling)  Amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled  Amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	To landfill no more than 21,330 tonnes of biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste

<b>Corporate Indicators – Set by Us</b>	<b>Corporate Standards – Set by Us</b>
Average working days per year (full time equivalent) lost through sickness absence	5% or less the number of days lost due to sickness absence
Payment of suppliers (creditors) within 30 days	90% of all suppliers paid within 30 days
Percentage of Service Budgets within agreed expenditure	100% of all service budgets kept within agreed expenditure
Number of persons visiting Council facilities	Increase in persons visiting Council facilities
Percentage increase in income generated by council	Increase by 1% income generated
Percentage of overtime against payroll	Reduce overtime payments as a percentage of payroll
Correspondence responded to within 15 days	90% of all correspondence responded to within 15 days
Number of Freedom of Information Requests processed within 20 days	100% of information requests responded to within 20 days

## Contact Us

Queries on this plan can be directed to:

Democratic Services  
Dungannon Office  
Circular Road  
Dungannon BT71 6DT

Telephone 03000 132 132  
Email [committees@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:committees@midulstercouncil.org)  
Web [www.midulstercouncil.org](http://www.midulstercouncil.org)

