



October 18th, 2024

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

You are requested to attend a meeting of the

Mid and East Antrim Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee

to be held on **Monday, 21st October 2024 at 6:30 pm** in **Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena and via remote access.**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Valerie Watts'.

Valerie Watts  
Interim Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

# Agenda

## 1 NOTICE OF MEETING

## 2 APOLOGIES

## 3 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are invited to declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, including gifts and hospitality, they may have in respect of items on this Agenda.

## 4 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION

### 4.1 Policy Briefing - Circulated

📄 *Policy Briefing.pdf* *Page 1*

📄 *Appendix 1 Consultation Summary Report.pdf* *Page 3*

### 4.2 Policy Action Plan - Circulated

📄 *Policy Action Plan.pdf* *Page 4*

### 4.3 Article 55 Review Report - Circulated

📄 *Article 55 Report to Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.pdf* *Page 6*

### 4.4 Information Governance Framework - Circulated

📄 *Information Governance Framework.pdf* *Page 10*

📄 *Appendix 1 - Draft MEABC IG Framework.pdf* *Page 12*

📄 *Appendix 2 - Schedule of amendments IGP to IGF.pdf* *Page 35*

📄 *Appendix 3 - EQIA Information Governance Framework.pdf* *Page 43*

📄 *Appendix 4 - RNIA Information Governance Framework.pdf* *Page 58*

📄 *Appendix 5 - DPIA screening Information Governance Framework.pdf* *Page 67*

📄 *Appendix 6 - C&S screening Information Governance Framework V2.pdf* *Page 76*

## 4.5 Bi-Annual Information Governance Performance Report - Circulated

📄 *Bi-Annual Information Governance Performance Report.pdf*

Page 83

## 4.6 Standing Orders Sub-Committee – updated Terms of Reference - Circulated

📄 *Standing Orders Sub-Committee updated Terms of Reference.pdf*

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📄 *Appendix 1 - Updated Standing Orders Sub-Committee ToR.pdf*

Page 89

## 4.7 Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 Consultation Response - Circulated

📄 *Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 Consultation Response.pdf*

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📄 *Appendix 1 - Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 Consultation MEA Response.pdf*

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## 5 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

## 6 TABLED QUESTIONS

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*Closed Committee - In accordance with Council policy, representatives of the Press will not be in attendance for this section of the Meeting.*

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## 7 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION – CLOSED COMMITTEE

### 7.1 Procurement Update - Circulated

📄 *Procurement Update.pdf*

*Not included*

### 7.2 IT Cyber Security - Circulated

📄 *IT Cyber Security Update Report.pdf*

*Not included*

### 7.3 Reserves Policy - Circulated

📄 *Reserves Policy.pdf*

*Not included*

📄 *Appendix 1 - Reserves Policy Oct 24.pdf*

*Not included*

### 7.4 Licences/Agreements enacted under Scheme of Delegation -

## **Circulated**

📄 *Licences Agreements enacted under Scheme of Delegation.pdf*

*Not included*

📄 *Appendix 1 - Licensor MEA 04.24 - 09.24.pdf*

*Not included*

## **8 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – CLOSED COMMITTEE**

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### *Open Committee*

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## **9 Forward Plan for Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee - Circulated**

📄 *CRPG Forward Plan.pdf*

*Page 144*



**Mid & East  
Antrim**  
Borough Council

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**Council/ Committee:** Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee  
**Date:** 21 October 2024

**Report Title:** Policy Briefing  
**Publication Status:** Open  
**Author:** Lesley Kerr, Interim Policy Manager & DPO  
**Approver:** Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate and Support Services

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members in respect of matters that fall within the remit of the Policy Team.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1. Within the Corporate and Support Services directorate, the Policy team is responsible for managing Council's responsibilities in relation to information governance (Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulations and Data Protection/UK GDPR), complaints, public consultations, equality & diversity and rural needs.
- 2.2. Policies and guidance for Elected Members are available in the 'Policies' section of MinutePad.

## **3. Key Issues for Consideration**

### **3.1. Public Consultations**

Public consultations published by the NI Executive are centrally registered by the Policy team and considered by the relevant service areas, with responses drafted to those that are relevant to Council and/or the Borough. Draft consultation responses are submitted to the most relevant Committee for Elected Members to review and approve the response prior to submission.

A summary of these consultations is produced to the Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee each month. This month's consultation summary is set out in Appendix 1.

### **3.2 Information Governance**

A programme of work has been designed to ensure Council's compliance in all areas of information governance. The redesign of the Corporate and Support Services Directorate will support the team in taking forward this significant programme of change.

An Information Governance Framework is also being presented to CRPG for approval this month.

### 3.3 Complaints

Council implemented NIPSO's Model Complaints Handling Procedure from 1st January 2024. A summary of Council's complaints data will be reported quarterly to CRPG and published annually at each year end.

The quarterly complaints report for Q1 2024-2025 was presented to members in September and in accordance with the members request the reports will contain a quarter-by-quarter analysis going forward. The Policy team are currently in the early stages of preparing the quarterly complaints report for Q2 2024-2025 which will be presented accordingly.

### 3.4 Equality & Diversity and Rural Needs

Council's internal EDI Network of officers continues to meet quarterly and report on the progress of Council's Disability Action Plan and Equality Scheme to the Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee. The Policy team sends a report on equality and diversity to CRPG twice per year.

Council have commenced publishing its equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments on its website in line with best practice, to ensure transparency and accountability.

## 4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1 Responding to relevant public consultations is necessary for Council to publicly demonstrate its policy position and work towards achieving optimum outcomes on behalf of the residents of the Borough.

## 5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 N/A

## 6. Recommendation or Decision

It is recommended that Elected Members:

- (i) Note the Public Consultation summary report at Appendix 1.

## 7. Appendices / Links

Appendix 1 Consultation Summary Report



## Consultation Register Summary Report Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee

21<sup>st</sup> October 2024

### A. Consultations where Council is the stakeholder

Consultations for Response by MEABC		
Title and Closing Date	Consulting Department/Organisation	Proposed Dept and Committee
Public invited to have their say on Trust's review of general surgery services	Department of Health	PPHWB Neighbourhood & Communities
Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'	Northern Ireland Housing Executive	Communities Corporate Performance Neighbourhood & Communities
Proposed new Code of Practice on Sampling and Reporting at Materials Facilities	DAERA	Neighbourhood Services Environmental & Economy Committee
Consultation stakeholder events on the draft policing plan 2025-2030	Policing Board	PCSP & PPHWB Neighbourhood & Communities

### B. Consultations being conducted by Council

Title	Consulting Department	Comments/Link to Consultation Documents
arc21 Addendum to the Waste Management Plan	Operations	<a href="https://www.arc21.org.uk/what-we-do/Consultation-on-Addendum-to-WMP">https://www.arc21.org.uk/what-we-do/Consultation-on-Addendum-to-WMP</a>



**Council/Committee:** Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee  
**Date:** 21 October 2024

**Report Title:** Policy Action Plan  
**Publication Status:** Open  
**Author:** Siobhan Fisher, Assistant Director Citizen Focus  
**Approver:** Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To update Elected Members on the proposed way forward in relation to the management of Council's policies and procedures.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. Currently, there is no existence of a central policy register within the organisation, some policies are held on the shared ICT drive, whilst some are held locally at departmental level. There is a lack of a sufficiently robust framework for responsibility of ensuring that policies are reviewed and kept up to date, consulted upon or appropriately screened as per statutory requirements.
- 2.2. The restructure of the Corporate and Support Services Directorate aims to support the development and maintenance of an efficient and effective Corporate Policy Framework to address these issues.
- 2.3. Within the proposed new structure for the Corporate Services & Support Directorate there are three dedicated 'Policy & Performance Officers', who will report directly into the 'Policy, Performance & Partnership Manager'. This dedicated resource will take forward the Corporate Policy Framework programme of work.

## 3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. When the posts in the new structure have been filled, the following actions will be taken:
  - An audit will be carried out across all Council departments and of the shared ICT drive, to determine the current policy position.
  - A central policy register will be compiled.
  - The Policy & Performance Officers will work across all departments to ascertain which policies are still live and which can be archived.
  - Any additional policies found to be in operation will be added to the register along with any policies that are required to address gaps.



- The Policy & Performance Officers will then create a centralised location for storage of all policies and ascertain if all screening has been carried out. Where the appropriate screening has not been completed, the officers will support each department to complete this important exercise.
- The central policy register will hold details of key dates in relation to each policy, including review and expiration. The Policy & Performance Officers will assume responsibility for monitoring and maintaining the central policy register. They will reach out to policy owners in a timely manner to inform them of upcoming review dates and work to support them through the process.
- The Policy & Performance team will also work to develop a Policy Development Toolkit, which will create a clear approach to the development, implementation, management and governance of all Council policies and procedures. It will ensure that policies are developed and implemented in an efficient, cost effective and consistent manner, whilst ensuring good governance across development and approval processes.
- The toolkit will include processes for consultation and engagement on key policies as appropriate.

#### **4. General Considerations / Implications**

- 4.1. This programme of work aligns with the *Performance* pillar of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028. It will help meet the objective of:

*"Develop our key support services to help us achieve our goals, underpinning and enabling us to operate effectively and meet our core, statutory and regulatory obligations."*

#### **5. Proposed Way Forward**

- 5.1. Work will be able to commence as the restructure of the Corporate and Support Services Directorate progresses, and the necessary resources are in place.

#### **6. Recommendation or Decision**

- 6.1. Elected Members are asked to note the proposed way forward in relation to the management of Council's policies and procedures.



<b>Council/Committee:</b>	Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance
<b>Date:</b>	21 October 2024
<b>Report Title:</b>	Article 55 Report to Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
<b>Publication Status:</b>	Open
<b>Author:</b>	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director – Business Support
<b>Approver:</b>	Laureen Donnan, Director of Corporate Services

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the actions identified in the Council's 'Article 55' Fair Employment Monitoring Report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Under Article 55 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, all registered employers are required to complete a review of the composition of their workforce and employment practices at least once every three years.
- 2.2 The purpose of the review is to:
  - determine whether members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities are enjoying, and are likely to continue to enjoy, fair participation in employment
  - take affirmative action if fair participation is not being secured by members of the Protestant and Catholic communities
  - set goals and timetables as part of affirmative action
  - take account of the guidance in the [Fair Employment Code of Practice](#)
- 2.3 The Article 55 review is structured to identify employment patterns, trends and practices that allow organisations to reach their own conclusions on fair participation, affirmative action, goals and timetables.

## 3. Key Issues for Consideration

### Workforce Composition

- 3.1 The most recent Article 55 review, covering the period from 02 January 2020 until 01 January 2023 was completed in September 2024 and has been submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The Commission will now take time to review the statistical data before providing a response with feedback and recommendations.



- 3.2 Council's Article 55 review indicates that the overall workforce composition of Protestant and Roman Catholic employees continues to be broadly in line with what is expected, using Northern Ireland as the catchment area.
- 3.3 However, when looking in more detail at specific job groups, known as Standard Occupational Categories or SOCs there continues to be evidence of some underrepresentation.
- 3.4 The proportions employed in management/professional SOCs in 2023, indicate an under-representation of Roman Catholics employed at this level in the Council, using the whole of Northern Ireland as a relevant comparator, taking account of higher salaries in these posts and the assumed wider travel to work area. However, it should be noted that this does represent a small improvement when compared with the last review period.
- 3.5 For administrative/clerical posts, the proportions of Protestants and Roman Catholics employed in these posts in 2023 are broadly in line with what would be expected, using the Borough as the relevant catchment area.
- 3.6 The proportions employed in manual, leisure or customer service jobs indicate a significant under-representation of Roman Catholics employed in these posts at MEA Council using the Borough as the appropriate catchment area. This has been the case for some time.

### **Applications**

- 3.7 In terms of applications, the proportions of Protestant and Roman Catholic applicants for posts at the Council fluctuated during the three-year period under review. During year one of the review period, there was a much higher level of external, publicly advertised recruitment activity when compared with both year two and year three. This is as a consequence of the decision taken by the Council in early 2021 to advertise all posts internally in the first instance. Mid and East Antrim is one of the very few, if not only council, to retain this approach.
- 3.8 The proportion of applicants from both the Protestant and Roman Catholic community fluctuated during the review period but the figures remain broadly in line with what would be expected using the Northern Ireland economically active figures.
- 3.9 The proportion of Roman Catholic applicants for administrative/clerical posts increased during the review period, indicating a small improvement in the percentage of Roman Catholics applying for these types of posts.
- 3.10 In general, there has been a very low level of external recruitment for posts such as Leisure Attendants, Refuse Collectors, Caretakers, Skilled Trades during the whole three year review period. This is primarily due to Council's



policy to fill posts via internal trawls in the first instance and also ongoing consultation on RPA structures and negotiations on terms and conditions related matters.

### **Fair Participation and Affirmative Action**

- 3.11 As previously outlined at 3.4 there appears to be a marginal under-representation of Roman Catholics in management/ professional posts (SOCs 1-3) but this has improved slightly since the last review period. The statistics for manual posts (SOCs 5-9) also demonstrate an under-representation of Roman Catholic applicants, based on the relevant catchment areas.
- 3.12 Taking account of the statistical data, Council acknowledged in the report that it needs to take further affirmative action to secure fair participation but noted that a number of measures are already in place, including training for those involved in recruitment and selection; cross community representation on selection panels and the introduction of exit interviews.
- 3.13 Council concluded that a number of further affirmative action measures should be taken such as the inclusion of statements in job adverts welcoming applications from the Roman Catholic community for posts in the Management and Professional and Skilled Trades categories.
- 3.14 In the proposed restructure of the Corporate & Support Services Department, a new dedicated Workforce and Resourcing Manager will take a lead on recruitment and employee branding and a new Employee Inclusion and Wellbeing Officer will take a lead in developing and implementing policies to ensure the Council has a more diverse and inclusive workforce. The OD and Talent Manager will lead on the development of work placement approaches which aim to attract a broad range of candidates into the workforce. Together, these postholders, with the newly proposed HR & OD Manager, will be tasked with identifying actions required to improve participation rates from the Roman Catholic community.

## **4. General Considerations / Implications**

- 4.1 HR – HR will continue to conduct statutory monitoring and OD and Learning will explore potential outreach options in the Roman Catholic community that will allow Council to promote the organisation with the aim of increasing applicants for the various types of posts highlighted in this report.
- 4.2 Undoubtedly, the 'internal first' recruitment policy the Council previously made has impacted on Council's ability to demonstrate fair participation in recruitment activity and opens the council to challenge of equality. It is intended that this policy position is reviewed and discussed with trade union colleagues to improve access to Council posts. The senior management



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view is that the Council should now recruit externally, still enabling internal recruitment to be encouraged.

- 4.3 It should be noted that this will not affect any RPA-related posts or the imminent planned internal recruitment for new posts for the Corporate Support Services restructure.

## **5. Recommendation or Decision**

- 5.1 It is recommended that members note the content of this report and note that:
- management will commence discussions with trade union colleagues regarding the current practice of advertising posts internally, before accessing the external labour market with a view to changing the Council's current position.
  - under the restructure of the Corporate & Support Services, the newly expanded HR&OD section will identify and develop actions to address the issues identified.

## **6. Appendices / Links**

Not applicable.



<b>Council/Committee:</b>	Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee
<b>Date:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2024
<b>Report Title:</b>	Information Governance Framework
<b>Publication Status:</b>	Open
<b>Authors:</b>	Siobhan Fisher, Assistant Director – Citizen Focus
<b>Approver:</b>	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with a draft of the newly developed Information Governance Framework document for consideration and approval.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. In March 2024, Deloitte issued a report detailing its internal audit of Council's information governance processes.
- 2.2. One of Deloitte's Priority 1 recommendations was for Council to develop a formal information governance strategy and framework that clearly articulates Council's overall approach to information governance.

## 3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Information Governance Framework document attached at Appendix 1 will replace Council's current Information Governance Policy. The existing document is the closest equivalent to an Information Governance Framework, however, it is not robust enough to satisfy itself as the Information Governance Framework, nor independent enough to exist alongside a newly developed Information Governance Framework.
- 3.2 The review and transformation of the existing Information Governance Policy represents a significant development in Council's policy position, moving from an 11 page policy to a 23 page Information Governance Framework document. A Schedule of Amendments is attached at Appendix 2 which demonstrates a full account of all proposed changes to the policy document. The required screening documents are also attached at Appendices 3-6.
- 3.3 Previously, Council has placed a large proportion of its focus in respect of information governance on access to information requests (FOI/EIR/SAR). However, information governance applies to several disciplines. To represent



a more thorough approach, this proposed Framework connects all information-related disciplines and is structured around the following 8 key pillars of information governance:

1. Data Protection
2. Information Security
3. Risk Management
4. Records Management
5. Information Sharing
6. Access to Information
7. Training and Communication
8. Governance

- 3.4 This structure will allow for much more robust and thorough management reporting and align Council with established best practice. These are reflected in the enhanced Governance arrangements at Section 16 of the attached Information Governance Framework.

#### **4 General Considerations / Implications**

- 4.1 This proposed Framework will allow Council to complete a high priority audit recommendation. However, information governance is comprised of standards and procedures set out in legislation and as such, good information governance practices should always be considered a high priority for Council.

#### **5 Proposed Way Forward**

- 5.1 Upon approval, the Policy team will begin to establish and deliver the functions outlined within the Framework, such as the Information Governance Steering Group and the tailored information governance training modules.

#### **6 Recommendation or Decision**

- 6.1 Elected Members are asked to review and approve the proposed Information Governance Framework document at Appendix 1.

#### **7 Appendices / Links**

Appendix 1 – Draft Information Governance Framework

Appendix 2 – Schedule of Amendments

Appendix 3 - EQIA Screening for the IG Framework

Appendix 4 – Rural Needs Impact Assessment for the IG Framework

Appendix 5 – DPIA Screening

Appendix 6 – Climate and Sustainability Screening



# Information Governance Framework

Corporate and Support Services Directorate  
Approved October 2024



<b>Approved Date</b>	October 2024
<b>Review Date</b>	October 2025
<b>Related Legislation/Applicable Section of Legislation</b>	Public Records (Northern Ireland) Act 1923 Freedom of Information Act 2000 Data Protection Act 2018 UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) Environmental Information Regulations 2004 Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005 The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR)
<b>Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks</b>	Access to Information Policy Data Protection Policy IT Policies Retention and Disposal Schedule Clear Desk Clear Screen Policy Publication Scheme PRONI NI Records Management Standard 2007 ICO Accountability Framework Information Classification Policy Acceptable Use Policy Internet and Email Policy Mobile Phone Policy Tablet Policy Strong Password Policy Access Control Policy Third Party Access to Premises and Visitor Monitoring Policy Responsible Disposal Policy
<b>Replaces</b>	Information Governance Policy V2.0 (September 2023)
<b>Policy Lead (Name/Position/Contact details)</b>	Director of Corporate Support Services policy@midandeantrim.gov.uk
<b>Sponsor Directorate</b>	Corporate and Support Services
<b>Version</b>	3.0

## Revision record

Date	Version	Revision Description
April 2018	1.0	Initial Policy
September 2023	2.0	Policy reviewed and updated. Amended as per schedule of amendments.
October 2024	3.0	Policy reviewed and developed to become Council's Information Governance Framework document following internal audit report.

DRAFT

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## 1. Introduction

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC) generates and receives an enormous amount of information. The Council recognises that information is a key corporate asset that requires the same discipline to its management as is applied to other important corporate assets, such as finance, people and property.

Information assets include both paper records and electronically held records, for example, in business systems, on network drives and within email systems.

Information Governance is the overarching term used for the management of this information.

This Information Governance Framework, together with its associated policies and procedures, outlines the Council's accountability from strategic level to those working with information day-to-day, in order to reinforce information governance as a core business function.

Information governance applies to all corporate information, regardless of its format, function, sensitivity or location. This Framework connects all information-related disciplines and is structured around the following 8 key pillars of information governance:

1. Data Protection
2. Information Security
3. Risk Management
4. Records Management
5. Information Sharing
6. Access to Information
7. Training and Communication
8. Governance

## 2. ICO Registration

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) as a Data Controller.

Registration Number - ZA076984

Data Controller Name: Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Contact address: The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street Ballymena Antrim, BT43 5EJ

Email: [dpo@midandeastantrim.gov.uk](mailto:dpo@midandeastantrim.gov.uk)

Separate ICO data controller registrations are also in place for all Elected Members within the Mid and East Antrim Borough.

## 3. Complaint Handling

The Council aim to provide good quality services for everyone, but things can sometimes go wrong. If they do, we need to know so we can put them right and learn from them.

MEABC holds a Complaints, Comments & Compliments Policy which adheres to the standards set out in the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman's (NIPSO) Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

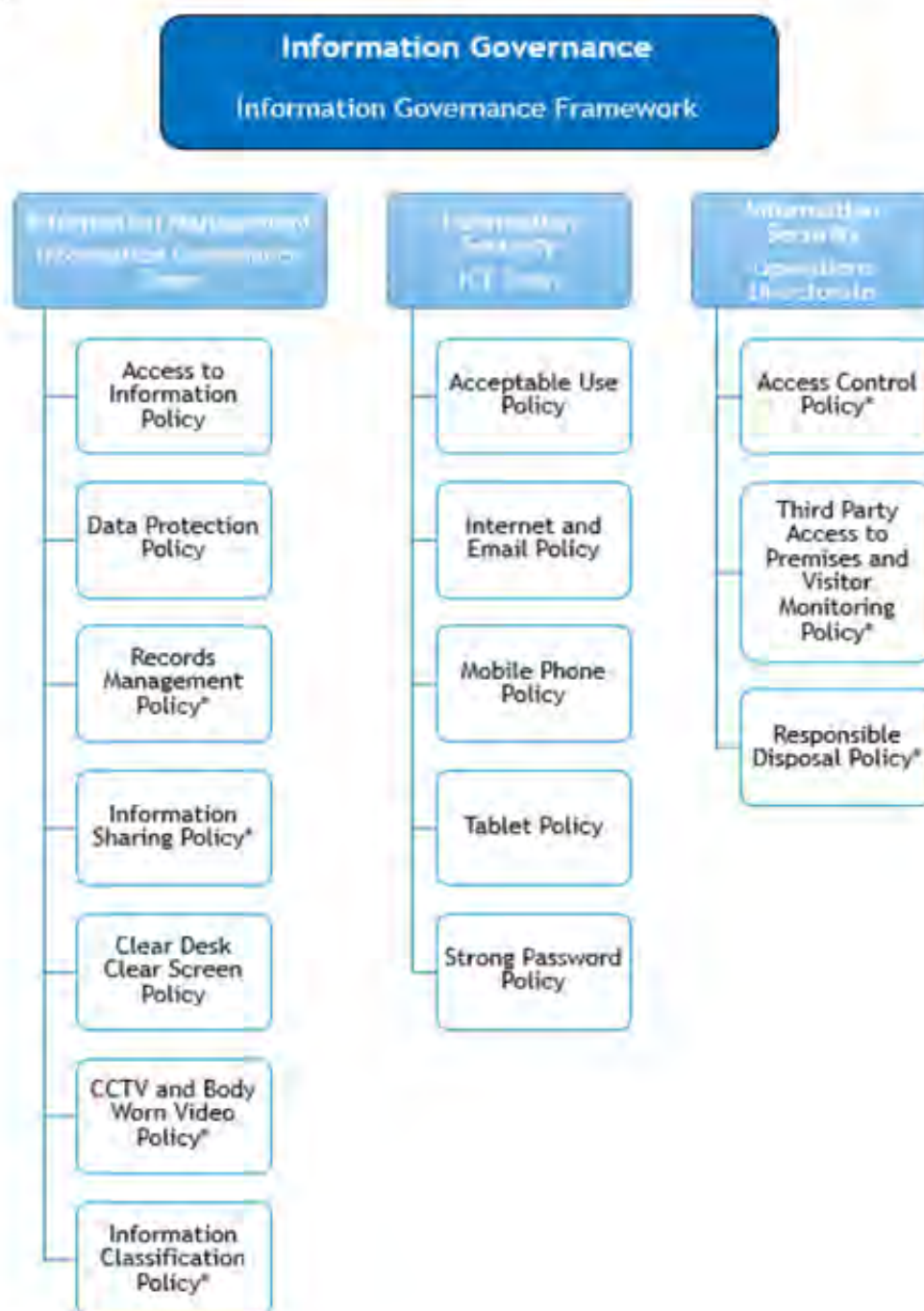
Details of the Council's Complaints, Comments & Compliments Policy can be found on our website, by talking to any Council staff, or by contacting us at the following email address:

Contact: [complaints@midandeastantrim.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@midandeastantrim.gov.uk)

#### 4. Associated Policies and Procedures

This Framework sets out the high-level principles for Information Governance across the Council. The associated policies and procedures primarily sit with the Information Governance team, the ICT team or across several teams within the Operations Directorate. The diagram below represents these key policies and procedures, however, policy development within the Council is dynamic and ongoing and as such, this is not an exhaustive list:

**Figure 1**



\*in development

## 5. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to provide an overarching information governance framework for the Council, specifically to outline its approach to:

- Data Protection
- Information Security
- Risk Management
- Records Management
- Information Sharing
- Access to Information
- Training and Communication
- Governance

Through effective information governance arrangements, this Framework's objectives are to:

- Support delivery of Council's strategic priorities;
- Ensure compliance with our legislative, regulatory and ethical responsibilities;
- Improve and drive business efficiency
- Manage risks associated with information appropriately, through adequate assessment and mitigation where appropriate;
- Support transformation.

## 6. Scope

The Information Governance Framework applies to:

- All information held across Council. For the purposes of the Information Governance Framework, Council uses the meaning of "information" as defined by Section 84 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as information recorded in any form i.e. all formats of storage and transmission including, but not limited to, paper, electronic and audio/visual.
- All elected members, council employees, agency workers, contractors, and volunteers.
- All other third-party organisations or individuals (e.g. statutory partners, auditors) with access to information held by Council where specific data sharing arrangements are not in place.

## 7. Roles and responsibilities

The Chief Executive, as Chief Accounting Officer, has ultimate responsibility for information governance.

There are several key roles in place within Council to support the Chief Executive.

### *Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)*

The role of the SIRO is to lead a culture of good information management. The Director of Corporate and Support Services, reporting directly to the Chief Executive is the designated SIRO and is responsible for:

- The information governance risk profile of Council, including the identification, analysis, evaluation and management of risk;
- Advocating to Council and Senior Management Team and providing written assurance to the chief accounting officer in regard to information risk;
- Have overall ownership of the Information Governance Framework and associated policies, procedures and risk management in respect of the information management aspects of this Framework;

### *Information Asset Owner (IAO)*

The role of the IAO is to ensure information is properly and lawfully handled within their service area. The IAO will be the Head of Service or Assistant Director of each Council service area and is responsible for:

- Maintaining the service area's entry on the Record of Processing Activities (RoPA).
- Having a clear understanding of what information is held, and in what form, how it is added and removed, who has access and why. As a result, they are able to understand and address risks to the information.
- Approve the level and extent of transfer of data to removable media, such as laptops, ensuring that the minimum necessary to conduct the business and that it is properly protected.
- Ensure the access rights to IT systems are limited to the minimum needed, and that usage of information is monitored.
- Ensure that best use is made of information and receive and respond to requests from others for access to information.
- Provide a written judgement of the security and use of their asset annually to support the audit process.
- Holding membership of the Information Governance Steering Group as per the rotating membership detailed within the Group's Terms of Reference and participating in the Group as required.
- Be responsible for presenting on any data breaches within their service area to the Information Governance Steering Group



### ***Local Information Manager (LIM)***

The responsibility of the Local Information Manager is to provide the first line of support for staff within their department acting as a primary source of information and guidance.

It is recommended that the role of LIM's would be fulfilled by managers within the service areas, supported by the IAO's.

The LIM will be responsible for:

- In conjunction with their IAO, must seek to ensure compliance with the information governance framework;
- Managing the retention and disposal schedule at a local level, to include keeping a register of new files and destruction of files in association with the Schedule.
- Assist in maintaining the Departments RoPA entry;
- play a key role in the identification and retrieval of requested information and personal data and will work with the department, IAOs and any third parties to collate the necessary data and address any associated issues.

### ***Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee***

Elected Members, through the Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee, will maintain oversight of Council's information governance arrangements.

They will be provided with a bi-annual performance report, which will provide an assessment of compliance against the information governance framework and any other operational standards.

### ***Data Protection Officer (DPO)***

In line with Council's responsibilities under Article 37 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) a Data Protection Officer (DPO) has been appointed.

As outlined by Article 39 of the UK GDPR, the DPO has responsibility:

- To inform and advise the organisation and its employees about their obligations to comply with the UK GDPR and other data protection laws.
- To monitor compliance with the UK GDPR and other data protection laws, including managing internal data protection activities, advise on data protection impact assessments; train staff and conduct internal audits.
- To be the first point of contact for supervisory authorities and for individuals whose data is processed (employees, customers etc).

Should the Data Protection Officer be absent from their post, e.g. due to annual leave, sickness absence, etc., the Corporate Solicitor will provide cover for any urgently required duties and/or advices.

### ***Information Governance Steering Group - IGSG***

The information governance steering group (IGSG) will act as an assurance function and support the SIRO in developing and implementing information governance policy and procedures within the Council to include an annual review of the organisations overall compliance in respect of information governance.

The IGSG has its own Terms of Reference. It is chaired by the DPO and membership is representative of all council departments.

### ***The Information Governance Team***

The Information Governance Team is the Council's operational lead to ensure compliance with, and the promotion, development and implementation of the Information Governance Framework, together with its associated policies, standards and processes in respect of information management.

### ***The ICT Team and the Operations Directorate***

The ICT Team and the Operations Directorate are the Council's operational leads to ensure compliance with and the promotion, development and implementation of the Information Security policies, standards and processes.

### ***Third Parties***

Data Processors / other Controllers (Joint or Independent) / Contractors / Service Providers must manage the information they create and hold, according to the terms of their agreements with the Council and all relevant legislation.

## 8. Compliance and Liability

Compliance with this Framework is monitored by the SIRO, assisted by the DPO and the Information Governance Team and in conjunction with the Senior Management Team within the Council.

### *Council Staff*

Implications for Council staff who are found to be non-compliant with this Framework will vary depending on the nature of the non-compliance and the severity of the consequences. Management investigations may range from informal reviews to formal investigations under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

### *Elected Members*

Implications for Elected Members who are found to be non-compliant with this Framework will also vary depending on the nature of the non-compliance and the severity of the consequences. NIPSO's Guidance for Councillors specifies that Elected Members should ensure that they are aware of, understand and act in accordance with the Council's policies. Non-compliance will be considered in line with the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

Elected Members are also data controllers in their own right and the Council advises each Member to register with the ICO as a data controller upon their election.

The Council takes the position that despite Elected Members' independent controller status, the Council holds a duty of shared responsibility towards the Borough and as such will assist Members in ensuring that they are handling information correctly. The Council has resources in place that are available for Elected Members to avail of, such as training sessions and template documents that they may use in their work as local councillors.

At times Elected Members will share information, including personal data, with the Council in their role as representatives for the Borough. The Council has in place data sharing agreements with each Elected Member that ensures this information sharing takes place lawfully.

## 9. Data Protection

Council aspires to the principle of 'Data protection by design and by default' across the organisation.

Personal data will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the principles of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). That is, that personal data should be:

- a) Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner;
- b) Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes;
- c) Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary;
- d) Accurate and where necessary kept up to date;
- e) Kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which those data are processed; and
- f) Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data.

Under Data Protection legislation, data subjects have the following rights:

**Right to be informed** - Individuals have the right to be informed about the collection and use of their personal data. Council fulfill this obligation through the provision of privacy notices which are provided to data subjects directly and published on our website.

**Right of access** - Individuals have the right to access and receive a copy of their personal data, and other supplementary information. These requests are known as a subject access request and Council must respond within one month.

**Right to rectification** - The UK GDPR includes a right for individuals to have inaccurate personal data rectified, or completed if it is incomplete.

**Right to erasure** - The UK GDPR introduced a right for individuals to have personal data erased.

**Right to restrict processing** - Individuals have the right to request the restriction or suppression of their personal data.

**Right to data portability** - The right to data portability allows individuals to obtain and reuse their personal data for their own purposes across different services.

**Right to object** - The UK GDPR gives individuals the right to object to the processing of their personal data in certain circumstances.

**Rights related to automated decision making including profiling** - The UK GDPR has provisions on automated individual decision-making (making a decision solely by automated means without any human involvement) and profiling

(automated processing of personal data to evaluate certain things about an individual).

Council will not require data subjects to pay any charge for exercising their rights.

**Data Breaches**

The Council will maintain incident reporting procedures and monitor, investigate and record all reported instances of actual or potential breaches of data privacy, confidentiality and security.

Breaches of personal data are risk assessed by the Data Protection Officer and scored against Council’s risk scoring matrix, below.

Impact				
Major	4	4	8	12
Significant	3	3	6	9
Moderate	2	2	4	6
Low	1	1	2	3
		1	2	3
		Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely
		<b>Likelihood</b>		

Where a data breach is assessed to be high risk, the DPO and SIRO will jointly allocate the risk score and work in conjunction with the relevant Information Asset Owner to progress any required investigations.

In the event of a data breach, the relevant Information Asset Owner will present weekly updates to the Information Governance Steering Group, as per the Group’s Terms of Reference.

**Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs)**

DPIAs are an essential part of the Council’s accountability obligations. Conducting a DPIA is a legal requirement under Article 35 of the UK GDPR for any type of processing that is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Council has integrated a DPIA screening exercise into its policy development and partnership working considerations to identify where data processing may result

in a high risk to individuals. Council will publish these screening exercises on its website.

In some cases, although a screening exercise may identify a processing activity as not being high risk, the Council may still conduct a DPIA in order to fully consider any impacts and/or risks involved in the processing.

In compliance with Article 35(2) and 39(1)(c), the DPO will provide advice in respect of data protection impact assessments. If the DPO's advice is not accepted, this must be recorded on the DPIA and can only be authorised by a Head of Service, Assistant Director or Director of the Council.

### **Record of Processing Activities (RoPA)**

To demonstrate how it fulfils the data protection principle of accountability, and in compliance with Article 30 of the GDPR, Council will also maintain a written record of its processing activities under its responsibility. This is referred to as the Record of Processing Activities (RoPA).

The RoPA shall, as a minimum, contain all of the following information:

- the name and contact details of the controller and, where applicable, the joint controller, the controller's representative and the data protection officer;
- the purposes of the processing;
- a description of the categories of data subjects and of the categories of personal data;
- the categories of recipients to whom the personal data have been or will be disclosed including recipients in third countries or international organisations;
- where applicable, transfers of personal data to a third country or an international organisation, including the identification of that third country or international organisation and, in the case of transfers referred to in the second subparagraph of [Article 49\(1\)](#), the documentation of suitable safeguards;
- where possible, the envisaged time limits for erasure of the different categories of data;
- where possible, a general description of the technical and organisational security measures referred to in [Article 32\(1\)](#).

Information Asset Owners and Local Information Managers will ensure that their RoPA entries are accurate and up to date for their service areas.

The Council shall make the RoPA available to the Information Commissioner's Office on request.

## 10. Information security

The Council's ICT Team and teams within the Operations Directorate lead on the cyber and physical security of information held by Council. Their policies and procedures relevant to information governance are outlined at Figure 1.

As per ISO:27001, Information security requires "preservation of confidentiality, integrity and availability of information" and in providing effective information security Council must strike the appropriate balance between the three.

Information must only be made available to those who have a legitimate need for access and protected against unauthorised access.

Information Asset Owners must identify and record those individuals who require access and provide classification according to appropriate level of security.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will endeavour to apply the information security standards as set out in ISO:27001 with the aim of achieving corporate certification.

Information Security requirements are detailed within the council's Information Security policies and procedures outlined above, at Figure 1. The following Information security controls are in place (this is not an exhaustive list):

### ***Buildings***

Dependant on role, employees and Elected Members of MEA Council are issued an ID card which must be worn at all times and will provide access to Council buildings where authorised. Within Council buildings access to certain areas is restricted to authorised individuals by access fob, key code or keys.

### ***ICT Network and Systems***

Access to the council ICT network is by a unique allocated user login and user set password. For remote access to the network a further level of user authentication is in place through a VPN token, which requires the user to enter both a personal identification number and a time restricted number displayed on the token application. The issuing of network logins is controlled through the ICT team in accordance with an authorisation process.

ICT systems are housed in environmentally controlled secure data centres with limited access to authorised personnel only. Data is backed up on a regular basis and all systems are patched as per the Councils Patch Management Policy. All ICT systems are protected with Anti-Virus software which is updated on a daily basis.

When appropriate and if possible access to individual records may be blocked from certain users or groups of users to ensure the privacy of individuals or to prevent / reflect conflicts of interest.

ICT block the following categorised websites on the Corporate and Public Network Infrastructure by default: Adult, Alcohol and Tobacco, Criminal Activity, Gambling, Hacking, Illegal Drugs, Intolerance & Hate, Tasteless and offensive, Violence and Weapons.

### ***Secure Methods of Transfer***

The Council has systems in place to enable the safe and secure transfer of information using strong end to end encryption email and file transfer technologies.

### ***Responsible Disposal of Hard Copy Information***

The Council has systems in place to ensure the secure and confidential disposal of hard copy information which also aligns with the Council's environmental objectives within its Climate and Sustainability Action Plan 2023-2027.

## **11. Risk Management**

Risks identified in relation to information assets will be evaluated and mitigated against, in line with the Council's Risk Management Strategy.

Significant risks identified at a service or departmental level must be escalated, through the SIRO, to be included on the Corporate Risk Register.

The Council will ensure that adequate business continuity plans are in place to give assurance that it has robust measures to cope with potential major disruption to access and use of its information assets.

The Council will arrange appropriate assessments and audits of its Information Management and Information Security (including cyber security) arrangements.

## **12. Records Management**

Records will be managed in line with the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice, that is:

- Council will have in place organisational arrangements that support records management;
- Council have in place a records management policy, either as a separate policy or as part of a wider information or knowledge management policy;



- Council should ensure they keep the records they will need for business, regulatory, legal and accountability purposes;
- Council should keep their records in systems that enable records to be stored and retrieved as necessary;
- Council will know what records it holds and where they are, and should ensure that they remain usable for as long as they are required;
- Council will ensure that records are stored securely and that access to them is controlled;
- Council will know how long they need to keep particular records, should dispose of them when they are no longer needed and should be able to explain why records are no longer held;
- Council will ensure that records shared with other bodies or held on their behalf by other bodies are managed in accordance with the Code; and
- Council will monitor compliance with the Code and assess the overall effectiveness of the programme.

The Council's Records Management Policy and associated ensure the standard of records management is consistent and that there is a commonality of approach.

### **The Information Asset Register and the Record of Processing Activities (RoPA)**

The information held by Council can be in different formats and held in a variety of locations and systems. It is essential that the Council understands the information it holds so that we can adequately manage and protect it.

It is important that the council understands, not only what information it holds, but who is responsible for the information, the status of the information, and how it can lawfully be used. Having a robust and well documented understanding of this allows the council to drive its corporate agenda by helping services to become more efficient in storing, locating and retrieving the information.

To achieve this, the Council maintains an Information Asset Register which is held and coordinated centrally by the Information Governance Team.

The accuracy of the Information Asset Register entries for each service area are the responsibility of the Information Asset Owners, assisted by their Local Information Managers.

To demonstrate how it fulfils the data protection principle of accountability, and in compliance with Article 30 of the GDPR, Council will also maintain a RoPA, as detailed above.

The council uses its Information Asset Register as the basis for its RoPA and as such, takes a joint approach to their maintenance.

The Information Governance Team will deliver training to Council service areas on completing their IAR and RoPA entries as part of the overall information governance training agenda.

The IAR and the ROPA are dynamic, live documents and will be consistently updated and improved to ensure the Council maintains a full understanding of the information that it holds.

The Information Governance Team will coordinate regular reviews of the Information Asset Register and the RoPA to assist Information Asset Owners to maintain and update their entries.

### 13. Information Sharing

Sharing information across and between organisations can bring significant benefits. If carried out appropriately, it can help to design and deliver modern, efficient services which better meet people's needs and make their lives easier. It can also identify people at risk and address problems before they have a significant adverse impact.

Data protection legislation does not prevent data sharing but creates a framework within which it can be undertaken in a lawful, appropriate, and proportionate way which balances the Council's organisational needs with the rights of individuals.

Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs) are a means used by the Council to ensure that routine sharing of personal data is properly considered and securely executed.

This procedure applies when the Council initiates sharing (or receives a request to share) personal data on a regular basis with an external body. It applies to systematic information sharing, described by the Information Commissioner's Office as 'routine sharing of data sets between organisations for an agreed purpose'. It will also apply where a group of organisations arrange to 'pool' their data for specific purposes.

Where a supplier is processing personal data on the Council's behalf, the supplier is classed as a Data Processor and the law requires that a written contract must be in place between the Council and processor in order to protect the rights of the individuals whose data is being processed. This agreement is known as a Data Processing Agreement which sets out why and how the data will be processed.

The agreements outlined above do not apply to the sharing of personal information between teams within the Council. However, data protection principles state that data should only be used for the purposes for which it was collected and must not be used for incompatible purposes. Therefore, any

internal sharing of personal data needs to be undertaken in line with this principle and on a need to know basis.

Safeguarding issues will take precedence over these requirements in (typically one-off) situations where not sharing the personal data may present a risk of harm to individuals. However, in these situations, privacy considerations should be made, risks assessed, and the decisions documented.

Ad hoc, one off requests for information from third parties (such as the PSNI or other public authorities) should be dealt with in accordance with the Council's standard Access to Information procedures.

Requests from individuals or their representatives for access to, or copies of, their personal data, are referred to the Information Governance team and handled as a Subject Access Request.

## 14. Access to information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) gives the public a general right of access to information held by public authorities, with the aim to increase openness and accountability in the public sector. (For further information please see the Access to Information policy).

Anyone seeking information from the Council has had the right to:

- Be told whether or not the Council holds the information requested; and
- To have that information provided where eligible for release.

All information held by the Council is potentially eligible for release but certain categories may be protected and therefore an exemption under the FOIA or an exception under the EIR will apply.

All requests for information which fall outside the scope of the Council's Publication Scheme will be managed in line with the Council's Access to Information Policy.

The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005 requires Council to make information available it has produced available to a third party to republish or use to produce a new product or resource often by combining it with other information. i.e. Re-use means using public sector information, for a purpose other than the initial public task it was produced for.

### ***Information Held in Complaint Files***

The Council adheres to the ICO's Guidance on 'Access to Information Held in Complaint Files'.

In most cases, a lot of the information held in complaint files is considered to be personal data and as such will not be released as part of an FOI request. An individual may request copies of their own data from a complaint file as a Subject Access Request but not the data of other individuals.

### ***Subject Access Requests***

Council adheres to the ICO's guidance on handling subject access requests. Data protection legislation entitles data subjects to a copy of their own data, as it is processed by the Council. As per ICO guidance, this does not necessarily include copies of entire documents. The Council may respond to a subject access request with a summary report of the personal data held, copy documents or a combination of both.

## **15. Training and Communication**

All Council staff are required to complete mandatory Information Governance training as part of their induction process and on a regular and ongoing basis.

Training sessions are delivered by the Information Governance Team using a curriculum approved, and regularly reviewed, by the Senior Management Team. Attendance is monitored by Council's OD and Talent Manager and uptake will be reported to Council's Senior Management Team as part of the reporting requirements outlined within this Framework.

Tailored information governance training is provided, appropriate to roles and responsibilities, to Council staff including, but not limited to, IAOs and LIMs, Officers who deal with requests for information, records management, personal data processing and those who use body worn video and/or cctv.

This Framework is published on Council's website and is available internally to all Council employees and Elected Members.

## **16. Governance, Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements**

The Chief Accounting Officer will provide Council, through the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, with an annual assurance statement in relation to the adequacy of information governance arrangements within Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

Council's Annual Information Governance Assurance Statement will use the established metrics outlined in the ICO's Accountability Framework which cover:

- Leadership and oversight;
- Policies and procedures;
- Transparency;
- Records Management and security
- Individuals' rights;
- Contracts and data sharing;
- Records of process and lawful basis;
- Training and awareness;
- Risks and Data Protection Impact Assessments;
- Breach response and monitoring.

This annual assurance statement will be supported by the monitoring and reporting arrangements as outlined below.

The SIRO will provide the CRPG Committee with a bi-annual performance report in relation to Council's information governance processes.

The SIRO will provide the Chief Accounting Officer and Senior Management Team with a quarterly performance report in relation to the of information governance processes.

Information Asset Owners will provide the SIRO, via the IGSG, with annual assurance statements in relation to the adequacy of information governance arrangements within their department. These submissions will assist to evidence the overall annual assurance statement to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

This Framework will be monitored for effectiveness and suitability on an ongoing basis by the Information Governance Team. This Framework will be reviewed by the Information Governance Team and the Information Governance Steering Group 1 year following its implementation and every 2 years thereafter.



**Appendix 2****Schedule of Amendments to Information Governance Policy to become Information Governance Framework**

<b>Information Governance Framework</b>		
<b>Section/Page</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>
Throughout	Formatting and grammar editing	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding
Cover Page	Amended name to Information Governance Framework	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance
Page 2	Related Legislation/Applicable Section of Legislation amended.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance
Page 2	Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks updated and amended to include relevant new policies and remove obsolete policy.	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure
Page 2	Updated replaced policy.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance
Page 2	Updated contact for policy lead and sponsor directorate.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 3	Revision Record Updated	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 4	Table of Contents updated	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
<b>Introduction</b>		
<b>Section/Page</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>

Throughout	Formatting and grammar editing.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding
Page 5	Points 1.1 and 1.2 removed.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance
Page 5	Inserted formal introduction and list of 8 key pillars of information governance.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance
<b>ICO Registration</b>		
<b>Section/Page</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>
Page 6	Inserted Information regarding ICO registration details	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure consistency. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation.
<b>Complaint Handling</b>		
<b>Section/Page</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>
Page 6	Inserted procedure for complaints and complaint handling.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure consistency. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation.
<b>Associated Policies and Procedures</b>		
<b>Section/Page</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>
Page 7	Inserted paragraph regarding the associated policies and procedures, as well as which teams are involved.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance
Page 7	Inserted Figure 1 showing framework in context of other related policies.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding
<b>Aims and Objectives</b>		
<b>Section/Page</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>
Throughout	Formatting and grammar editing.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding



Page 8	Amended title from 'Aim' to 'Aims and Objectives. Combined two previous sections.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding
Page 8	Removed existing list of aims and replaced with expanded list.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance.
Page 8	Removed 'Objectives'	To remove redundant element which has been combined with previous section.
Page 8	Added specific section of Freedom of Information Act relevant to Framework's scope.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation
<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>		
<b>Section/Page</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>
Throughout	Formatting and grammar editing.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding
Page 9	Adjusted titles and departmental names	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure
Page 10	Inserted reference to Information Governance Steering Group	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure
Page 10	Inserted 'bi-annual performance' into section regarding reporting	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance.
Page 10	Inserted reference to Article 39 of the UK GDPR	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation.
Page 11	Inserted section regarding procedure if Data Protection Officer is absent.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance
Page 11	Amended Section relating to Information Governance Steering Group, including references to its own terms of reference and chair.	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure. To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance

Page 11	Inserted section regarding Information Governance Team	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure. To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance
Page 11	Inserted section regarding the ICT Team and Operations Directorate.	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure. To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance
Page 11	Inserted section regarding Third Parties	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure. To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance
Page 11	Removed heading 'Information governance organisational structure'.	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure.
Page 12	Removed redundant table showing old information governance organisational structure	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding. To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure.
<b>Compliance and Liability</b>		
<b>Section/Page</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>
Page 12	Inserted new section on Compliance and Liability	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To provide further clarity on how the council will meet Data Protection responsibilities.
Pages 12-13	Inserted paragraph on how compliance with framework will be monitored, as well as specific sections outlining the implications for non-compliance for both Council staff and Elected Members.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To provide further clarity on how the council will meet Data Protection responsibilities. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation.
<b>Data Protection</b>		
<b>Section/Page</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>

Throughout	Formatting and grammar editing.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 13	Inserted line regarding Council's commitment to 'Data protection by design and default'	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance.
Page 13	Inserted section outlining data subject's rights	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation.
Page 14	Inserted section regarding Data breaches, including information on how they are assessed by the Data Protection Officer.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation.
Page 15	Inserted section regarding Data Protection Impact Assessments, including what the process for implementing a DPIA is and relevant legislative basis for them.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation.
Page 15	Updated section on Record of Processing Activities (RoPA) including commitment to how the Council will demonstrate its compliance with Article 30 of the GDPR.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation
Page 16	Updated section on Information security including outlining the role of the ICT Team and Operations directorate as leads for this issue and reference to relevant ISO standard.	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation
Page 16	Removed section of Information security information	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding and remove redundant element of section.
Page 16-17	Inserted paragraph outlining where the Information Security requirements are explained, as well as a list of information security controls.	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation
Page 17	Inserted section on Building information security controls.	To explain safety measures taken by council. To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure.
Page 17	Inserted section on ICT Network and Systems information security controls	To explain safety measures taken by council. To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure.

Page 17	Inserted section on Secure Methods of Transfer security controls	To explain safety measures taken by council. To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure.
<b>Risk Management</b>		
<b>Section/Page</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>
Throughout	Formatting and grammar editing.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 17	Added numbering for section	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 18	Removed reference to specific number for risk score	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance.
Page 18	Inserted sections regarding business continuity plans for major disruptions.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance.
Page 18	Inserted section regarding appropriate assessment and audit of information management and security	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance.
<b>Records Management</b>		
<b>Section/Page</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>
Throughout	Formatting and grammar editing.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 18	Added numbering for section	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 19	Removed section header 'Information security and data protection'	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance.
Page 19	Added 'The Information Asset Register and the' to section sub-title	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 19	Amended section titled "The Information Asset Register and the Record of Processing Activities (RoPA)" (previously "Record of Processing Activities (RoPA)") to lay out the importance and role of the Information Asset Register and it's relationship to the Record of Processing activities	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation. To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure.
<b>Information Sharing</b>		

Section/Page	Amendment	Reason for Amendment
Page 20-21	Insertion of section on Information Sharing, laying out the Council's approach and responsibilities regarding the sharing of information. Laying out the Council's policy and procedures on Data Sharing agreements.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation. To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure.
<b>Access to information</b>		
Section/Page	Amendment	Reason for Amendment
Throughout	Formatting and grammar editing.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 21	Added numbering for section	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 21	Removal of line regarding development of an open data policy.	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure.
Page 21	Inserted section on Information Held in Complaint Files, outlining the Council's procedure and adherence to the ICO guidance.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation.
Page 21-22	Inserted section on Subject Access Requests outlining Council's commitment to compliance with ICO guidance on subject access requests and its policy and procedures.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation.
<b>Training and Communication</b>		
Section/Page	Amendment	Reason for Amendment
Throughout	Formatting and grammar editing.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 22	Added numbering for section	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 22	Amended title from "Training" to "Training and Communication"	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure.
Page 22	Removed point 12.1 and replace with in depth section on training and communication	To remove redundant information
Page 22	Inserted section on Training and Communication policy and procedure. Inserted commitment that all staff would be required to	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure. To bring the

	complete mandatory Information Governance training, to outline the schedule for training and where tailored information would be made available. To outline how this would be communicated with staff	policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation.
<b>Governance, Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements</b>		
<b>Section/Page</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment</b>
Throughout	Formatting and grammar editing.	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 22	Added numbering for section	To ensure accuracy and ease of understanding.
Page 22	Amended title from "Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements" to "Governance, Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements"	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure.
Page 22-23	Inserted section regarding the Annual Information Governance Assurance Statement, established that this would be based on metrics from the ICO's Accountability Framework.	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure. To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance. To bring policy in line with Data Protection legislation
Page 23	Added line regarding SIRO's responsibility to provide bi-annual performance reports to the related committee in council (CRPG).	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure.
Page 23	Amended section regarding Information Asset Owner's assurance statements to make clear they would come via the IGSG and be annual (formerly quarterly). Including a line regarding the annual assurance statement to the Audit and Scrutiny committee	To bring policy document up to date with Council's current structure. To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance.
Page 23	Inserted section regarding monitoring of Framework on an ongoing basis by the Information Governance team, including schedule for review.	To bring the policy document up to date and ensure good governance.

## Section 75 Equality Screening

<b>Part 1</b>	Policy Scoping
<b>Part 2</b>	Screening Questions
<b>Part 3</b>	Screening Decision
<b>Part 4</b>	Monitoring
<b>Part 5</b>	Approval and Authorisation

### Part 1. Policy scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy, being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

Public authorities should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

#### Part 1: Information about the policy

Information about the policy	
<b>Name of policy</b>	Information Governance Framework
<b>Is this an existing, revised or new policy?</b>	Revision
<b>What is it trying to achieve? (<i>intended aims/outcomes</i>)</b>	<p>The aim of this policy is to provide an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information security and data protection;</li> <li>• Access to information;</li> <li>• Records management; and</li> <li>• Risk Management and business continuity</li> </ul>

	It is also intended to revise and replace the existing Information Governance Policy.
Are there any section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit for the intended policy? <i>If so, explain how.</i>	All residents regardless of S75 groups are expected to be able to benefit from a robust Information Governance Policy.
Policy Lead Officer <i>(who initiated or wrote the policy)</i>	Assistant Director - Business Support
Who owns/implements the policy?	Policy Team

**Implementation factors**

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

If yes, are they *(please tick as appropriate)*

- financial
- legislative
- other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

None identified.

**Main stakeholders affected**

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon? *(please tick as appropriate)*

- Staff
  - Service users
  - Other public sector organisations
  - Voluntary/community/trade unions
  - Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Community
  - Disabled persons

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

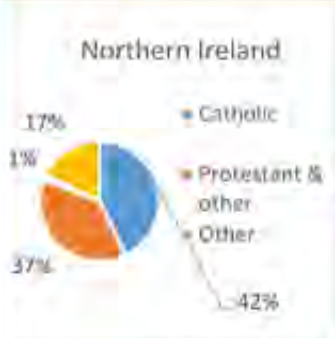
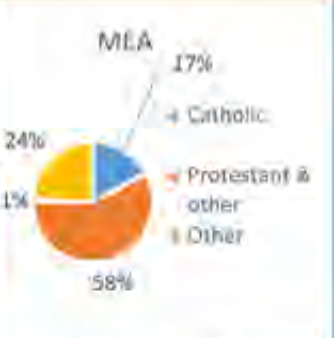
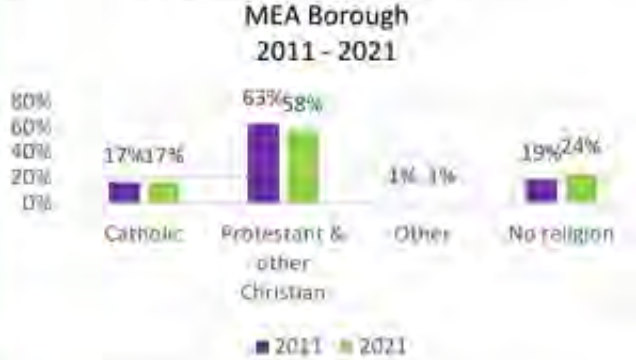


- what are they?
- who owns them?
- Access to Information Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- IT Policies
- Retention and Disposal Schedule
- Clear Desk Clear Screen Policy
- PRONI NI Records Management Standard 2007

**Available evidence**


Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data. The Commission has produced this guide to signpost to S75 data.

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

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Northern Ireland</p>  <p>17% 1% 37% 42%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic</li> <li>• Protestant &amp; other</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>MEA</p>  <p>17% 24% 1% 58%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catholic</li> <li>• Protestant &amp; other</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul> </div> </div> <p>Protestant and other Christian religions comprise the majority of citizens within MEA Borough at 58% compared to 17% Catholic. Overall NI figures record a majority of Catholic citizens, however this does not apply to MEA Borough. MEA citizens without/did not state religion, accounts for approximately a quarter of MEA Borough.</p> <p><u>2011 - 2021 Census Comparison</u></p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>MEA Borough 2011 - 2021</p>  <p>80% 60% 40% 20% 0%</p> <p>17% 17%    63% 58%    1% 1%    19% 24%</p> <p>Catholic    Protestant &amp; other Christian    Other    No religion</p> <p>■ 2011    ■ 2021</p> </div>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite preponderance of Protestant and other citizens, numbers have fallen by 5% within MEA Borough.</li> <li>• Catholic and Other have remain unchanged.</li> </ul> <p>No religion has increased by 6%, these figures may possibly account for the decline in Protestant and other numbers.</p>																
<p>Political opinion</p>	<p>The Local Government Election in May 2023 demonstrated the following weighting in the Borough’s political opinion. Note: only 45.55% of those eligible submitted a vote.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="437 495 858 927"> <thead> <tr> <th>Party</th> <th>MEA Borough (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>DUP</td> <td>30.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UUP</td> <td>17.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alliance</td> <td>18.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TUV</td> <td>15.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Independent</td> <td>4.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sinn Fein</td> <td>9.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SDLP</td> <td>2.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Party	MEA Borough (%)	DUP	30.9	UUP	17.3	Alliance	18.9	TUV	15.9	Independent	4.7	Sinn Fein	9.3	SDLP	2.0
Party	MEA Borough (%)																
DUP	30.9																
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<p>Racial group</p>	<p><u>2021 Census</u></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="437 987 1027 1223"> <thead> <tr> <th>NI Census 2021</th> <th>N. Ireland (%)</th> <th>MEA Borough (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>96.55</td> <td>97.78</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other/None recorded</td> <td>3.45</td> <td>2.22</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>2011 - 2021 Census Comparison</u> 1% increase in white with a 1% decrease in other</p>	NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	MEA Borough (%)	White	96.55	97.78	Other/None recorded	3.45	2.22							
NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	MEA Borough (%)															
White	96.55	97.78															
Other/None recorded	3.45	2.22															
<p>Age</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="437 1368 1027 1603"> <thead> <tr> <th>NI Census 2021</th> <th>N. Ireland (%)</th> <th>MEA Borough (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0-14</td> <td>19.19</td> <td>17.14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15-39</td> <td>31.23</td> <td>28.65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40-64</td> <td>32.43</td> <td>34.27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65+</td> <td>17.15</td> <td>19.67</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The largest age range in MEA Borough is 40-64 at 34% with 15-39 representing 29% of the Borough. 69% of the Borough is represented by the 15-64 age range.</p> <p><u>2011 - 2021 Census Comparison</u></p>	NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	MEA Borough (%)	0-14	19.19	17.14	15-39	31.23	28.65	40-64	32.43	34.27	65+	17.15	19.67	
NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	MEA Borough (%)															
0-14	19.19	17.14															
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65+	17.15	19.67															

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MEA Borough 2011 - 2021</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <caption>Population Data from Chart</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>2011 (%)</th> <th>2021 (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0-14</td> <td>18%</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15-39</td> <td>29%</td> <td>31%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40-64</td> <td>34%</td> <td>34%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65+</td> <td>17%</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age 15-39 have increased by 3%</li> <li>The 65+ population has fallen by 3%</li> </ul> <p>In 2011 it was predicted the 65+ age group will continue to grow by 41% by 2030 however it has fallen in the past 10 years. A possible explanation could be the impact of the Covid pandemic during which over 65's were at most risk.</p>	Age Group	2011 (%)	2021 (%)	0-14	18%	17%	15-39	29%	31%	40-64	34%	34%	65+	17%	20%						
Age Group	2011 (%)	2021 (%)																				
0-14	18%	17%																				
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<p><b>Marital status</b></p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #d9e1f2;">NI Census 2021</th> <th style="background-color: #d9e1f2;">N. Ireland (%)</th> <th style="background-color: #d9e1f2;">MEA Borough (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Single</td> <td>38.07</td> <td>33.43</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Married</td> <td>45.59</td> <td>49.15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Civil Partnership</td> <td>0.18</td> <td>0.16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Separated</td> <td>3.78</td> <td>3.53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Divorced</td> <td>6.02</td> <td>6.83</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Widowed</td> <td>6.36</td> <td>6.91</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>MEABC has a higher proportion of married residents when compared to Northern Ireland figures.</p> <p>There has been changes in the marital status of MEABC residents since the 2011 census.</p> <p>The number of residents who are single, in a civil partnership or divorced has risen. In comparison the number of residents who are married, separated or widowed has fallen.</p>	NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	MEA Borough (%)	Single	38.07	33.43	Married	45.59	49.15	Civil Partnership	0.18	0.16	Separated	3.78	3.53	Divorced	6.02	6.83	Widowed	6.36	6.91
NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	MEA Borough (%)																				
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<p><b>Sexual orientation</b></p>	<p>Figures refer to Borough residents aged 16 and over, of which there are 113,075.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #d9e1f2;">NI Census 2021</th> <th style="background-color: #d9e1f2;">N. Ireland (%)</th> <th style="background-color: #d9e1f2;">MEA Borough (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Straight or heterosexual</td> <td>90.04</td> <td>91.04</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gay or Lesbian</td> <td>1.17</td> <td>0.86</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bisexual</td> <td>0.75</td> <td>0.56</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Sexual orientation</td> <td>0.17</td> <td>0.13</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	MEA Borough (%)	Straight or heterosexual	90.04	91.04	Gay or Lesbian	1.17	0.86	Bisexual	0.75	0.56	Other Sexual orientation	0.17	0.13						
NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	MEA Borough (%)																				
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Bisexual	0.75	0.56																				
Other Sexual orientation	0.17	0.13																				

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Prefer not to say</td> <td>4.58</td> <td>4.21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not stated</td> <td>3.30</td> <td>3.19</td> </tr> </table> <p>Sexual orientation statistical breakdown for Mid and East Antrim 2011 census was not available therefore it is not possible to see if there has been any change in the sexual orientation of Mid and East Antrim residents.</p>	Prefer not to say	4.58	4.21	Not stated	3.30	3.19												
Prefer not to say	4.58	4.21																	
Not stated	3.30	3.19																	
Men and women generally	<p><u>2021 Census</u> The population of the Borough is 49% male and 51% female. There has been no change since the 2011 census.</p>																		
Disability	<p><u>2021 Census</u></p>  <p>There are 138,994 residents within Mid and East Antrim and 25% live with a limiting long term health problem or disability. However the number of households affected by a resident or residents with a limiting long term health problem or disability totals 45% of the 58,283 households within the Borough. Therefore nearly half the number of households in Mid and East Antrim are affected by one of the 50,121 limiting long term health problems or disability recorded for the area.</p>																		
Dependants	<p><u>2021 Census</u> 27.07% of MEABC households have 1 or more dependent children. This has fallen from 32.14% recorded in the 2011 census. The age breakdown of the dependent children is as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age</th> <th>MEA Borough (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0-4</td> <td>9.65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5-11</td> <td>9.39</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12-18</td> <td>8.03</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The majority of children within households with dependent children are aged between 0 and 4. Hours of unpaid care provided by residents of MEABC according to the 2021 census.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Unpaid Care (hrs)</th> <th>MEA Borough (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 - 19</td> <td>25.38</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 - 34</td> <td>5.68</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35 - 49</td> <td>6.39</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50+</td> <td>17.33</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age	MEA Borough (%)	0-4	9.65	5-11	9.39	12-18	8.03	Unpaid Care (hrs)	MEA Borough (%)	1 - 19	25.38	20 - 34	5.68	35 - 49	6.39	50+	17.33
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Unpaid Care (hrs)	MEA Borough (%)																		
1 - 19	25.38																		
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35 - 49	6.39																		
50+	17.33																		

If you do not have enough data to tell you about potential or actual impacts you may need to conduct a pre-consultation to generate more data and to distinguish what groups are potentially affected by your policy.

## 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 of the needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 categories below:

Section 75 category	Details needs, experiences and priorities
Religious belief	None
Political opinion	None
Racial group	None
Age	None
Marital status	None
Sexual orientation	None
Men and women generally	None
Disability	None
Dependants	None

## Part 2. Screening questions

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

1 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		
Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? Positive major Positive minor None Negative major Negative minor
Religious belief	This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. As such, there will be no likely impact on equality of opportunity for this S75 grouping.	None
Political opinion	This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. As such, there will be no likely impact on equality of opportunity for this S75 grouping.	None
Racial group	This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. As such, there will be no likely impact on equality of opportunity for this S75 grouping.	None
Age	This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. As such, there will be no likely impact on equality of opportunity for this S75 grouping.	None
Marital status	This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. As such, there will be no likely impact on equality of opportunity for this S75 grouping.	None
Sexual orientation	This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. As such, there will be no likely impact on equality of opportunity for this S75 grouping.	None

Men and women generally	This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. As such, there will be no likely impact on equality of opportunity for this S75 grouping.	None
Disability	This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. As such, there will be no likely impact on equality of opportunity for this S75 grouping.	None
Dependants	This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. As such, there will be no likely impact on equality of opportunity for this S75 grouping.	None

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

Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious Belief	Promotion of the Information Governance Policy throughout all Council departments and online.	
Political opinion	Promotion of the Information Governance Policy throughout all Council departments and online.	
Racial group	Promotion of the Information Governance Policy throughout all Council departments and online.	
Age	Promotion of the Information Governance Policy throughout all Council departments and online.	
Marital Status	Promotion of the Information Governance Policy throughout all Council departments and online.	
Sexual Orientation	Promotion of the Information Governance Policy throughout all Council departments and online.	
Men and women generally	Promotion of the Information Governance Policy throughout all Council departments and online.	
Disability	Promotion of the Information Governance Policy throughout all Council departments and online.	
Dependents	Promotion of the Information Governance Policy throughout all Council departments and online.	



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	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? Positive major Positive minor None Negative major Negative minor
Religious belief	None	None
Political opinion	None	None
Racial group	None	None
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 reasons
Religious belief		This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. There are no opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief.
Political Opinion		This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. There are no opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different political opinion.
Racial Group		This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. There are no opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different 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).*

No.

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

N/A.

### Part 3. Screening decision

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

N/A

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced - please provide details.

N/A

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

N/A

#### Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

- Yes  
 No

If so, give the reasons to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

N/A

## Timetabling and prioritising

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

If the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

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 equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	1
Social need	1
Effect on people's daily lives	1
Relevance to a public authority's functions	1

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

**Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?**

**If yes, please provide details.**

No.

## Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 - 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

## Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

<b>Equality Screening undertaken by: (Position/Job Title)</b>	<b>Policy Officer</b>
<b>Date Completed:</b>	<b>08/10/2024</b>

<b>Equality Screening approved by: Position/Job Title:</b>	<b>Interim Policy Manager</b>
<b>Date Completed:</b>	<b>08/10/2024</b>

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 the public authority's website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

## Appendix I - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

### SECTION 1 - Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

#### 1A. Name of Public Authority.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

#### 1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Implementation of the Information Governance Framework to revise the Information Governance Policy

#### 1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

Developing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		

#### 1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

Information Governance Framework

#### 1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. It is designed to revise and replace the existing Information Governance Policy.

**1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

*Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.*

Not applicable.

*Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.*

Not applicable.

*Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.*

This is an internal policy and does not have any impact on rural needs.

## SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

Yes  No  If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

Not Applicable

2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas *differently* from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

Not Applicable.



**2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.**

Rural Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

**If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.**

**2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.**

No rural needs identified.

This is an internal document affecting employees within Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. No rural needs were identified as being impacted during this process.

### SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

**3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Yes  No  If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

**3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input type="checkbox"/>

**3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.**

Not Applicable.

**3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?**

Not Applicable.

If the response to Section 3A was **YES** GO TO Section 4A.

**3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?**

No rural needs identified.

This is an internal document affecting employees within Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. No rural needs were identified as being impacted during this process.

## **SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

**4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

Not Applicable.

**SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

**5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?**

Yes  No  If the response is **NO GO TO Section 5C.**

**5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.**

Not Applicable.

**If the response to Section 5A was YES GO TO Section 6A.**

A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for Public Authorities  
(Revised) April 2018

**5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.**

Not Applicable.

## SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

**6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.**

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled.



<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:</b>	Policy Officer
<b>Division/Branch</b>	Policy Team
<b>Date:</b>	08/10/24
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	Interim Policy Manager
<b>Division/Branch:</b>	Policy Team
<b>Date:</b>	08/10/24

## IDENTIFYING THE NEED FOR A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) - SCREENING QUESTIONS

A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is a process to help you systematically and comprehensively analyse your personal data processing and help you identify and minimise any data protection risks of a project.

You must do a DPIA before you begin any type of personal data processing that is “likely to result in a high risk.”

This set of screening questions will help you decide whether a DPIA is necessary. Please note, if there is a change to the nature, scope, context or purposes of your processing you will be required to complete this screening template again.

You will be accountable for the screening decisions you make. Therefore, it is critical that you document via “Explanatory Notes” the screening decisions you have made, providing logical reasons regarding whether to do a DPIA or not.

### Section A - Project Details

<b>Title of Project/Plan/Policy</b>	<b>Information Governance Framework</b>
<b>Is this an existing, revised or new project?</b>	<b>Revision</b>
<b>What is the purpose of the project, plan or policy ? e.g. intended aims/outcomes</b>  <b>Include any relevant background information here</b>	<b>This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.</b>
<b>Which MEABC Department owns or holds responsibility for this project, plan or policy?</b>	<b>Policy Team</b>

## Section B

Does this project, plan or policy involve the processing of personal data?	Yes	No
	X	

If the answer to this question is 'No', you do not need to conduct a DPIA. Please proceed straight to Section E.

If the answer to this question is 'Yes', please proceed to Section C.

## Section C: Questions 1 - 13

For questions 1 to 13, a DPIA **MUST** be carried out if the answer is YES. Your documentation should explain very clearly whether there are any indicators that a type of processing will likely result in high risk. See Appendix A for ICO's examples of processing "likely to result in high risk."

For some of these questions, the answer will only be "yes" if the processing occurs in combination with criteria (see questions 14 to 22) in the Article 29 Data Protection Working Party's European Guidelines.

	Screening Questions - <u>will the project:</u>	Yes/No	Explanatory Notes
1	Use systematic and extensive profiling or automated decision-making to make significant decisions about people?	No	
2	Process special category data or criminal offence data on a large scale?	No	
3	Systematically monitor a publicly accessible place on a large scale?	No	
4	Use innovative technologies or the novel application of existing technologies?  <i>(Note: A DPIA is required where this processing is combined with any of the criteria from the European guidelines.)</i>	No	



5	Use profiling, automated decision-making or special category data to help make decisions on someone's access to a product, service, opportunity or benefit?	No	
6	Carry out profiling on a large scale?  <i>To decide what constitutes 'large scale' you should consider and include information on factors such as:</i> -the number of individuals concerned -volume of data -variety of data -duration of processing -geographical extent of processing.  <i>Also see examples in ICO's guidance of processing/ projects they consider to be large scale.</i>	No	
7	Process biometric data?  <i>(Note: A DPIA is required where this processing is combined with any of the criteria from the <a href="#">European guidelines</a>.)</i>	No	
8	Process genetic data?  <i>(Note: A DPIA is required where this processing is combined with any of the criteria from the <a href="#">European guidelines</a>.)</i>	No	
9	Combine, compare or match personal data from multiple sources?	No	
10	Process personal data without providing a privacy notice directly to the individual?  <i>(Note: A DPIA is required where this processing is combined with any of the criteria from the <a href="#">European guidelines</a>.)</i>	No	
11	Process personal data in a way which involves tracking individuals'	No	

	online or offline location or behaviour?  <i>(Note: A DPIA is required where this processing is combined with any of the criteria from the <a href="#">European guidelines</a>.)</i>		
12	Process children's personal data for profiling or automated decision-making or for marketing purposes, or offer online services directly to them?	No	
13	Process personal data which could result in a risk of physical harm in the event of a security breach?	No	

### Section D: Article 29 Data Protection Working Party's European Guidelines

When considering if your processing is "likely to result in high risk," you should consider the [European guidelines](#). These define nine criteria of processing operations likely to result in high risk. In most cases, a combination of two factors indicates the "need" for a DPIA. Although this is not a strict rule. Therefore, if the answer to any of questions 14 to 22 is "yes" a DPIA should be "considered."

Your documentation should explain very clearly whether there any indicators that a type of processing will likely result in high risk.

See Appendix B for the Article 29 Data Protection Working Party's examples of processing "likely to result in high risk."

	Will the project:	Yes/No	Explanatory Notes
14	Involve evaluation or scoring?	No	
15	Involve automated decision-making with legal or similar significant effect?	No	
16	Involve systematic monitoring?	No	
17	Involve sensitive data or data of a highly personal nature?	No	
18	Involve data processing on a large scale?	No	

19	Involve matching or combining datasets?	No	
20	Involve processing of data concerning vulnerable data subjects*?  <i>(Note: staff may be considered to be vulnerable data subjects due to the imbalance of power between employer and employee.)</i>	No	
21	Use innovative technological or organisational solutions?	No	
22	Prevent data subjects from exercising a right or using a service or contract?	No	

**Section E: Findings**

Is a DPIA required?

Yes  No

Note: Data Protection legislation and ICO guidance state that you should seek your DPO's advice when you need to do a DPIA.

Final Comments

<b>DPIA Screening undertaken by: Position:</b>	Policy Officer
<b>Date Completed:</b>	09 October 2024
<b>DPIA Screening approved by:</b>	Interim Policy Manager
<b>Date Completed:</b>	11/10/24

Appendix A - ICO examples of processing “likely to result in high risk”

Screening question	Type of processing operation requiring a DPIA	Non-exhaustive examples of existing areas of application
1	Systematic evaluation based on automated processing or profiling resulting in legal/other significant effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit checks</li> <li>• Mortgage / loan applications</li> <li>• Fraud prevention</li> <li>• Insurance underwriting</li> <li>• Application of AI</li> </ul>
2	Large scale processing of Article 9/10 data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political parties membership data</li> <li>• Trade Union membership data</li> <li>• Health records processed by Hospitals/health clinics/gym chains</li> <li>• Social care records</li> <li>• Research (including medical research)</li> <li>• Fraud prevention</li> <li>• Application of AI</li> <li>• Dating websites/applications</li> </ul>
3	Systematic monitoring of a publically available area on a large scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatic number plate recognition,</li> <li>• Intelligent transport systems</li> <li>• Traffic management systems involving monitoring of vehicle/driver behaviour</li> <li>• Wi-Fi/Bluetooth/RFID tracking</li> <li>• Audio/video surveillance of public areas</li> <li>• Application of AI</li> </ul>
4	New technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artificial intelligence, machine learning and deep learning</li> <li>• Connected and autonomous vehicles</li> <li>• Intelligent transport systems</li> <li>• Smart technologies (including wearables)</li> <li>• Market research involving neuro-measurement (i.e. emotional response analysis and brain activity)</li> <li>• Some IoT applications, depending on the specific circumstances of the processing</li> </ul>

Screening question	Type of processing operation requiring a DPIA	Non-exhaustive examples of existing areas of application
5	Denial of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit checks</li> <li>• Mortgage or insurance applications</li> <li>• Other pre-check processes related to contracts (i.e. smartphones)</li> </ul>
6	Large-scale profiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data processed by Smart meters or IoT applications</li> <li>• Hardware/software offering fitness/lifestyle monitoring</li> <li>• Social media networks</li> <li>• Application of AI to existing process</li> </ul>
7	Biometric data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facial recognition systems</li> <li>• Workplace access systems/identity verification</li> <li>• Access control/identity verification for hardware/applications (including voice recognition/fingerprint/facial recognition)</li> </ul>
8	Genetic data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical diagnosis</li> <li>• DNA testing</li> <li>• Medical research</li> </ul>
9	Data matching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fraud prevention</li> <li>• Direct marketing</li> <li>• Monitoring personal use/uptake of statutory services or benefits</li> <li>• Federated identity assurance services</li> </ul>
10	Invisible processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List brokering</li> <li>• Direct marketing</li> <li>• Online tracking by third parties</li> <li>• Online advertising</li> <li>• Data aggregation / data aggregation platforms</li> </ul>

Screening question	Type of processing operation requiring a DPIA	Non-exhaustive examples of existing areas of application
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-use of publically available data</li> </ul>
11	Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social networks, software applications</li> <li>• Hardware/software offering fitness/lifestyle/health monitoring</li> <li>• IoT devices, applications and platforms</li> <li>• Online advertising</li> <li>• Web and cross-device tracking</li> <li>• Data aggregation / data aggregation platforms</li> <li>• Eye tracking</li> <li>• Data processing at the workplace</li> <li>• Data processing in the context of home and remote working</li> <li>• Processing location data of employees</li> <li>• Loyalty schemes</li> <li>• Tracing services (tele-matching, tele-appending)</li> <li>• Wealth profiling - identification of high net-worth individuals for the purposes of direct marketing</li> </ul>
12	Targeting of children/other vulnerable individuals for marketing, profiling for auto decision making or the offer of online services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connected toys</li> <li>• Social networks</li> </ul>
13	Risk of physical harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing/complaint procedures</li> <li>• Social care records</li> </ul>

Appendix B - Article 29 Data Protection Working Party's examples of processing "likely to result in high risk."

Examples of processing	Possible Relevant criteria	DPIA likely to be required?
A hospital processing its patients' genetic and health data (hospital information system).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sensitive data or data of a highly personal nature.</li> <li>- Data concerning vulnerable data subjects.</li> <li>- Data processed on a large-scale.</li> </ul>	Yes
The use of a camera system to monitor driving behaviour on highways. The controller envisages to use an intelligent video analysis system to single out cars and automatically recognize license plates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Systematic monitoring.</li> <li>- Innovative use or applying technological or organisational solutions.</li> </ul>	
A company systematically monitoring its employees' activities, including the monitoring of the employees' work station, internet activity, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Systematic monitoring.</li> <li>- Data concerning vulnerable data subjects.</li> </ul>	
The gathering of public social media data for generating profiles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluation or scoring.</li> <li>- Data processed on a large scale.</li> <li>- Matching or combining of datasets.</li> <li>- Sensitive data or data of a highly personal nature</li> </ul>	
An institution creating a national level credit rating or fraud database.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluation or scoring.</li> <li>- Automated decision making with legal or similar significant effect.</li> <li>- Prevents data subject from exercising a right or using a service or a contract.</li> <li>- Sensitive data or data of a highly personal nature</li> </ul>	
Storage for archiving purpose of pseudonymised personal sensitive data concerning vulnerable data subjects of research projects or clinical trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sensitive data.</li> <li>- Data concerning vulnerable data subjects.</li> <li>- Prevents data subjects from exercising a right or using a service or a contract.</li> </ul>	

## Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Climate & Sustainability Screening Tool

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council has a statutory duty to promote sustainable development. This includes screening all proposals, investments, and decisions. This screening tool is designed to help departments consider the likely sustainability impacts of their proposed decisions, following the five pillars of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda: People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnership.

Council must lead by example by considering wellbeing and sustainability in everything that it does. By embedding the principles of sustainability, wellbeing and climate justice across decision making processes, this organisation aims to enable our people and planet to thrive.

The questions are designed so that environmental and social parameters are considered alongside each other, to provide a wider view of the decision-making process. The screening assessment will be used to evidence how decisions will provide residents with environmental as well as social benefits, and how any adverse effects will be reduced. It aims to focus the limited resources of our decision-making structures onto the most relevant issues - which now formally include the environment and our impact on it.

The related guidance should be read in advance. It provides advice on how to carry out a sustainability screening exercise. Detailed information about the Section 25 duty and what it means in practice is available on the DAERA website (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/sustainable-development>).

The screening tool has 4 sections to complete. These are:

- Section 1** Details about the policy / decision that is being screened
- Section 2** 10 key questions on basic sustainability considerations and likely impacts on sustainable development
- Section 3** Summary of the overall sustainability impact of the proposed activity
- Section 4** Formal record of the screening decisions



**Section 1 – Defining the activity subject to Section 25 of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006**

1A. Name of Service Area	Policy Team
1B. Please provide a short title, which describes the activity being undertaken that is subject to Sustainability Screening through the MEA Climate & Sustainability Policy	Revision of the Information Governance Policy into the Information Governance Framework
1C. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the proposal.	This policy sets out an overarching information governance framework for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

**Section 2 – Understanding the impact of the proposal on our commitment to sustainable development**

Section 2 should be completed to the best of your knowledge at this time. It should be revisited as circumstances change or affect the outcomes. Please **use the prompts in the related guidance** (see section 2.3.2) to explore what each heading means.

	<b>Answer</b> Please choose an option that describes the nature of the impact	<b>Comments</b> Please clarify any impacts and specify measures to mitigate negative impacts. Reference any evidence that supports the impact
<b>2.1</b> What impact will the proposal have on the <b>local community</b> including:		
Education	None	N/A
Health	None	N/A
Housing	None	N/A
Transport	None	N/A
Place Making, Community & Culture	None	N/A
<b>2.2</b> What impact will the proposals have on <b>sustainable food systems</b> including:		
Seasonal and local produce	None	N/A
Nutritional value	None	N/A
Animal welfare	None	N/A
Environmental impact	None	N/A
<b>2.3</b> What impact will the proposals have on <b>diversity</b>		

<b>and equality?</b>		
Equal opportunity	None	N/A
<b>2.4 What impact will the proposals have on economic wellbeing including:</b>		
Decent jobs & Income	None	N/A
Social Value	None	N/A
Human and Labour Rights	None	N/A
<b>2.5 What impact will the proposals have on 'greenhouse gas emissions' including from:</b>		
Removal of natural carbon sinks	None	N/A
Energy	None	N/A
Transport	None	N/A
Embodied carbon	None	N/A
<b>2.6 What impact will the proposals have on waste in terms of:</b>		
Waste generation	None	N/A
Waste management	None	N/A
<b>2.7 What impact will the proposals have on the direct consumption of natural resources including:</b>		
Materials	None	N/A
Minerals	None	N/A
Fresh water	None	N/A

2.8 What impact will the proposals have on <b>resilience</b> to the adverse effects of:		
Climate change and severe weather	None	N/A
2.9 What impact will the proposals have on the <b>environment</b> including:		
Environmental management	None	N/A
Air pollution	None	N/A
Ozone layer depletion	None	N/A
Water / soil pollution	None	N/A
Chemical pollution	None	N/A
Noise pollution	None	N/A
Land conversion	None	N/A
Built Heritage	None	N/A
Natural Heritage and Biodiversity	None	N/A
2.10 What impact will the proposals have on ensuring:		
Peace	None	N/A
Justice	None	N/A
Political voice	None	N/A
Partnerships	None	N/A

### Section 3 – Determination of screening outcome

Use the information from Section 2 to complete the table below. Tally up the number of instances each impact category is recorded to provide an assessment of overall sustainability impact.

	Number of times selected	What does this mean
Positive impact	0	If the majority of the impacts are positive, it indicates the project is being appropriately managed and that opportunities to enhance sustainability are being taken. It is recommended that (subject to implementation of mitigation measures for any negative impacts) the proposal should be considered favourably.
Negative impact	0	More than 5 of these answers indicates that the project could unintendedly cause wide-ranging damage to society and / or the environment if negative impacts are not appropriately mitigated. It is recommended that the proposals are revised with guidance from the appropriate departmental experts so that liabilities and risks can be minimised. It is recommended that the proposals are not approved until these liabilities are minimised as far as reasonably practicable. Where a policy affects an area with heritage value or at risk of flooding, some red flags are inevitable but providing that these are explained satisfactorily in the comments section of the assessment this is acceptable.
Mixed Impact	0	More than 5 'Mixed Impact' responses indicates that the proposal must be reviewed to include a better management of potential negative effects. It is recommended that the proposals are not approved until the potential negative impacts have been identified and a solution has been suggested.
No impact	36	More than 5 of these answers indicates that the decision has very few environmental / social impacts <u>or</u> that the assessment has not been completed properly. It is recommended that if there is a risk that social / environmental impacts have been overlooked, the assessment is repeated with support from relevant lead departments so that a more comprehensive understanding of impacts can be provided for decision making.
Don't know	0	If there are more than 5 'don't know' responses, it is recommended that the assessment is repeated with support from relevant service areas, so that data gaps can be filled. It is recommended that the proposals are not approved until social / environmental impacts are better understood.

**Section 4 – Formal record of the screening decisions**

Title of proposal being screened:

Revision of the Information Governance Policy

I can confirm that the proposal has been screened for: (place an X below)

sustainability

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend this proposal is – (place and X in the appropriate box below)

**Deferred** - we are deferring the final decision in relation to the outcome of this screening to allow for consultation feedback. Once this consultation is complete, the feedback will be used, if applicable, to update the screening and a view taken as to the best screening outcome decision.

**Screened In** – Necessary to carry out mitigation measures and screen again

**Screened Out** – No impacts or very few negative impacts. Provide a brief note below to explain how the decision was reached:

**Summary of decision:**

The Corporate Plan 2023-2027 scored 35 positive impacts out of a possible 36 impacts, with no negative or mixed impacts for sustainability. It demonstrates a good balance of environmental, social and economic objectives to ensure that Council support its citizens and businesses and protect the environment in a sustainable way.

**Screening assessment completed by (Officer level) -**

Name: :Policy Officer Date: 09/10/2024  
 Department: Corporate & Support Services

Screening assessment approved by –

Name: Interim Policy Manager Date: 11/10/24  
 Department: Corporate and Support Services

Please save the final version of the completed screening form and forward to the Climate and Sustainability Manager

<b>Council/ Committee:</b>	Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee
<b>Date:</b>	21 October 2024
<b>Report Title:</b>	Bi-annual Information Governance Performance Report
<b>Publication Status:</b>	Open
<b>Author:</b>	Siobhan Fisher, Assistant Director – Citizen Focus
<b>Approver:</b>	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate and Support Services

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with a bi-annual update in respect of Council's information governance.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 As a public authority, Council has several statutory duties in respect of information governance.
- 2.2 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) gives the public a general right of access to information held by public authorities, with the aim to increase openness and accountability in the public sector. The policy and procedures in relation to this are detailed under Council's Access to Information Policy.
- 2.3 The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) gives an individual rights in respect of the information held by the Council about them. The policy and procedures in relation to this are detailed under Council's Data Protection Policy.
- 2.4 Each service area has ultimate responsibility for fulfilling its statutory duties in respect of information governance. The Policy team, which includes Council's Data Protection Officer, provides expert advice and guidance to all service areas within Council in respect of information governance matters to guide them towards full compliance. The Policy team also manages the Council's access to information function.

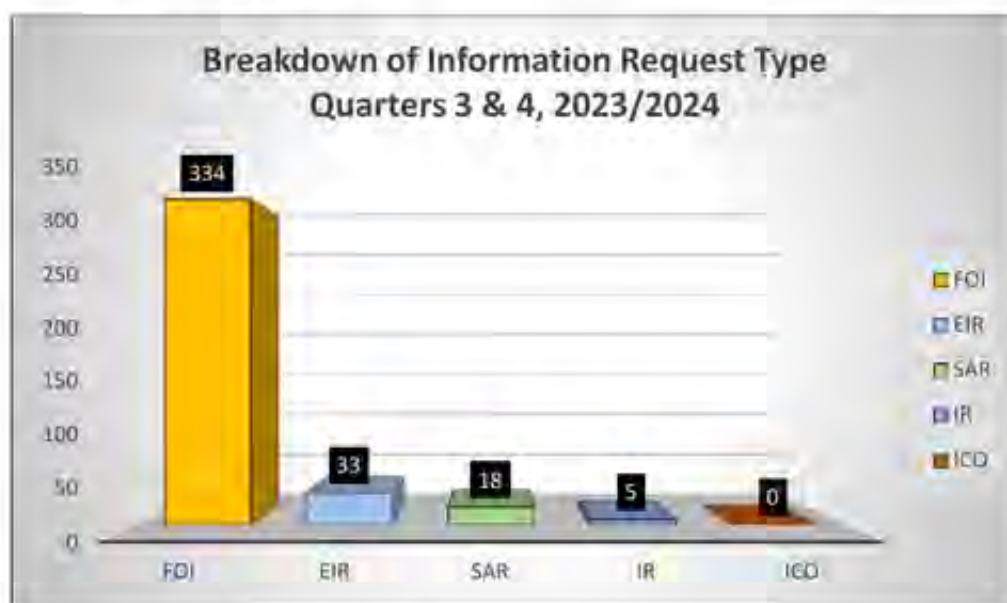
## 3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1 This report will cover both Q3 and Q4 of the 23/24 year and Q1 and Q2 of the 24/25 year. As such, this report represents two updates in one report.
- 3.2 Access to Information

*Quarter 3 & 4 Financial Year 2023/2024*

Between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, there were a total of 390 information requests received and processed.

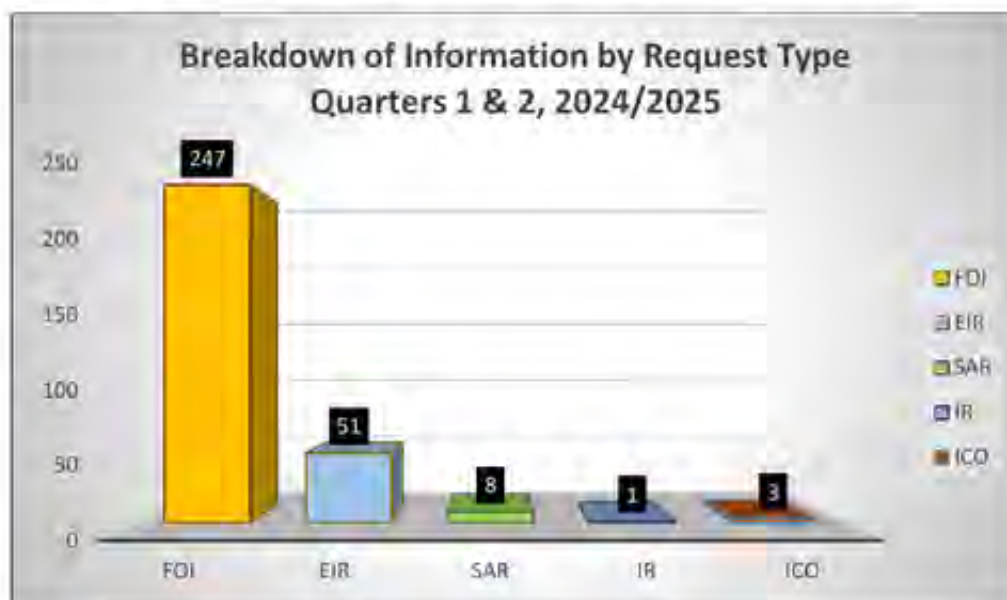
The majority (86%), of information requests were managed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.



*Quarter 1 & 2 Financial Year 2024/2025*

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, there were a total number of 310 information requests received and processed.

The majority (80%), of information requests were managed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. There has been an increase in the number of requests processed under the Environmental Information Regulations brought about by implementing a more detailed consideration of requests by the Policy Team.





Of the 310 FOI requests received over the above periods, 96 (31%) were completed by the Policy Team upon receipt. These were a combination of:

- Requests for information relating to processes not carried out by MEABC. In response to these requests, information and guidance were provided to requestors in line with the requirements of FOIA, Section 16.
- Information already held by the Policy Team or accessible without placing extra burden on departments (where this information was confirmed to be correct at time of processing).

### 3.3 Data Breaches

#### *Quarter 3 & 4 Financial Year 2023/2024*

In this period, ten potential breaches of information were reported to the Data Protection Officer. All were investigated and, upon DPO risk assessment, were found not to represent a risk to those individuals affected and as such there was no requirement to report.

#### *Quarter 1 & 2 Financial Year 2024/2025*

In this period, two potential breaches of information were reported to the Data Protection Officer. One incident was determined as representing a potential high risk and was therefore reported to the ICO. Subsequent internal investigation resulted in a reduced risk to data subjects. Mitigating factors to reduce the risk of recurrence are being implemented.

### 3.4 Record of Processing Activities (RoPA)

Article 30 of the GDPR requires Council to maintain a record of its processing activities. The Policy team are currently reviewing the Council's RoPA and implementing any necessary resulting measures in line with best practice.

### 3.5 Records Management

Council has a statutory responsibility for the effective management of information throughout the lifecycle of all records i.e. creation, maintenance, use, security, storage and final destruction or transfer to archives and the management of associated risks.

- 3.6 The review of Council's Retention and Disposal Schedule is ongoing. Upon ratification, approval will be sought to commence a Council-wide records review project.

## 4 **General Considerations/Implications**

- 4.1 Effective information governance is necessary for Council to fulfil its statutory duties and to demonstrate commitment to openness and accountability.

## **5 Proposed Way Forward**

- 5.1 An extensive programme of work has been planned to advance Council's information governance practices. The Policy team will continue to implement the actions therein.

## **6 Recommendation or Decision**

- 6.1 Elected Members are asked to note the contents of this information governance performance report.

## **7 Appendices / Links**

N/A



**Council/Committee:** Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee  
**Date:** 21 October 2024

**Report Title:** Standing Orders Sub-Committee – updated Terms of Reference

**Publication Status:** Open

**Author:** Sarah Williams, Assistant Director – Business Support

**Approver:** Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report is to present the updated Terms of Reference for the Standing Orders Sub-Committee.

### 2. Background

- 2.1. At the first meeting of the Standing Orders Sub-Committee held on 20 August, Alderman Ashe was elected as Chairman and Councillor Skinner elected as Vice-Chairman.
- 2.2. The draft Terms of Reference were reviewed and amended to include a review of the Constitution and to reflect the aims of the members that the Standing Orders and Constitution ensure the smooth operation of Council business and decision-making. The updated Terms of Reference are set out at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.3. Members of the Sub-Committee are continuing to review the Standing Orders, met again on 18 September and a date is being scheduled to meet again in November. The updated Standing Orders will be brought to Committee for approval.

### 3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. Members are asked to approve the updated Terms of Reference for the Standing Orders Sub-Committee.

### 4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. There may be financial implications arising from the outworking of the sub-committees, although they do not have delegated powers to incur any direct financial expenditure, and any proposed spending must be from within agreed budgets or deferred for consideration as part of the next rates setting process.



- 4.2. Staff resources will be required for some support for the sub-committees though it is expected that they will be self-functioning and additional officer time will be minimal.
- 4.3. Aligns to Corporate Plan High Performing Council objective.

## **5. Recommendation or Decision**

Committee is asked to approve the updated Terms of Reference for the Standing Orders Sub-Committee.

## **6. Appendices / Links**

**Appendix 1** – Updated Terms of Reference for the Standing Orders Sub-Committee.



## Standing Orders Sub-Committee

### Terms of Reference

#### 1. Purpose

The purpose of the sub-committee is to review and monitor the operation of Standing Orders **and to identify any amendments to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of Council business.**

#### 2. Objectives

- To ensure Standing Orders **and the Council Constitution** are compliant with relevant legislation;
- To identify any proposals or amendments to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of Council business **and ensure the best use of officer and member time;**
- To present options and recommendations to full Council through the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee.

#### 3. Membership

##### **Elected Members**

Ald B Ashe, MBE  
Ald W McCaughey  
Cllr M Armstrong  
Cllr R Beggs  
Cllr G McKeen  
Cllr A Rae  
Cllr A Skinner

##### **Council Officers**

Assistant Director – Business Support  
Solicitor

Democratic Services Manager

##### *Supported by*

Interim Chief Executive  
Interim Director of Corporate Services

##### **Chair & Vice Chair**

The Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed at the first meeting and ideally should remain in post for the duration of one year.

#### 4. Meeting arrangements

The sub-committee will meet at least quarterly **or as necessary**.

The sub-committee quorum will be 50% of the active membership ie 3 Members.

If the quorum fails to be achieved at two consecutive meetings, the future of the sub-committee will be reviewed by the sponsor Committee.

## **5. Reporting structure**

A brief note of any actions agreed at the meeting will be taken by an officer in attendance.

The sub-committee will report and make recommendations to the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee.

DRAFT



<b>Council/Committee:</b>	Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee
<b>Date:</b>	21 October 2024
<b>Report Title:</b>	Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 Consultation Response
<b>Publication Status:</b>	Open
<b>Author:</b>	Siobhan Fisher, Assistant Director Citizen Focus
<b>Approver:</b>	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide Elected Members with the corporate response to the draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 Consultation for noting, ahead of submission before the deadline of 4 November 2024.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. On 5 September 2024, the Executive agreed a draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'. It outlines the Northern Ireland Executive's priorities for 2024-2027.
- 2.2. An eight-week public consultation process on the draft Programme for Government was opened on 9 September 2024 and will end on 4 November 2024.
- 2.3. The draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' can be found at [Hyperlink 1](#).
- 2.4. Elected Members agreed, at a meeting of Full Council on 14 October 2024, that a corporate response should be submitted to the consultation that is reflective of the views and opinions of Officers from an organisational perspective. Members advised they would also proceed to submit individual and party responses.

## 3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. It was agreed that the corporate response to the consultation would be presented to Members at this meeting of the Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee for noting ahead of submission to the consultation. A copy of the corporate response has been included at Appendix 1.



#### **4. General Considerations / Implications**

- 4.1. The draft Programme for Government has a direct impact on all Council activity, it is therefore essential for Council to respond in order to ensure local needs are represented, to influence regional policy, and to ensure alignment of Council's strategic priorities with that of the Executive.

#### **5. Proposed Way Forward**

- 5.1. The consultation response will be submitted before the deadline of 4 November 2024.

#### **6. Recommendation or Decision**

- 6.1. Elected Members are asked to note the corporate response to the draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 Consultation.

#### **7. Appendices / Link**

- Hyperlink 1 [Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'](#)
- Appendix 1 Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 Consultation MEA Response



## **Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 Consultation Response**

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**Section One: Priorities**

**Priority One: 'Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy'**

How much do you agree that the priority 'Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
✓				

**Proposed Action:**

Through a series of multi-million-pound committed investments, we will make this a more vibrant and inclusive place to live, work, invest and visit. Central to every part of our plan for a globally competitive and sustainable economy will be employers and workers. Supporting them to build the skills needed both now, and in the future, will be vital if we are to harness our economic potential.

**Actions are:**

- Prioritise the development of high-productivity sectors through specific programmes to support cluster development.
- Continue to streamline City and Growth Deals processes and approvals.
- Additional investment in the Higher Education Innovation Fund and similar programmes, and by focusing on increasing the uptake of European and UK-based funding programmes.
- Through the new Skills Fund, a range of initiatives will be introduced to ensure individuals have the right training to adapt to new technologies and new ways of working.
- Improve management practices to boost productivity and job quality.
- Appointed a new Chief Science and Technology Adviser and will establish a Northern Ireland Science and Technology Advisory Network.
- A new Apprenticeship Inclusion Challenge Fund.
- Set up a new Skills Fund; this will include a new Tourism and Hospitality Careers Programme and a new Skills Academy for the childcare sector.
- Subject to Executive approval, we propose to introduce new Employment Rights Legislation and a Good Work Charter.
- Seek to achieve self-sufficiency in our own clean and affordable energy.
- Invest £15 million in the Energy and Resource Efficiency Support Scheme.
- Invest a further £75 million via the Invest to Save Fund into the public sector's transition to net zero.
- Realise ambition of the proposed £150 million Investment Zone.
- Publish a Circular Economy Strategy.
- We need to invest in our economic infrastructure working more closely and importantly more constructively with local stakeholders.
- Continue to build on, and support, our established Higher Education campuses at QUB, UU Belfast and UU Coleraine.

- The Magee Taskforce will develop and oversee an action plan for campus expansion (Ulster University's Magee Campus).
- Boost tourism's sub-regional impact through an innovative Tourism Strategic Action Plan.
- Work with Councils and local partners to deliver a Sub-Regional Economic Action Plan.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy' priority:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council welcomes the inclusion of the priority to 'Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy' within the Draft Programme for Government (PFG). This priority aligns well with the strategic vision outlined in our Corporate Plan 2024-2028 and Community Plan 2017-2032, 'Putting People First'. Both plans underscore our commitment to fostering sustainable economic growth, enhancing employability, and ensuring long-term prosperity for our borough.

**Alignment with the Corporate Plan 2024-2028:** Our Corporate Plan is built around four key pillars: *People, Place, Planet, and Performance*. Each pillar contains specific objectives that will drive our actions in the coming years. Under the *People* pillar, we are committed to working closely with employers and stakeholders to support employment opportunities, enhance access to the labour market, and promote upskilling. This includes initiatives that provide skills development, apprenticeships, and work experience, all of which directly contribute to the goals of the PFG.

Our *Place* pillar focuses on creating a prosperous local economy by promoting the borough as a leading destination for business and investment. This includes supporting tourism growth through the promotion of our rich natural and built heritage, aligning closely with the PFG's emphasis on global competitiveness and sustainable economic growth.

Furthermore, our *Performance* pillar demonstrates Council's commitment to empowering and equipping our staff to reach their full potential. This is achieved through the delivery of comprehensive skill development, health and wellbeing initiatives and a fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation.

**Alignment with the Community Plan 2017-2032:** Our Community Plan's strategic themes of 'Tourism and the Economy' and 'Progress in Education and Employment' also align with this PFG priority. These themes emphasise boosting local businesses, promoting skills development, and ensuring that Mid and East Antrim remains an attractive location to live, work, do business and visit.

**Our Approach:** We continue to collaborate with local stakeholders to deliver targeted programmes that enhance employability and economic resilience, these include but are not limited to:

- Employment programmes that equip citizens with the skills needed to thrive in the modern economy.
- Business growth support for local enterprises, particularly in the cleantech and tourism sectors.
- STEM education initiatives to promote innovation and workforce readiness.
- Town centre regeneration projects to revitalise local areas and stimulate economic activity.
- Tourism development projects that leverage our natural and cultural assets, attracting both local and international visitors.

**Areas for Consideration:**

1. **Tourism Development:** While the proposed initiatives are a positive step, we urge a greater focus on maximising the region's tourism potential. This includes:
  - Prioritising the development of accommodation options beyond Belfast to distribute economic benefits more evenly across Northern Ireland.
  - Monitoring the impact of increased traffic, especially coaches, along scenic routes such as the Causeway Coastal Route, to protect the natural environment and quality of life for local communities.
  - Supporting local community groups to develop unique tourism offerings, fostering community buy-in and increasing expenditure in rural areas.
  - Enhancing the evening economy in towns and villages to encourage longer stays and support local businesses.
  - Generating initiatives to attract visitors during shoulder seasons, such as targeted marketing campaigns and events.
  - Promoting regenerative tourism, which goes beyond sustainability to actively improve local economies, preserve cultural heritage, and enhance biodiversity.
2. **City Deal Projects:** While we welcome the Executive's commitment to streamline City and Growth Deals processes and approvals, we remain concerned about potential disruptions following recent announcements from the UK Labour Government regarding funding pauses. We stress the importance of ensuring that key projects in our borough, such as the i4C Innovation Centre, The Gobbins Phase 2, and Carrickfergus Regeneration, proceed without interruption.
3. **Support for SMEs:** The absence of specific actions for SMEs in the PfG is a concern. We recommend that the Executive includes measures to support the creation, growth, and development of small businesses, which are vital to the regional economy.
4. **High Productivity Sectors:** Care is needed to ensure that benefits from high productivity sectors are distributed across the region, avoiding the exacerbation of existing inequalities. Incentives should be designed to promote the development of these sectors outside Greater Belfast.
5. **Skills Fund:** We urge the Executive to allocate sufficient resources to facilitate access to training for all working-age adults, regardless of their employment status. Initiatives

should ensure that individuals are equipped to adapt to new technologies and ways of working, with a specific focus on digital skills training to keep pace with technological advancements. Furthermore, we call on the Executive to make funds accessible to local government, which would enable them to offer apprenticeship opportunities across their varied responsibilities, thus supporting the development of a skilled workforce to meet the demands of public services and community needs.

6. **Technological Change:** Rapid technological advancements can leave smaller businesses behind, in particular independent town centre traders. Support for digital transformation and upskilling in e-commerce and digital technologies is essential to enable these businesses to compete effectively. Council would recommend that a dedicated Digital Skills Development Fund be established and equitably distributed.
7. **Cost of Living:** Northern Ireland has the lowest discretionary disposable income in the UK, with households spending a significantly higher portion of their income on energy, food, and fuel compared to other regions. Recent research by YouGov, commissioned by the Trussell Trust, found that 14,000 people on Universal Credit in Northern Ireland relied on food banks between December 2023 and January 2024. To foster a growing and sustainable economy, the Executive must not only support businesses in developing and encouraging sales but also focus on assisting local households to ensure they can contribute to the economy.
8. **High Street Task Force:** It is important to acknowledge the lack of progress with the High Street Task Force report, "*Delivering a 21st Century High Street*," which has been inactive for some time. The NI Executive had previously committed that the findings from the 'call for evidence' consultation would be incorporated into the Programme for Government. Despite this, there is an absence of focus on town centre regeneration or the revitalisation of the High Street in the current draft. It is essential that regenerating the High Street becomes a priority, with the recommendations and objectives from the previous consultation incorporated as actionable goals.

**Emphasis on Sustainability:** Council believes economic growth must be pursued sustainably, with a strong focus on environmental protection. Our Climate and Sustainability Action Plan 2023-2027 supports this priority by integrating sustainability into economic development. We recommend more emphasis on resource management and implementing the Draft Circular Economy Strategy's target to halve our material footprint by 2050.

**Going Forward:** Mid and East Antrim Borough Council remains committed to supporting the PFG priority of 'Growing a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy'. We believe our current and future plans are well-aligned with this priority and look forward to working alongside the Executive to deliver the programmes and initiatives outlined.

We welcome any opportunity to collaborate with the Executive to achieve these shared goals and contribute to the long-term economic resilience, competitiveness, and sustainability of Northern Ireland.

**Priority Two: 'Deliver More Affordable Childcare'**

How much do you agree that the priority 'Deliver More Affordable Childcare' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
✓				

**Our Proposed Action:**

We have already started to develop a long-term approach which will make childcare more affordable and help parents stay in or return to work. We know support cannot come soon enough, and that is why we are taking steps to introduce a balanced package of measures this year. This has the interests of children at its core and will ease current financial pressures on providers and families. It will also lay the foundation for an Early Learning and Childcare Strategy.

**Actions are:**

- As we develop the Early Learning and Childcare Strategy, we are also taking immediate action. We are investing up to £25 million this year.
- Introduce a 15% childcare subsidy for parents in receipt of tax-free childcare who have children below primary school age.
- Supporting existing childcare and early years programmes, which are focused on children facing disadvantage, and will consider how to best support childcare providers.
- Pre-School Education Programme; invest in taking steps to ensure we can deliver long-term change and to stabilise core services.
- Collect more robust and comprehensive data from the sector so we can more effectively evaluate the 2024/25 interventions to inform the future longer-term development of the strategy.
- Put in place the training needed to build a skilled, valued and happy workforce, including a new Skills Academy.
- Create a solution focused on child-centred, developmental approaches and early support for children with additional needs.
- Develop an Early Learning and Childcare Strategy which improves provision and includes two high-profile targets: supporting the development of our children to give every child the best start in life, while supporting more affordable childcare.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Deliver More Affordable Childcare' priority:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council welcomes the priority to 'Deliver More Affordable Childcare' within the Draft PfG. While this issue is not specifically addressed within our own Council strategies, we recognise the critical importance of affordable childcare for supporting families, enhancing employability, and contributing to economic growth across Northern Ireland.

We welcome the commitment to invest up to £25 million this year, which addresses the urgent financial pressures faced by families and childcare providers, ensuring immediate and meaningful support.

The introduction of a 15% childcare subsidy for parents receiving tax-free childcare is essential in alleviating financial burdens and improving access to quality services.

Additionally, we appreciate the focus on supporting existing programmes for disadvantaged children, as equitable access to early education is crucial for promoting social inclusion.

Moreover, the commitment to robust data collection will help evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and guide the future development of the Early Learning and Childcare Strategy.

Lastly, establishing a Skills Academy for workforce training will enhance service quality and retention, ultimately benefiting both children and families in our community.

**Local Context:** Expensive childcare remains a significant barrier to employment, particularly for parents in low-income households who find costs excessively high. When childcare expenses rival or exceed potential earnings, many parents, especially mothers, are forced to make difficult decisions between continuing in employment or staying home to care for their children. This not only limits their career progression but also has broader social and economic implications, including reduced household income and decreased workforce participation.

In the Mid and East Antrim area, there are currently 209 registered childminders, 14 approved homecare providers, and 18 crèche/daycare facilities. Over the past three years, the Council has facilitated childminding training for 25 individuals, resulting in 21 newly registered childminders in the borough.

**Our Approach:** With new funding approved by the Department of Education, across all Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs) 125 new childminders will be trained by March 2025. Mid and East Antrim will support 13 individuals through mandatory training and the Early Years registration process.

**Areas for Consideration:** While these initiatives are welcomed, there are several areas that require attention:

- 1. Broadening Support for Parents in the Workforce:** Mid and East Antrim Borough Council believes that while affordable childcare is a crucial action, it should be part of a broader strategy to support parents who wish to join or rejoin the workforce. Rather than focusing solely on childcare, efforts should also encompass initiatives that provide more holistic support for parents. This could include delivering education and training opportunities within the workplace, promoting flexible working arrangements, and leveraging technology to enable remote or hybrid working models. This multifaceted

approach would not only address immediate childcare needs but also provide sustainable solutions for workforce re-entry and economic participation.

- 2. Lengthy Registration Process:** The current registration process for new childminders, including home checks, can take a number of months, causing significant delays in individuals commencing self-employment. Streamlining this process would enable new childminders to enter the workforce more swiftly, addressing local demand for childcare services.
- 3. Challenges with Tax-Free Childcare Administration:** The administration of the 15% subsidy for parents in receipt of tax-free childcare is burdensome. Delays in processing payments, sometimes up to four weeks, have discouraged some childminders from offering this service. Simplifying the payment system would reduce administrative burdens and increase uptake among providers.
- 4. Sustainability of the Childminding Sector:** A recent focus group with childminders in the Ballymena area revealed that 75% of participants have considered leaving the sector due to rising operational costs. Many have discontinued school pick-ups or limited their services to local children in response to increased car insurance expenses. One childminder has even reduced their hours to take on part-time employment to supplement their income. These challenges underscore the urgent need for targeted support to ensure the sustainability of this vital sector.
- 5. Reliance on Council Facilities:** Many community-based childcare providers rely on council facilities and are unable to afford full rental prices. Consequently, the Council is subsidising the provision of community-based childcare. Without access to these reduced-cost council facilities, many of these providers would be unable to operate sustainably.

**Going Forward:** Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is committed to supporting the PfG priority of delivering more affordable childcare. We recognise that accessible, high-quality childcare is essential for enabling parents to participate in the workforce and contribute to economic growth. We look forward to collaborating with the Executive to implement initiatives that make childcare more accessible and affordable for families across Northern Ireland.



**Priority Three: 'Cut Health Waiting Times'**

How much do you agree that the priority 'Cut Health Waiting Times' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
✓				

**Our Proposed Action:**

The need to improve performance, increase productivity, and improve the quality and consistency of care is well understood. We know that we need to accelerate the transformation and reconfiguration of services to deliver that, and progress has and is being made to tackle the backlog of patients waiting. For example, through the development of elective care centres, rapid diagnosis centres, service reviews, and mega clinics.

In addition, officials are working with Trusts to increase productivity and efficiency through a wide range of best practice service improvements, and the Social Care Collaborative Forum is working across all social care sectors to reform the commissioning and delivery of adult social care.

**Actions are:**

- Given the importance of addressing waiting lists, investments of £76 million have been approved for 2024/25.
- Supporting those on cancer and time-critical waiting lists.
- Prepare for future investments that will provide improvements and efficiencies that help us reduce waiting times.
- Investing in our workforce, delivering digital capability and innovation, taking the difficult decisions about reconfiguration, and supporting a move to addressing health inequalities and improving health through primary, community and social care.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Cut Health Waiting Times' priority:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council welcomes the inclusion of the priority to 'Cut Health Waiting Times' in the Draft PfG and is encouraged by the approval of a £76 million investment to tackle this critical issue.

Timely access to healthcare is essential to ensuring the health and wellbeing of all citizens, and we are pleased to see this being addressed at a strategic level.

At a local level, the Council is actively working to address health and wellbeing within our community. By focusing on preventive measures and promoting healthy lifestyles, we aim to positively impact the long-term health of our residents. While we recognise that not all health issues can be prevented, our goal is to empower individuals to take proactive steps toward improving their physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

**Alignment with the Corporate Plan 2024-2028:** Our *People* pillar demonstrates our commitment to supporting and delivering opportunities for our citizens to improve their physical, mental, and emotional health and wellbeing.

Under our *Place* pillar, the Council is enhancing and expanding local amenities, parks, open spaces, and built heritage to encourage active and mindful use by our residents, fostering better physical health through increased access to recreational spaces.

Internally, under our *Performance* pillar, we are prioritising the health and wellbeing of our employees by fostering a supportive work environment that promotes physical, mental, and emotional health, enabling staff to thrive both personally and professionally.

**Alignment with the Community Plan 2017-2032: Putting People First:** The Community Plan emphasises the theme of Good Health and Wellbeing, with objectives that include; encouraging citizens to be physically active more often, ensuring easy access to the borough's natural environment and heritage, and providing access to information, activities, and advice to support both physical and mental wellbeing.

**Our Approach:** To achieve these objectives, we have introduced several initiatives designed to support the health and wellbeing of our citizens. These include but are not limited to:

- MEActive Programme, which includes MEAqua Swimming Academy, MEActive Summer Programmes, and outdoor gyms to encourage physical fitness.
- Through Parks Development and Outdoor Recreation Programmes, the Council actively promotes physical activity and engagement with our natural environment, promoting both physical and mental health and wellbeing for all abilities.
- Enhancements to local parks and amenities to facilitate physical activity.
- Promotion of our leisure facilities to make health and fitness accessible to all.
- Physical Activity Referral Scheme, providing targeted support for those most in need.
- Continual investment in play provision through the Play Investment Framework to include accessible, inclusive play, as well as play for all, for example, urban sports provision.

Through these efforts, we aim to complement regional initiatives to reduce healthcare waiting times by fostering a healthier, more active community.

**Community Planning:** Through the Good Health and Wellbeing thematic group, of the Community Planning Partnership and Strategic Alliance, the Council works in collaboration to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing within the community. By working closely with key partners such as the Health and Social Care Board, the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, and the Public Health Agency, the Council supports initiatives designed to enhance overall health and wellbeing. These efforts include promoting preventative health measures, increasing access to wellness programmes, and fostering community-based health initiatives, all of which aim to reduce the strain on health services and improve the quality of life for residents.

**Areas for Consideration:**

- 1. Addressing Health Inequalities:** While the focus on reducing waiting times is vital, it is equally important to address the underlying health inequalities that contribute to prolonged waiting lists. Incorporating targeted initiatives aimed at addressing social impacts on health, particularly for disadvantaged or marginalised communities, will ensure equitable access to care.
- 2. Data-Driven Decision Making:** A commitment to robust data collection and analysis will be critical for understanding factors contributing to waiting times. This should also include timely adjustments to strategies based on real-time insights.
- 3. Investment in Workforce Development:** A comprehensive strategy for recruitment, training, and retention of healthcare professionals, particularly in areas facing workforce shortages, will ensure that patient care is not compromised.

**Priority Four: 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls'**

How much do you agree that the priority 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
✓				

**Our Proposed Action:**

This year we will launch our first delivery plan. The delivery plan will strengthen existing, and mobilise new, partnerships and networks across government, and all sections of our society. It will drive and enable the necessary change, embracing the vital roles of our community and voluntary sector and grass roots organisations.

We have co-designed, with a wide range of stakeholders, including those with lived experience, a Strategic Framework which sets out an ambitious roadmap for generational and systemic change. This will be supported by a series of action plans over a period of seven years.

Our long-term focus is on early intervention and prevention of violence against women and girls. We will take strategic action to tackle damaging attitudes and behaviours so everyone can have healthy, respectful relationships and a chance to thrive. Immediate action is also required to improve the outcomes for victims and survivors of VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls).

**Actions are:**

- Lead and work with partners to develop campaigns to ensure that there is strong, consistent messaging so that everyone here, including our children and young people, understands the issue and knows how to help end violence against women and girls.
- Invest through a Change Fund, providing on-the-ground support for the vital work of communities and the sector in the delivery of the first-year delivery plan.
- Introduce better access and support for victims and survivors in the criminal justice system.
- Invest in organisations to explore the two key challenges that have been identified through our co-design: using technological innovation to improve understanding and prevention of VAWG, and increasing and improving the physical and psychological safety of women and girls everywhere.
- Work collaboratively to support delivery, communications, and stakeholder networks and advise on innovation, measurement, and good practice, improving and joining up data.
- Lead in connecting and supporting collaborative working across the public sector and with Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) sectoral stakeholders.
- Officials will continue to work with the PSNI, and across departments, to ensure collaborative working and alignment with other strategies where there are clear shared outcomes.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' priority:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council fully supports the inclusion of 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' as a priority in the Draft PfG. This issue remains of significant concern, both locally and across Northern Ireland. The Council believes that violence against women and girls is a severe barrier to equality, safety, and wellbeing, and we are committed to working collaboratively to provide comprehensive support systems that protect victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and foster a culture of respect and non-violence.

**Local Context:** According to the latest statistics from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), incidents of domestic violence and abuse continue to be prevalent in the Mid and East Antrim area. During the 2023-2024 period alone, PSNI recorded approximately 2,188 incidents of domestic abuse within the borough. Whilst we acknowledge these will not all be incidents of violence against women and girls, it underscores the relevance of this as a priority for the PfG.

**Alignment with our Corporate Plan 2024-2028:** Our Corporate Plan 2024-2028 places a strong emphasis on improving the safety and wellbeing of all residents, including women and girls. Under the strategic pillar of *People*, we are dedicated to building inclusive, safe communities where everyone feels secure. This commitment is reflected in our support for collaborative efforts with local agencies, law enforcement, and community groups to deliver educational programmes, improve reporting mechanisms, and provide resources for those affected by domestic abuse.

**Our Approach:** Mid and East Antrim Borough Council recognises that ending violence against women and girls requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond addressing immediate safety concerns. We believe it is essential to tackle the underlying social and cultural factors that perpetuate gender-based violence and to work proactively to create an environment where all individuals feel safe, respected, and valued.

The Council has engaged in various programmes aimed at improving community safety and supporting women and girls. For example, our annual walks programme includes a walk for women, conducted in collaboration with the local policing team. This initiative provides a safe, informal setting where participants can discuss personal safety concerns, make connections, and receive advice from PSNI officers. Such programmes not only empower participants but also strengthen community ties and foster trust between residents and law enforcement.

Internally, we are a certified Platinum standard Safe Place Organisation, supporting the Safe Place Campaign Pledge to never commit, condone or stay silent about domestic violence. We commit to provide a Safe Place for victims of domestic violence to confidentially access information. We also acknowledge domestic violence is a problem that impacts on all of us

as a society, and will be prepared to play our part in supporting victims and state clearly to perpetrators that we will not tolerate abuse in our community.

We acknowledge that more needs to be done to enhance the effectiveness of our efforts. This includes improving support for those affected by domestic abuse, enhancing prevention initiatives, and ensuring that educational and support programmes are accessible to all communities. We also believe that stronger mechanisms should be established to engage men and boys as allies in the effort to end violence against women and girls.

**Community Planning:** The Mid and East Antrim Community Planning Partnership has actively addressed violence against women and girls through various initiatives focused on prevention and support. In collaboration with key stakeholders such as the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and Women's Aid, the partnership has implemented awareness campaigns, educational programmes, and training sessions for professionals to effectively respond to incidents of violence. These initiatives have been crucial in raising community awareness about abuse, improving access to support services, and enhancing the capacity of professionals to support victims.

#### **Areas for Consideration:**

1. **Broadening of Scope:** Addressing violence against women and girls should be part of a broader strategy to end violence and hatred towards all vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities and those of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. This comprehensive approach would help to build a more inclusive and respectful society.
2. **Representation of the Arts:** We also advocate for the inclusion of the arts as a means to address these issues. The arts can serve as an invaluable resource in delivering educational and awareness-raising programmes. Artistic initiatives, such as theatre, visual arts, and community arts projects, can effectively engage communities, foster dialogue, and build relationships that challenge harmful norms and promote a culture of non-violence and mutual respect.
3. **Safe Leave:** Council supports the swift implementation of the newly adopted 'Safe Leave' legislation across Northern Ireland, which grants paid leave to victims of domestic abuse, allowing them time to seek support, relocate, or attend legal and medical appointments without the fear of losing their jobs. Although the law has been passed, its full implementation remains pending. The timely enforcement of this legislation is critical if the Executive is to fully support this priority.
4. **Access to Support Services:** Improving access to support services for victims must be adequately resourced to handle specific needs.
5. **Long-Term Funding:** The Change Fund should provide long-term funding commitments for community organisations and initiatives, ensuring sustained efforts to combat violence against women and girls.

**Going Forward:** Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is committed to continuing our work in partnership with local stakeholders to create a safer, more equitable society. We believe that by working together, we can make meaningful strides toward ending violence against women and girls and ensuring a safer future for all residents.

We look forward to collaborating with the Executive to develop and support the delivery of programmes and initiatives that address this critical issue and contribute to the wellbeing of communities across Northern Ireland.

**Priority Five: 'Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs'**

How much do you agree that the priority 'Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
✓				

**Our Proposed Action:**

We will work to transform the Education system to provide high-quality, efficient and sustainable services for children with SEN and disability. Systemic transformation will take time, but it is vital that we respond meaningfully to make sure our education system works for all learners.

**Actions are:**

- Rebuild trust and confidence in and within the system.
- Develop a set of enabling actions to better support schools.
- Clear and ongoing communications with children and young people with SEN and disabilities, and their supporting networks.
- Prioritise providing the Right Support, from the Right People, at the Right Time and in the Right Place, through the proposed transformation implementation plan.
- Develop an investment plan across the school estate which sets out the changes needed to make sure that all pupils have access to learning environments that are inclusive, safe and able to support pupils of different backgrounds, abilities, and cultures.
- Seek to streamline the statutory assessment, statementing and annual review process to meet statutory timeframes and ensure timely confirmation of school placements for children with SEN.
- The Department of Education (DoE) will work with the Department for the Economy (DfE) and the Department of Health (DoH) to improve pathways to appropriate opportunities and improve protections for young people with SEN when they leave school.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs' priority:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council fully supports the inclusion of the priority for 'Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs' in the Draft FIG.



The Council recognises that addressing special educational needs from an early age has a profound impact on long-term outcomes, including health and wellbeing. By ensuring that children and young people receive tailored support, we can help them overcome barriers to learning and personal development, enhancing their educational experiences and contributing to their future potential.

To effectively rebuild trust among parents and educators, ongoing engagement with stakeholders is essential. Streamlining assessment processes with clear timelines will ensure families receive timely information. Additionally, investing in developing nurturing learning environments and specialised training for educators is crucial. Expanding collaboration between government departments and local organisations will also create comprehensive support pathways for young people with special educational needs as they transition from school to further education or employment.

This priority closely aligns with the strategic objectives outlined in our Corporate Plan 2024-2028 and our Community Plan 2017-2032: *Putting People First*.

**Alignment with the Corporate Plan 2024-2028:** Our *People* pillar demonstrates our commitment to ensuring people have equity of opportunity and support to achieve their full potential, in both a professional and personal capacity. Underscored by objectives to; explore ways to help vulnerable and marginalised individuals feel welcome and supported in their local communities, removing feelings of isolation or exclusion and to lead by example to improve equality, accessibility and inclusion across the borough by embedding it into everything we do.

**Alignment with the Community Plan 2017-2032: Putting People First:** Included within our Community Plan is the theme of 'Progress in Education'. Under this theme, we aim to provide opportunities for all and support people to achieve their full potential through reducing barriers to personal and professional development, and through the provision of a range of education pathways to employment.

Additionally, under the theme of 'Community Safety and Cohesion' we will deliver actions to ensure our activities and events are inclusive and welcoming to all. We will support and include the most vulnerable and most excluded, proactively delivering programmes to address their greatest concerns.

**Our Approach:** To achieve these objectives, we have introduced several initiatives designed to support the health and wellbeing of our citizens. These include but are not limited to:

- Supporting various community programmes and initiatives that focus on the requirements of children with special needs. This includes funding or facilitating programmes that offer extracurricular activities, therapeutic support, and skill-building opportunities tailored to children with disabilities.
- Promoting accessibility and inclusivity within public spaces and educational facilities.
- Delivering our corporate, democratic and community events in an inclusive way. This has included the introduction of 'quiet hour' initiatives.
- Through partnership working with The Mae Murray Foundation, our destination play parks are designed to consider the experience of families with a variety of needs not just while using the play provision but also the experience prior to and travelling to the site. This can

include provision of detailed information on the Council website, appropriate accessible car parking provision and appropriate toilet facilities e.g. changing places units.

- Council provides a range of autism support initiatives, including inclusive leisure programmes, autism-friendly public spaces, and staff training to enhance understanding and assistance. The Council also partners with local schools and autism organisations to offer targeted educational programmes and regularly hosts community events to raise autism awareness. These efforts aim to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for individuals with autism and their families across the borough.

Additionally, during the last academic year, the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Team was proud to welcome students from local Special Educational Schools, who were pursuing land-based studies qualifications (LANTRA). These students sought the Council's support to gain practical, hands-on experience in a real working environment to better prepare them for life after education. As a result, a number of students have since secured employment, while others are continuing their education and will be returning to the Council's Parks Team for an additional placement year.

**Community Planning:** Additionally, through our involvement in the Community Planning Partnership and Strategic Alliance, we have actively worked to collaborate and develop partnerships with educational institutions, health services, and community organisations to provide a holistic support system. These initiatives aim to address unique learning needs and foster environments where every child can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

#### **Areas for Consideration:**

##### **1. Development of Multi-Disciplinary Teams with a Child-Centred Approach:**

Establishing multi-disciplinary teams that integrate educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, and special education professionals within schools can significantly enhance the support system for children with special educational needs. These teams should adopt a child-centred approach, ensuring that assessments and interventions are tailored to each child's unique needs. By fostering collaboration among various specialists, we can create comprehensive support plans that not only address academic challenges but also promote emotional and social wellbeing.

- ##### **2. Raising Awareness of Autism Among Teaching Staff:** It is crucial to enhance the understanding of autism among educators. This can be achieved through targeted training programmes that equip teachers with the necessary tools, skills, and knowledge to effectively manage the diverse needs of their pupils. By increasing awareness and understanding of autism spectrum disorders, we can create a more inclusive classroom environment. This includes developing individualised teaching strategies and promoting positive interactions between teachers and students with autism, ultimately fostering a sense of belonging and engagement.

- ##### **3. Collaboration with Assessment Bodies:** We advocate for collaboration with relevant assessment bodies to develop alternative approaches to educational assessment that are acceptable within the school setting. These alternative methods should be designed to align with the individual capabilities and needs of each child, ensuring that assessments are not only fair but also reflective of their potential. This approach would help to alleviate the pressure often associated with traditional assessment methods and

create a more supportive environment for children with special educational needs to demonstrate their abilities.

- 4. Consideration for Adults with Late Diagnoses:** It is essential to extend our focus beyond children and young people to include adults, particularly those who receive late diagnoses of special educational needs. Many adults struggle with the repercussions of undiagnosed conditions throughout their lives, which can affect their educational and career opportunities. Implementing support systems for late-diagnosed individuals can facilitate their access to necessary resources, training, and employment opportunities. This consideration aligns with our commitment to promoting inclusivity and supporting the lifelong learning journey of all individuals within our community.
- 5. Lack of representation for the Arts:** The arts sector in Northern Ireland can significantly support young people and children with special educational needs by offering inclusive, creative opportunities that enhance personal development, social skills, and emotional wellbeing. Tailored arts programmes, such as music, drama, visual arts, and dance, provide alternative ways for children to express themselves, develop communication abilities, and build confidence. These activities can be particularly beneficial for those who find traditional educational methods challenging, enabling them to engage in a supportive and understanding environment.

Partnerships between schools, community arts organisations, and professional artists can further enrich learning by creating bespoke programmes that align with individual educational needs. Such collaborations not only promote the development of fine motor skills and concentration but also foster a sense of inclusion and acceptance. By recognising and celebrating the talents of young people with special educational needs, the arts sector can help create a more supportive and empathetic community.

**Going Forward:** Our ongoing efforts underscore our dedication to improving the quality of life for all children and young people. We believe that investing in targeted support for those with special educational needs is essential for building a more equitable and prosperous future, aligning with the broader goals of the Draft PFG.

**Priority Six: 'Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing'**

How much do you agree that the priority 'Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
✓				

**Our Proposed Action:**

- Unlock the combined skills and resources of government, the private and third sectors, finding solutions and creating opportunities to transform supply and improve quality across the whole housing system.
- Ensure that the planning system supports the delivery of the appropriate supply of housing, creating sustainable and inclusive spaces, and work with NI Water to help facilitate housing growth.
- Deliver a Northern Ireland Housing Supply Strategy.
- Seeking Treasury agreement for appropriate treatment of borrowing to enable the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to increase investment in its homes, improve energy efficiency, and contribute to new supply.
- Focus on preventing homelessness, making it brief, rare and non-recurrent by working collaboratively, prioritising housing solutions for those most in need and developing innovative funding models with third sector partners to purchase homes.
- Bring forward a pilot programme that will support young people leaving care and help to prevent this group from the risk of homelessness.
- Continue to prioritise housing support for vulnerable people across our society through NIHE's three-year Supporting People Strategy.
- By 2025, we will launch a new Fuel Poverty Strategy.
- Continue our investment in shared ownership homes, supported by low-cost loans to deliver 800 per year.
- Continue our programme of reform of the private rented sector.
- Review the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Private Sector Grants, including the Disabled Facilities Grant.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing' priority:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council supports the priority to 'Provide More Social, Affordable, and Sustainable Housing'. Although our Corporate Plan 2024-2028 and Community Plan, *Putting People First*, do not explicitly reference housing, we recognise the importance of this area and are pleased to see its inclusion in the Draft PFG.

Additionally, Council welcomes the clear linkages with this priority and those identified within the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Housing Investment Plan which includes a strategic priority; *'Take the lead role as the Strategic Housing Authority, we will work our partners to increase social housing supply to meet identified need'*.

**Local Context:** Across Mid and East Antrim in 2023/24, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive was responsible for 58,283 households, managed 5,602 social homes, allocated more than 410 homes, started 50 new social homes, delivered 50 disabled facilities grants, provided 1,398 housing support places to the most vulnerable through the Supporting People Programme and completed 160 new build homes. In terms of funding, they awarded £22k in community grants, £35k for community cohesion and £65k for community safety.

Recent figures show that at the end of March 2024, 3,161 applicants were on the list for the Mid and East Antrim area. Additionally, 573 placements were made to temporary accommodation.

**Community Planning:** The Community Planning Partnership has been actively working to support the provision of more social, affordable, and sustainable housing within the borough.

By collaborating with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), housing associations, and other stakeholders, the partnership has worked to address housing needs and improve community wellbeing. This includes supporting housing development plans that cater to diverse community requirements and aligning new projects with the borough's long-term strategic vision.

Several housing-led regeneration projects have been initiated to revitalise areas in need, transforming them into vibrant communities with a mix of social, affordable, and private housing which have enhanced the housing stock and overall quality of life in these areas.

The partnership has also focused on preventing homelessness and supporting vulnerable groups through collaborations with local charities and NIHE, providing essential services and emergency accommodation.

Sustainability is a key focus, with the partnership promoting energy-efficient building practices and the integration of green spaces and sustainable transport in new housing developments.

**Alignment to the Local Development Plan 2030:** The policies in the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP) 2030 seek to deliver quality, sustainable and safe new residential developments. In addition, it will help to create balanced communities through policies requiring new residential developments to provide adaptable and accessible homes in a variety of house types, sizes and tenures. For example, the LDP includes an affordable housing policy that requires developers to include affordable units within larger residential projects. In applying this policy, the Housing Needs Assessment conducted by the

Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), is a material consideration, ensuring that development is directed towards areas with the greatest need.

#### **Our Approach:**

- **"Keeping Warm, Keeping Well" initiative:** designed to offer practical assistance and information on energy efficiency, fuel poverty, and accessing financial support to help keep homes warm. Through this programme, the Council aims to prevent health issues associated with cold homes, such as respiratory conditions and cardiovascular problems, thereby contributing to the overall wellbeing of the community.

Additionally, the initiative emphasises community engagement and awareness-raising activities. Workshops and information sessions are held to educate residents on how to keep their homes warm and energy efficient. The Council works closely with local partners, including health and social care organisations, to ensure that those most in need are identified and supported. We have a dedicated section on our website to provide guidance to residents.

This work aligns with that of the Executive's action to develop a new Fuel Poverty Strategy and we are keen to emphasise our willingness to be involved in the development of a strategy.

#### **Areas for Consideration:**

1. **Infrastructure Investment:** It is essential to acknowledge that the construction of new housing cannot proceed in isolation; it must be accompanied by significant investment in supporting infrastructure. Specifically, enhancements to water and sewage infrastructure are critical. This investment is necessary not only to accommodate the increased demand from new housing developments but also to ensure that our existing communities have access to reliable and safe services. A coordinated approach to infrastructure planning and housing development is vital to achieve our collective housing ambitions.
2. **Holistic Planning:** To effectively address the housing crisis, we advocate for a holistic planning approach that integrates housing policy with infrastructure development, environmental considerations, and community needs. By engaging with stakeholders, including residents, community groups, and service providers, we can ensure that new housing developments are situated in locations that are well-served and connected to essential amenities. This collaborative approach will enhance the liveability of new neighbourhoods and foster stronger, more resilient communities.
3. **Sustainable Practices:** Furthermore, we emphasise the importance of sustainability in all aspects of housing development. This includes not only the environmental impact of new construction but also the long-term sustainability of the communities we create. We encourage the incorporation of energy-efficient designs, the use of sustainable materials, and the promotion of green spaces in housing developments. By prioritising sustainability, we can create homes that are not only affordable but also reduce the carbon footprint and contribute to the wellbeing of residents.
4. **Engagement with Relevant Agencies:** We recommend that the government work closely with relevant agencies and local authorities to assess and improve existing infrastructure

while planning for future housing needs. This collaboration will ensure that infrastructure investments are aligned with housing strategies, ultimately leading to more cohesive community development.

- 5. Major Planning Applications:** A key concern regarding the Executive's ability to achieve this is the complexity and length of the planning approval process for major planning applications, such as large-scale housing developments. These applications often require detailed technical assessments on issues like environmental impact, traffic, noise, flood risk, and ecology to ensure sustainable development. The cumulative effect of these factors can significantly prolong the timeline for planning approvals, hindering the Executive's ability to efficiently deliver on its housing priority. It is therefore essential that the Executive reviews the current planning approval framework to streamline the process and ensure applications are processed as swiftly and efficiently as possible. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council has made representation to the Department for Infrastructure on these concerns, and we remain committed to collaborating with the Department and other stakeholders to find practical solutions.
- 6. Reforming Building Regulations:** Reforming Northern Ireland's Building Regulations is essential to ensure sustainable design is incorporated into all new homes. We can no longer build energy-inefficient housing, and minimum sustainability standards should be mandated. In addition, grant funding must be provided to retrofit older homes, making them more energy efficient and environmentally friendly. These steps will reduce energy costs for households, combat fuel poverty, and help meet environmental targets. Addressing both new builds and existing homes is crucial for a more sustainable future.
- 7. Support for those leaving care:** The proposed pilot programme for young people leaving care should be expanded to include mentorship and life skills training, aiding them in navigating housing and financial challenges.

**Moving Forward:** The Council is committed to working in partnership to ensure innovative approaches and strategic collaborations to further enhance housing provision. This includes securing funding for new projects, advocating for sustainable housing policies, and ensuring that housing remains a priority in local planning. These efforts demonstrate strong alignment with the Draft PfG priority to 'Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing', contributing to the improved quality of life for residents in the borough.

**Priority Seven: 'Safer Communities'**

How much do you agree that the priority 'Safer Communities' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
✓				

Our Proposed Action:

We are committed to keeping our communities safe and to making sure you feel confident and secure to live your life to its fullest.

Actions are:

- Work across the Executive to embed trauma-informed, responsive systems.
- Seek to drive forward a Speeding Up Justice Programme to reform the way in which cases are handled.
- Seek to invest to drive much needed reform at a system level, underpinned by investment in digital capabilities.
- Seek to achieve a sufficient number of police officers in line with NDNA commitments, the necessary prosecution resources, and capacity within the courts and Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) to process cases and capacity in prisons to hold people safely and securely and support their rehabilitation.
- Work collectively to develop a cross-governmental strategy to reduce offending and reoffending.
- Focus on preventing people from entering the justice system, where possible, through early intervention, diversion and the use of community sentencing.
- Continue to implement the Strategic Framework for Youth Justice to ensure the youth justice system improves outcomes for children, families, victims and communities affected by crime.
- Remain committed to tackling paramilitarism and organised crime and continue to support the cross-Executive efforts aimed at addressing them.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Safer Communities' priority:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council strongly supports the inclusion of the 'Safer Communities' priority within the Draft PFG. We fully support the commitment to ensuring that



communities across Northern Ireland are safe and that residents feel confident and secure to live their lives to the fullest.

**Local Context:** In March 2023 an inspection report raised concern at a practice which sees neighbourhood police officers removed from core duties to plug gaps elsewhere. Total officer numbers are currently around 6,400, much lower than the 7,500 recommended in the Patten report.

Recent statistics from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) indicate a slight decline in anti-social behaviour incidents in Mid and East Antrim, from 3,404 in 2022/23 to 3,121 in 2023/24. While this is a positive development, we understand that sustained efforts are required to continue this trend.

The town centres within Mid & East Antrim have seen an increase in antisocial behaviour such as graffiti, littering and crimes of theft. The reduction in neighbourhood police presence has a detrimental effect on recurring offences and an increase in police response times, this has a knock-on effect to the community and how the towns are being perceived by the local community and out of town shoppers.

**Alignment with the Corporate Plan 2024-2028:** Our Corporate Plan includes a strategic pillar dedicated to 'People', with a clear ambition to make Mid and East Antrim a safe, inclusive, and welcoming borough where diversity is celebrated, and communities live in harmony.

We aim to boost public confidence and safety by building effective partnerships focused on proactive crime prevention. This includes working closely with law enforcement agencies, community groups, and other stakeholders to create a safer environment for all residents.

Council is committed to fostering good relations, enhancing community pride, and reinforcing a strong sense of belonging. We are actively working to create spaces and opportunities for people of all backgrounds to come together and engage in shared activities that promote understanding and unity.

**Alignment with the Community Plan 2017-2032: Putting People First:** The Community Plan's strategic theme of 'Community Safety and Cohesion' is integral to our long-term vision for Mid and East Antrim.

We are dedicated to building communities where every resident feels included and valued, and where diversity is seen as a strength.

Furthermore, ensuring that all people feel safe in their homes and communities is a fundamental goal. We work closely with partners to address safety concerns and to create an environment where residents and visitors can thrive.

**Our Approach:** Council is committed to tackling the underlying issues that lead to crime, such as poverty, addiction, and social exclusion. We recognise that a multi-faceted approach is necessary to create meaningful and lasting change.

We believe that early intervention is crucial in preventing crime. By working closely with our partners, we are implementing support programmes for those most at risk of becoming

involved in criminal activities. This proactive approach not only addresses immediate concerns but also contributes to the long-term safety and stability of our communities.

Our activities to support those at risk of becoming involved in crime include, but are not limited to:

- **Good Relations Programme and PCSP Collaboration:** Council, in partnership with the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP), is delivering the Good Relations Programme to improve community cohesion and safety. This initiative includes a range of projects aimed at promoting mutual understanding, reducing tensions, and building positive relationships among different community groups. During 2023/24, two key initiatives, the Beacon project and the Integrata project, were delivered.
- **School Uniform Scheme:** Delivered in partnership with Mid and East Antrim Community Advice Services (MEACAS) and supported by the Mid and East Antrim Poverty Action Group (MEAPAG), the scheme has been a lifeline for many families struggling with the increased cost of living.
- **Hardship Fund:** MEAPAG act as our vehicle for the delivery of the Hardship Fund and in partnership with the Affordable Food Club, they have been able to deliver several support schemes.
- **Christmas Toy Container:** Delivered in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, East Belfast Mission (Restore) and local community groups, the scheme diverts from landfill and protects the environment, whilst helping those who struggle by providing good quality toys at a low cost.

#### Areas for Consideration:

1. **Recognition of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs):** It is essential to acknowledge the invaluable work of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) at the local level. PCSPs play a crucial role in fostering community engagement, building trust in policing, and promoting lawful behaviour among residents. Their efforts in enhancing relationships within and between communities, as well as between communities and various agencies, are vital for creating a safe and cohesive environment. Continued support for PCSPs is essential to ensure they can maintain and expand their initiatives that promote safety and wellbeing.
2. **Importance of Good Relations Functions:** The good relations function within PCSPs is instrumental in building confidence in policing and fostering a culture of lawfulness. By encouraging positive interactions among community members and law enforcement, these initiatives help mitigate tensions and enhance community cohesion. We urge the government to support and invest in programmes that promote good relations, as they are critical to the success of safer communities.
3. **Continuation of Funding for EPPOC Projects:** The continuation of funding for projects currently supported under the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime (EPPOC) is vital for maintaining the momentum of community safety initiatives. The uncertainty surrounding funding commitments beyond March 2025 has already had a detrimental impact on various programmes, creating instability and hindering the progress made in enhancing community safety. We recommend that the government

provide clarity and assurance regarding funding for these essential projects to enable local authorities and organisations to plan effectively and sustain their efforts.

4. **Community Engagement and Collaboration:** Enhancing community safety requires ongoing engagement with residents and collaboration with various stakeholders, including local authorities, law enforcement, and community organisations. We advocate for a comprehensive approach that involves residents in identifying safety concerns and developing tailored solutions. By fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility within communities, we can create safer environments where individuals feel empowered to contribute to their own safety and that of their neighbours.
5. **Investment in Resources:** Ensuring enough police officers and adequate court resources is vital for community safety and an effective justice system.
6. **Economic Landscape:** The aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, coupled with rising living costs and inflation, has heightened financial insecurity and increased the risks of crime and anti-social behaviour in our communities. Poverty and deprivation remain substantial barriers to creating safer environments, and we recognise that addressing these challenges is crucial for the wellbeing of our residents.
7. **Lack of representation of the Arts:** The arts can significantly contribute to developing safer communities by fostering social cohesion and promoting understanding. Engaging residents through creative initiatives encourages participation and builds a sense of belonging, helping to address issues like anti-social behaviour. Programmes that involve artists, schools, and community groups can strengthen relationships and trust among residents, creating a more unified environment.

Additionally, the arts serve as a powerful platform for raising awareness about safety and social issues. Through performances, exhibitions, and workshops, artists can highlight community challenges and inspire discussions that lead to action. By empowering individuals, particularly young people, to express their experiences creatively, the arts enhance wellbeing and contribute to the overall safety and resilience of the community, aligning with the Executive's priority of fostering safer communities.

**Moving Forward:** The Council welcomes the development of a cross-governmental strategy to reduce offending and reoffending, as outlined in the Draft PfG. We wish to emphasise the importance of involving local councils in this process and request that they are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the strategy. This collaborative approach would allow the Council to share valuable local insights and support effective implementation, ensuring that the strategy reflects community needs and leverages the strengths of local partnerships.

**Priority Eight: 'Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment'**

How much do you agree that the priority 'Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
✓				

**Our Proposed Action**

- Publish a new environment strategy which will be adopted as Northern Ireland's first Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP).
- Set our carbon budgets and develop our first Climate Action Plan, detailing cross-cutting steps to reduce carbon emissions, adapt to changing weather patterns, and work towards net zero.
- The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has led work with other government agencies to develop an Interagency Monitoring Protocol to clarify what monitoring will be carried out, and by whom, in response to future blooms of blue-green algae at any site.
- The Lough Neagh Action Plan has already been agreed and published by the Executive.
- With financial support from DfE, DAERA has launched a Small Business Research Initiative to explore potential solutions to treat/reduce blue-green algae blooms without impacting the natural environment of Lough Neagh and associated Northern Ireland waterways.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment' priority:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council shares the concerns of the Executive around Lough Neagh and is pleased to see its inclusion of the priority 'Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment' in the Draft PFG.

**Local Context:** Over 45% of all the water that lands in NI ends up in Lough Neagh, with that every discharge from wastewater treatment works, certain septic tanks (those close to waterways), industrial discharges from a range of industries and agricultural runoff.

The entire length of the River Braid, with its tributaries, flows into the lough via the River Maine. 47km of the river Maine is within Mid and East Antrim, only the last 8km are within the borough of Antrim and Newtownabbey.

Approximately 15km of the Lower Bann is within the Mid and East Antrim borough. Assets the Council are responsible for along the Lower Bann include Newferry, Portglenone and Bracknamuckley Wood. The smell and issues of using the river for livestock drinking has had an impact on landowners within the Bannside DEA.

Postcodes within the Mid and East Antrim borough who get their drinking water supply from Dunore Point on Lough Neagh include Academy, Ahoghill, Ardeevin, Ballee and Harryville, Ballykeel, Braidwater, Castle Demesne, some of Cullybackey, some of Galgorm, some of Kells, Park, and Slemish.

**Lough Neagh Action Plan:** Council welcomed the Lough Neagh Action Plan upon its approval in July 2024. We are keen to engage and collaborate with the Executive to ensure the successful delivery of the Plan's objectives, including improvements to water quality, management of invasive species, and sustainable land use around the lake.

The successful implementation of the Lough Neagh Action Plan supports broader environmental goals, contributing to the health of regional ecosystems and enhancing the sustainability of Northern Ireland's natural resources.

**Our Approach:** Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is actively engaged in addressing the challenges facing Lough Neagh, within the scope of its authority. This includes meaningful participation in discussions with key government departments and agencies to identify, assess, and resolve pressing issues affecting the lough. Furthermore, the Council plays a vital role in disseminating important information and updates to relevant stakeholders, ensuring they remain informed and engaged in efforts to protect and preserve this vital environmental resource.

#### **Areas for Consideration:**

- 1. Climate Action as a Stand-Alone Priority:** It is crucial that climate-related actions be recognised as a distinct priority within the Draft PFG. This should include the establishment of carbon budgets, the development of comprehensive climate action plans aligned with these budgets, and the production of a strategy focused on climate adaptation and resilience. Additionally, ensuring a just transition for affected communities is essential for fostering widespread support for environmental initiatives.
- 2. Impact on Connected Waterbodies:** The environmental health of Lough Neagh extends to its linked waterbodies, which are also impacted by algal blooms. It is imperative that these downstream waterbodies be considered in any protective measures or research initiatives, as their ecological stability is interconnected with that of Lough Neagh.
- 3. Investigation of Algal Bloom Sources:** There must be a focused effort on researching and identifying the sources that contribute to algal blooms in Lough Neagh. This investigation should be followed by strict enforcement measures, including potential fines for parties responsible for pollution. Such actions are vital to discourage future occurrences and to safeguard the water quality and ecosystem health.
- 4. Support for Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs):** The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) should extend its support to local councils in Northern Ireland by providing guidance on developing robust Local Biodiversity Action

Plans (LBAPs). This support would empower councils to take proactive steps in preserving and enhancing biodiversity, contributing to the overall health of the environment surrounding Lough Neagh.

- 5. Support for Agri-Food industry:** Support should be given to the local agri-food businesses whose practices directly impact on the lough.

**Moving Forward:** The Council is eager to see the publication of the Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland and wishes to emphasise the importance of involving local councils in its development. We believe that their involvement will ensure the plan effectively addresses regional environmental challenges and leverages local expertise. By collaborating with councils, the Executive can create a comprehensive and actionable strategy that reflects the needs and priorities of communities across Northern Ireland.

**Priority Nine: 'Reform and Transformation of Public Services'**

How much do you agree that the priority 'Reform and Transformation of Public Services' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
✓				

**Our Proposed Action:**

We know that fiscal and service sustainability will require brave decisions, collaborative working, and a relentless focus on innovation and efficiency in service delivery. This can only be achieved through partnership working, and a willingness to accept change, challenge the status quo, and make long-term strategic decisions.

**Actions are:**

- Continue to explore options to deliver efficiencies, sustainability, and enhance borrowing powers.
- Set up a new Reform and Transformation Unit.
- A Reform Package which will include a Fiscal Framework, a Sustainability Plan and a Transformation Programme.
- A new Public Sector Transformation Board, through which £235 million will be invested from a new Transformation Fund, with the objectives of: Service Delivery Transformation, Productivity and Digital Transformation, and Innovation and Research Transformation.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Reform and Transformation of Public Services' priority:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council welcomes the inclusion of the priority of 'Reform and Transformation of Public Services' within the Draft PfG.

We welcome the establishment of a dedicated Reform and Transformation Unit to focus on enhancing service delivery and efficiency. A comprehensive Reform Package should be developed, encompassing a Fiscal Framework, Sustainability Plan, and Transformation Programme. Additionally, the creation of a Public Sector Transformation Board to oversee the £235 million investment from the new Transformation Fund will be crucial for driving service delivery, productivity, and digital innovation.

**Areas for Consideration:**

1. **Devolved Powers:** We advocate for more powers to be devolved to local government, which would enable councils to respond more effectively to local needs and enhance community engagement in decision-making processes. Devolving greater powers to local government would empower councils to make decisions that are more tailored to the unique needs of their communities, fostering more localised solutions and improved service delivery. With this in mind, we also wish to emphasise that should central government seek to devolve additional powers to local government, it is essential that local councils are involved in the identification of areas for transfer and that adequate funding is provided to support the delivery of these powers. Increased responsibility should not place undue strain on local government or negatively impact its capacity to serve communities effectively.
2. **Arm's Length Bodies:** We wish to emphasise the necessity of reviewing Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) to ensure robustness and value-for-money in the face of increasingly limited public funds. A review of current ALBs would assess whether they are still fit-for-purpose as individual and stand-alone organisations, and/or if there is a more effective way to fund and sustain them that would permit more core and grant funding to be disseminated to the relevant sectors.
3. **Tax Reform:** We strongly advocate for a reform of the tax system to ensure a fair approach that stimulates the high street. A comprehensive review of commercial and business rates, especially in villages and town centres facing high vacancy and dereliction rates, is essential. We propose legislative changes to address town centre dereliction and to empower local authorities with enforcement powers to deal with absent landlords and land banking issues.
4. **Community Planning:** We wish to emphasise the critical importance of integrating Community Planning into the reform and transformation of public services to ensure that services are tailored to local needs, foster collaboration among agencies, empower communities, and focus on measurable outcomes that reflect residents' priorities.
5. **High Street Task Force:** We must highlight the stagnation of the High Street Task Force report, "Delivering a 21<sup>st</sup> Century High Street", which has now been dormant for some time. It was promised by the Executive that the outcome of the 'call for evidence' consultation would align with the future PfG. However, there is no clear priority focus on town centre regeneration or the re-purposing of the High Street within this Draft PfG. It is crucial that regenerating the High Street is included as a priority area, with the outcomes and priorities from the previous consultation detailed as actions for delivery.

**Going Forward:** We believe that meaningful engagement with local government is vital during any reform or transformation actions to ensure that the needs and perspectives of local communities are effectively represented and addressed. Local authorities are often the first point of contact for residents, and their insights can drive initiatives that are more aligned with community needs, ultimately leading to more effective and efficient public services.



### Priorities

Are there any other priorities that should be included in the Programme for Government?

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council supports the priorities identified by the Executive in the Draft PFG. However, we believe it is essential that the Executive carefully considers the feedback provided in this response, particularly under 'Areas for Consideration.'

As a local authority, the Council is uniquely positioned to understand the needs and priorities of our residents, and we urge the Executive to take this into account to ensure that the PFG effectively addresses the challenges faced by our communities.

### Section Two: Building New Foundations

We are committed to investing in our public infrastructure and reshaping how our services are delivered.

Together, we will work as hard as we can to continue taking care of your needs today while supporting your hopes and ambitions for tomorrow through the high-quality, sustainable public services you deserve.

We will:

- Boost Housing Funds.
- Improve the Planning System.
- Deliver Better Public Services.
- Support Our Net Zero Future.
- Manage Our Water.
- Upgrade Stadia and Support Local Sports.
- Retrofit Homes.
- Improve Our Transport Infrastructure for Safer Travel, Connected Communities and Sustainable Economic Growth.

We are committed to investing £26 billion of public funding in the next decade. More detail on this will be provided in the upcoming Investment Strategy.

How much do you agree that these are the right commitments in relation to the plans for investment in infrastructure?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the plans for investment in infrastructure:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council welcomes the proposed investment outlined in the Draft PFG and fully supports the commitment to invest £26 billion over the next decade in public infrastructure and services. We particularly appreciate the broad scope of these actions, addressing housing, public services, sustainability, and infrastructure, all of which are essential to the future prosperity of Northern Ireland.

- **Housing Investment and Planning System Reform:** Boosting housing funds and improving the planning system are crucial steps in addressing the current housing shortage and ensuring a streamlined approach to development. We believe that investment should prioritise increasing the availability of affordable housing, particularly in rural areas where housing stock may not currently meet demand. Improving the planning process must also focus on reducing delays, providing local authorities with more autonomy, and considering the needs of both urban and rural communities.

- **Delivering Better Public Services:** We are fully committed to the delivery of high-quality public services and agree that these must evolve to meet the growing and changing demands of our citizens. We would encourage further collaboration between the Executive and local councils to ensure that services are both localised and responsive to community needs. Investment should be directed towards supporting vulnerable populations and streamlining digital infrastructure to enhance accessibility to public services.
- **Supporting a Net Zero Future:** Council strongly supports actions towards achieving a net zero future. Investment in green technology and sustainability initiatives is crucial. We advocate for a focus on renewable energy infrastructure, the decarbonisation of public transport, and initiatives to support businesses in reducing their carbon footprint. This will not only benefit the environment but also create job opportunities within the green economy.
- **Managing Water Resources:** Water management is vital to ensure environmental sustainability and economic stability. We recommend that investment in water infrastructure should prioritise upgrading aging systems, particularly in regions vulnerable to flooding. Additionally, incorporating sustainable drainage systems can mitigate flood risks while improving water quality.
- **Upgrading Stadia and Supporting Local Sports:** Sports play a significant role in fostering community spirit and improving public health and wellbeing. Whilst upgrading large stadia is important, we ask that the Executive ensure investment is also directed to supporting local sports clubs and facilities that are accessible to all ages and abilities. This will help create healthier communities and provide opportunities for grassroots development.
- **Retrofitting Homes for Energy Efficiency:** Retrofitting homes is essential to improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty. We encourage the Executive to prioritise older homes, particularly in low-income areas, where energy efficiency upgrades could have the most significant social and environmental impact. Expanding retrofitting programmes could also provide training and employment opportunities in the construction and energy sectors.
- **Improving Transport Infrastructure:** Safe and efficient transport infrastructure is vital for economic growth and connecting communities. We support investment focused on road safety, rural transport links, and expanding sustainable options like cycling and walking routes, particularly for isolated areas.

We urge the Executive to consider the *Strategic Rail Review* findings, advocating for enhanced rail services to reduce carbon emissions and improve regional connectivity. This includes linking Mid and East Antrim to economic hubs and providing a more sustainable alternative to road transport.

Additionally, aligning with the *2025 UK Border Strategy* is crucial for improving transport links, especially between ports and border areas, ensuring competitiveness in cross-border trade. Investment should also support decarbonising transport, as highlighted in the *Call for Evidence on the Decarbonisation of NI Roads*, by expanding electric vehicle infrastructure and incentivising low-carbon transport options.

The *Union Connectivity Review* emphasises improved connections between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. We recommend considering these findings when planning investments in roads, rail, and ferry services to boost economic growth and strengthen UK-wide ties.

While Mid and East Antrim Borough Council supports the proposed areas for investment in infrastructure, it is vital that any changes are implemented inclusively, ensuring that all communities, including those protected under Section 75, are considered.

We must ensure that the skills necessary to develop and implement these programmes are in place, which requires investment in training to ensure any changes can be effectively maintained over time.

Additionally, we emphasise the importance of involving local authorities in the identification, development, and implementation of any new initiatives. Local councils are well positioned to provide insight into community needs and can play a crucial role in ensuring that projects are tailored to local needs and delivered effectively.

### Section Three: Shaping a Better Tomorrow

While making things better today is important to us, we also need to look at long-term issues.

Our commitments are based on a recognition of our duty and drive to do better for you, your family, our communities and this place we all call home, now and for generations to come. Our focus will centre on three long-term Missions: **People**, **Planet**, and **Prosperity**, as well as a cross-cutting commitment to **Peace**.

- **People:** Working to support everyone at all stages of their life to ensure they have the chance to succeed by improving life opportunities.
- **Planet:** Harnessing the potential of a green growth economy while ensuring we provide an equitable transition to a sustainable and affordable society as we take responsibility for decarbonising our economy and society.
- **Prosperity:** Improving our economic productivity while making sure that we have an economy that works for everyone, and our story continues to be an inspiration to others.
- **Peace:** Our cross-cutting commitment to Peace will make sure that everyone feels the benefit of a growing economy, improved environment, and fairer society.

How much do you agree with a Missions-based approach?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
✓				

Please enter any comments in the box below

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council welcomes this Missions-based approach.

The missions identified have clear alignment with those identified within our Corporate Plan 2024-2028, which is being delivered under the four strategic pillars of *People, Place, Planet and Performance*.

How much do you agree that these are the right Missions to focus on?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
People	✓				
Planet	✓				
Prosperity	✓				

Are there any areas that are not captured under these missions?

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council welcomes and supports the identified missions of *People, Planet, and Prosperity*, as well as the overarching commitment of *Peace*. We believe these are the right areas of focus for the Northern Ireland Executive as they reflect the critical priorities for both the wellbeing of citizens and the sustainable development of the region.

However, while these missions are commendable, they are largely outward-facing and concentrated on external objectives. In order to strengthen the effectiveness of the PfG and ensure that these vital areas are successfully addressed, we recommend the inclusion of the additional mission of *Performance*.

At Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, we have adopted a similar strategic approach with an emphasis on *Performance* to ensure inward reflection, continuous improvement, and accountability. A dedicated *Performance* mission would encourage a systematic approach to evaluating and improving the delivery of the Executive's stated actions, ensuring that goals are met efficiently and effectively.

Incorporating this into the Executive's framework would not only enhance transparency and accountability but would also drive innovation and adaptability within public services, making sure that resources are used optimally, and outcomes are achieved in line with the vision of the Draft PfG.

By taking this approach, the Executive can reinforce its commitment to delivering high-quality services and outcomes for the people of Northern Ireland, building on a foundation of excellence in performance and governance.

**Mission One: People**

**Our Proposed Action:**

We are focusing on People, a long-term mission to make sure that everyone can live a long, healthy and happy life.

We want everyone to benefit from a fair and inclusive society where everyone flourishes, no one is left behind, and everyone is made to feel welcome.

**Actions are:**

- Committed to bringing forward actions to address the issues of integration and racism.
- Through joint working across departments, statutory agencies, and voluntary and community organisations, we will work to keep people safe and allow them to achieve their potential.
- The introduction of social inclusion strategies.
- A significant programme of reform of children's social care services is underway.
- Provide access to justice for those affected by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses through the Truth Recovery Programme.
- Deliver much-needed support to those experiencing poverty or at risk of it and continue work to ensure consumers are not exploited.
- Increase the skills and talent pipeline of public services in Northern Ireland through apprenticeship routes.
- An apprenticeship challenge fund will promote innovation in apprenticeships.
- Launch the NI Food Strategy Framework, along with initiatives like the Food Action Plan.
- Work with our agri-sector to support primary production and ensure food security.
- Seek long-term arrangements to secure a veterinary medicine agreement.
- Build on the Executive's strategic framework for public health, Making Life Better, to tackle the wider determinants of health, and we will redouble our efforts to improve the physical and mental health outcomes of Northern Ireland's population and reduce inequalities, through continued implementation of, for example, the Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031.
- The 'Live Better' initiative will deliver and test a new place-based approach to addressing health inequalities.
- Prioritise sports and physical activity to tackle obesity.
- Investments in new outdoor recreation and sporting facilities will help to ensure we provide quality and modern focal points for our communities and that we can help people to enjoy active social lives.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Is there anything else that should be included under the People Mission?

**Alignment to our Corporate Plan 2024-2028:** Within our Corporate Plan, we have the pillar of 'People'. Under this pillar we have set an ambition that *'By 2028, Mid and East Antrim will be a safe, inclusive, and welcoming borough, where diversity and cultural differences are celebrated, and communities live in peace. Our people will have equity of opportunity and support to achieve their full potential, in both a professional and personal capacity. Individuals and communities will be empowered to be independent and self-sustaining, enabling us to concentrate our efforts on those who need it most.'*

In addition to the programmes and initiatives highlighted throughout this response that support this 'People' mission, it is pertinent to highlight that internally Mid and East Antrim Borough Council have taken specific proactive steps to foster equality and inclusivity across the borough, including the establishment of both an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Network and an Inclusion and Equality Sub Committee.

#### **Areas for Consideration:**

The proposed actions address a wide range of important areas, particularly around integration, social care, health, justice, education, and community wellbeing. However, several critical areas related to 'People' may be missing or under-emphasised:

- 1. Mental Health Support Access and Early Intervention:** While the Mental Health Strategy is acknowledged, there is a lack of specific focus on expanding access to mental health services or early intervention programmes for vulnerable groups, including children, young people, and low-income families. This emphasis is crucial given the mental health challenges exacerbated by poverty and the ongoing impacts of the post-pandemic recovery.
- 2. Housing and Homelessness Support:** The absence of direct references to addressing housing shortages, homelessness, and improving access to affordable housing is concerning, as these are key factors in tackling poverty and promoting social inclusion.
- 3. Education and Lifelong Learning:** Although there is mention of apprenticeships and skills development, broader educational initiatives aimed at improving access to quality education for all age groups, especially in disadvantaged areas, are not included. Additionally, promoting lifelong learning and adult education could help bridge skill gaps and enhance social inclusion.
- 4. Funding Access:** Council calls for local government authorities to be granted access to funding to support the delivery of paid apprenticeships. Providing such opportunities within local councils would not only help address skills shortages but also ensure that individuals, particularly young people, can access meaningful employment pathways across a range of sectors.
- 5. Digital Inclusion:** In an increasingly digital world, there is no mention of actions to combat digital exclusion. Addressing this issue is essential to ensure equal access to opportunities in education, employment, and public services, particularly for older individuals and disadvantaged groups.



- 6. Support for Older People:** While the programme addresses youth and apprenticeships, it overlooks the elderly population and lacks measures to enhance services for older people, such as aging in place, elderly care reforms, and initiatives to prevent social isolation.
- 7. Arts and Culture:** The proposed actions do not explicitly mention the arts, which play a significant role in supporting mental health, fostering community cohesion, and promoting personal development. Investing in the arts can provide a platform for creative expression, improve mental wellbeing, and address issues of social isolation and inequality. Arts programmes can also aid community regeneration, support education, and offer opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to engage in cultural activities that enhance social inclusion and build a shared sense of identity.
- 8. Anti-Poverty Strategy:** We recommend the inclusion of a sustainable Anti-Poverty Strategy under this mission, focusing on empowering individuals through education and skills development, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, prioritising preventive measures to address the root causes of poverty, and implementing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing vulnerability and poverty in our communities.

Furthermore, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council wishes to emphasise the importance of involving local government at all stages during the development of any proposed programmes, initiatives, or strategies. Local authorities are uniquely positioned to understand and respond to the specific needs of their communities, and their early involvement will be critical to the success and effectiveness of these actions.

**Mission Two: Planet**

**Our Proposed Action:**

The effects of a changing climate, including prolonged periods of rain, regional weather warnings, flash flooding, longer-lasting wildfires and rises in water temperatures, accompanied by a seasonal upsurge in blue-green algae, cause untold damage to our local communities, economy, infrastructure, housing, natural environment and health.

These issues serve as a timely reminder that our natural environment cannot be taken for granted. While solving these problems will not happen overnight, we are taking immediate action.

It is important we do right by this place for now and for the future. That is why we are taking steps to support a fairer, cleaner, healthier future for us all. Prioritising our wellbeing means thinking ahead and taking actions now to protect and preserve our environment and our natural resources for generations to come.

**Actions are:**

- Climate Action Plan.
- Water Quality.
- Flood Risk Management.
- Environmental Improvement Plan.
- Affordable Renewable Energy.
- Just Transition.
- Renewable Electricity Support Scheme.
- Facilitate Net Zero Infrastructure.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Is there anything else that should be included under the Planet Mission?

In response to the Planet mission of the Draft PFG, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council notes that many of the proposed actions lack the necessary clarity in terms of action verbs. For instance, actions such as 'Climate Action Plan,' 'Water Quality,' and 'Affordable Renewable Energy' are currently vague and open to interpretation. We recommend that specific verbs, such as 'Develop' a Climate Action Plan, 'Improve' Water Quality, and 'Deliver' Affordable Renewable Energy, be explicitly stated. This will provide clearer direction, ensure transparency, and enhance accountability in achieving the intended outcomes of these actions.

**Alignment to our Corporate Plan 2024-2028:** Within our Corporate Plan, we have the pillar of 'Planet'. Under this pillar we have set an ambition that 'By 2028, Mid and East Antrim will be at the forefront of balancing progression with sustainability. We will be an emerging NI hub

*for innovation, environmental and cleantech skills training, and green economic growth. Our commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 will have set a standard for excellence across the region. Our dedication to safeguarding our natural and built heritage and preserving the environment through climate change mitigation and adaptation, will ensure a thriving and resilient future for generations to come.*

#### **Our Approach:**

- 1. Motion:** Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is committed to addressing climate change, as demonstrated by the motion passed in September 2019. We aim to become a carbon-neutral organisation and pro-actively work with partners to reduce net carbon emissions across the borough.
- 2. UN Sustainable Development Goals:** Our activities align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and we have consistently measured and reduced our carbon footprint since 2015.
- 3. Climate and Sustainability Action Plan 2023-2027:** In July 2023, we launched our first Climate and Sustainability Action Plan, which outlines our strategy to address climate change over the next number of years. Developed in partnership with Sustainable NI, the plan focuses on meeting our commitments under the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and delivering on our Climate and Sustainability Policy.

Our key goals include a 30% reduction in Council operation emissions by 2030, decarbonising small vehicles in our fleet by 2030, achieving net-zero Council emissions by 2040, and supporting the borough's journey to net zero by 2050. We are also focused on ensuring climate resilience in our buildings, public spaces, and infrastructure.

The Plan includes six key themes - Good Governance and Community Leadership, Our Environment, Economy, Transport, Resource Management, and Buildings and Energy - through which 97 actions will be delivered.

- 4. Climate Change Working Group:** The Climate Change Working Group, established in 2022, plays a key role in guiding decision making and ensuring progress on these commitments.
- 5. Sustainable Practices:** We are committed to building climate protection and sustainability into all our projects. Where possible, we are using Passivhaus standards in strategic major developments to boost energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. An example of this is the redevelopment of Carnfunnock Country Park, where the new visitor centre and caravan amenity block will be built to Passivhaus standards, ensuring lower energy use and a more sustainable future.

#### **Areas for Consideration:**

- 1. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services:** There is a notable absence of explicit actions aimed at protecting and enhancing biodiversity. Initiatives to restore habitats, improve land use practices, and promote ecosystem services should be emphasised.
- 2. Low-Carbon Circular Economy:** A focus on the circular economy would have a substantial impact on reducing waste, promoting resource efficiency, and lowering

carbon emissions. This approach not only addresses environmental concerns but also drives economic sustainability by reusing materials and creating new opportunities for green growth. Incorporating this priority would align with broader climate goals and strengthen the overall mission.

3. **Public Awareness and Education:** Increasing public understanding of environmental issues through education and community engagement initiatives could foster a culture of sustainability and proactive participation in environmental stewardship.
4. **Research and Innovation:** Investment in research and innovation related to environmental technologies and practices could drive progress in achieving sustainability goals.

In summary, while the proposed actions cover significant areas, incorporating these additional elements would enhance the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the Planet mission within the Draft PfG.

Once again, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council wishes to emphasise the importance of involving local government at all stages during the development of any proposed programmes, initiatives, or strategies.

### Mission Three: Prosperity

#### Our Proposed Action:

Our goal is to support social enterprises and businesses here to thrive and ensure that everyone, no matter where they live, can have well-paid and fulfilling jobs. We will build capacity in the Social Enterprise Sector and will prioritise areas that are vital to delivering on productivity and decarbonisation. This includes sectoral partnerships to improve pathways into good jobs, a focus on technical and vocational qualifications, and provide opportunities for those returning to the labour market.

#### Actions are:

- Support small-to-medium-sized enterprises to adopt productivity-improving technology through the AI Collaboration Centre and City and Growth Deals investments.
- Harness the UK Government Investment Zone policy to support our transition to net zero. This initiative is backed by a £150 million investment to bolster skills, local infrastructure, enterprise, business support, and planning and development efforts.
- Through the development of a Net Zero Accelerator Fund, we are developing a concrete way of attracting net zero investment and cutting greenhouse gas emissions in line with the Climate Change Act 2022.
- Maximise benefits from our unique place in the world to attract global investment, grow exports, and attract Foreign Direct Investment to support higher productivity.
- Building on our international relationships to advance our economic development and attract new investment opportunities.
- Build upon the existing institutions – the North South Ministerial Council, the British Irish Council and InterTradeIreland – to support our small and medium-sized enterprises in maximising trade.
- Strengthen relationships and establish new institutions such as the East-West Ministerial Council and Intertrade UK.
- Work with the UK Government to support pre-clearance between the United States and Belfast International Airport.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Is there anything else that should be included under the Prosperity Mission?

**Alignment to our Corporate Plan 2024-2028:** Within our Corporate Plan, we have the pillar of 'Place' which aligns with sentiment of the 'Prosperity' mission of the Draft PfG. Under our 'Place' pillar we have set an ambition that 'By 2028, Mid and East Antrim will be widely recognised as an ideal place to live, visit, work and do business. We will have vibrant, clean, and harmonious shared spaces, designed to showcase our natural, and built, heritage and assets. Our tourism offering will be filled with diversity and richness of culture, history, and

*heritage, attracting visitors on a global scale. Businesses, new and existing, will have the required support to grow and prosper, leading to an economically innovative and sustainable borough, offering stable employment, inclusive growth and an ideal place to invest.\**

**Areas for Consideration:**

1. **Work with the UK Government on pre-clearance at Belfast International Airport:** This action could significantly enhance trade and investment. However, it might also be useful to consider broader improvements to transport and logistics infrastructure, which could support businesses in reaching new markets more effectively.
2. **Focus on Workforce Development:** While there is a mention of improving pathways into good jobs, there should be more emphasis on comprehensive workforce development programmes that address skills gaps, especially in emerging industries. Initiatives could include apprenticeships, retraining programmes, and partnerships with educational institutions to align training with market needs.
3. **Support for Social Enterprises:** Given the emphasis on social enterprises, there should be targeted actions to provide funding, resources, and mentorship specifically for these organisations, enabling them to thrive and contribute to local economies.
4. **Encouraging Sustainable Practices:** Promoting sustainable business practices across all sectors can enhance long-term prosperity. Initiatives could include incentives for businesses that implement eco-friendly practices or support for those transitioning to more sustainable models.
5. **Digital Economy Support:** As businesses increasingly move towards digital solutions, there should be a focus on supporting SMEs in their digital transformation efforts. This includes access to training, resources, and technologies that enable them to compete in a digital economy.
6. **Inclusivity in Economic Development:** There should be a commitment to ensuring that economic growth is inclusive, with specific actions aimed at supporting underrepresented groups, including women, minorities, and people with disabilities, in accessing opportunities within the workforce.
7. **Support for Local High Streets:** The Draft PFG Government should identify specific programmes that directly support local high streets, including tax reform to alleviate commercial rates for retailers and initiatives to tackle derelict properties. Dedicated programmes, such as targeted grants for retailers, are essential to ensure high streets remain vibrant economic hubs.

In summary, while the proposed actions under the 'Prosperity' mission are important, incorporating these additional elements would enhance the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the strategy, ultimately driving sustainable economic growth for all communities in Northern Ireland.

Once again, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council wishes to emphasise the importance of involving local government at all stages during the development of any proposed programmes, initiatives, or strategies.

**Cross-Cutting Commitment: Peace**

A commitment to Peace will underpin the three missions (People, Planet and Prosperity). A series of actions have been proposed under this commitment.

Actions are:

- Commitment to Safer Communities.
- Partner with international governments, investors and philanthropists to embed a cross-cutting commitment to peace within Our Plan.
- Develop a trauma-informed public sector.
- Along with our ongoing support for the PEACE PLUS programme and Safer Communities, we will refresh our Good Relations Programme, Communities in Transition, Together: Building United Community, Urban Villages, and Tackling Paramilitarism, Criminality and Organised Crime, and the introduction of a strategic approach to racial equality.

How much do you agree that these are the right actions?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Is there anything else that should be included under the commitment to Peace?

**Alignment to our Corporate Plan 2024-2028:** Although we do not have a standalone 'Peace' pillar within our Corporate Plan, we have the pillar of 'People' which echoes the sentiment of the 'Peace' commitment in the Draft PFG. Under this pillar we have set an ambition that *'By 2028, Mid and East Antrim will be a safe, inclusive, and welcoming borough, where diversity and cultural differences are celebrated, and communities live in peace. Our people will have equity of opportunity and support to achieve their full potential, in both a professional and personal capacity. Individuals and communities will be empowered to be independent and self-sustaining, enabling us to concentrate our efforts on those who need it most.'*

In addition to the programmes and initiatives highlighted throughout this response that support this cross-cutting commitment, it is pertinent to highlight that Mid and East Antrim Borough Council are investigating becoming a trauma informed borough. A notice of motion proposing 'That this Council commits to becoming a trauma informed borough' was carried at a recent meeting of Full Council. Officers are taking the proposal forward, to include relevant screening and financial assessments, with a view to bringing back to a future Council meeting for final decision.

**Areas for Consideration:**

1. **Community Engagement and Empowerment:** Beyond existing programmes, there should be an emphasis on empowering communities to take an active role in peace-

building efforts. This could include funding for grassroots initiatives and support for community-led projects that promote reconciliation and understanding.

2. **Youth Engagement:** Addressing the needs and aspirations of young people is essential for long-term peace. Specific actions could focus on youth leadership programmes, educational initiatives promoting tolerance and understanding, and opportunities for youth to engage in community service.
3. **Mental Health Support:** Given the trauma experienced by many in the community, there should be a focus on enhancing mental health services, including access to counselling, support groups, and preventative mental health education in schools.
4. **Evaluation and Accountability:** Establishing a robust framework for evaluating the impact of peace-related actions is critical. This could involve regular reporting on progress, feedback mechanisms from communities, and independent reviews of programmes to ensure they are meeting their objectives.
5. **Integration of Peace within Economic Development:** The actions under the 'Peace' commitment should also consider how economic development can support peace-building efforts. Initiatives that create jobs, enhance skills, and promote local entrepreneurship can contribute to stability and cohesion.
6. **Collaboration Among Government Departments:** It is imperative that government departments communicate effectively and collaborate on the various programmes and interventions related to peace, good relations, and community safety. Currently, there is a disconnect in how these initiatives are implemented, leading to inefficiencies and missed opportunities for synergy. A strategic, coordinated approach is essential to maximise the impact of these efforts and ensure that resources are utilised effectively.
7. **Sustainable and Reliable Funding:** Additionally, while the commitment to sustainability is acknowledged, the current practice of providing only one-year recurrent funding, which is often confirmed halfway through the financial year, poses significant challenges. This uncertainty hampers strategic planning, limits the ability of councils and third-sector organisations to innovate, and undermines the sustainability of critical programmes. A commitment to longer-term funding solutions is necessary to support collaborative efforts and enable meaningful progress in addressing the complex issues of peace and community safety.

In summary, while the proposed actions under the 'Peace' commitment are fundamental for a thriving society, incorporating these additional elements would further enhance their effectiveness and ensure that the commitment to peace is comprehensive and impactful for all communities in Northern Ireland.

Peace is framed as a cross-cutting commitment, rather than a mission. How much do you agree that this is the right structure?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			



Please enter any comments in the box below

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council believe that the inclusion of a 'Peace' element is important and understands the sentiment of this being a 'Cross-cutting Commitment' as opposed to a further 'Mission'.

We are supportive of this structure so long as the 'Cross-cutting Commitment' retains dedicated actions and deliverables, to ensure transparency and accountability.

**Section Four: Understanding Missions by Tracking Wellbeing**

To help us keep track of our Missions, a set of metrics have been developed to help understand quality of life in Northern Ireland and these can be found in our [Wellbeing Dashboard](#).

The draft Programme for Government outlines how it will measure progress through a Wellbeing Framework.

How much do you agree with the proposed approach?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
✓				

Please provide any further comments you may have in relation to your response

The Wellbeing Dashboard is a valuable tool for tracking progress on key societal issues across Northern Ireland. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council supports the approach to monitoring wellbeing but wishes to emphasise the need for detailed local data to better address the specific needs of our communities. Ensuring that underrepresented groups are included, and that data is regularly updated is crucial. By working closely with local authorities like Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, the dashboard can better inform strategies and improve wellbeing outcomes for all communities in Northern Ireland.

### Section Five: Additional Information

Do you have any further comments relevant to this consultation?

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council wishes to emphasise the critical importance of collaboration with local government in the development and implementation of any strategies, programmes, or initiatives outlined in the Draft PFG. Local authorities possess invaluable insights into the unique needs and priorities of their communities, which are essential for designing effective and responsive solutions.

Collaboration with local government offers numerous benefits, including enhanced resource allocation, improved service delivery, and increased community engagement. By leveraging local knowledge and expertise, government initiatives can be better tailored to meet the specific needs of citizens, businesses, and visitors. Furthermore, fostering strong partnerships encourages shared responsibility and accountability, leading to more sustainable outcomes.

For any programmes or initiatives for which local government will be the delivery body, it is vital that they are appropriately funded for the duration of the programme. Consistent and reliable funding is essential to ensure that these initiatives can be effectively implemented and sustained over time.

Additionally, there should be a commitment to continual collaboration, regular review, and necessary adjustments throughout the lifecycle of these programmes. This approach will ensure that initiatives remain relevant and suitable to address the evolving needs of our communities, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for all residents and fostering a thriving local economy.

**Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee  
Forward Plan**

**1. Planned Agenda Items Next meeting (02 December 2024)**

Items	Purpose	Report by:
Policy Briefing	For noting	Siobhan
Technology One Programme Update	For noting	Sarah
Quarterly Communications Update	For noting	Siobhan
Quarterly Budget Monitoring Q2	For noting	Michelle
Procurement Update	For noting	Michelle
Sickness Absence (6 monthly update)	For noting	Sarah
Modern Slavery Policy	For approval	Siobhan
Performance Improvement Plan Q2 Update	For noting	Siobhan

**2. Future Meetings**

Meeting Date	Item	Purpose
13 Jan 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Briefing</li> <li>• Procurement Update</li> <li>• NIAO Annual Audit &amp; Assessment Report</li> </ul>	For noting For noting For noting
24 Feb 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Briefing</li> <li>• Quarterly Complaints Report</li> <li>• Sickness Absence Update (Q1 and 2)</li> <li>• Performance Improvement Plan Q3 Update</li> <li>• Quarterly Budget Monitoring – Q3</li> <li>• Fees &amp; Charges</li> <li>• Treasury Management Annual Outturn Report</li> <li>• Information Governance Update Report</li> <li>• Procurement Update</li> <li>• Workplace Charter Domestic Violence – Annual Update</li> </ul>	For noting For noting For noting For noting For approval For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting
7 April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Briefing</li> <li>• Quarterly Communications update</li> <li>• Licences /agreement enacted under Scheme of Delegation</li> <li>• Procurement Update</li> </ul>	For noting For noting For noting For noting
19 May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Briefing</li> <li>• Quarterly Complaints Report</li> <li>• Procurement Update</li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety Annual Report</li> <li>• Licences/Agreements enacted under Scheme of Delegation</li> </ul>	For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting
June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Briefing</li> <li>• Council Publication Scheme</li> <li>• VAT Update</li> <li>• Procurement Update</li> <li>• Members' Annual Training Programme (including mandatory)</li> </ul>	For noting For noting For approval For noting For approval

Meeting Date	Item	Purpose
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Equality Commission Submission</li> <li>Members Code of Conduct</li> <li>Constitution – Annual Update</li> <li>Performance Improvement Plan – 2024/25 Year End Report</li> <li>Business Cases</li> </ul>	For noting For noting For noting For noting For approval
September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy Briefing</li> <li>Quarterly Communications Update</li> <li>Procurement Update</li> <li>Quarterly Complaints Report</li> <li>Quarterly Budget Monitoring – Q1</li> <li>Performance Improvement Plan – Q1 Update</li> <li>Asset Management Plan</li> <li>Pay Award Update</li> <li>Business Cases (if applicable)</li> </ul>	For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting
October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy Briefing</li> <li>Article 55 Review Report</li> <li>Procurement Update</li> <li>IT Cyber Security</li> <li>Policy Action Plan</li> <li>Reserves Policy</li> <li>Information Governance Framework</li> <li>Bi-Annual Information Governance Performance Report</li> <li>Licences/Agreements enacted under Scheme of Delegation</li> <li>Sub Committee Terms of Reference</li> <li>Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 Consultation Response</li> </ul>	For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For approval For approval For noting For noting For noting For noting

### 3. Items to be Programmed

Item	Purpose
Customer & Digital Strategy	
Consultation & Engagement Strategy	
Communications & Marketing Strategy	
Social Value Report	
Annual Investment Strategy	
Annual review: Statutory Equality and Good Relation duties	
Dual Language Street Naming Policy	
Annual Events Programme	
Notices of Motion - Update	
HR Policies / Strategic projects / industrial action as required	
Health and Safety Policies as required	
Staff survey actions (full council?)	
Learning and Development Policies as required	
IT Strategy	