

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

15 September 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a meeting of the Audit Committee of the Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held by Zoom on **THURSDAY, 22 September 2022** commencing at **7.00pm**.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Reid
Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Chairman's Remarks
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings
 - a) Committee Minutes from June 2022 (attached)
 - b) Follow-up Actions (attached)
5. Performance Improvement
 - a) 2022/23 Progress report to 30 June 2022 (attached)
6. External Audit
 - a) Draft Report to Those Charged with Governance (attached)
 - b) Audited Financial Statements for 2021/22 (attached)
7. Internal Audit
 - a) Internal Audit Progress Report 2022/23 (attached)
 - i. Service Review - Strategic Capital Development (attached)
 - ii. Planning for new ways of working in post Covid environment
8. Corporate Governance
 - a) Corporate Risk Register (attached)
9. Any Other Notified Business

ITEMS 10 - 13 *IN CONFIDENCE*****

10. Single Tender Actions Update (attached)
11. Fraud, Whistleblowing and Data-protection matters (verbal update)
12. Internal Audit Contract Tender (attached)
13. Meeting with NI Audit Office & Internal Audit Service in the absence of Management

MEMBERSHIP OF AUDIT COMMITTEE (11 MEMBERS)

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Councillor Gilmour (Chairman)
Alderman Wilson	Councillor McAlpine
Councillor Irwin	Councillor McClean
Councillor Greer	Councillor Thompson
Mr P Cummings	

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Audit Committee was held virtually via Zoom on Monday 27 June 2022 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:-

In the Chair: Councillor Gilmour

Alderman: Armstrong-Cotter

Councillors: Greer
Irwin (7.30 pm)
McAlpine
McClean

Independent Member: Mr T McGonigal

In Attendance: ASM – C Hagan
Deloitte – C McDermott
NIAO - A Allen

Officers: Chief Executive (S Reid), Director of Finance and Performance (S Christie), Head of Finance (S Grieve) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

1. APOLOGIES

The Chairman, Councillor Gilmour, sought apologies at this stage and those were noted from Councillor Thompson. Apologies were also noted for David Kinsella, Deloitte, and Members were informed that Camille McDermott would present the internal audit report in his absence.

NOTED.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting including the internal and external auditors to the Committee from the Northern Ireland Audit Office, ASM and Deloitte.

NOTED.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman asked for any Declarations of Interest at this stage and none were made.

NOTED.

4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

(a) **Audit Committee Minutes from March 2022** (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Greer, that the minutes be noted.

(b) **Follow Up Register** (Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Finance and Performance detailing that in line with best practice, the purpose of the report was to make the Audit Committee aware of the status of outstanding recommendations or any outstanding actions from the previous Audit Committee meetings.

There was one item from the previous committee which had been completed.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the report.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Greer, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the recommendation be adopted.

5. **INTERNAL AUDIT**

(a) **Internal Audit Progress Report 2022/23** (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Audit Committee Progress Report, Ards and North Down Borough Council.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

C McDermott spoke as the internal auditor explaining that progress had been set out against the new annual internal audit plan, starting off the 22/23 year. It would be noticed that both the audits for Q1 were underway and progressing well. For Q2 terms of reference had been agreed or planning meetings scheduled for this week. She added that Q3/Q4 finance dates would be agreed for finance and waste management and planning would commence later for Q3/Q4 and a date had been set for the Q3 audit. She was happy to take questions from Members on progress.

Mr McGonigal referred to Q4 and there was no date set to look at cyber security. In response it was explained that would be discussed at the planning meeting when the cyber team and the business technology team met in September after the summer holidays. She gave assurance that it would be completed before the end of the financial year.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Greer, that the recommendation be adopted.

6. PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

(a) 2021/22 Performance Improvement Progress Report to 31 March 2022 (Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Finance and Performance detailing that the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 Part 12 put in place a new framework to support continuous improvement in the delivery of Council services. The Council was required each year to determine its priorities for improvement which were aligned to the Community Plan and Corporate Objectives and to publish those in the format of an Improvement Plan.

In the 2020/21 year the requirement to publish a Performance Improvement Plan was set aside and for the 2021/22 year the publication date was extended to September.





The Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for 2021/22, identified 5 improvement objectives with a corresponding 33 measures including 7 Statutory Indicators and 6 self-imposed indicators, all were included in the Council's Service Plans and were monitored and reported on quarterly through each Service's respective Standing Committee.





It should be noted that this report reflected performance of the PIP only and was not necessarily representative of the overall performance of the organisation.

The following table gave an assessment of the status across all measures in the PIP for Quarter 4.

Performance Assessment Key

The key outlined below provided definitions for the three Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status levels which had been chosen to measure progress.

RAG Status	Definition
	Target/standard, actions and measures are of concern and are mostly falling short of plan
	Target/standard, actions and measures are mostly on track, but some are falling short of plan
	Target/standard, actions and measures are on track
	Rescheduled/no progress owing to impact of Covid

Corporate Plan PEOPLE priority	Improvement Objective	No of measures			
					
PROSPERITY	▶ We will grow the economy and create jobs		-	6	2
ENVIRONMENT	▶ We will improve the cleanliness of the streets in our borough by targeting littering and dog fouling incidents	1		2	-
	▶ We will improve recycling rates from Household Recycling Centres (HRCs)		-	1	1

LIFE	▶ We will support our businesses and residents to protect and improve their health and wellbeing	1	-	-	2
EXCELLENCE	▶ We will use technology to drive change		-	2	2
STATUTORY INDICATORS	▶ Municipal Waste ▶ Economic Development ▶ Planning		5	2	-
SELF-IMPOSED INDICATORS	▶ Resident Satisfaction	-	-	-	1
	▶ Prompt Payment of Invoices	-	-	-	3
	▶ Average number of working days lost per employee	-	-	-	1
	▶ % staff attendance	-	-	1	-
	OVERALL	2	5	14	12

Detailed information on progress against each of the measures could be found in and appendix to the report. Information on the Council's performance against the PIP 2021/2022 could also be found on the Council's [website](#) following ratification of the report.

RECOMMENDED that the report is noted.

Councillor Greer made an observation in relation to the high tonnage that the Council was sending to landfill and she was aware that the Director of Environment was discussing that with party groups along with potential solutions to that problem. She asked when further information would be brought back to the Environment Committee. The Chief Executive reported that consultations would take place over the coming weeks with a view to bringing back a report to the Environment Committee in September.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Greer, that the recommendation be adopted.

7. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

(a) Annual Statements of Assurance

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Organisational Development and Administration detailing that in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy, Heads of Service were required to provide Statements of Assurance. Assurance Statements comprised 4 main sections to be completed by each Head of Service following consultation with each of their Service Units. Period of this report, 1 October 2021 - 31 March 2022. One statement for remained outstanding.

Findings

General – Identification of Risk, Monitoring and Control measures

No key issues had been declared as not having appropriate internal controls in place. All Services had confirmed that any risks identified had appropriate internal controls and any further actions taken, or to be taken, to adequately mitigate or resolve the risk had been identified.

Brexit and COVID 19 Pandemic Impacts

The impacts of both those issues had been previously reported. Actual and potential impacts, primarily financial and demands affecting staff, and/or service delivery, were reported across the Statements of Assurance.

Section 1 – Strategic and Operational Risk Management

Services reported appropriate controls were currently in place and had identified satisfactory actions to review, monitor, control, mitigate and resolve issues, where appropriate.

The Waste and Cleansing Service had reported that a significant financial liability risk remained if the bidding process for the Residual Waste Treatment project was collapsed by the client (arc21). Planning permission was recently refused by the DFI Minister and legal advice was currently being sought on whether to challenge the validity of the decision. All of that had significant implications for the future of arc21, in terms of delivering infrastructure for member councils.

The Leisure Service had reported that the current insourcing exercise being undertaken for North Down Leisure was greatly adding to the workload of the management team. Additional leisure and human resourcing staff had been recruited along with the retention of specialist consultancy services to assist in that process.

Section 2 – Internal Control

Generally, there were no key issues arising to cause significant concern or requiring immediate action.

Progress on Audit findings was reported to the Committee separately, although they were reflected in the Assurance Statements. Services had recorded progress and plans to complete outstanding audit actions. Outstanding audit recommendations for four services were noted here.

The Communications and Marketing Service unit had two outstanding Priority 2 findings and one outstanding Priority 3 finding related to the Social Media Audit conducted in 2021, and those were being addressed.

Strategic Transformation and Performance had three Priority 1 findings, two Priority 2 findings and four Priority 3 findings raised by the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Audit and the Business Technology Audit, all those findings were being progressed through an action plan.

Community and Culture Service had two priority 2 findings related to improving the documentation for PCSP grant claims with regards to when a non-standard approach to grant claims was appropriate and to ensure that management approval was documented for variations in grant claim timetables. In addition, the Service also had 8 priority 3 findings outstanding to be implemented.

Finance Service had recorded one outstanding Priority 1 Audit finding relating to the provision of an Asset Management Policy, in addition there were seven Priority 2 findings and two Priority 3 findings which had not been able to be progressed due to

the Covid-19 response and a lack of staff resources to influence policy review and development. In addition to those there were four Priority 2 recommendations and seven Priority 3 findings, progress and plans for completion of those were recorded.

Finance Service had also noted the absence of new Finance policies as a factor contributing to Internal Control risk. A business case had been submitted for additional staffing to progress those policies.

Section 3 – Governance

Administration had reported that complaints monitoring had revealed that information was not always being appropriately captured and that, despite formal procedures being in place, officers did not meet the expected standards in terms of response times and responsibilities. An action plan was in place to address that with the increased roll-out of the Te-Care software.

Assets and Property Services had reported that due to the recent high volatility in fuel prices a “deemed contract” was set up with suppliers in a collective action by councils to secure supply and attempt to achieve a price certainty as far as was practical. Significant overspend was expected, officers would continue to report to Council on that and explore options. In addition, due to unexpected market conditions the sale of electricity from the wind turbine in Balloo Wood Bangor was extended beyond the tender period, the tender would be revised.

The Service had also reported that due to the pandemic several vehicles were hired from a local business to support waste collections and other activities, those were hired without the value of the contract being known at the time, but those vehicles had continued to require use for much longer than planned due to the health and safety implications of Covid-19 on operations.

The Leisure Service had reported that the insourcing of the North Down Leisure Services may introduce legal or financial issues which had not been foreseen. To mitigate that the insourcing team had been made up of officers from across multiple sections of the Council for the greatest breadth of experience available to work on that. The loss of income claims submitted by the current operator were being independently reviewed by an external contractor to make an assessment as to the validity of those claims.

In addition, the Leisure Service had reported that the current difficulties recruiting staff were leading to staffing shortfalls, should that continue there was the possibility of reduction in facility opening hours and associated financial impact.

Environmental Health Protection and Development had again reported potentially significant legal and financial issues due to the demand on the Service both in relation to Covid-19 and the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. In addition, the Service was reporting a difficulty recruiting and retaining environmental health staff, both for front facing and support staff which combined with the other pressures may hinder the Council’s ability to deliver on statutory requirements.

The Finance Service had reported that the issues of the interaction of overtime and holiday pay were still unresolved as well as the implications of the McCloud and

Sargent court cases, whilst being accounted for in financial statements for year end March 2022 had not been fully accounted for in employer pension contribution rates.

In addition, the Service had reported that an attempted fraud was discovered on 13 April 2022, that was reported to the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Department for Communities, no loss was incurred by the Council.

The Parks and Cemeteries Service had reported that there would be an increase in fuel costs associated with the removal of the ability to use red diesel in road-going work vehicles (eg tractors). The ongoing complaints regarding remaining depths in graves was having a negative impact on cemeteries operations. Generally, a potential risk in terms of administration support had been identified following recent restructuring and in Cemeteries a need for greater administration support had been noted. A general review of the structure at SUM level had been identified as a future requirement to prepare for a sustainable and resilient delivery model going forward.

Human Resources and Organisational Development had reported several Priority 2 and 3 findings resulting from a number of audits. A timetable had been put in place to ensure appropriate action was taken within reasonable timescales.

Several direct award contracts were reported by services, all of those had been reported to the Council and Council procedures followed.

Community and Culture had reported that there was a deviation from the Council's grants policy relating to a grant for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations which was agreed by the Council. In addition, the Service had also noted that grant funding relating to Covid-19 costs were claimed in error from SEUPB, and that the Service was working with them to resolve that.

Section 4 – Miscellaneous

Many services had stated continuing difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff at all levels as a key factor contributing to potential risk across a range of Council activities.

The Planning Service had reported that the Service Level Agreement (revision) with Shared Environmental Service required signing for the provision of services in relation to Sustainability Appraisal for the Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

The Head of Finance outlined the report explaining that this was the Council's bi-annual report and in line with its risk management strategy which had previously been agreed. It was the second one of the year and was a summary of issues being reported from each service section. There were no major issues being shown, however, there were a number of things to be highlighted.

There were some issues in respect of demands on Council staff, financial and workload pressures and difficulties recruiting suitable staff in a number of sections.

The Head of Finance presented the remainder of the report to Members in detail.

Mr McGonigal had a question for the Head of Finance about the utilities contract that was going to add significant pressures on the Council's resources and if there were any contingencies to meet those demands or if there were any opportunities for additional funding from the Department for Communities. The officer replied that that would be seen later when the meeting considered the financial statements in which it would be seen that the Council had set aside funds to help mitigate that cost pressure.

In addition, the Association of Local Government Finance Officers (ALGFO) were working on collating a piece of work with a view to putting in a financial pressure bid to the Department for Communities in respect of the economy-wide pressures. That piece of work was ongoing.

Councillor Gilmour referred to leisure services and the costs of insourcing, both legal and financial issues which would be unforeseen. Members were informed that insourcing was going through due process and there was already a project board set up and was headed by the Director of Community and Wellbeing. There were a number of workstreams around leisure and business technology, finance contracts, human resources, assets and property that made up a reasonably lengthy 'to do' list. The reporting was a flag that there may be issues that would come up as the Council went through that due diligence process and in some respects those were issues with an unknown outcome.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter asked if the Council had given consideration to how to address the difficulty it faced in relation to recruitment of suitable candidates to work within the organisation. She was aware that in the planning section there was pressure to progress planning applications, and she wondered how recruitment could be improved. The Chief Executive agreed that recruitment and retention of staff was currently a key issue for the Council and the matter had been raised at the most recent Corporate Committee which had been held earlier in the month. The problem was an issue across employment in Northern Ireland generally and a cross Council working group had been set up to consider how the Council could attract more and better applicants, outlining the attractive benefits such as annual leave and the pension scheme. The Council was vulnerable for example to a general shortage of HGV drivers in the waste and cleansing section and for those with leisure specific qualifications such as sports coaches.

In response the Member was encouraged to hear of the Council's plan and suggested that it should also think about promoting the Council in different ways to appeal to younger people stating the benefits of flexibility and time out to travel for example while also meeting the Council's needs.

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Greer, that the recommendation be adopted.

8. TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW (Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Finance and Performance stating that in line with good practice the Audit Committee should review its terms of

reference annually and make recommendations to the Council to ensure that it keeps up to date with developments within legislation, guidance and regional and national issues.

The last review was carried out in June 2021.

The review had been carried out by the Head of Finance and there was only one change recommended under Overall Purpose and Objectives add:

- Approve the appointment of an Internal Auditor and receive regular reports therefrom.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the report.

The Head of Finance spoke to Members stating that each year they were made aware that the terms of reference were reviewed to ensure they were fit for purpose and up to date. This year it had been decided to add in the procedure for the appointment of an internal auditor and while the Council was carrying out that process already this would formalise it.

Councillor Greer suggested a further amendment to the terms of reference to state that while the appointment to the Audit Committee was for a four-year term there were changes made to the make-up of the committee each year due to Members taking on positions of responsibility. The Director of Finance and Performance was in agreement with that since there was much shuffling of positions following the Annual Meeting and indicated that that would be incorporated into the Terms if Members were in agreement.

Members were content that Councillor Greer's suggestion be included and left it to officers to agree the wording of that addition.

AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Greer, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the recommendation be adopted.

9. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that there were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

NOTED.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Greer, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business.

10. SINGLE TENDER ACTIONS UPDATE

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDNG THAT INFORMATION)

11. DRAFT GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR 2021/22
(Appendix VI)

IN COMMITTEE

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDNG THAT INFORMATION)

12. DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2021/22
(Appendix VII)

IN COMMITTEE

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDNG THAT INFORMATION)

13. FRAUD, WHISTLEBLOWING AND DATA-PROTECTION MATTERS

IN COMMITTEE

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDNG THAT INFORMATION)

14. CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION: NI AUDIT OFFICE GUIDES

IN COMMITTEE

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDNG THAT INFORMATION)

15. MEETING WITH NI AUDIT OFFICE AND INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE IN THE ABSENCE OF MANAGEMENT

*****IN CONFIDENCE*****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Greer, that the public/press be readmitted to the meeting.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 8.17 pm.

Unclassified

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ITEM 4b**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting	22 September 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Finance and Performance
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	14 September 2022
File Reference	AUD02
Legislation	Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations 2015
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Follow up actions from previous meetings - Action Register
Attachments	Appendix 1

In line with best practice, the purpose of this report is to make the Audit Committee aware of the status of outstanding recommendations or any outstanding actions from the previous Audit Committee meetings.

There one item from the previous committee.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Committee notes the report.

Unclassified

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Appendix 1

Item	Title	Action	Officer	Status
December 2021				
8	Terms of Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Amend to include changes following Annual Meeting	Head of Finance	Complete

Unclassified

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ITEM 5a**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	PIP
Date of Meeting	22 September 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Finance and Performance
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance
Date of Report	13 September 2022
File Reference	260501-03
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 Part 12
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	2022/23 Performance Improvement Plan - Quarter 1 progress report
Attachments	2022/23 PIP - Q1 Progress Report

Context

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 Part 12 put in place a new framework to support continuous improvement in the delivery of council services. The Council is required each year to determine its priorities for improvement which are aligned to the Community Plan and Corporate Objectives and to publish these in the format of an Improvement Plan by 30 June in each year..

Following internal discussion and review of the most recent Resident Survey conducted in June 2021 it was concluded that with minor alterations to Improvement Objectives 2 and 3 the 2021/22 Improvement Objectives should be rolled forward to 2022/23 and any incomplete actions would be brought forward. This approach aligns to feedback from the NIAO regarding continuity and the ability to track performance on our objectives.

Unclassified

	PIP 2021/22	PIP 2022/23
Improvement Objective		
1.	We will grow the economy and create jobs	We will grow the economy and create jobs
2.	We will improve the cleanliness of the streets in our borough by targeting dog fouling incidents:	We will improve the cleanliness of the streets
3.	We will improve the recycling rates from Household Recycling Centres	We will improve the Borough's recycling rates
4.	We will support our business and residents to protect and improve their health and wellbeing	We will support our businesses and residents to protect and improve their health and wellbeing
5.	We will use technology to drive change	We will use technology to drive change





There are a corresponding 38 measures including 7 Statutory Indicators and 6 self-imposed indicators, all are included in the Council's Service Plans and are monitored and reported on quarterly through each Service's respective Standing Committee.

It should be noted that this report reflects performance of the PIP 2022/23 only and is not necessarily representative of the overall performance of the organisation.

The following table gives an assessment of the status across all measures in the PIP for Quarter 1 2022/23 (1 April – 30 June 2022).

Performance Assessment Key

The key outlined below provides definitions for the three Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status levels which have been chosen to measure progress.

RAG Status	Definition
	Target/standard, actions and measures are of concern and are mostly falling short of plan
	Target/standard, actions and measures are mostly on track, but some are falling short of plan
	Target/standard, actions and measures are on track
	Rescheduled/no progress owing to impact of Covid

Unclassified

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Corporate Plan PEOPLE priority	Improvement Objective	No of measures			
					
PROSPERITY	▶ We will grow the economy and create jobs		-	-	12
ENVIRONMENT	▶ We will improve the cleanliness of the streets	-	1		2
	▶ We will improve the Borough's recycling rates	-	1	-	-
LIFE	▶ We will support our businesses and residents to protect and improve their health and wellbeing	-	-	-	5
EXCELLENCE	▶ We will use technology to drive change		-	-	4
STATUTORY INDICATORS	▶ Municipal Waste		1	-	2
	▶ Economic Development		-	-	1
	▶ Planning		3	-	-
SELF-IMPOSED INDICATORS	▶ Resident Satisfaction	-	-	-	1
	▶ Prompt Payment of Invoices	-	-	-	3
	▶ Average number of working days lost per employee	-	-	1	-
	▶ % staff attendance	-	-	-	1
	▶ Average days lost per employee	-	-	-	1
	OVERALL	-	6	1	31

This section of the report details each measure report Red or Amber status with supporting commentary from the relevant Service. This section focusses on the Improvement Objectives that have measures reporting Red or Amber outcomes in the period.

Prosperity / Planning

- **EX.01.PL01.001 Number of weeks to process local applications from date valid to decision or withdrawal**
 - 255 applications in the local category of development were submitted and 266 decisions issued of which 2 were refusal, which an average processing time of 23.0 weeks.
- **EX.01.PL01.002 Number of weeks to process major applications from date valid to decision or withdrawal**
 - 2 approvals issued on Major Development applications which were for a replacement school in Crawfordsburn and 29no. dwellings at High Street in Hollywood, which were processed in 28.8 weeks and 78.4 weeks respectively. The Hollywood proposal was subject to a number of amendments including relating to trees and landscaping within the proposed Area of Townscape Character.
- **EX.01.PL07.001 % progress of all enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint (i.e. case closure, date on which Enforcement Notice or Breach of Condition Notice issued, summons to court (date solicitor instructed))**
 - Enforcement staff continue to work through the backlog of new cases opened during COVID, and number of alleged breaches of planning control continue to remain high.

Unclassified

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 Environment

- **EN.02.RS02.002 Redesign the delivery model for the Environmental CLEAR programme to year 8's**
 - The education programme is still in development
- **EN.04.WC01.001 Develop Strategy for improving recycling rates across HRCs**
 - Progress on the development of the strategy has been stalled pending a workshop with Elected Members.
- **EN.01.WC02.001 % of household waste recycled, reused and composted**
 - With the majority of Covid measures now withdrawn, the Council will be undertaking an extensive Communications Campaign around the householders kerbside recycling requirements and recommencing kerbside checks for contamination/recyclables in residual waste bins, in an effort to increase recycling rates towards the 60% target.

 Excellence

- **PF.03.Council.01 % staff attendance**
 - The overall absence figure for Quarter 1 was 6.93%, 4.85% attributable to long term absence and 2.08% to short term absence. There continued to be an impact due to Covid-19, with 2% of absences being attributable to the virus, and this is reflected in the inflated short term absence figure. If Covid-19 related absences are excluded from the figures, then the overall absence figure for the quarter represents 5.73%. Those on long term sick continue to undergo consultations at Occupational Health to assess their medical condition. Employees attend regular meetings to review their progress and fitness for work and to discuss any measures which can be done to enable them to return to work in a timely manner.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the report is noted.

2022/23 PIP | Q1 Progress Report

Report Type: Scorecard Report
Report Author: Moira McVeigh
Generated on: 13 September 2022



PROSPERITY				
Improvement Objective 1 - We will grow the economy and create jobs				
Status	PI Code & Short Name	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target
	EX.01.PL01.001 Number of weeks to process local applications from date valid to decision or withdrawal	Q1 2022/23	23	15
	EX.01.PL01.002 Number of weeks to process major applications from date valid to decision or withdrawal	Q1 2022/23	53.6	30
	EX.01.PL07.001 % progress of all enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint (i.e. case closure, date on which Enforcement Notice or Breach of Condition Notice issued, summons to court (date solicitor instructed)	Q1 2022/23	36%	70%
	EX.01.RU02.001 To deliver the town recovery plans and a rural recovery plan	Q1 2022/23	0	0
	EX.01.TO07.002 Develop Events Bid for Strategy	Q1 2022/23	0	0
	OP.02.TO01.001 No of event organisers and volunteers receiving support/training (cumulative)	Q1 2022/23	6	5
	PR.05.ED01.004 Number of participants on ERDF Digital Transformation programme	Q1 2022/23	0	0
	PR.05.ED05.001 No of new jobs created through NIBSUP2	Q1 2022/23	31	20
	PR.05.ED05.001a No of new jobs created through business start-up activity	Q1 2022/23	31	20
	PR.05.ED06.001 Number of businesses supported through the Digital Growth Programme	Q1 2022/23	4	4
	PR.05.ED06.003 Delivery and implementation of Digital Strategy Action Plan	Q1 2022/23	0	0
	PR.05.RU01.002 No of meetings with Town Advisory Groups to develop regeneration improvements	Q1 2022/23	5	1
	PR.05.RU04.001 No of projects developed in partnership with EBR for Peace Plus funding	Q1 2022/23	0	0
	PR.05.RU04.002 Number of capital schemes commenced using funding from Covid Recovery Small Settlements Programme	Q1 2022/23	0	0
	PR.06.ED02.003 Number of new jobs created through Go For It programme (cumulative)	Q1 2022/23	31	31

ENVIRONMENT				
Improvement Objective 2 - We will improve the cleanliness of the streets				
Status	PI Code & Short Name	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target
	EN.01.WC03.001 Local Environmental Audit and Measurement Score (LEAMS) (Street Cleansing)	Q1 2022/23	76	75
	EN.02.RS02.002 Redesign the delivery model for the Environmental CLEAR programme to year 8's	Q1 2022/23	No	Yes
	EX.01.RS03.001 Maintain top 3 position for Fixed Penalty Enforcement in NI	Q1 2022/23	Yes	Yes

Improvement Objective 3 - We will improve the Borough's recycling rates				
Status	PI Code & Short Name	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target
	EN.01.WC01.001 Tonnage of municipal solid waste sent to landfill	Q1 2022/23	9,363	10,000
	EN.01.WC02.001 % of household waste recycled, reused and composted	Q1 2022/23	55%	60%
	EN.01.WC02.002 Amount (tonnes) of biodegradable waste sent to landfill	Q1 2022/23	4,093	4,754
	EN.04.WC01.001 Develop Strategy for improving recycling rates across HRCs	Q1 2022/23	No	Yes

LIFE				
Improvement Objective 4 - We will support our businesses and residents to protect and improve their health and wellbeing				
Status	PI Code & Short Name	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target
	EN.03.PC01.001 Total Hectares of Council maintained ground rewilded (m2)	Q1 2022/23	49,195	49,195
	EN.03.PC02.001 Number of trees planted	Q1 2022/23	2	0
	EX.01.AP02.001 % of condition surveys completed against schedule (cumulative)	Q4 2021/22	100%	100%
	EX.01.EH07.001 Produce business case and recruit additional support in Health and Wellbeing	Q1 2022/23	1	1
	LI.02.PC01.001 Retain Green Flag Awards	Q1 2022/23	6	5

EXCELLENCE				
Improvement Objective 5 - We will use technology to drive change				
Status	PI Code & Short Name	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target
	EX.01.AD08.002 Resolution rate for issues or enquiries at first point of contact for Customer Service	Q1 2022/23	97%	75%
	EX.02.CC01.005 Develop proposals for more innovative and effective methods of consultation and engagement with residents	Q1 2022/23	No	No
	EX.03.TP03.001 Develop a Digital Transformation Strategy	H1 2022/23	30-Jun-2022	30-Sep-2022
	EX.05.TP03.001 Commence Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme - Digital	Q1 2022/23	31-May-2022	31-Mar-2023
	EX.02.CC01.004 % resident satisfaction with engagement	Q1 2022/23	0%	0%
	PF.02.Council.01 Prompt Payment within 10 working days	Q1 2021/22	90%	55%
	PF.02.Council.02 Prompt Payment within 30 calendar days	Q1 2021/22	99%	95%
	PF.02.Council.03 Prompt Payment outside 30 calendar days	Q1 2021/22	1%	12%
	PF.03.Council.01 % staff attendance	Q1 2022/23	93.07%	95%
	EX.04.HR02.002 Average number of days lost per employee (Council Wide)	Q1 2022/23	3.8	4



Northern Ireland Audit Office

Draft Report to those charged with Governance

Ards and North Down Borough Council

2021-22



13 September 2022

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We have prepared this report for Ards and North Down Borough Council's sole use. You must not disclose it to any third party, quote or refer to it, without our written consent and we assume no responsibility to any other person.

1. KEY MESSAGES

This report summarises the key matters from our audit of the 2021-22 Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) financial statements which we must report to the Audit Committee, as those charged with governance. We would like to thank the Director of Finance and Performance and his staff for their assistance during the audit process.

Proposed Audit Opinion

It is proposed that the Local Government Auditor (LGA) will report on the 2021-22 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification.

Proposed Audit Certificate

It is also proposed that the Local Government Auditor will certify completion of the audit of accounts of the Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government Code of Audit Practice. The audit certificate closes the audit and marks the point when the Local Government Auditor's statutory responsibilities in respect of the audit of the accounts for the period covered by the certificate have been discharged.

The draft Audit Certificate is included at [Appendix Two](#).

Misstatements

Financial Statement Adjustments

No adjustments to the financial statements were made as a result of the audit.

Uncorrected misstatements

Uncorrected misstatements would decrease expenditure and increase net assets by a further £231k.

Audit Findings

During the audit we reviewed internal controls; accounting systems; and procedures to the extent considered necessary for the effective performance of the audit. We have not identified any priority one recommendations in relation to the internal control environment.

Full details of findings are included at [Findings from the Audit](#).

Proper Arrangements

Under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005, the Local Government Auditor should be satisfied that a Council has in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are satisfied that the Council has in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. However, we have identified a number of areas for improvement in relation to policies that are overdue for review. Further details are included in the [Findings from the Audit](#).

Status of the Audit

The audit is substantially complete with the following items outstanding:

- receipt and review of the revised annual report and financial statements; and
- bank confirmations.

Following receipt of outstanding items, it is proposed that the Chief Financial Officer will sign the Statement of Accounts together with a letter of representation, the proposed wording of which is included at [Appendix One](#).

The total audit fee charged is in line with that set out in our Audit Strategy.

Independence

We consider that we comply with the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) Ethical Standard and that, in our professional judgment, we are independent and our objectivity is not compromised.

No non-audit services were provided to the entity.

Management of information and personal data

The Council is required to comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in the handling and storage of personal data. Those Charged with Governance should ensure they have made sufficient enquiries of management to form a view on whether there were any significant specific data incidents which should be disclosed in the Governance Statement. We are not aware of any data handling incidents during the year. Confirmation to this effect has been sought within the letter of representation included at [Appendix One](#).

During the course of our audit we have access to personal data to support our audit testing. We have established processes to hold this data securely within encrypted files and to destroy it where relevant at the conclusion of our audit. We can confirm that we have discharged those responsibilities communicated to you in accordance with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.

Looking ahead

In response to significant changes in International Standards on Auditing (ISAs), the way in which we plan and conduct our audits is changing for our 2022-23 audit cycle. This will involve the performance of more detailed and extensive risk assessment procedures to identify financial reporting risks of material misstatement, and the subsequent design of audit approaches which are responsive to each assessed risk. We will write to the Chief Finance Officer this autumn to outline these changes and potential implications for our audit of the 2022-23 financial statements.

Performance Improvement

The outcome from our work in respect of Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 on Performance Improvement will be reported separately to those charged with governance, as set out in the planned approach in the 2021-22 Audit Strategy.

Actions for the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee should:

- Review the findings set out in this report, including the draft letter of representation and audit certificate at Appendices One and Two respectively; and
- Consider whether the uncorrected misstatements set out in section 5, '[Misstatements](#)' should be corrected. The Audit Committee minutes should provide written endorsement of management's reasons for not correcting these misstatements.

2. AUDIT SCOPE

We have completed our audit of the 2021-22 financial statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs) issued by the Financial Reporting Council; with Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'; and with the Audit Strategy presented to the Audit Committee in March 2022.

There are no new matters to communicate concerning the planned scope and timing of the audit.

3. SIGNIFICANT RISKS

The significant risks identified in our Audit Strategy have been addressed as follows:

Significant Risk 1

Management override of controls

Under ISA (UK) 240, there is a presumed significant risk of material misstatement due to fraud through management override of controls.

Audit Response

As required by ISA (UK) 240, we:

- tested the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements;
- reviewed accounting estimates for biases and evaluate whether the circumstances producing the bias, if any, represent a risk of material misstatement due to fraud; and
- considered significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business for the entity, or that otherwise appear to be unusual.

Outcome

No issues were noted in respect of management override of controls

Significant Risk 2

Risk of fraud in revenue recognition

Under ISA (UK) 240, there is also a presumed risk of fraud in revenue recognition, albeit rebuttable. We have assessed this risk to be significant in relation to the Council's other income streams (i.e. income streams relating to community planning; economic development and planning; operations; and for 2021-22, government support). We note that income in relation to Leisure, Arts and Culture services continued to be impacted during the year due to the closure of facilities for periods of time.

Audit Response

We undertook the following procedures:

- documented our understanding of the controls and procedures in place around revenue recognition;
- verified income received from Government Grants to supporting documentation and subsequent receipt to gain comfort over the completeness of income;
- substantively tested income streams relating to community planning; economic development; planning; operations; leisure and amenities; community and culture; and government support grants;
- analytically reviewed other material income streams, investigating any large and/or unusual variances; and
- performed walkthroughs and substantive testing of income.

Outcome

No issues were identified in relation to revenue recognition.

No additional significant risks were identified during our audit fieldwork.

4. FINDINGS FROM THE AUDIT

Financial Reporting

As part of our audit, we evaluate the qualitative aspects of accounting practices and financial reporting. In this section we draw to your attention any significant changes or issues in respect of accounting policies; accounting estimates; and financial statement disclosures.

The Council has robust processes in place for the production of the accounts and continue to produce good quality supporting working papers. Officers dealt efficiently with audit queries, effectively prioritising them, and the audit process has been completed within the planned timescales.

Accounting Policies

Accounting policies adopted by the Council have not changed or altered since the prior year financial statements. On this basis we can conclude that the quality, effectiveness and transparency of financial reporting and accounting at the Council is appropriate.

Accounting Estimates

We examined the appropriateness of accounting estimates and judgements and are content with the consistency of assumptions and the degree of prudence reflected in the recorded amounts.

Financial Statement Disclosures

We have made a number of suggestions to improve narrative disclosures and to ensure completeness of the disclosures required under the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and other relevant guidance.

Going Concern

We considered the Medium Term Financial Plan and while the financial outlook appears challenging, no events or conditions were identified from our audit work that cast significant doubt about the Council's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting.

Narrative Report

The Narrative Report was considered to be consistent with our understanding of the business, and was in line with the other information provided in the financial statements.

Remuneration Report

The parts of the Remuneration Report to be audited were considered to be properly prepared in accordance with Department for Communities (DfC) directions issued under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. A number of changes were suggested in relation to various disclosures within the remuneration report. These changes have been made.

Governance Statement

Our review of the Governance Statement confirmed that it complies with the Code of Practice and the Department for Communities Accounts Direction. We provided management with a number of minor observations and suggested disclosure changes to improve the narrative and completeness of disclosures within the Governance Statement.

Legality, Propriety and Losses

We found no issues in relation to illegality, propriety or losses during our audit.

Internal Control

No material weaknesses in the design and implementation of the Council's internal control systems have come to our attention during the audit. However, certain internal control weaknesses were identified during audit testing and are detailed below. We also note the three limited assurance reports issued by Internal Audit and management's accepted responses to these recommendations.

Related Parties

No significant matters were arising during the audit in connection with the Council's related parties.

Audit Recommendations

This section outline the findings arising from our audit, as well as management's response and target date for implementation. Our findings are defined as:

- Priority 1 – significant issues for the attention of senior management which may have the potential to result in material weakness in internal control.
- Priority 2 – important issues to be addressed by management in their areas of responsibility.
- Priority 3 – issues of a more minor nature which represent best practice.

Finding 1

Business cases and spend without authority

Business Cases

Our review of fixed asset additions identified that in three instances, business cases were not signed by the relevant Council staff members. It is Council policy that all business cases are signed by the appropriate manager whether this is an electronic or physical signature.

Spend without authority

We noted during expenditure testing that no contract or Direct Award Contract (DAC) was in place for transactions with two suppliers. While the amount sampled was lower, we noted that cumulative spend with these suppliers was as follows:

- Manvik - £349k
- Autobody - £49k

We also noted that the Governance Statement refers to spend on vehicle hire for which no procurement exercise was completed or DAC in place due the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whilst the above suppliers are preferred suppliers (and in the instance of Manvik are the only providers available) the Council has not followed the appropriate procurement or DAC procedures and therefore formalised contracting arrangement are not currently in place.

Priority Rating

2

Recommendation

We recommend that

- Council staff ensure that all business cases are signed as evidence of the necessary approval; and
- The Council regularise the contractual arrangements with all suppliers as soon as possible, be it using a formal contract or a Direct Award contract. Expenditure should not be approved where a formal contractual arrangement does not exist.

Management Response (including target date)

Finding 2**Disposal of Ards Leisure Centre**

The Council disposed of the former Ards Leisure Centre site to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) on 1 April 2021 for due consideration of £1.8m. DfI has not made payment for the site. We note that the vesting order for this disposal became operative during the 2021/22 financial year (19 May 2021), with compensation due to the Council of £1.8m. The Council's compliance team has followed up this matter with DfI and while they remain content that this amount is fully recoverable there is no commitment in writing from DfI. On 30 May 2022, DfI stated to Council that "the matter of compensation is currently the subject of negotiations between the DfI Departmental Solicitor's Office and the legal representatives for AND Council. Until the negotiations are successfully concluded, an invoice should not have been submitted".

The Council's debt management policy states that formal debt collection process should commence after 30 days of the invoice date and in these instances has not been followed. In such instances, given materiality, we would have expected the Council to seek assurances from DfI over the recoverability of this balance and have formal pursuance of the debt recorded.

Priority Rating

2

Recommendation

We recommend that the Council escalate the non-payment of this amount with DfI and seeks confirmation of recoverability. The Council's debt control policy for debt management should be followed in all instances.

Management Response (including target date)**Finding 3****Leases**

The Council maintain a MS Excel workbook for recording all instances of when the Council acts as a lessor. We noted that the workbook was outdated and that it included inaccurate start/end dates and lease amounts. While the differences caused by these errors when netted off are clearly trivial in terms of disclosures in the financial statements, there is a risk that properties continue to be used by the lessees even though the leases have expired or that Council fail to undertake rent reviews at appropriate times.

Priority Rating

3

Recommendation

We recommend that the Council's lease register is reviewed on a regular basis for completeness and accuracy to ensure that rent reviews and lease renewals are dealt with as soon as they are due.

Management Response (including target date)

Finding 4

Proper arrangements

During our Proper Arrangements work the following areas for improvement were identified, some of which had been raised in prior years:

- the Council's ICT system is still not ISO 27001 accredited;
- we note that some work continues to ensure that all policies are up to date, complete and reflective of actual practice. As part of our consideration of proper arrangements, we noted further updates are required to either review existing policies, approve draft policies or to review new policies for the following areas: Staff Travel Policy (2010); Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy (2018); Employee Expenses and Benefits Policy (2013);
- we note that a resource/succession planning policy has not yet been implemented. However consultations are underway to inform this formulation of this policy;
- we note that the Council's Business Continuity Plan which was drafted in February 2020 has yet to be finalised/adopted by Council;
- the Council still has not yet established a Reserves Policy;
- a managing vacancies policy dated July 2014 is now redundant and should be removed from the Council's policy list; and
- from our review of journals, we noted that four journals were not approved before posting.

Priority Rating

3

Recommendation

We recommend that:

- the Council ensures that its information security arrangements are ISO 27001 compliant and seek accreditation;
- the Council continues work to ensure that all policies are up to date and formally approved; and
- all journals are approved before posting and that evidence is retained of this approval.

Management Response (including target date)

There were no priority one recommendations made in our prior year Report to those charged with Governance that need to be followed up on.

Proper Arrangements

Under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005, the Local Government Auditor should be satisfied that a Council has in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are satisfied that the Council has in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. However, a number of areas for improvement have been identified - see Finding 4 for further details.

5. MISSTATEMENTS

Adjusted misstatements

During the audit process we identified no misstatements above our clearly trivial threshold of £71,500.

Uncorrected misstatements

The table below lists unadjusted misstatements which exceed our clearly trivial threshold of £71,500. Uncorrected misstatements would decrease expenditure and increase net assets by a further £231k.

Area	Issue	CIES		Balance Sheet	
		Debit £'000	Credit £'000	Debit £'000	Credit £'000
Fixed asset additions	Expenditure of a capital nature included in revenue expenditure			231	
Expenditure			231		
Trade creditors	Classification error of trade and capital creditors.			75	
Capital creditors					75
TOTAL			231	306	75
NET EFFECT			231	231	

We recommend that uncorrected misstatements be corrected by the Council.

APPENDIX ONE LETTER OF REPRESENTATION

[Client Letterhead]

The Local Government Auditor
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

LETTER OF REPRESENTATION: ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021-22

As Chief Financial Officer of the Ards and North Down Borough Council (“the Council”) I have fulfilled my responsibility for preparing accounts that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs, income and expenditure, cash flows, and movements in reserves, and the related notes of the Council for the year ended 31 March 2022.

In preparing the accounts, I was required to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by the Department for Communities (DfC), including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and apply appropriate accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed and disclosed and explain any material departures in the accounts; and
- make an assessment that the Council is a going concern and will continue to be in operation throughout the next year and ensure that this has been appropriately disclosed in the financial statements.

I confirm that for the financial year ended 31 March 2022:

- having considered and enquired as to the Council’s compliance with law and regulations, I am not aware of any actual or potential non-compliance that could have a material effect on the ability of the Council to conduct its business or on the results and Balance Sheet disclosed in the accounts;
- all accounting records have been provided to you for the purpose of your audit and all transactions undertaken by the Council have been properly reflected and recorded in the accounting records. All other records and related information, including minutes of all management meetings which you have requested have been supplied to you; and
- the information provided regarding the identification of related parties and related party transactions involving Councillors and senior staff is complete; and the related party disclosures in the financial statements are adequate.

All material accounting policies as adopted are detailed in note 1 to the accounts.

INTERNAL CONTROL

I have fulfilled my responsibility as Chief Financial Officer for the design and implementation of internal controls to prevent and detect error and I have disclosed to you the results of my assessment of the risk that the financial statements could be materially misstated.

I confirm that I have reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal control and that the disclosures I have made are in accordance with DfC guidance on the Governance Statement.

FRAUD

I have fulfilled my responsibility as Chief Financial Officer for the design and implementation of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud and I have disclosed to you the results of my assessment of the risk that the financial statements could be materially misstated as a result of fraud.

I am not aware of any fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Council and no allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the financial statements has been communicated to me by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

ASSETS

General

All assets included in the Balance Sheet were in existence at the reporting period date and owned by the Council and free from any lien, encumbrance or charge, except as disclosed in the accounts. The Balance Sheet includes all long term assets owned by the Council.

Long Term Assets

All assets over £5,000 are capitalised. They are revalued regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their fair value at the year-end. Annually a full revaluation is performed on 1/5th of the Council's assets and all other assets subject to a desk based valuation. All assets will receive a full revaluation as a minimum, every 5 years, by Land and Property Services (LPS). Depreciation is calculated to reduce the net book amount of each asset to its estimated residual value by the end of its estimated useful life in the Council's operations.

Current Assets

On realisation in the ordinary course of the Council's operations the other current assets in the Balance Sheet are expected to produce at least the amounts at which they are stated. Adequate provision has been made against all amounts owing to the Council which are known, or may be expected, to be irrecoverable.

Current assets include £1.8m compensation receivable from DfI for the transfer of the former Ards Leisure Centre with effect from 1 April 2021 which I believe is fully recoverable.

LIABILITIES

General

All liabilities have been recorded in the Balance Sheet. There were no significant losses in the year and no provisions for losses were required at the year end.

All litigation and claims have been disclosed to you and correctly accounted for.

Provisions

Provision is made in the financial statements for:

- Insurance - £424k;
- Environment - £95k;
- Legal – £30k; and
- Holiday pay - £681k.

Contingent Liabilities

There are a number of legal claims or potential claims against the Council the outcome of which cannot at present be estimated with certainty. Full provision is made in the financial statements for all liabilities which are expected to materialise.

I am not aware of any pending litigation which may result in significant loss to the Council, and I am not aware of any action which is or may be brought against the Council under the Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 and the Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 2005.

OTHER DISCLOSURES

Results

Except as disclosed in the accounts, the results for the year were not materially affected by transactions of a sort not usually undertaken by the Council, or circumstances of an exceptional or non-recurring nature.

Unadjusted Misstatements

Uncorrected misstatements would decrease expenditure and increase net assets by a further £231k.

Events after the Balance Sheet date

Except as disclosed in the accounts, there have been no material changes since the Balance Sheet date affecting liabilities and commitments, and no events or transactions have occurred which, though properly excluded from the accounts, are of such importance that they should have been brought to notice.

Accounting Estimates

The methods, significant assumptions and the data used in making the accounting estimates and the related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is in accordance with the financial reporting framework.

Management of Personal Data

Except as disclosed in the Governance Statement, there have been no personal data related incidents in 2021-22 which are required to be reported.

Mr Stephen Reid
Ards and North Down Borough Council

Date:

APPENDIX TWO AUDIT CERTIFICATE

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

I have audited the financial statements of Ards and North Down Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2022 under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005. The financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement, and the related notes including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom supported by UK adopted International Financial Reporting Standards.

I have also audited the information in the Remuneration Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021-22, of the financial position of Ards and North Down Borough Council as at 31 March 2022 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Department for Communities' directions issued thereunder.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of this certificate. My staff and I are independent of Ards and North Down Borough Council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that Ards and North Down Borough Council's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on Ards and North Down Borough Council's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

The going concern basis of accounting for Ards and North Down Borough Council is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts other than the financial statements, the parts of the Remuneration Report described in that report as having been audited, and my audit certificate and report. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the other information included in the Statement of Accounts. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Department for Communities' directions made under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; and
- the information given in the Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2022 is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of Ards and North Down Borough Council and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Statement of Accounts.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if:

- in my opinion:
 - the Annual Governance Statement:
 - does not reflect compliance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021-22;
 - does not comply with proper practices specified by the Department for Communities;
 - is misleading or inconsistent with other information I am aware of from my audit; or
 - adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
 - the statement of accounts and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
 - I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit, or
- I issue a report in the public interest under Article 9 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005; or
- I designate under Article 12 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 any recommendation made to the Council; or
- I exercise the other special powers of the auditor under Article 19 to 21 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005.

Responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Council's and Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities, the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- such internal controls as the Chief Finance Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing Ards and North Down Borough Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Chief Finance Officer anticipates that the services provided by Ards and North Down Borough Council will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government Code of Audit Practice.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to Ards and North Down Borough Council through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on Ards and North Down Borough Council's compliance with laws and regulations;
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of Ards and North Down Borough Council's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition and posting of unusual journals;
- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading Council and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate; and
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:

- performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
- testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
- assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website <http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of my certificate.

This report is made solely to the Members of Ards and North Down Borough Council in accordance with the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and for no other purpose, as specified in the Statement of Responsibilities of the Local Government Auditor and Local Government Bodies.

Certificate

I certify that I have completed the audit of accounts of Ards and North Down Borough Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government Code of Audit Practice.

Colette Kane
Local Government Auditor
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

Date

Mr Patrick Barr

106 University St,
Belfast BT7 1EU

14 September 2022

Stephen Reid
Chief Financial Officer
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Town Hall
The Castle
Bangor
BT20 4BT

Dear *Stephen*

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Draft Report to those charged with Governance for the year ended 31 March 2022

I have attached a draft Report to those charged with Governance setting out the provisional findings from our audit of Ards and North Down Borough Council's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022. The Key Messages section outlines the current status of the audit.

Following finalisation of the audit and receipt of management comments to the issues identified in our report, we will issue the report to you in final form. If you have any queries on the matters raised in the Report to those charged with Governance, I would be happy to discuss them with you if you would find that helpful.

You will appreciate that the matters were identified from our normal audit procedures conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs). These are designed primarily for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements and included only a limited review of your accounting systems and procedures. Therefore our work may not have brought to light all the weaknesses that may exist, and our findings should not be seen as comprehensive in this respect. I have included an assessment of the risks and made recommendations that are designed to be constructive. However, I should point out that responsibility for determining whether they should be implemented, and the effects of such implementation, necessarily rests with management.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for the assistance and co-operation received throughout the audit. I would be grateful if the draft report was tabled at the next Audit Committee meeting.

Yours sincerely



pp Andrew Allen

Patrick Barr

Director

Financial Statements

For the year ended
31 March 2022



Ards and
North Down
Borough Council

This document will be made available in a range of alternative formats on request. Please contact Stuart Waring on stuart.waring@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk or 0300 013 3333 extension 40606.

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Narrative Report

Introduction

These financial statements set out Ards and North Down Borough Council's financial performance during the financial year 2021/22 and its financial position at the end of that year. The Council's financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2022 is as set out in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (pages 53-54), the Movement of Reserves Statement (pages 55-56), and its financial position is as set out in the Balance Sheet (page 57) and Cash Flow Statement (page 58).

The financial statements follow approved accounting standards and are necessarily technical in parts. It is the purpose of this narrative report to explain, in an easily understandable way, the financial facts in relation to the Council in addition to its main objectives, strategies and the principal risks it faces.

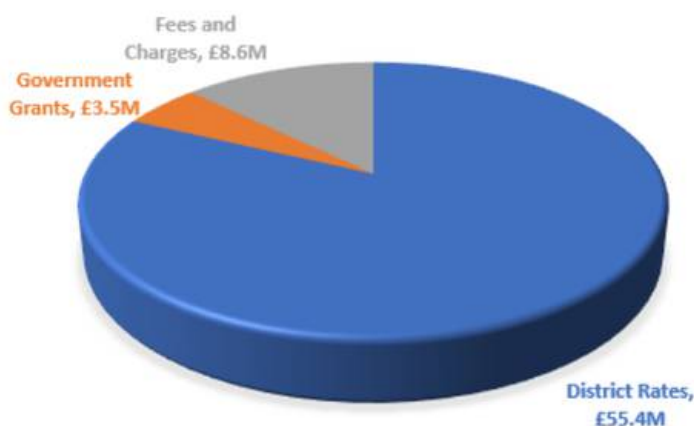
These financial statements have been prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom for the year ended 31 March 2022 (the Code) and the Department for Communities Accounts Direction, Circular LG 02/2022 dated 7 January 2022 and are the 'Statement of Accounts' the Council is required to prepare under Regulation 7 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations 2015.

Organisation Overview and External Environment

The Council operates a traditional model of decision making for councils and is organised into five directorates plus the Chief Executive's Office. Each of these directorates are further divided into Services as follows:



The Council delivers a broad range of local services covering among others: community development, leisure, parks and cemeteries, waste collection and disposal, economic development and tourism, environmental health, building control, planning and off-street car parking. It directly employs over 800 staff and has a budget of £67.5M. In addition, it participates in a number of strategic partnerships with other councils, private operators, public bodies and third sector organisations in order to deliver its vision for the Borough.



The Council recently refreshed this vision -- it seeks to make 'Ards and North Down a vibrant, connected, healthy, safe and prosperous place to be'. It has set its objectives out in the context of its [Corporate Plan Towards 2024](#). Service Plans are produced and published on an annual basis, detailing how the Council intends to meet the Corporate Objectives. Key improvement activities are also published annually in the Council's Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), however, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic the legislative requirement to publish such a plan was set aside by the Department for Communities in the 2020/21 year but reinstated for 2021/22.

The Council's Corporate Objectives are themed as follows:

- **P**ROSPERITY – Growing our economy
- **E**NVIRONMENT – Growing a cleaner, greener local and global environment
- **O**PPORTUNITY – Growing the lifelong potential of our community
- **P**RIDE – Growing empowerment, respect and safety in our community
- **L**IFE – Growing the health and wellbeing of our residents
- **E**XCELLENCE – Growing a high-performing Council



The Council operates in the context of [The Big Plan Second Edt d2.pdf \(ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk\)](#), which is the Community Plan for the Borough (see below). At its heart is an integrated approach to strategic development, not only for the Council, but for everyone in the Borough who has an interest in making Ards and North Down a better place to live, work, visit and invest. The Council's Corporate Plan, which sits below the Community Plan, is supported by key strategies including the Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development and the Integrated Strategy for Arts and Heritage. Internally the Council is working to promote an agenda of transformation to enhance and improve internal processes, as well as delivering, better engagement with, and services for, the communities the Council serves.

The Council is developing its culture around the values of:



- **Progressive** – We will be proactive, ambitious, innovative, forward thinking and outward looking.
- **Respect** – We will treat everyone in a fair and equitable manner, respecting diversity and each others roles.
- **Integrity** – We will always be open, honest, transparent, trustworthy and accountable in our business relationships.
- **Delivery** – We will ensure a “can do” attitude, being passionate about achieving results, performance driven, and outcome focussed.
- **Excellence** – We will strive to deliver continuously improving and excellent quality services, whilst ensuring value for money.

Governance

The governance arrangements of the Council are set out in the Governance Statement (pages 15 - 39) and there have been no significant changes in approach in the course of the year, with the exception of the necessity to move to remote working where possible for staff and Council meetings.

Operational Model

The Council published, the Big Plan for Ards and North Down, in March 2017. This provides a commitment from all partners who are members of the Strategic Community Planning Partnership on the five outcomes they will collectively work towards achieving for the people of Ards and North Down. In accordance with Community Planning Guidance, the first Statement of Progress was published in November 2019. This initiated a review of the existing implementation methodology and the agreement of a refined list of ten community planning collaborative priorities. [The Big Plan Part II Our Big Priorities April 2022.pdf \(ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk\)](#) was published in April 2022. This updated the whole population indicators and sets out the issues the Strategic Community Plan will focus its attention on.





The Big Plan provides an overarching context for the Council's Corporate Plan. Activities to progress the outcomes and priorities resulting from the Big Plan and Corporate Plan are set out in the Council's annual Service Delivery Plans for each of its 17 Services. Service budgets are aligned to the annual Plans.

Inputs

- Council receives over 80% of its funding through the local property tax (often referred to as the district rates) and 13% from fees and charges for the use of range of services.
- Council employs in excess of 800 staff. These staff are recruited according to the Local Government Staff Commission guidance the Council's Learning and Development Strategy provides the framework for maintaining and enhance the skills of the work force, through on the job training, Pride in Performance conversations, formal training, part-time study and mentoring.
- The Council owns 351 properties and has a fleet of 205 vehicles, all of which are maintained in a proactive manner.
- In light of the pandemic, the Council has reviewed and changed the mode of operation for a number of services, including the holding of Council and committee meetings remotely, registration services and visitor servicing.

Activities and Outputs

The Council is organised into five directorates which are further divided into service units with an aim to provide customer and outcome focussed Services to residents, businesses and visitors alike. Although these services concentrate specialised skills around common themes, the Council endeavours to provide unified and complimentary services using a range of collaborative forums, such as Corporate Leadership Team, Heads of Service Team and Service Unit Managers forums in addition to address ad hoc or specialist issues.

The Council engages with a number of strategic partners in order to deliver some of its services within its Community & Culture, Leisure, Waste & Cleansing, Regulatory, Regeneration and Economic Development Services.

The Council's Planning Service relies on extensive detailed input from a range of statutory consultees which are outside the Council's authority, such as Government Departments, and which continue to experience resourcing issues relating to staff in post and expertise. This has had a direct impact on the processing of planning applications and therefore on the achievement of the statutory performance indicators.

In addition, Councillors participate in a range of regional bodies and Officers participate in a wide range of local government professional groups in order to provide co-ordination among Councils on a Northern Ireland wide basis.

Outcomes

The outcomes within the Council's Corporate Plan are aligned to those within the Big Plan (the Community Plan). The Council, as facilitator of community planning for the borough works in



partnership with statutory partners, government departments and the community and voluntary sector to work towards these high-level aspirational outcomes. Workstreams (formally referred to as thematic groups) have been established to help focus Council resources on these outcomes. Workstreams have been set up for all five outcomes.

A workstream that is a sub-group of our Strategic Community Planning Partnership is focused on public estate and land issues. The purpose of this group is to share information about capital build projects and to identify areas where collaboration will improve the outcomes for our citizens. The Council has shared the review of its estate with Strategic Partners and this had led to expressions of interest being put forward to co-locate front facing services in, for example, the proposed Newtownards Citizen Hub. Other discussions are on going about the land requirements of different partners and a shared project to map land ownership on Council's Geographic Information System (GIS) portal is underway.

Aligning Corporate Plan and Community Plan outcomes has resulted in increased levels of collaboration across Council directorates to the benefit of the citizen. The Council applied to be part of the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly programme in recognition of our ageing population. An Age Friendly Alliance has been established with representation across department and community planning partners. Internally cross-departmental programmes have been developed that recognise the contribution that each service needs to play to contribute to an outcome that says that all people in Ards and North Down live in communities where they are respected, safe and feel secure. Resources are being shared to develop walkability audits of public spaces with stakeholders that will demonstrate an involved level of engagement and listening to our citizens.

Partnerships to deliver against our outcomes have been established across all PEOPLE priorities and Community Plan Priorities. This is enabling us to use our resources to contribute to other important agendas such as health reform and how local health commissioning will happen in the future. Collaboration is happening between community development, education, and police to improve how young people have a voice via the establishment of a Youth Council. This is directly contributing to our outcome that all people in Ards and North Down fulfil their lifelong potential.

An outcomes approach is still relatively new and relies on having access to an evidence base that can be used to measure whether the work Council and its partners are undertaking is making a difference. We have used our resources to undertake a comprehensive assessment of wellbeing that helps us identify the issues we need to focus on to contribute to the five outcomes identified.

In addition, the period covered by this report was dominated by the Council's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing utility prices impacting on the worldwide economy. During this time the UK Government and the NI Executive took significant mitigation measures in order to curtail the spread of the coronavirus throughout the country. A general lockdown in the early part of the year had significant impact on almost all aspects of Council operations, workforce, finances risks and strategic partners.

Despite these challenges the Council continued to deliver positive outcomes for residents and businesses showing a high degree of innovation and effectiveness.

How the Council spent its resources is set out in its Comprehensive Income and Expenditure statement on pages 53-54.

Risks and Opportunities

In all its strategic planning activities the Council identifies risk and opportunities as well as seeking to identify mitigations and to take advantage of potential positive outcomes.



Risks

✦ **Brexit**

The UK transition period formally came to an end on 31 December 2020. As a number of 'grace' periods are still in operation (when the UK does not have to implement all the requirements of the Northern Ireland Protocol), the implications for local authorities and the wider public sector continue to remain uncertain. SOLACE continue to co-ordinate the activities of councils in this regard.

Uncertainty exists on future funding, such as access to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to replace EU funds, which Council has relied on to optimise delivery of many support programmes. This will put a strain on Council resources should it not be in place post March 2023 or be forthcoming in a timely manner.

✦ **Political Instability**

The current uncertainty regarding the re-establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Northern Ireland Executive may have significant impact on the Council's ability to plan in the short to medium term due to the lack of a multi-year Executive budget. This provides difficulties particularly in respect of multi-year programmes and capital projects.

✦ **Resourcing**

The Council has ambitious plans and strategies for the pursuit of prosperity in the Borough. Resourcing these plans requires finance, assets and talent. Currently, in common with many organisations, the Council is experiencing significant difficulties in recruiting staff and in managing rising utility costs. These pressures will inhibit the Council's ability to deliver on its plans.

Council must both prioritise, and regularly assess, its appetite and tolerance for risk in order to ensure it is fit for purpose to deliver on the objectives set.

Opportunities

✓ **Sustainability commitments**

Ards and North Down Borough Council was the first local authority in Northern Ireland to declare a climate emergency and has developed a Roadmap to Sustainability (which was approved in March 2021). We view sustainability as a unique selling point for the Council, which can help us to deliver better services for residents, businesses and visitors. We are committed to integrating sustainability into all business practices moving forward and progress has been made on this throughout the reporting period ([Sustainability Case Studies](#)).



✓ **Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD)**

The BRCD executive body comprises this Council along with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, the Queen's University Belfast and the Ulster University (the Belfast Region).

The objective of the BRCD is to deliver a step change in the region's economic fortunes and help achieve inclusive growth. It will see the UK Government invest £350 million into the Belfast Region over the next 15 years. This figure will be matched by the Northern Ireland

Executive and a further co-investment of upwards of £150 million from Belfast Region City Deal partners.

Four “pillars” for the BRCD proposition have been established:

- Employability and skills
- Innovation and digital
- Infrastructure
- Tourism and Regeneration

Ards and North Down contribute to the regional Employability and Skills programme and benefit from capital funding towards a regional digital programme and projects as outlined below.

The Council is also due to receive circa £40M towards the Bangor Waterfront development, our ambitious plans to redevelop Bangor’s beautiful seafront with a necklace of new, sustainable, tourism and leisure attractions.



It will also benefit from funding to create an Innovation Hub to support the Creative Industries in the borough.

✓ **Redevelopment of Queen’s Parade**

Bangor Marine Ltd.’s comprehensive planning application for the development site located at Queen’s Parade and Marine Gardens in Bangor was approved by the Council’s Planning Committee in January 2021. After a significant delay, while the Department for Infrastructure considered the approval, the application was finally returned to the Council in March 2022. This is a significant milestone towards seeing the major, planned £50 million regeneration project delivered in the town, which will complement the Bangor Waterfront development.

✓ **Reform and Transformation**

Restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have ‘fast tracked’ the Council’s efforts towards digitisation of some services, both internal and external facing. Human Resources, for example, moved some recruitment procedures to online channels e.g., shortlisting and interviewing. A SMS text service was introduced to facilitate short, factual messages being shared with staff across the organisation. The continuation of these digitised practices will be reviewed moving forward to ensure that benefits including reduction of paperwork/ time efficiencies and effective communication methods are maintained.



Strategy and Resource allocation

The Council is seeking to provide high quality services and facilities.

The Council approved a new [corporate plan](#) in April 2021 and will use this to assist in the allocation of resources to ensure that it meets its new objectives. In addition, the Council has adopted a range of strategies in respect of:



✓ **Tourism, Economic Development and Regeneration**

The Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development presents a coherent vision for the pursuit of prosperity in the Borough of Ards and North Down. It responds to the vision and outcomes of the Community Plan for the area and is to be used as the common point of reference for all those contributing to the growth of our economy, the welcoming of visitors and the improvement of our places, both urban and rural.

✓ **Arts and Heritage**

The Arts and Heritage strategy defines how arts and heritage will help achieve Ards and North Down's cultural, social and economic ambitions by enriching its people and places and empowering its residents to make the most of their creativity.

It responds to the vision and outcomes of the Big Plan for Ards and North Down and contributes to the delivery of the Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018 - 2030, responding to its vision and propositions from the arts and heritage perspective.

✓ **Road Map to Sustainability**

The Road Map to Sustainability summarises the key sustainability content and the benefits which will be realised from the successful implementation of the various integrated Council strategies and Plans either currently in place or under development.

✓ **Capital Investment Plan**

The Council uses a project prioritisation approach to assess and prioritise potential capital investments. The Council's ambitious capital investment involves scoring each project across a range of agreed, standardised criteria, to include elements such as strategic alignment, cost and risk. The resulting ranked project list is used as a basis for decision making on which, and how many projects will progress, depending on the desired investment level.

✓ **Medium-Term Financial Strategy**

The Council continues to consider carefully its financial resilience in its budgeting cycles. This budgeting process is guided by the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which sets out 11 guiding principles which provide a framework in which to develop future budgets. These budgets for the next financial year are developed in the context of a five-year Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). In addition, the Council has developed a 10-year district rate projection to enable it to forecast the impact of its longer-term capital investment plans. The MTFP was reviewed in the new budgeting cycle for 2021/22 taking into account the financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, increases to the national living wage and the current inflationary economic environment.

As the Council emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic it is setting out on a strategic transformation programme that seeks to modernise the functioning of the organisation and service delivery. To this end it has established a Reform and Transformation Fund. To complement this fund, a Sustainability



Fund has also been established in order drive forward initiatives to reduce the Council's dependence of carbon.

In light of the both the pandemic and the resourcing difficulties in recruiting staff, the Council has launched a project to develop a comprehensive Workforce Planning Strategy in order to identify the gaps between the current position and what the Council need to put in place to make sure we have the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

Performance

FINANCIAL

The results for the year are set out in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and reflects the accounting deficit for the year to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). A number of adjustments are then made to this (see note 4 on page 87) to arrive at the actual surplus for the year on the Council's General Fund, as shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement (pages 55-56) and summarised below:

	Actual £'000
Cost of Continuing Operations	(62,923)
Other Operating Expenditure or Income	(261)
Financing and Investment Income & Expenditure	(3,843)
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	59,792
Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services	(7,235)
Adjustment between Accounting and Funding bases	10,808
Net Transfers (to) or from Reserves and Funds	(2,613)
Surplus / (Deficit)	960
Balance brought forward	4,527
General Fund Balance at 31 March 2022	5,487

The 2021/22 financial year saw the Council start to emerge from the unprecedented difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council received further central Government financial support during 2021/22 (in addition to that received in 2020/21) to help it meet in-year and future COVID-19 related financial challenges, so it has been able to set aside significant funds into Earmarked Reserves to allow it to mitigate the impact of these challenges.

The Council's General Fund carried forward is £5.5M (equivalent to 7.1% of gross revenue expenditure, up from 6.3% on 31/03/2021).

The Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2022 (page 57) shows a net worth of £145.2M, an increase of £24.8M from the 31 March 2021 balance sheet, this is largely attributable to:

- the net increase in value of fixed assets (£4.7M);
- the decrease in outstanding loans (£6M); and



- the decrease in other long-term liabilities (£13.7M).

The Council participates in the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland), commonly referred to as Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee, or 'NILGOSC'. This scheme is currently in deficit and the £46.9M liability relating to the Council has been appropriately reflected in these financial statements and shows a decrease of £13.7M on 2020/21. Details regarding the pension liability are in Note 22 (Page 108). In line with the Code, this deficit is mitigated in the Council's balance sheet and does not affect usable reserves. NILGOSC has a long-term strategy to recover this deficit, by adjusting employer contribution rates following triennial revaluations.

The Council's Usable Reserves at 31 March 2022, with a comparison to the opening position, is set out in the following table:

Reserves:	31 March 2022 £'000	31 March 2021 £'000
General Fund	5,488	4,527
Capital Receipts Reserve	3,327	1,619
Capital Grants Unapplied Account	2,500	2,740
Revenue Grants Unapplied Account	301	279
Other Earmarked Funds	13,426	10,813
TOTAL	25,042	19,978

Notes are provided within the Financial Statements to explain material changes.

Capital Investment

In order to enhance the services it provides, the Council has an ambitious Capital Investment Programme representing around £113M over the next 10 years. This level of investment is dependent on significant external funding being secured, particularly from the BRCD. These plans will be subject to review in the normal course of business as part of the normal budgeting cycles, in respect of affordability, sustainability and prudence. This is particularly important in the context of the Council's recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this Capital Investment Programme, expenditure on capital projects during the 2021/22 financial year included:

Capital Scheme	£000
Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	2,085
Cairnwood – forest paths	373
Donaghadee Motte & Ballywalter Lime Kilns	287
Lemon's Wharf Play Park	224
Software	108
Copeland Plaza	145
Other Minor Schemes	192
Total	3,414

Details of how the Council has funded its capital expenditure are set out in Note 13 (page 100). Information on capital commitments relating to capital projects is set out in Note 14 (page 100).



COVID Funding

During 2020/21 the Northern Ireland Executive allocated an additional £10M has been allocated to support councils with the ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council received an apportionment of £1.5M. Other Council COVID-19 Support funds received are also set out below.

Government Department	COVID-19 Funding Purpose	Amounts Received £000
DfC	Financial Loss	1,538
DAERA	Waste Management	4
HMRC	Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	87
Total Received		1,629

Non Financial

Each year the Council publishes its [Annual Performance Report](#). This self-assessment is to account for its improvement activity for that year and review performance against the Improvement Objectives set in the preceding year. The report reflects on the performance on the delivery of our agreed Improvement Objectives and supporting actions for the year in review.

The following table gives an assessment of the status across all measures in the Performance Improvement Plan.

Corporate Plan PEOPLE priority	Improvement Objective	No of measures			
		◇	●	▲	✓
PROSPERITY	▶ We will grow the economy and create jobs		-	6	2
ENVIRONMENT	▶ We will improve the cleanliness of the streets in our borough by targeting littering and dog fouling incidents	1		2	-
	▶ We will improve recycling rates from Household Recycling Centres (HRCs)		-	1	1
LIFE	▶ We will support our businesses and residents to protect and improve their health and wellbeing	1	-	-	2
EXCELLENCE	▶ We will use technology to drive change		-	2	2
STATUTORY INDICATORS	▶ Municipal Waste ▶ Economic Development ▶ Planning		5	2	-
SELF-IMPOSED INDICATORS	▶ Resident Satisfaction	-	-	-	1
	▶ Prompt Payment of Invoices	-	-	-	3
	▶ Average number of working days lost per employee	-	-	-	1
	▶ % staff attendance	-	-	1	-
OVERALL		2	5	14	12

RAG Status	Definition
●	Target/standard, actions and measures are of concern and are mostly falling short of plan
▲	Target/standard, actions and measures are mostly on track, but some are falling short of plan
✓	Target/standard, actions and measures are on track
◇	Rescheduled/no progress owing to impact of Covid



Outlook

The outlook for the Council remains uncertain as it emerges from the pandemic and enters a high inflationary economic environment. In the longer-term Council has concerns around wage growth and increasing utility costs resulting in less disposable income among rate payers and therefore the loss of service income and the expected contraction in the non-domestic tax base due to businesses closing.

As the capital investment increases in line with the Capital Investment Plan the Council may see its borrowing increase modestly from £67M in March 2022 to around £86M in 2025, although this will be kept under review as the impact of recovery from the COVID-19 situation develops.

The non-domestic rate base has contracted year-on-year since April 2015 and continues to provide a challenge to the Council in terms of income generation. The Council plans for anticipated movements as part of its strategic financial planning process, although it expects the overall situation to deteriorate further due to the longer term impact of the pandemic.

In addition to the increases in capital financing costs, there are pressures within salaries budgets (because of nationally agreed pay settlements being driven by increases to the National Living Wage and the increase in employer pension contributions), the ongoing revenue costs associated with new capital investment projects and recruitment difficulties due to a shortage of talent. However, despite these pressures at the last budgeting cycle, the Medium-Term Financial Plan was forecasting district rate increases for the next number of years which were a little above the current levels of inflation.

The Council's Corporate Plan Towards 2024 has been developed to provide clear focus and priorities for the relevant period. It is anticipated that the Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme, which has been established alongside this as a vehicle to drive and guide any identified key organisation changes, including efficiencies and service improvements, will look to harness a range of practices and approaches that Council has adopted during the period of lockdown restrictions.

Basis of preparation

Information is considered material "if omitting it or misstating it could influence decisions that users make on the basis of financial information." Consequently, items of differing magnitude may both be regarded as material given their differing contexts.

These financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as required by the Code. The COVID-19 emergency has had profound effects on the Council's operations and finances, however as detailed above, the Council has taken clear and decisive action to secure its financial position in the medium term and therefore consider that in addition to the statutory going concern requirement the Council has secured its financial situation in practice.

Material and Unusual Items

The Council has not incurred any other material or unusual expenditure during the 2021/22 financial year.



Statement of the Council's and Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

The Council's Responsibilities

Under Section 1 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 the Council shall make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. A Council shall designate an officer of the Council as its Chief Financial Officer and these arrangements shall be carried out under the supervision of its Chief Financial Officer.

Under Regulation 7 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, the Council, or a Committee, is required by resolution, to approve the accounts.

These accounts were approved by the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer on 19 September 2022.

The Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities

Under Regulation 8(2) of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Council's Statement of Accounts in the form directed by the Department for Communities.

The accounts must give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Chief Financial Officer is required to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Department for Communities including compliance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom;
- follow relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis; and
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

The Chief Financial Officer is also required to:

- keep proper accounting records which are up-to-date; and
- take reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.



Governance Statement

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Scope of Responsibility

Ards and North Down Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of governance (including the system of internal control) to allow it to act in the public interest by:

- enabling its business to be conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards; and
- ensuring that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions.

In discharging these overall responsibilities, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council is required to prepare an Annual Governance Statement, in accordance with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016). This statement explains how the Council meets the requirements of Regulation 4 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and the activities through which it engages with, leads and gives account to its communities. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

This governance framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2022 and up to the date of approval of the financial statements.

The Governance Framework

This section describes the key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the Council's governance arrangements.



1. Arrangements for reviewing the Council's vision and its implications for the Council's governance arrangements

Council's vision within its Corporate Plan Towards 2024 mirrors the vision of the Community Plan. In 2017, the Council and its partners published the area's first community plan - the 'Big Plan' – which sets out a vision for the Borough.

"Ards and North Down is a vibrant, connected, healthy, safe and prosperous place to be".

The vision is supported by five outcomes that are also mirrored in the Council's Corporate Plan.



All people in Ards and North Down ...

- Fulfil their lifelong potential
- Enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure
- Benefit from a prosperous economy
- Feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment

Ards and North Down's Community Plan is known as 'the Big Plan'. It has been developed following extensive engagement with the citizens of Ards and North Down using 'The Big Conversation' initiative to identify the long-term vision they would like to see achieved over the next 15 years. This engagement mechanism will continue to be used to consult with people on how implementing the Big Plan will improve the delivery of all public services. The Big Plan provides a commitment from 15 strategic partners covering a range of issues including transport, housing, environment, policing and health. The Big Plan and its implementation were reviewed and the Big Plan Part II | Our Big Priorities was published 5 years after the publication of the Big Plan. A year's extension to a legally required review was provided due to resources being diverted to support communities dealing with COVID-19. The five outcomes from the Big Plan are now supported by 10 priorities. A Big Conversation Panel was used to confirm the most important issues for residents are recognised by the 10 priorities.

The Big Plan gives the context for the Corporate Plan (available on the Council website [here](#)) and the Council's first Local Development Plan, which is still being prepared.

Each of the Council's Services have agreed and published Service Plans against which they will report to their Standing Committee. Each Plan is aligned to the Council's Corporate objectives and monitoring of performance is managed through the Council's Performance Reporting software. The system tracks a wide range of Key Performance Indicators on a quarterly and annual basis and reports progress on a RAG (Red Amber Green) basis, providing visibility of same to the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service.

The Council's Corporate Services Committee has responsibility for overseeing the performance management process and agreeing the Council's statutory Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for Council approval. The Council's Audit Committee receives reports on PIP performance, ensuring that progress in each of the key areas is carefully monitored. The PIP is a mechanism



to identify key interventions to better achieve the outcomes set out in the Council's Corporate Plan. It also fulfils the Council's statutory obligations as set out in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. It should be noted that the requirement to publish a Performance Improvement Plan for the 2020/21 year was set aside by the Department owing to the impact of the global pandemic but reinstated for the 2021/22 year.

2. Arrangements for identifying and communicating the Council's vision of its purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and service users

The Council will deliver against the six People-focused priorities specified in its Corporate Plan Towards 2024, which are aligned with the Community Plan outcomes. Each year Council Services identify in their Service Plans improvement actions that are driven by:



- Priorities identified in the Corporate Plan are based on input from Elected Members, officers and wider consultation;
- Feedback from ratepayers, residents and stakeholders arising from the "Big Conversation" community planning engagement project and Conversation Panel surveys;
- Feedback from residents via the biannual residents survey;
- Output from workshops involving the Corporate Leadership Team and Heads of Service Team; and
- A review of Service Plans.

The Performance Improvement Plan is subject to, and informed by, public consultation, also involving Statutory and Community Planning partners, our Consultative Panel on Equality and Good Relations; Equality Scheme Consultees; a range of hard-to-reach groups; and the Chambers of Trade for our principal towns.



At the end of the financial year, we will publish an assessment of the Council's performance.

3. Arrangements for measuring the quality of services, for ensuring they are delivered in accordance with the Council's objectives and for ensuring that they represent the best use of resources

Individual Council Services monitor their performance on a quarterly basis to ensure that they maintain customer satisfaction levels. The Council has in place performance reporting software which links key performance indicators (KPIs) via Service Plans to the Council's overall objectives and shows progress against same.

The Council is subject to audit by the Local Government Auditor, within the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The scope of auditors' work covers not only the audit of the Council's Financial Statements, but also aspects of corporate governance, arrangements to secure the economic, efficient and effective use of resources and an audit and assessment of the Council's PIP. The Local Government Auditor publishes an annual report on the results of both the financial audit and improvement audit which are published on the Council's website.

The Council has established a Performance Improvement Service Unit with responsibility for developing and implementing effective performance governance arrangements in addition to supporting projects and activities aimed at improving the better use of resources to achieve agreed outcomes.

The Council has committed to undertaking a formal survey of residents every two years to gain an insight into satisfaction levels with the organisation and the services we deliver. The information gathered is shared across all service areas and used to inform a number of performance improvement measures including our annual service plans, performance improvement plan and financial statements.

Our last survey was completed in summer 2021 with a smaller than usual sample (while remaining statistically significant) given that many services had been significantly restricted during 2020/21.

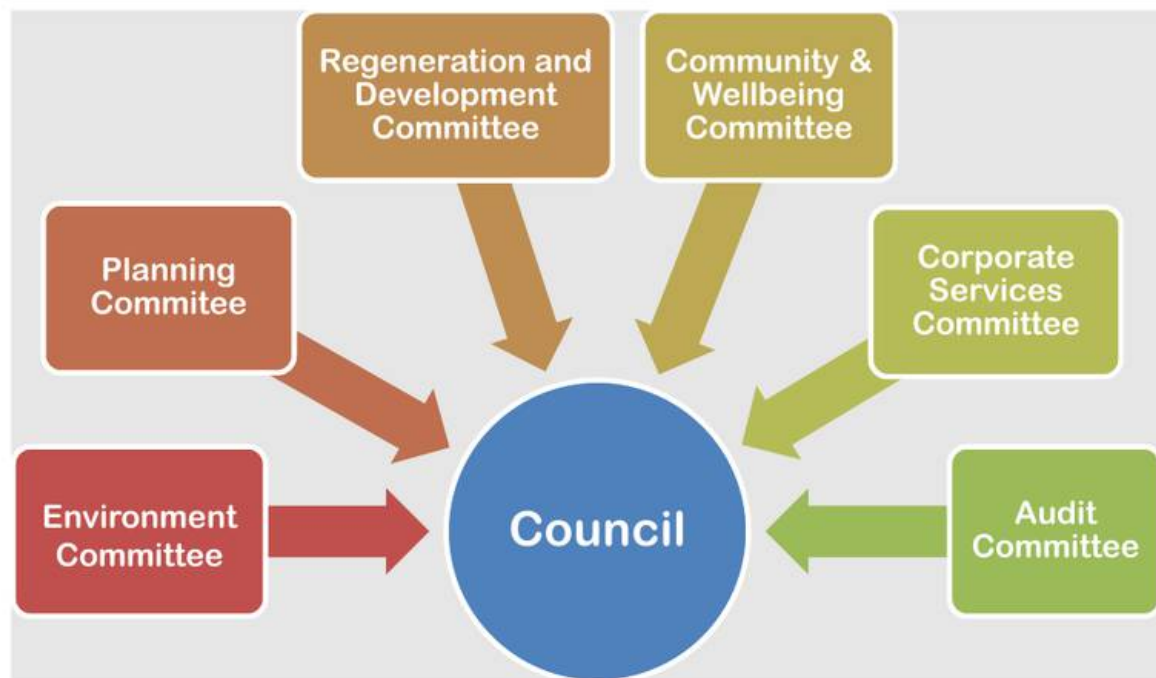
It is encouraging to note that 82% of residents report satisfaction with the Council. The comparative figure for all Great Britain Councils in June 2021 was 68%.

- ✓ Areas for improvement (over which Council has direct control) include enhancing opportunities for consultation and tackling environmental issues at a local level e.g. addressing dog fouling and littering.
- ✓ Residents identified health and wellbeing (47%) to be the most important corporate priority followed by jobs and the economy (21%).
- ✓ 72% rated their most recent contact with the Council as either 'excellent' or 'good', with the same percentage considering that the Council keeps residents informed about the services and benefits it provides.
- ✓ 68% were satisfied with the level of engagement the Council offers local residents.
- ✓ 71% rated the reputation of the Council as either excellent or good.



4. Arrangements for defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of the Council, scrutiny and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication

As a statutory body, the Council performs a range of functions that are provided for in legislation. The Council takes overall responsibility for discharging these functions, with its performance delegated either to a Committee or an Officer. The committee structure is:



Each Committee has a defined Terms of Reference, documenting its roles and responsibilities including determining policy in its own area within the remit delegated from the Council.

The Terms of Reference of each Committee are periodically reviewed. The latest version was agreed at the Council's annual meeting in 2019. There are also a number of established sub-committees and working groups involving Elected Members, which report to the relevant Committees.

In July 2020, the Council agreed to establish a task and finish working group of Members, known as the Strategic COVID-19 Recovery Group (SCRG), to develop a way forward for the Council through the development of strategic recovery plans. The SCRG reported directly to Council and made recommendations within the scope of its purpose and objectives as outlined in agreed terms of reference. This working group was stood down early in the 2021/22 financial year.

During the pandemic legislation was enacted to allow council meetings to take place remotely, via video conferencing technology. This legislation expired during May 2021 following which the Chief Executive was delegated to make decisions until further legislative arrangements could be made in September 2021.

Section 41 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 requires that Councils' Standing Orders must make provision requiring reconsideration of a decision if 15% of the members present make a requisition to the Chief Executive on either or both of the following grounds:

- That a decision was not arrived at after a proper consideration of the relevant facts and issues; and
- That the decision would disproportionately affect adversely any section of the inhabitants of the district.

This is commonly known as the 'call-in' procedure and is addressed by Standing Order 22 within the Council's Standing Orders.

In line with section 2 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, the Council has prepared its constitution. This has been published on the Council's website [here](#).

The purpose of the constitution is to:

- enable the Council to provide clear leadership to the community, in partnership with citizens, businesses and other organisations;
- support the active involvement of citizens in the process of Council decision-making;
- help Councillors represent their constituents more effectively;
- enable decisions to be taken efficiently and effectively;
- create a powerful and effective means of holding decision-makers to public account;
- ensure that no one will review or scrutinise a decision in which they were directly involved;
- ensure that those responsible for decision-making are clearly identifiable to local people and that the decision-makers explain the reasons for decisions; and
- provide a means of improving the delivery of services to the community.

A Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), consisting of the Chief Executive and Directors meets to make strategic decisions, while a Heads of Service Team (HoST) is responsible for Operational delivery and informing strategic work.

A Corporate Project Portfolio Board (CPPB) provides oversight of the range of capital and strategic projects undertaken by the Council, while a Corporate Project Assurance Group (CPAG) provides additional objective scrutiny of projects on the corporate portfolio. In addition, the Council has established a Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme Board to oversee a programme of modernisation within the organisation and is establishing an Estates Development Programme Board to identify and deliver strategic development projects in respect of the Council estate.

The Council has also set up a Corporate Health and Safety Committee that meets quarterly, comprising Directors, Heads of Service, Service Unit Managers, the Council's Health and Safety Officer and Trade Unions representatives to ensure the streamlining of Health and Safety throughout all Council functions and to report on incidents. In addition, each Directorate has its own Health and Safety Committee.

The Council is also a member of the arc21 Waste Management Joint Committee along with five other Northern Ireland Councils. The Joint Committee has delegated authority to deal with financial matters up to £250,000 and all other decisions are subject to ratification by the constituent Councils.

The responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer are set out in the Local Government (Accounts & Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. Council has designated the Chief Executive as its Chief Financial Officer. In addition, the responsibilities of Officers including, senior management are enshrined in job descriptions. In addition, the Council has a scheme to delegate decision making to Service Unit Manager level.

5. Arrangements for developing, communicating and embedding codes of conduct, defining the standards of behaviour for members and staff

The Council has a wide range of policies and procedures, which are subject to on-going review and include the standards of behaviour expected from all employees. The Council has adopted



the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Conduct. All policies and procedures are communicated to employees through induction, other on-going training initiatives and are published on the intranet. Specifically, these policies include an Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption policy (including a fraud response plan) and a Declarations of interest policy (which requires all employees at or above salary scale point 29 to declare actual or potential conflicts of interest).

Line managers have received training from the Council's Human Resources Service in relation to these HR policies. Council has an "Employee Behaviour Charter" and training has been provided to embed these positive behaviours into the Council culture. The Council is continuing to embed the learning and development strategy and the Pride and Performance conversation initiative with every employee. These conversations align with the Corporate Values which are part of the Corporate Plan.



The Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors came into effect 28 May 2014. Councillors have received training in respect of this statutory code of conduct. They have also completed declarations of interest, which are published on the Council [website](#) and which they have an obligation to keep up to date.

6. Arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of the decision-making framework, including delegation arrangements, decision making in partnerships and robustness of data quality

The Council is committed to the effective delivery of services for the benefit of residents and users alike. A scheme of delegation to officers with clearly defined parameters and reporting arrangements was agreed by Council in 2019 and is kept under periodic review.

The Council is involved in a number of strategic partnerships, including the Queen's Parade redevelopment, Belfast Region City Deal, the 11-Council Business Start Up Programme *Go For it* and the Strategic Community Planning Partnership, all of which have project boards or committees in place to provide an appropriate governance structure.

7. Arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of the framework for identifying and managing risks and demonstrating clear accountability

Risk Management

In line with the Council's Risk Strategy, a Corporate Risk Register is maintained to ensure that key areas of risk that may affect delivery of our Corporate Plan are identified. To ensure a proactive approach to risk management, all corporate risks have assigned mitigations (comprising current controls and additional mitigation measures required). As a live document, it is subject to change as required. The Register is reviewed by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Heads of Service Team (HoST) on a quarterly basis to ensure that it is kept up to

date and to streamline consideration of and mitigation against risk throughout the organisation and is reported to the Audit Committee twice yearly.

A second level of risk recording is performed through Service Risk Registers, these identify Service specific strategic and operational risks and are incorporated into Service plans. Periodic reviews are included within each Service's management processes. In addition, biannually, each Service completes an internal governance Assurance Statement to provide assurance that the internal standard procedures, risk management and / or control arrangements are in place. Within this statement any failure of controls or significant risks causing concern and requiring mitigation is identified.

In response to an audit recommendation in March 2019, the Council's risk strategy has been reviewed and was ratified in October 2021. The revised Risk Strategy is being aligned to the Corporate Plan Toward 2024 to ensure that the Council is best equipped to deliver its future ambitions. This was delayed due to Council diverting resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Appropriate training will be delivered in due course to management and staff and a communication exercise will be completed to ensure all employees are aware of the strategy and their responsibilities in relation to it.

Data Management

The Council aims at all times to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The new data protection legislation, which came into force in May 2018, triggered the recruitment of a Data Protection Officer, whose role is defined in the legislation. Since then, data security and information management systems have been reviewed, privacy notices updated, and a significant programme of training has been delivered to management and employees, including a new comprehensive E-learning module. Business Technology has introduced additional measures to ensure data security. A new CCTV and Surveillance Equipment Policy has been developed to ensure all aspects of video/audio recordings are managed securely. This will be ratified in September 2022.

The Council plans to introduce an electronic document and records management system, based on a Microsoft GDPR compliant platform, to continue to improve data management practices, data security and general compliance. A scoping exercise was carried out in 2019/20 but no further action took place pending budget cover. This action is still on the agenda for consideration as a transformation project, but timescales are not yet confirmed.

A project on scanning the title deeds associated with land belonging to the Council took place in January – May 2022. This has resulted in a comprehensive set of documents being available to all officers that require them in a timely fashion and ensures that the records are safe for the future.

Conflicts of Interest

Each member of the Council is obliged to declare any interests. These declarations are published on the Council website. Declarations of interests is a standard item on each Council or committee meeting agenda, with standing orders requiring that a member leaves the meeting for the duration of the item in which they have made a declaration.

The Council has also approved a Declaration of Interests policy for employees, which requires all staff at or above a certain level to declare all interests which may result in a conflict of interest. In addition, all staff must receive written permission to have employment with another employer.



8. Arrangements to ensure effective accountability

Transparency

The Council is committed to conducting its business in an open and transparent manner. It aims to publish information in a timely and accurate manner and in accordance with its published publication scheme. All meetings of the Council and its Committees are open to members of the public and minutes/audio recordings of those meetings are available on the Council website. During the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings are also streamed on Zoom as a webinar.

The Council has a very proactive social media presence, which it uses to both share information and to engage with citizens, answering questions and address customer care issues. Across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter platforms the Council has over 43,000 followers.

Reporting

Each of the Council's 18 services report on performance on a quarterly basis to their respective Standing Committees. Progress against the annual Performance Improvement Plan is reported to Audit Committee. An annual report is published to highlight progress against the PIP (when applicable) and achievement against the Corporate Plan outcomes.

Financial statements are prepared in line with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and published annually. Articles 17 and 18 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 give members of the public access to the books of accounts as part of the audit process.

Performance Management

The Council has a wide range of policies and strategies to assist with the management of performance. Key documents include the Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan (set aside for 2020/21) and Service Plans each with outcomes and indicators. All staff operate within the Pride in Performance framework.

The Council has developed and adopted a performance framework called PERFORM, as illustrated in the diagram below. This is in recognition that performance of the organisation is driven by a number of factors such as effective planning, the engagement of staff, allocation of resources, aligned policies and systems, effective utilisation of these in providing services, relating to our residents, customers and partners and our ability to manage resulting performance. This model provides a framework to guide our approach on each of these elements and to promote alignment of related approaches.



Financial Management

The Council's Finance Service operates under the direction of suitably qualified and experienced accountancy professionals and within the policies and procedures framework brought forward from legacy organisations.



The Council substantially funds its services by setting a property tax for both domestic and non-domestic properties (the district rates). It sets these rates in the context of a Medium-Term Financial Strategy, including principles to guide decision making and a five-year Medium-Term Financial Plan which integrates the on-going costs of service delivery and the financial impact of the capital investment programme, taking into account external economic and legislative factors. All budgets are allocated through Directors to Heads of Service and on to Service Unit Managers for accountability purposes and are reported both on corporate bases to management and the Corporate Services Committee.

Audit

External audit services are provided by the Local Government Auditor (LGA), a member of staff in the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO), appointed to this role by the Department for Communities with the consent of the Comptroller and Auditor General. They are assisted in this role by other NIAO staff. The LGA has contracted the performance of both the financial and improvement audits to a private sector organisation, whilst retaining responsibility for the statutory responsibility for certifying the financial statements.

In addition, the auditor can undertake value for money studies and public interest investigations, as necessary.

With respect to the financial audit a Report To Those Charged With Governance is reported to the Council's Audit Committee detailing such matters as audit findings, recommendations, and misstatements which the Local Government Auditor considers appropriate to bring to the attention of management. In addition, an annual audit letter is prepared for Council and published on the Council website.

The Improvement Audit is also carried out by the Local Government Auditor. This includes reviews of the previous year's activities and the adequacy of current year's plan. The findings from this Audit and Assessment Report together with the Certificate of Compliance are published on the Council website.

9. Arrangements ensuring effective counter-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are developed and maintained.

The Council's Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy states that it is committed to creating an environment that:

- Minimises the risk of fraud, bribery or corruption;
- Promotes its early detection;



- Safeguards whistle-blowers; and
- Effectively investigates and recovers, where appropriate, any financial loss suffered.

To this end, the Council relies on measures such as the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors, Code of Conduct for Local Government Services, employment references, policies and procedures (including manager review, segregation of duties, reconciliations, performance reporting and registers of interests) to embed a counter-fraud culture.

Opportunity is also taken to use the Council's intranet to communicate anti-fraud messages including the publication of NIAO fraud risk guides. In addition to highlighting these issues at periodic Service Unit Manager forums and Heads of Service meetings.

All occurrences of fraud are reported to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis as a matter of course.

10. Arrangements ensuring effective management of change and transformation

The Council is committed to delivering high quality services for the residents of the Borough and those who use its services.

To this effect the Council has in place a Corporate Plan to provide an overarching context and framework for its service delivery. Flowing from this each of the Council's 18 services prepare a service plan to guide the core business and to identify and progress service improvements. Under normal circumstances these form the basis of the annual Performance Improvement Plan, which is both publicly consulted on and reported against, however, in the 2020/21 year the requirement to publish a Performance Improvement Plan was set aside by the DfC. Council reviewed its Corporate Plan during the reporting period and published the Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in April 2021.

Council has also established a Strategic Policy and Finance Group to provide a forum for Members to consider and guide matters of strategic importance to the Council. However, during the reporting period this group was stood down and replaced by Strategic COVID-19 Recovery Group in order to provide a cross council approach to recovery planning. This arrangement came to an end in June 2021.

The Council has an approved Capital Project Management Handbook which sets out the organisation's structured capital project management approach. This is in parallel to the development of a corporate transformation programme to ensure corporate alignment of initiatives, increase the pace of delivery and provide a robust governance framework for oversight purposes. As part of its Strategic Transformation and Performance Service Council has a Performance Improvement Unit to provide support to other services as they seek to transform.

The Council acknowledges in its Organisational Development strategy that the successful delivery of the Council's vision requires a workforce that is truly motivated and working together for a common and meaningful purpose. To this end the Council has obtained Investors in People Silver accreditation to stimulate continued progress in the nine pillars to improve performance:



As part of this strategy, each year management commit to a number of key actions in its People Plan.

The Council views partnership working a key to delivering change for the benefit of residents. The Big Plan formally establishes collaboration among the partners to deliver the Community Plan. This forum is being used to provide greater cross-working on estates issues across community planning partners. In addition, officers from across the Council maintain regular contact with

colleagues in other organisations to address areas of common concern, and as a result participates in several inter-council procurement exercises. The Big Conversation Panel was used to gather the views of residents to develop the Big Plan and has been used to gather feedback from residents to inform decisions taken by community planning partnerships. This information is shared across all community planning partners to improve local services.

11. Compliance of financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in Local Government (2016)

The Chief Executive has been designated by the Council as its Chief Financial Officer. As a result, the Council complies with this statement with the exception of Principle 5. The Council does not comply with this principle because local regulations in Northern Ireland do not require the CFO to be professionally qualified accountant nor for the role to be separated from that of the Chief Executive. However, the Council's governance arrangements deliver the same impact as the CFO is supported by a suitably qualified and experienced Director and qualified staff within the Finance Service to ensure that decisions made by Council are based on sound technical knowledge and understanding.

12. Arrangements for ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful

Regulatory compliance is a responsibility of all members of Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Heads of Service Team (HoST) and is monitored at service level to ensure that all relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures are adhered to. To support this, meetings of the Council and its Committees are conducted in accordance with a set of agreed Standing Orders. It also has a range of policies arrived at following policy development procedures.

To ensure that legislative compliance is embedded for all activities, reports to Council require relevant legislation to be quoted. All major expenditure proposals are subject to review by CLT before being passed to Council and legal advice is sought where appropriate and reported to Council. In addition, all Directors, Heads of Service and Service Unit Managers are required to sign off Interim and Annual Assurance statements which provide a chain of assurance to the



Chief Executive with regard to management of risks, control failings, incidents of fraud and whistleblowing and to declare interests outside work which may give rise to conflicts of interest.

13. Arrangements for ensuring assurance processes conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010) and where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact.

The Council outsources its internal audit service and ensures conformity to the CIPFA statement in its tender requirements which require appropriately qualified and experienced staff. In addition, its approved Internal Audit Charter:

- Sets out how audit work will be carried out, based on the risk analysis and evidence;
- Sets out how audit work will be resourced; and
- Defines roles and responsibilities and explicitly grants access to management and Audit Committee. It is standard practice at committee meetings that both internal and external auditors have opportunity to address the committee in the absence of management.

14. Arrangements for undertaking the core functions of an Audit Committee, as identified in CIPFA's Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities

The Council has in place an Audit Committee whose overall purpose and objective is to assist the Council in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities. The Audit Committee, which meets at least four times each year, has responsibility for reviewing:

- The system of internal control and management of risks;
- The financial reporting process;
- The audit process;
- Progress in respect of the Performance Improvement Plan;
- Council's processes for monitoring compliance with laws and regulations; and
- Council's processes for monitoring compliance with its own Standing Orders, policies and procedures.

In performing its duties, the Audit Committee is responsible for maintaining effective working relationships with the Council as a whole, with management and with the internal and external auditors. The committee has 11 members including one independent external representative.

15. Arrangements for whistleblowing and for receiving and investigating complaints from the public

The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. It expects its employees who have serious concerns about anything improper that is happening in the Council, to come forward and raise those concerns.

The Council has a whistleblowing policy in place to ensure that employees who raise concerns receive a response and are informed about how their concerns are being dealt with. Training will commence during the 2022/23 year via the Council's e-learning platform.



The handling of complaints is set out in the Council's Complaints Procedure, a copy of which is published on the Council's website.

16. Arrangements for identifying the development needs of members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles, supported by appropriate training

New Members, whether joining Council after an election or co-option, receive induction training to ensure that they are fully aware of all key issues, including an overview of each Council Directorate, operation of the Committee system and Standing Orders and an overview of local government finance. Members of the Planning Committee have received specific training in respect of this new statutory role. The Council has been awarded Elected Member Charter accreditation. Members were given the opportunity to identify their training needs and to develop their own training plans. Members also attended courses and conferences as required during the course of the year. Council will seek Charter Plus accreditation in due course.

The development needs of senior officers are addressed through the Pride in Performance Initiative and the Organisational Development Strategy.

17. Arrangements for establishing clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation

The Council is committed to establishing and maintaining strong lines of communication with all sections of the local community. All Council and Committee meetings are open to the press and public. In addition, the minutes and an audio recording are published on the Council website (except where a meeting or part thereof is held 'in committee').

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Council and Committee meetings have been conducted on Zoom and members of the press and public could enter the 'gallery' and watch the meeting (except where a meeting or part thereof is held 'in committee').

There is awareness across all Directorates that different communication channels need to be employed to ensure maximum impact, however the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of digital channels. Corporately, the Council uses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn platforms, which have a combined following of over 43,000 people. Channels are updated on a daily basis. Service-specific channels operate in tourism, arts and culture, and leisure with a combined following of 23,000 people.

The Council's Gov.uk website is the main shop window for all its digital communication. Any online search for Ards and North Down will direct to this site. Council's main social media channels all refer people back to this website to deliver on calls to actions. Council ezine are also linked back to the site. Annual traffic to the site is in excess of 1.2M and growing year on year. User satisfaction with the site is high (averaging at 91% in the last two resident surveys). However, the site was created in 2015 using a content management system that has since been upgraded and the site will be redeveloped in the 2022/23 financial year to ensure it continues to be fit-for purpose.

The Council distributed its annual corporate publication, the Borough Magazine, to all households and businesses in the Borough (approx. 80,000 addresses) at the end of March 2022. This publication provides an overview of Council business across all Directorates and each page is themed to enable residents to easily access information of specific interest to them. A contact number for further information or links to the Council website are provided for readers to access more information if required. The 'Your Opinion Matters' section in each edition invites comments, questions and ideas for service improvements from residents, via



postcard or email. These are processed by the Performance Improvement Unit and allocated to the relevant service area for action.

The information in the Borough Magazine is supplemented by focussed correspondence and publications relating to specific service areas. The Council employs two officers dedicated to external communications (one for traditional channels and one for digital channels). They produce regular content for both local and regional media and undertake the daily management of the Council's website and social media channels.

All Council Services consult on their various strategies and policies in the process of normal business and to comply with the Council's various statutory duties. Given that COVID-19 had restricted Council services during the period a small-scale residents survey (440 rather than 1,000 users) was undertaken in June 2021. It assessed satisfaction levels with core services but also garnered more information on communication preferences so the Council can tailor information to best suit citizen needs. Overall satisfaction was 82%. The comparative figure for all GB Councils in June 2021 was 68%.

This year a number of internal corporate services carried out internal customer surveys to assist with refining plans.

18. Arrangements for enhancing the accountability for service delivery and effectiveness of other public service providers

The Big Plan for Ards and North Down (known as the Community Plan) is monitored and reported on via a Strategic Community Planning Partnership. There are two parts to this:

- **Statement of Progress** – The Department for Communities has produced guidance on how progress against the Community Plan should be reported. Every two years a Statement of Progress must be published to consider the impact service delivery is having on the people of Ards and North Down. The whole-population based indicators in the Big Plan (linked to the Programme for Government indicators) will be used to measure impact over time. The first Statement of Progress was published in November 2019, the second was published in November 2021.
- **Performance Update Report** – The review of the Big Plan and its implementation has resulted in the identification of 10 priorities that are now supported by issue specific workstreams. Most workstreams are supported by an action plan and the activities within this are reported to the Strategic Community Planning Partnership using Report Cards developed via Outcomes Based Accountability methodology. An annual Performance Update Report is provided to the Strategic Partnership and help make partnership members collectively accountable for the impact all public services have on the people who live in Ards and North Down.

The governance arrangements for community planning in Ards and North Down are managed via a partnership agreement outlining the roles and responsibilities of those who deliver public services across all tiers of the partnership – strategic and operational. This Partnership Agreement was reviewed and updated in February 2022.

In line with community planning guidance documentation, a review of the Community Plan and its associated actions was initiated in December 2019. Due to the impact of COVID-19 the outworking's of the review was delayed by 12 months. While 10 priorities were agreed by the Strategic Partnership prior to COVID-19, these were further reviewed using the Big Conversation Panel and via feedback from a Community Support Steering Group, to ensure their relevance in

a post-Covid world. The Big Plan Part II | Our Big Priorities is published on the Council website [The Big Plan for Ards and North Down | Ards and North Down Borough Council](#).

19. Arrangements for reviewing and updating standing orders, standing financial instructions, a scheme of delegation and supporting procedure notes/manuals, which clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required to manage risks

Meetings of the Council and its Committees are conducted in accordance with a set of agreed Standing Orders. Any changes to these documents require formal approval by the Council.

The Standing Orders set out the formal mechanisms by which the Council regulates the conduct of its meetings and are subject to regular review and update in response to the changing environment and the needs of the Council. The Standing Orders have been reviewed and amended as and when required since 2015. A comprehensive review was undertaken in 2019. Due to COVID-19 the standing orders were further amended to incorporate reference to new legislation enabling meetings to be held remotely. The current version was ratified in December 2021.

During the pandemic legislation was enacted to allow council meetings to take place remotely, via video conferencing technology. This legislation expired during May 2021 following which the Chief Executive was delegated to make decisions until further legislative arrangements could be made.

In addition, there is a range of human resource management, financial management, procurement and project management policies and procedures in place, some of these are carried forward from legacy organisations. The Council will keep its policies and procedures under review to ensure that they provide sufficient and comprehensive coverage. The Corporate Risk Register is subject to formal update and is reported to the Audit Committee at least twice yearly, or more regularly if required.

Any suspension of Standing Orders requires approval by the Council by way of qualified majority.

20. Arrangements in respect of partnerships and other joint working as identified by the Audit Commission's report on the governance of partnerships

The Council has responsibility to initiate, maintain, facilitate and participate in community planning. The statutory partners have all agreed to a Partnership Agreement which commits them to be active participants in the community planning process and to provide relevant staff for each of the workstreams. The agreement also sets out that all partners are equal and provides rules of attendance at meetings and how decision should be made. The Partnership Agreement was reviewed, updated and endorsed by the Strategic Partnership in February 2022. Reports on the process and progress in relation to Community Planning are reported regularly to the Council's Corporate Services Committee.

The Council also participates in arc21 Joint Committee along with five other councils in order to discharge statutory responsibilities set out in its waste management plan. This joint committee has been established as a body corporate and participating organisations have agreed to Collaboration Agreement (Terms of Agreement), which includes a statement of principles. Reports in respect of the activities of and decisions required by arc21 are brought to the Council's Environment Committee.



General Power of Competence

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 gave councils a general power of competence, enabling them to take any action they consider appropriate provided the action was not prohibited by any other legislation. Councils have been provided with the ability to act in their own interests and to develop innovative approaches to addressing issues in their Borough. Under the Council's Standing Orders, a qualified majority shall be required on the exercise of the general power of competence in accordance with Section 79 of the Act. This power was not used during the reporting period.

Review of effectiveness

A. Overview of the Review Process

The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the Council's CLT, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, and also by comments and recommendations made by the external auditors.

Recommendations arising out of internal and external audits are agreed with management before finalisation to ensure that they will achieve the desired enhancement to the control environment and are practical solutions. Follow up reviews are also reported to the Audit Committee.

The Chief Executive has responsibility for preparing this Annual Governance Statement. In preparing this statement, he has considered the governance framework and system of internal controls in place. This review has been undertaken taking account of Guidance on the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 issued by the Department of the Environment in November 2015. The Chief Executive leads the Council's CLT to collectively have involvement in, and oversight of, the processes involved in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework. In producing this statement, full regard has been made to the register of interests for Councillors, the Corporate Risk Register, Statements of Assurance provided by each Head of Service and Director to the Chief Executive for year ended 31 March 2022.

The Council itself maintains overall control of the governance framework and has been involved, for example, in approving the implementation of the risk management policy and statement of assurance processes. Primary responsibility for overseeing the governance process is the responsibility of the Audit Committee as a standing committee of Council. The role of the Audit Committee extends to receiving reports from the Council's internal and external auditors to ensure that any issues raised are subject to due consideration and are addressed by CLT on a timely basis.

In considering this Annual Governance Statement, the Audit Committee has considered the review of the governance framework and system of internal controls prepared by the Chief Executive.

B. Internal Audit

The Council's Internal Audit service is provided under contract by Deloitte Ireland LLP. Internal Audit provides an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control. Internal Audit reports any deficiencies in internal control to the Chief Executive and Directors whose responsibility it is to consider any recommendations made and to take necessary remedial action. The results of the work of Internal Audit are also reported to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis to ensure that continuous improvement takes place.



These reports include a half-yearly report on the progress being made to implement previous agreed recommendations and an annual report from the Head of Internal Audit, providing overall assurance on the systems of internal control in place.

The Council has both a four-year strategic audit plan and a one-year operational plan covering the financial year under review, both of which have been agreed by the Audit Committee following discussions with CLT and HoST. The internal audit approach is risk based and our audit plan has been developed following an audit needs assessment as detailed in the Internal Audit Strategy 2019-2023. The audit plan for 2021/22 was designed to cover the high-risk areas identified by this audit needs assessment. An executive summary of each Internal Audit report has been reported to the Audit Committee, including recommendations, management responses and an assignment to an appropriate manager for implementation by a specified date.

During 2021/22, 11 internal audits were completed, all of these were assurance reviews. Of these reviews, eight received satisfactory assurance and three received limited assurance. All Internal Audit recommendations have been accepted or accepted in principle by management and each has been allocated to a responsible officer and given a timescale for implementation. The details of the recommendation priority and agreed actions in each of the limited assurance reviews are set out below.

Social Media	
Priority	Action
2	<p>Social Media Channels Established Outside of Council Control</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Head of Tourism to review the Taste Ards and North Down Facebook Page to establish its purpose/ objectives and contribution to service outcomes. If the page is to continue, Corporate Communications will provide guidance on necessary controls to be introduced eg implementation of house rules/ access controls in line with the Social Media Policy or statement of non-affiliation with the Council. Head of Tourism will monitor compliance. 2. Head of Regulatory Services to review the Bangor Market Facebook Page to establish its purpose/ objectives and contribution to service outcomes. If the page is to continue, Corporate Communications will provide guidance on necessary controls to be introduced eg implementation of house rules/ access controls in line with the Social Media Policy or statement of non-affiliation with the Council. Head of Regulatory Services will monitor compliance.
2	<p>Policy and Procedures</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HR input to the Social Media policy. This will involve two stages <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Finalisation of the document including engagement with Staff Consultative Committee, Trade Unions and then Council approval. b. Training for all staff about roll out/ implications via Learning Pool training. 2. Update of the draft policy with recommendations listed 1-9. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations 1-7 + 9 will be implemented immediately. • Recommendation 8 re customer care guidance will be completed by September (see 2.2 response 5) 3. Council wide only essential training eg Health and Safety was delivered in 2020 and into 2021 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The organisation



Social Media	
Priority	Action
	<p>is only now beginning to develop and deliver its wider training programme that would include social media.</p> <p>Communications has budget for training staff identified as managing Council established channels – however the audit has identified a number of additional channels and a additional staff acting as admins on existing pages so additional budget will be required to meet training requirements in 2021.</p> <p>The provider of previous social media training for the Council has been commissioned to deliver 2 training modules – one for staff who assist with the day-to-day operation of Council social media accounts and one for staff with responsibility for the management of Council accounts. These modules will be added into the annual training plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Annual programme of bi-monthly social media co-ordination meetings established. Terms of Reference to be formally agreed at first meeting (July 2021). Working with other designated social media officers, the Corporate Communications Team will develop guidance for managing social media responses. This will be submitted to the Customer Services Manager for integration into the Council's Customer Care Policy.
2	<p>Strategy, KPIs and Reporting</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A strategic review of the Visit Strangford Lough Channel commenced in June 2021 to consider its fit with the wider social media strategy. The review will include a monthly engagement report to head of service during that period in the same format as current reporting for VisitAND channels. The strategic review is due for completion in September 2021 and will include recommendations for the long-term future of the channel and any relevant KPIs agreed as required. As this channel was set up jointly with Newry Mourne and Down, a strategic discussion is scheduled in June with Newry Mourne and Down DC key stakeholders to determine their position with regards to the channel. Agree KPIs for leisure page and provide monthly performance report to Operations Manager Leisure
2	<p>User Access</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Update Overview of SM accounts document. Establish process for periodic review of the Overview of SM accounts document. Bi-monthly from June 2021. As mentioned in 2.3, a strategic discussion is scheduled to take place in June with Newry Mourne and Down DC in relation to the owner ship, access to and future strategy of the Visit Strangford Lough social media channel.
3	<p>Customer Service</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Update the Customer Care to include guidance on social media responses. This will be considered by the Customer Care Working Group as an enhancement to our current Customer Care policy.



Social Media	
Priority	Action
	Due to visibility of public posts and the ongoing record retained of direct messages, social media responses are more visible than most other response to queries received by Council and issue of appropriateness and 'house style' should be identified on an ongoing basis.

Lease Management	
Priority	Action
2	<p>Policy and Procedures</p> <p>1. Management will update the existing Land and Property policy section on Rental to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of properties owned by the Council; • Requirement of review and approval of a lease application by the Corporate Services Committee; • Requirement of the signing of a lease by the CEO on behalf of the Council; • Roles and responsibilities of those involved in lease management; • A timeframe from the lease expiry date, before which the Compliance Manager contacts the lessee to check whether they want to renew the lease; • Maintenance of a Lease Licence Register including periodic reviews and approvals; and • Monitoring and tracking compliance with the lease requirements including inspections.
2	<p>Lease Review and Approval Process</p> <p>1. Management will ensure that the requirements of the Land and Property policy are followed for every new lease and evidence of all the required steps are maintained on file including below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of lease applications by the CLT; • Valuation by the Council's Valuer; and • Legal advice received prior to entering the lease.
2	<p>Maintenance Expenses</p> <p>1. A process will be developed and implemented to confirm whether the Council has the responsibility for the maintenance of the leased property before providing the maintenance services to the leased property on the lessee's request.</p> <p>2. A process will be developed and implemented to recoup the part of maintenance expenses incurred by the Council from the lessee as required by the lease agreement.</p> <p>3. Management will perform an exercise to identify where maintenance expenses incurred by the Council should be charged back to the lessee and update the licence register to record this. Where it is found that maintenance expenses have not historically been charged back when they</p>



Lease Management Priority	Action
	<p>should have been per the lease agreement, a decision will be taken and documented as to how to approach this with the lessees.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Management will ensure that the roles and responsibilities for maintenance within the lease agreements are clearly documented. 5. A separate code will be set up within the Finance System for leases to support financial monitoring of charges.
2	<p>Monitoring and Inspection</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A process will be developed and implemented for monitoring and tracking compliance with lease agreements. This will be completed by carrying out inspections of the leased property on a periodic basis, particularly at the commencement and renewal or termination stage of the lease, to verify that the responsibilities of the lessee are being complied with and to identify any damage to the property. 2. The Compliance Manager will liaise with the Asset and Property team to ensure that inspections carried out are included and updated within the lease licence register.
2	<p>Lease Licence Register</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The lease licence register will be reviewed and approved at an appropriate level on a periodic basis. <p>Management will update the lease licence register and consider including, but not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the operating leases maintained in a separate register; • Terms and conditions of the lessor and the lessee; and • Inspection carried out at the leased property. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Management will ensure that the lease licence register captures all the required details. 3. All the lease agreements will be scanned and retained on the file. The Council will consider where best to store the scanned copies to prevent multiple versions being made and provide a central access for required users of the information.
3	<p>Income and Debt Collection</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The process for income and debt collection will be formally documented. 2. Significant changes to the debtor management process such as the decision to temporarily pause the debtor follow up process for a period of time during the Covid-19 pandemic, will be formally approved by the Council/Committee.



General IT Controls	
Priority	Action
1	<p>Weaknesses identified in security configurations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Password requirements will be changed to minimum length of 8 characters with a maximum number of 5 attempts before account lockout. Staff information campaign will be carried out over the summer to advise of change. 2. 4 identified accounts have been set to expire. A review of accounts to be conducted with any other user accounts that are found to be set to not to expire to be changed 3. Multi Factor authentication is currently being enabled, currently 10% of users are set up. 4. Disc encryption will be rolled out, commencing November 2021, prioritising the laptop estate and enforcing all USB devices to be encrypted (business case for resources approved June 2021). 5. Review ICT Policy with the suggested amendments 6. Training will be rolled out once Interim Home Working and updated ICT Policies have been approved. 7. A manual, weekly, review of authentication logs will commence straight away with any unusual activity investigated. An automated SIEM will be introduced by target date. (business case for resources approved June 2021).
2	<p>Weaknesses identified in the management of access</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Process will be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose and any changes included in updated ICT Policy 2. Previously identified in Cyber Security Audit, this will be included in updated ICT Policy.
3	<p>Lack of formal review of key policies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy is currently under review 2. This will be included in updated ICT policy 3. Policy will be uploaded to Intranet once approved

For the period under review, Internal Audit has provided a satisfactory assurance on the overall system of internal control. Whilst Internal Audit has identified the need for certain improvements, there were no issues raised that are considered to represent a significant governance issue.

The Council's internal audit contractor undertakes an annual review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit service in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. This review was reported by exception to the Audit Committee and proved satisfactory.

C. Statements of Assurance

The Service Statements of Assurance have been reviewed and the following points noted:

General – Identification of Risk, Monitoring and Control measures

No key issues have been declared as not having appropriate internal controls in place. All Services have confirmed that any risks identified have appropriate internal controls and any



further actions taken, or to be taken, to adequately mitigate or resolve the risk have been identified.

Brexit and COVID 19 Pandemic Impacts

Actual and potential impacts, primarily financial and demands affecting staff, and / or service delivery, are reported across the Statements of Assurance.

Section 1 - Strategic and Operational Risk Management

Services report appropriate controls are currently in place and have identified satisfactory actions to review, monitor, control, mitigate and resolve issues, where appropriate.

The Waste and Cleansing Service has reported that a significant financial liability risk remains if the bidding process for the Residual Waste Treatment project is collapsed by arc21 (contingency disclosed on page 114). Planning permission was recently refused by the Department For Infrastructure Minister and legal advice is currently being sought on whether to challenge the validity of the decision. All of this has significant implications for the future of arc21, in terms of delivering infrastructure for member councils.

The Leisure Service has reported that the current insourcing exercise being undertaken for North Down Leisure is greatly adding to the workload of the management team. Additional leisure and human resourcing staff have been recruited along with the retention of specialist consultancy services to assist in this process.

Section 2 - Internal Control

Generally, there are no key issues arising to cause significant concern or requiring immediate action, although a range of action to follow-up internal audit recommendations are outstanding. These are reported to Audit Committee on a half yearly basis.

Section 3 - Governance

The Administration Service have reported that complaints monitoring has revealed that information is not always being appropriately captured and that, despite formal procedures being in place, officers do not meet the expected standards in terms of response times and responsibilities. An action plan is in place to address this with the increased roll-out of the Te-Care software.

Assets and Property Services has reported that due to the recent high volatility in fuel prices a "deemed contract" was set up with suppliers in a collective action by councils to secure supply and attempt to achieve a price certainty as far as is practical. In addition, due to unexpected market conditions the sale of electricity from the wind turbine in Balloo Wood Bangor was extended beyond the tender period, the tender will be revised.

This Service has also reported that due to the pandemic several vehicles were hired from a local business to support waste collections and other activities, these were hired without the value of the contract being known at the time, but these vehicles have continued to require use for much longer than planned due to the health and safety implications of COVID-19 on operations. It is expected that these arrangements will be wound down over in the next number of months.

The Leisure Service has reported that the insourcing of the North Down Leisure Services may introduce legal or financial issues which have not been foreseen. To mitigate this the insourcing team has been made up of officers from across multiple services of the Council for the greatest breadth of experience available to work on this. The COVID-19 loss of income claims submitted by the current operator are being independently reviewed by an external contractor to make an assessment as to the validity of these claims.

In addition, the Leisure Service has reported that the current difficulties recruiting staff is leading to staffing shortfalls, and should this continue there is the possibility of reduction in facility opening hours and by experience, an associated financial impact.

Environmental Health Protection and Development have again reported potentially significant legal and financial issues due to the demand on the Service both in relation to COVID-19 and the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. In addition, the Service is reporting a difficulty recruiting and retaining environmental health staff, both for front facing and support staff which combined with the other pressures may hinder Council's ability to deliver on statutory requirements.

The Finance Service has reported that the issues of the interaction of overtime and holiday pay are still unresolved as well as the implications of the McCloud and Sargent court cases, whilst being accounted for in financial statements for year end March 2022 have not been fully accounted for in employer pension contribution rates.

The Parks and Cemeteries Service has reported that the ongoing complaints regarding remaining depths in graves is having a negative impact on cemeteries operations. Generally, a potential risk in terms of admin support has been identified following recent restructuring and in Cemeteries a need for greater admin support has been noted.

Several direct award contracts were reported by services, all of these have been reported to Council and Council procedures followed.

Community and Culture have reported that there was a deviation from the Council's grants policy relating to a grant for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations which was agreed by Council. In addition, the Service has also noted that grant funding relating to COVID-19 costs were claimed in error from Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB), and that the Service is working with them to resolve this.

Section 4 - Miscellaneous

Many services have stated continuing difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff at all levels as a key factor contributing to potential risk across a range of Council activities.

The Planning Service has reported that the Service Level Agreement (revision) with Shared Environmental Service requires signing for the provision of services in relation to Sustainability Appraisal for the Local Development Plan.

D. Corporate Risk Register

Within the register, management have identified a significant residual risks (after current mitigating actions) regarding:

- the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) being found to be unsound due to unavailability of a draft Belfast Metropolitan Transport Strategy (BMTP). The Council's Head of Planning attends the BMTP project board and officers will continue to work with Department for Infrastructure and Translink colleagues on LDP issues.
- Failure of Department for Infrastructure to have implemented replacement of Planning Portal within ANDBC by early 2022 with no secure contract to maintain/support existing Planning Portal system beyond 31 December 2021, leading to inability to deliver Planning Services. Current controls include the Governance Board providing regular updates to SOLACE, extension of support for the legacy system.
- The impact of Brexit on Council to deliver services. Action has been taken to set up a Day One working group, review local service delivery legislation review of activities, projects



plans (including emergency planning and business continuity arrangements). Further contact with suppliers, work with the police and a review of income projections is required.

- **Breach of Cyber Security.** Damage to systems, or theft, leading to a failure to deliver services, financial loss, legal action, or regulatory action due to non-compliance with information management legislation (including GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018). A draft Cyber Security action plan is under development. Other mitigating actions include implementation of multi-factor authentication, review of internal processes, staff training and testing.
- **Data Breach Response & Recovery.** Inadequate response (speed / statutory compliance / inadequate controls / process / risk mitigation & provision / reputation / resourcing). Actions to be taken include the development of a critical incident policy and procedure, establishment of working group to address cross-organisation issues, development of a risk register, review of cyber systems and risks and also staff training.

Whilst improvements and safeguards have been implemented which align to the Good Practice guidelines from the National Cyber Security Centre both Breach of Cyber Security and Data Breach Response and Recovery risks are likely to remain regarded as high residual risks given the potential impact of a cyber-related incident.

E. Fraud, Whistle Blowing and Data Protection

During the year there were no actual frauds, whistleblowing incidents nor reportable data protection events.

The Council has been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Chief Executive and plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system.

Significant governance issues

There are no significant governance issues. Although there are a number of areas where ongoing improvements can be made, these are not considered to be fundamental in nature.

Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer
19 September 2022

Chair of Audit Committee
19 September 2022

Remuneration Report

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Introduction

The Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 require larger local government bodies to prepare a remuneration report as part of the statement of accounts.

Allowance and Remuneration Arrangements

Councillors

Allowances are payable by Councils to councillors and committee members under Part 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, which came into operation on 1 October 2019.

Guidance and determinations on Councillors' Allowances applicable from 1 April 2021 were issued by the Department for Communities on 8 March 2021 (Circular LG 07/2021). Details of the allowances paid to individual councillors are published on the Council's website.

Senior Employees

The remuneration of senior employees employed by the Council is determined by the Council in line with that determined by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives and National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services for Directors. Senior staff are those staff who are members of the Corporate Leadership Team.

Council appointments of employees are made in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commissions' Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, which requires appointment to be on merit and based on fair and open competition.

Unless otherwise stated below, the officials covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended.

Allowances Paid to Councillors

The total amount paid to Councillors by way of allowances in 2021/22, under Part 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 is set out in Table 1. This is audited information.

Independent Member – Audit Committee

Mr Samuel Hagen was the independent member of the Audit Committee until 30 September 2021. He was succeeded by Mr William McGonigal who commenced on 1 October 2021. The role is to help promote the highest standards in the financial management of the Council and thereby ensure the accountability of public funds. A payment of £270 is now paid per meeting to cover preparation and attendance plus travel and expenses.



Table 1: Total Allowances paid to Councillors and Independent Member (audited information)

Allowance	2021/22		2020/21	
	Total Allowances £	Number of Councillors receiving Allowance	Total Allowances £	Number of Councillors receiving Allowance
Basic Allowance	599,933	42*	602,678	41
Special Responsibility Allowance	27,950	22	27,409	25
Chairperson / Mayor Allowance	14,866	2	14,856	2
Vice Chairperson/ Deputy Mayor Allowance	7,428	2	7,428	2
Mileage Allowance	2,527	7	1,661	4
Other Travel Allowance	956	5	124	2
Subsistence	858	3	-	-
Training, Courses/ Conferences Visits	7,969	42	6,099	41
Dependents' Carers Allowance	-	-	-	-
Independent Member Allowance and Expenses	-	-	500	-
TOTAL ALLOWANCES	662,487		660,755	

* During the 2021/22 financial year 42 different councillors were remunerated. Two councillors resigned from the Council and were replaced in line with legislation.

Details of the allowances paid to individual councillors in 2021/22 are published on the Council's website at [Remuneration Report | Ards and North Down Borough Council](#)

Remuneration of Senior Employees

The remuneration of senior employees covers the Corporate Leadership Team. The following table provides details of the remuneration paid to senior employees:

Table 2: Remuneration (including salary) (audited information)

Officers	2021/22			2020/21		
	Salary (Full year equivalent in brackets where applicable) £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Total £'000	Salary (Full year equivalent in brackets where applicable) £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Total £'000
S Reid Chief Executive	120 -125	3	120 - 125	120 - 125	2	120 - 125
G Bannister DCW	85 - 90	3	85 - 90	85 - 90	2	85 - 90
S Christie DFP	85 - 90	1	85 - 90	85 - 90	1	85 - 90
D Lindsay DE	85 - 90	1	85 - 90	85 - 90	1	85 - 90
S McCullough DRDP	85 - 90	2	85 - 90	85 - 90	1	85 - 90
W Swanston DODA	85 - 90	1	85 - 90	85 - 90	1	85 - 90

DCW – Director of Community and Wellbeing

DE – Director of Environment

DFP – Director of Finance and Performance

DODA – Director of Organisational Development and Administration

DRDP – Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning

Councils are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid member of the Corporate Leadership Team and the median remuneration of the Councils workforce.

The banded remuneration of the highest paid member of the Corporate Leadership Team in the financial year 2021/22 was £120k - £125k. This was 5.63 times the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £21,748.



Table 3: Relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid member of the Corporate Leadership Team and the median remuneration of the Council's workforce (audited information)

	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Salary Band of Highest Paid member of the Corporate Leadership Team	120,000 – 125,000	120,000 - 125,000
Median Total Remuneration	21,748	21,960
Ratio	5.63	5.56

In 2021/22, no employees received remuneration more than the highest paid member of the Corporate Leadership Team.

Total remuneration includes salary, bonus payments (none paid) and benefits in kind (staff leisure membership and health insurance both taxed at source).

Salary

"Salary" includes gross salary, overtime, taxable mileage payments and any gratia payments.

Benefits in Kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument.

Exit Packages for staff

The number of exit packages provided to all staff by the Council, together with total cost per band and total cost of the compulsory and other redundancies are set out in the Table 4 below:

Table 4: Exit Packages (audited information)

Severance Package Cost Band £'000	2021/22			2020/21		
	Number of Compulsory Redundancies	Number of Other departures agreed	Total Cost £	Number of Compulsory Redundancies	Number of Other Departures agreed	Total Cost £'000
0 - 20	-	-	-	-	-	-
20 - 40	-	-	-	-	-	-
40 - 60	-	-	-	-	-	-
60 - 80	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-

Pension Benefits

The Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (the Scheme) is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, which provides retirement benefits for council employees on a “career average revalued earnings” basis from 1 April 2015. Prior to that date benefits were built up on a “final salary” basis.

From 1 April 2015, a member builds up retirement pension at the rate of 1/49th pensionable pay for each year of membership. Pension benefits in relation to membership between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2015 were built up at the rate of 1/60th pensionable pay for each year of membership. There is no automatic lump sum provided in respect of membership after 31 March 2009. Pension benefits in relation to any membership before 1 April 2009 were built up at the rate of 1/80th (pension) and 3/80ths (tax-free lump sum) of pensionable pay for each year of membership up to 31 March 2009. At retirement, members may give up some pension for additional lump sum, subject to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) limits. The conversion rate is £12 additional lump sum for every £1 of pension given up.

Councillors have been able to join the Scheme since May 2011. The Scheme application is modified to reflect the fact that councillors hold an elected office. Councillor members have always accrued pension on a career average basis. Prior to 1 April 2015 pension was accrued at a rate of 1/60th and thereafter at a rate of 1/49th.

The Scheme is funded by contributions made by both employees/councillors and employers. Prior to 1 April 2009, a member’s contribution rates were fixed at 6% of their pensionable remuneration (except for those who were entitled to contribute to the Scheme at 5% before 1 February 2003 and have remained in continuous employment). Tiered member contribution rates, determined by the whole-time equivalent rate of pay, were introduced from 1 April 2009. From 1 April 2015, the member contribution rates are determined on the actual rate of pay.

The ranges for the bands for tiered contribution rates are revised by the Department for Communities in April each year in accordance with the increase applied to a pension in payment. The bands, effective from 1 April 2021, were as set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Employee Contribution Rates

Band	Range	Employee Contribution Rate
1	£0 - £15,000	5.5%
2	£15,001 - £23,000	5.8%
3	£23,001 - £38,400	6.5%
4	£38,401 - £46,600	6.8%
5	£46,601 - £92,300	8.5%
6	More than £92,300	10.5%

Employers’ contribution rates are determined by the fund’s actuary every three years at the triennial valuation. As part of the March 2019 valuation the actuary certified the employers’ contribution rates for the three years from 1 April 2020. Most employers participate in a pooled employers’ contribution rate. As the Fund currently has a surplus, no deficit contributions are payable by the main group. The contribution rates for the Council for the three-year period are as set out in Table 6.



Table 6: Employer Contribution Rates

Year	Employer Contribution Rate
1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021	19.5%
1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022	19.5%
1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023	19.5%

The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 were made on 27 June 2014 and The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment and Transitional Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 were made on 30 June 2014. Both sets of regulations are effective from 1 April 2015.

Councillors have been able to join the Scheme since May 2011 and therefore have not accrued significant benefits thus far. However, the in-year pension contributions made by the Council for all Councillors during 2021/22 were £117,136 (2020/21: £118,021).

The value of pension benefits of the most senior management of the Council accrued during the year was as follows:

Table 7: Pension Benefits of senior staff in 2021/22 (audited information)

Officers	Accrued Pension at pension age as at 31/3/22 and related lump sum £'000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £'000	CETV at 31/3/22 £'000	CETV at 31/3/21 £'000	Real increase in CETV £'000
S Reid Chief Executive	55-60 and lump sum 105-110	0-2.5 and lump sum 0-(2.5)	1,207	1,146	19
G Bannister DCW	40-45 and lump sum 60-65	0-2.5 and lump sum 0-(2.5)	718	669	20
S Christie DFP	5-10 and lump sum nil	0-2.5 and lump sum nil	80	54	17
D Lindsay DE	40-45 and lump sum 65-70	0-2.5 and lump sum 0-(2.5)	802	749	22
S McCullough DRDP	35-40 and lump sum 50-55	0-2.5 and lump sum 0-(2.5)	619	574	19
W Swanston DODA	30-35 and lump sum 30-35	0-2.5 and lump sum 0-(2.5)	598	551	23

The Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV)

This is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. It is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the pension benefits they have accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. CETVs are calculated in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

The real increase in the value of the CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period. However, the real increase calculation uses common actuarial factors at the start and end of the period so that it disregards the effect of any changes in factors and focuses only on the increase that is funded by the employer.

Chief Executive
19 September 2022



Certificate of the Chief Financial Officer

I certify that:

- (a) the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 on pages 1 to 123 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department for Communities and under the accounting policies set out on pages 59 to 78.
- (b) in my opinion the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year ending 31 March 2022.

Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer
19 September 2022

Council Approval of Statement of Accounts

These accounts were approved by resolution of the Audit Committee on 19 September 2022.

Chairman
19 September 2022



Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Ards and North Down Borough Council

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Ards and North Down Borough Council Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement For the year ended 31 March 2022

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Councils raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with statutory requirements; this may be difference from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in both the Expenditure and Funding Analysis and the Movement in Reserves Statement.

	Note	2021/22			2020/21		
		Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Cost	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Cost
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Services Expenditure							
Community & Wellbeing HQ	2	922,026	(13)	922,013	369,465	(1,348)	368,117
Environmental Health	2	2,743,519	(611,445)	2,132,074	2,423,641	(576,611)	1,847,030
Community & Culture	2	3,514,164	(1,206,005)	2,308,159	3,230,718	(1,874,401)	1,356,317
Parks and Cemeteries	2	5,309,562	(457,928)	4,851,634	5,012,183	(461,052)	4,551,131
Leisure	2	7,899,585	(2,183,495)	5,716,090	9,454,602	(402,516)	9,052,086
Environment HQ	2	994,696	(1,965)	992,731	643,815	-	643,815
Waste and Cleansing Services	2	17,948,850	(1,113,652)	16,835,198	17,273,846	(834,745)	16,439,101
Assets and Property Services	2	9,625,185	(248,032)	9,377,153	8,271,652	(192,598)	8,079,054
Regulatory Services	2	3,152,010	(2,049,455)	1,102,555	2,828,771	(1,479,212)	1,349,559
Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	2	344,226	(8,334)	335,892	327,732	-	327,732
Regeneration	2	1,306,767	(137,728)	1,169,039	1,082,996	(106,030)	976,966
Economic Development	2	2,815,047	(533,819)	2,281,228	2,574,831	(411,308)	2,163,523
Planning	2	2,363,431	(1,007,463)	1,355,968	2,237,404	(846,542)	1,390,862
Tourism	2	1,749,718	(236,590)	1,513,128	1,236,069	(35,689)	1,200,380
Finance & Performance HQ	2	171,333	(30)	171,303	148,473	(10)	148,463
Internal Audit	2	55,870	-	55,870	56,610	-	56,610
Finance	2	1,122,993	(4,139)	1,118,854	1,041,739	(389)	1,041,350
Strategic Transformation & Performance	2	2,039,796	-	2,039,796	1,610,848	-	1,610,848
Strategic Capital Development	2	396,963	-	396,963	343,461	-	343,461
Organisational Development & Admin HQ	2	191,633	-	191,633	240,108	-	240,108
HR & Organisational Development	2	1,152,867	(900)	1,151,967	969,648	-	969,648
Admin & Customer Services	2	4,249,654	(345,256)	3,904,398	3,773,497	(277,669)	3,495,828
Chief Executive	2	364,654	(257)	364,397	392,561	-	392,561
Community Planning	2	196,116	(1,000)	195,116	134,114	(4,000)	130,114
Corporate Communications	2	895,986	-	895,986	461,601	-	461,601



	Note	2021/22			2020/21		
		Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Cost	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Cost
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Capital Financing	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Year End Transactions	2	85,722	-	85,722	-	-	-
REFCUS	2	1,458,209	-	1,458,209	1,321,514	-	1,321,514
Cost of Services on Continuing Operations	2	73,070,582	(10,147,506)	62,923,076	67,461,899	(7,504,120)	59,957,779
Cost of Services on Continuing Operations		73,070,582	(10,147,506)	62,923,076	67,461,899	(7,504,120)	59,957,779
Other Operating Expenditure / Income	8	260,583	-	260,583	118,785	-	118,785
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	9	3,973,376	(130,437)	3,842,939	3,929,338	(127,959)	3,801,379
Surplus/(Deficit) on Discontinued Operations		-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Operating Expenditure		77,304,541	(10,277,943)	67,026,598	71,510,022	(7,632,079)	63,877,943
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	10	-	(59,792,421)	(59,792,421)	-	(68,121,408)	(68,121,408)
Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services		77,304,541	(70,070,364)	(7,234,177)	71,510,022	(75,753,487)	4,243,465
Surplus/(Deficit) on revaluation of non-current assets	12			11,130,517			3,344,045
Impairment losses on non-current assets charged to the Revaluation Reserve	12			(455,000)			-
Re-measurements of the Net Defined Benefit Liability/ (Asset)	22			21,343,000			(9,468,000)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				32,018,517			(6,123,955)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				24,784,340			(1,880,490)



Ards and North Down Borough Council

Movement in Reserves Statement

For the year ended 31 March 2022

The Movement in Reserves Statement shows the movement from the start of the year to the end on the different reserves held by the authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other 'unusable reserves'. The Statement shows how the movements in year of the Council's reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustment required to return to the amounts chargeable to council tax for the year. The Net Increase/Decrease line shows the statutory General Fund Balance movements in the year following those adjustments.

	General Fund Summary £	Other Fund Balances & Reserves £	Capital Receipts Reserve £	Total Usable Reserves £	Total Unusable Reserves £	Total Council Reserves £
At 1 April 2021	4,527,365	13,831,634	1,619,304	19,978,303	100,432,099	120,410,402
Movement in reserves during the year:						
Surplus or (deficit) on the provision of services	(7,234,177)	-	-	(7,234,177)	-	(7,234,177)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	32,018,517	32,018,517
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(7,234,177)	-	-	(7,234,177)	32,018,517	24,784,340
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding under regulations	10,808,047	(217,646)	1,707,539	12,297,940	(12,297,940)	-
Net Increase / (Decrease) before transfers to Statutory and Other Reserves	3,573,870	(217,646)	1,707,539	5,063,763	19,720,577	24,784,340
Transfers to/(from) Statutory and Other Reserves	(2,613,712)	2,613,712	-	-	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in Year	960,158	2,396,066	1,707,539	5,063,763	19,720,577	24,784,340
At 31 March 2022	5,487,523	16,227,700	3,326,843	25,042,066	120,152,676	145,194,742



Ards and North Down Borough Council Movement in Reserves Statement For the year ended 31 March 2021

Comparative Year

	General Fund £	Other Fund Balances & Reserves £	Capital Receipts Reserve £	Total Usable Reserves £	Total Unusable Reserves £	Total Council Reserves £
At 1 April 2020	3,015,480	3,896,115	2,056,161	8,967,756	113,323,136	122,290,892
Movement in reserves during the year:						
Surplus or (deficit) on the provision of services	4,243,465	-	-	4,243,465	-	4,243,465
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	(6,123,955)	(6,123,955)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	4,243,465	-	-	4,243,465	(6,123,955)	(1,880,490)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding under regulations	6,728,473	475,466	(436,857)	6,767,082	(6,767,082)	-
Net Increase / (Decrease) before transfers to Statutory and Other Reserves	10,971,938	475,466	(436,857)	11,010,547	(12,891,037)	(1,880,490)
Transfers to/(from) Statutory and Other Reserves	(9,460,053)	9,460,053	-	-	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in Year	1,511,885	9,935,519	(436,857)	11,010,547	(12,891,037)	(1,880,490)
At 31 March 2021	4,527,365	13,831,634	1,619,304	19,978,303	100,432,099	120,410,402



Ards and North Down Borough Council

Balance Sheet

As at 31 March 2022

	Notes	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Fixed Assets	12	247,172,959	242,431,113
Long Term Debtors	16	539,642	609,827
LONG TERM ASSETS		247,712,601	243,040,940
Short Term Investments	17	-	-
Inventories	15	272,056	283,398
Short Term Debtors	16	7,425,300	6,443,685
Cash and Cash Equivalents	26	10,403,275	10,927,449
Assets Held for Sale	12f	100,000	1,800,000
CURRENT ASSETS		18,200,631	19,454,532
Bank Overdraft	26	-	-
Short Term Borrowing	18a	3,135,428	6,170,269
Short Term Creditors	19	5,707,070	7,300,996
Provisions	20	776,105	776,105
CURRENT LIABILITIES		9,618,603	14,247,370
Long Term Creditors	19	-	-
Provisions	20	454,340	363,728
Long Term Borrowing	18	63,724,547	66,859,972
Other Long Term Liabilities	22	46,921,000	60,614,000
Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	24	-	-
LONG TERM LIABILITIES		111,099,887	127,837,700
NET ASSETS		145,194,742	120,410,402
USABLE RESERVES			
Capital Receipts Reserve	27a	3,326,843	1,619,304
Capital Grants Unapplied Account	27b	2,500,040	2,739,841
Revenue Grants Unapplied Account	27c	301,460	279,305
Earmarked Fund	27d	13,426,200	10,812,488
General Fund	27e	5,487,523	4,527,365
		25,042,066	19,978,303
UNUSABLE RESERVES			
Capital Adjustment Account	28a	81,580,592	81,805,589
Revaluation Reserve	28b	86,187,908	79,999,277
Pensions Reserve	28c	(46,921,000)	(60,614,000)
Accumulated Absences Account	28d	(694,824)	(758,767)
		120,152,676	100,432,099
NET WORTH		145,194,742	120,410,402



Ards and North Down Borough Council

Cash Flow Statement

As at 31 March 2022

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Council's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (ie borrowing) to the Council.

	Notes	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Net surplus / (deficit) on the provision of services		(7,234,177)	4,243,465
Adjustment for non-cash movements	26a	15,534,541	14,527,660
Adjustment for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	26a	(1,850,159)	(20,000)
Net cash flows from Operating Activities		6,450,205	18,751,125
Net Cash flows from Investing Activities	26d	(804,114)	(4,577,199)
Net Cash flows from Financing Activities	26e	(6,170,265)	(8,213,710)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(524,174)	5,960,216
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	26b	10,927,449	4,967,233
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		10,403,275	10,927,449



Ards and North Down Borough Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

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1A Accounting Policies

General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2021/22 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2022. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts in a form directed by the Department for Communities in accordance with regulations 3 (7) and (8) in the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is principally historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments. The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22 also requires disclosure in respect of:

Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

i) Accruals of Income and Expenditure

Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received. In particular:

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised when (or as) the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet.
- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Interest payable on borrowings and receivable on investments is accounted for on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where it is doubtful that debts will be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

ii) Acquisitions

Guidance issued by CIPFA regarding the accounting treatment for transfers of functions, assets and liabilities resulting from local government reform stated that:



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Paragraph 2.5.2.1 of the Code defines a transfer of function as a 'transfer of an identifiable service or business operation with an integrated set of activities, staff and recognised assets and / or liabilities that are capable of being conducted and managed to achieve the objectives of that service or business operation.

The combinations and transfers as a result of Local Government Reform are considered, for accounting purposes, to be *combinations of public sector bodies* (these are most commonly seen in the form of local government reorganisation or other transfers of function from one public sector body to another).

Paragraph 2.5.1.1 of the Code advises that combinations of public sector bodies are deemed to be 'a combination of businesses under common control', and as such are outside the scope of IFRS 3 *Business Combinations*.

This means that the combination of the legacy local authorities into one new authority, and the transfer of functions (in full or in relation to a geographic area) from the responsibility of one authority (or other public sector body) to another, were accounted for using the principles that apply to *Group Reorganisations / Reconstructions*.

iii) Provisions for Single Status, Job Evaluation and Pay and Grading Reviews

As both the legacy Councils have already completed the Pay & Grading review under Single Status there is no longer a requirement to make a provision.

iv) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are investments that mature in no more than three months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value. In the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the Council's cash management. Any bank overdrafts are shown within current liabilities on the balance sheet.

v) Contingent Assets

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible asset whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council. Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits or service potential.

vi) Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required, or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably. Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

vii) Employee Benefits

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits (e.g. cars) for current employees, are recognised as an expense in the year in which employees render service to the Council. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday, flexi and time off in lieu entitlements earned by employees but not taken before the year-end and which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the wage and salary rates applicable in the following accounting year, being the period in which the employee takes the benefit. The accrual is charged to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday entitlements are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

Termination benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits and are charged on an accruals basis to the appropriate service segment or, where applicable, to a corporate service segment at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Council recognises costs for a restructuring.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, appropriations are required to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end.

Post-Employment Benefits

Most employees of the Council are members of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund administered by the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee. The scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees worked for the Council.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

The Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund

The Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme.

The liabilities of the Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc. and projections of projected earnings for current employees.

Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate based on the Aon Hewitt GBP Select AA Curve over the duration of the Employer's liabilities.

The assets of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:

- quoted securities – current bid price;
- unquoted securities – professional estimate;
- property – market value;
- unitised securities – current bid price.

The change in the net pension liability is analysed into seven components as follows:

1. Within the cost of services:

- **current service cost** – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year - allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked;
- **past service cost** – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years - debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statements. The treatment of past service costs will depend on the decisions of the Council about how they are allocated to service segments;

2. Within Financing Investment Income and Expenditure:

- **Net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset)** – i.e. net interest expense for the Council, the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement - this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability (asset) at the beginning of the period - taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability (asset) during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

3. Within Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (Re-measurements):

- **the return on plan assets** – excluding amounts recognised in the Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Asset). This includes interest, dividends and other income derived from the plan assets, together with realised and unrealised gains or losses on the plan assets, less any costs of managing plan assets, and any tax payable by the plan itself other than tax included in the actuarial assumptions used to measure the present value of the defined benefit obligation;



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

- **actuarial gains and losses** – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions, charged to the Pensions Reserves as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

4. Within the Movement in Reserves Statement Appropriations:

- **contributions by scheme participants** – the increase in scheme liabilities and assets due to payments into the scheme by employees (where increased contribution increases pension due to the employee in the future);
- **contributions by the employer** – the increase in scheme assets due to payments into the scheme by the employer.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, appropriations are made to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

5. Discretionary Benefits

The Council also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies that are applied to the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' pension fund.

The Northern Civil Service Pension Fund

As a result of Local Government Reform on 1 April 2015, staff that transferred from Central Government to the Council retained membership of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Scheme. The scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions). However, the arrangements for the NICS Pension Scheme mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot ordinarily be identified specifically to the Council. The scheme is therefore accounted for as if it was a defined contribution scheme and no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet.

viii) **Events After the Balance Sheet Date**

Events after the balance sheet date are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events;



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- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but where a category of events would have a material effect disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

The Statement of Accounts may subsequently be adjusted up to the date when they are authorised for issue. This date will be recorded on the financial statements and is usually the date the Local Government Auditor issues her certificate and opinion. Where material adjustments are made in this period they will be disclosed.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

ix) Exceptional Items

When items of income and expense are material, their nature and amount is disclosed separately, either on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement or in the notes to the accounts, depending on how significant the items are to an understanding of the Council's financial performance.

x) Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies and Estimates and Errors

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policies or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively, i.e. in the current and future years affected by the change and do not give rise to a prior period adjustment.

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the Council's financial position or financial performance. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied.

Material errors discovered in prior period figures are corrected retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period.

xi) Financial Instruments

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and are carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised.

For most of the borrowings that the Council has, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest); and interest charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

However, the bonds issued by the Council in 2019/20 are carried at a lower amortised cost than the outstanding principal, and interest is charged at a marginally higher effective rate of



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interest than the rate payable to bondholders, as a material amount of costs incurred in its issue is being financed over the life of the stock.

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund balance to be spread over future years. The Council has a policy of spreading the gain or loss over the term that was remaining on the loan against which the premium was payable or discount receivable when it was repaid. The reconciliation of amounts charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the net charge required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Financial Assets

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets and their cashflow characteristics.

There are three main classes of financial assets measured at:

- amortised cost
- fair value through profit or loss (FVPL), and
- fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)

The Council's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows. Financial assets are therefore classified as amortised cost, except for those whose contractual payments are not solely payment of principal and interest (i.e. where the cash flows do not take the form of a basic debt instrument).

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the financial assets held by the Council, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

However, the Council has made a number of loans to voluntary organisations at less than market rates (soft loans). When soft loans are made, a loss is recorded in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (debited to the appropriate service) for the present value of the interest that will be foregone over the life of the instrument, resulting in a lower amortised cost than the outstanding principal.

Interest is credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement at a marginally higher effective rate of interest than the rate receivable from the voluntary organisations, with the difference serving to increase the amortised cost of the loan in the Balance Sheet. Statutory provisions require that the impact of soft loans on the General Fund Balance is the interest receivable for the financial year - the reconciliation of amounts debited and credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the net gain required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.



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Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of an asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Expected Credit Loss Model

The Council recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost [or where relevant FVOCI], either on a 12-month or lifetime basis. The expected credit loss model also applies to lease receivables and contract assets. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors) held by the Council

Impairment losses are calculated to reflect the expectation that the future cash flows might not take place because the borrower could default on their obligations. Credit risk plays a crucial part in assessing losses. Where risk has increased significantly since an instrument was initially recognised, losses are assessed on a lifetime basis. Where risk has not increased significantly or remains low, losses are assessed on the basis of 12-month expected losses.

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit or Loss

Financial assets that are measured at FVPL are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured and carried at fair value. Fair value gains and losses are recognised as they arrive in the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services.

The fair value measurements of the financial assets are based on the following techniques:

- instruments with quoted market prices – the market price;
- other instruments with fixed and determinable payments – discounted cash flow analysis;

The inputs to the measurement techniques are categorised in accordance with the following three levels:

- Level 1 inputs – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets that the authority can access at the measurement date.
- Level 2 inputs – inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset, either directly or indirectly.
- Level 3 inputs – unobservable inputs for the asset.

Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of the asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where fair value cannot be measured reliably, the instrument is carried at cost (less any impairment losses).

xii) Foreign Currency Translation

Where the Council has entered into a transaction denominated in a foreign currency, the transaction is converted into sterling at the exchange rate applicable on the date the transaction was effective. Where amounts in foreign currency are outstanding at the year-end, they are reconverted at the spot exchange rate at 31 March. Resulting gains or losses are recognised in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.



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xiii) Government Grants and Contributions

Whether paid on account, by instalments or in arrears, government grants and third party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Council when there is reasonable assurance that:

- the Council will comply with the conditions attached to the payments; and
- the grants or contributions will be received.

Amounts recognised as due are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attaching to the grant or contribution have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset acquired using the grant or contribution are required to be consumed by the recipient as specified or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income (non-ringfenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

xiv) Intangible Assets

Expenditure on non-monetary assets that do not have physical substance but are controlled by the Council as a result of past events (e.g. software licences) is capitalised when it is expected that future economic benefits or service potential will flow from the intangible asset to the Council.

Internally generated assets are capitalised where it is demonstrable that the project is technically feasible and is intended to be completed (with adequate resources being available) and the Council will be able to generate future economic benefits or deliver service potential by being able to sell or use the asset. Expenditure is capitalised where it can be measured reliably as attributable to the asset and restricted to that incurred during the development phase (research expenditure is not capitalised).

Expenditure on the development of websites is not capitalised if the website is solely or primarily intended to promote or advertise the Council's goods or services.

Intangible assets are measured initially at cost. Amounts are only revalued where the fair value of the assets held by the Council can be determined by reference to an active market. In practice, no intangible asset held by the Council meets this criterion, and they are therefore carried at amortised cost. The depreciable amount of an intangible asset is amortised over its useful life to the relevant service line(s) in Cost of Services on Continuing Operations in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. An asset is tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset might be impaired – any losses recognised are posted to the relevant service line(s) in Cost of Services on Continuing Operations in the



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For the year ended 31 March 2022

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any gain or loss arising on the disposal or abandonment of an intangible asset is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where expenditure on intangible assets qualifies as capital expenditure for statutory purposes, amortisation, impairment losses and disposal gains and losses are not permitted to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and for any sale proceeds greater than £5,000, the Capital Receipts Reserve.

xv) Inventories & Long-Term Contracts

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The cost of inventories is assigned using the weighted average costing formula.

Long Term revenue contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services with the value of works and services received under the contract during the financial year.

xvi) Investment Property

Investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation. The definition is not met if the property is used in any way to facilitate the delivery of services or production of goods or is held for sale.

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, based on the amount at which the asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable parties at arm's length. Investment properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions at the year-end. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the Financing and Investment Income line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and result in a gain for the General Fund Balance. However, revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and the Capital Receipts Reserve.

xvii) Leases

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases. Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and buildings elements are considered separately for classification.

Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific assets.



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For the year ended 31 March 2022

The Council as Lessee

Finance Leases:

Property, Plant and Equipment held under finance leases is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value measured at the lease's inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Initial direct costs of the Council are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability. Contingent rents are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

Lease payments are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property – applied to write down the lease liability, and
- a finance charge (debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement)

Property, Plant and Equipment recognised under finance leases is accounted for using the policies applied generally to such assets, subject to depreciation being charged over the lease term if this is shorter than the asset's estimated useful life (where ownership of the asset does not transfer to the Council at the end of the lease period).

The Council is not required to raise District Rates to cover depreciation or revaluation and impairment losses arising on leased assets. Instead, a prudent annual provision is made from revenue towards the deemed capital investment in accordance with statutory requirements. Depreciation and impairment losses are therefore replaced by a revenue provision in the General Fund balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

Operating Leases:

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefiting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

The Council as Lessor

Finance Leases:

Where the Council grants a finance lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the relevant asset is written out of the Balance Sheet as a disposal. At the commencement of the lease, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether Property, Plant and Equipment or Assets Held for Sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. A gain, representing the Council's net investment in the lease, is credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal), matched by a lease asset (long term debtor) in the Balance Sheet.

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For the year ended 31 March 2022

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property – applied to write down the lease asset (long term debtor) together with any premiums received, and
- finance income (credited to the Financing and Investment income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

The gain credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on disposal is not permitted by statute to increase the General Fund Balance and will be required to be treated as a capital receipt. Where a premium has been received, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the amount due in relation to the lease asset is to be settled by the payment of rentals in future financial years, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When the future rentals are paid, the element for the charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property is used to write down the lease asset (debtor). At this point, the deferred capital receipts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against District rates, as the cost of fixed assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are therefore appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Operating Leases:

Where the Council grants an operating lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Credits are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease). Initial direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging the lease are added to the carrying amount of the relevant asset and charged as an expense over the lease term on the same basis as rental income.

xviii) Disposals and Non-Current Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell. Where there is a subsequent decrease to fair value less costs to sell, the loss is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previously recognised losses. Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale.

If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as Held for Sale, they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of its carrying amount before they were classified as Held for Sale: adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations that would have been recognised had they not been classified as Held for Sale, and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell.

Assets that are to be decommissioned i.e. abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as Assets Held for Sale.



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When an asset is disposed of, or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether Property, Plant and Equipment or Assets Held for Sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Summary as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Amounts received for a disposal are categorised as capital receipts and credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve. Receipts are appropriated to the Reserve from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against District Rates, as the cost of fixed assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

xix) Overheads and Support Services

Overheads and support services are no longer recharged to frontline services, as in previous years. This follows changes to the CIPFA code and the 'telling the story' initiative where the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is now formatted in the same manner as the Council reports internally.

xx) Property, Plant and Equipment

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the production or supply of goods or services, for rental to others or for administrative purposes and that are expected to be used during more than one financial year are classified as Property, Plant and Equipment.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

Measurement

Assets over £5,000 are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- the purchase price;
- any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management;
- the initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located.

The Council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred whilst assets are under construction.

The cost of assets acquired other than by purchase is deemed to be its fair value, unless the acquisition will not increase the cash flows of the Council. In the latter case, where the asset



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is acquired via an exchange, the cost of the acquisition is the carrying amount of the asset given up by the Council.

Donated assets are measured initially at fair value. The difference between fair value and any consideration paid is credited to the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, unless the donation has been made conditionally. Until conditions are satisfied, the gain is held in the Donated Assets Account. Where gains are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Assets are then carried in the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost;
- surplus assets – the current value measurement base is fair value, estimated at the highest and best use from a market participant's perspective;
- all other assets – fair value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV).

Where there is no market-based evidence of fair value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost is used as an estimate of fair value.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum every five years. Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2008 only, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

Impairment

Assets are assessed at each year-end as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where indications exist and any possible differences are estimated to be material, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated and, where this is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised for the shortfall.

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for as follows:

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains); and
- where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where an impairment loss is reversed subsequently, the reversal is credited to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, up to the amount of the original loss, adjusted for depreciation that would have been charged if the loss had not been recognised.



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Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all Property, Plant and Equipment assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (i.e. freehold land and certain Community Assets) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction).

Depreciation is charged on a straight-line basis on each main class of asset as follows:

- buildings and infrastructure assets are depreciated on their current value over the estimated useful life of the asset as advised by a suitably qualified officer. Depending on the type of building, installation or fitting the maximum useful life will be in the range of 3 to 69 years.
- plant, vehicles and equipment are depreciated on historic cost using a life of between 3 and 30 years.
- the Council applies a full year depreciation in the year of acquisition and no depreciation in the year of disposal.

Componentisation

Where an item of Property, Plant and Equipment has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately.

Componentisation is only applicable to larger value land and buildings or equipment assets.

Revaluations

Revaluation gains are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would have been chargeable based on their historical cost being transferred each year from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

xxi) Heritage Assets

Heritage Assets are assets with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that are held and maintained principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture. They are intended to be preserved in trust for future generations because of their cultural, environmental or historic associations and are held by the Council in pursuit of its overall objectives in relation to the maintenance of heritage.

The carrying amounts of heritage assets are reviewed where there is evidence of impairment for heritage assets, e.g. where an item has suffered physical deterioration or breakage or where doubts arise as to its authenticity. Any impairment is recognised and measured in accordance with the Council's general policies on impairment (see note xviii in this summary of significant accounting policies). The Council will occasionally dispose of heritage assets which have a doubtful provenance or are unsuitable for public display. The proceeds of such items are accounted for in accordance with the Council's general provisions relating to the disposal of property, plant and equipment. Disposal proceeds are disclosed separately in the notes to the financial statements and are accounted for in accordance with statutory accounting requirements relating to capital expenditure and capital receipts.

The Council's capitalisation limit for this class of asset is £5,000. Due to the fluctuating nature in value of such assets, the Council will only derecognise assets once they fall below a value of £2,500.

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Heritage assets are deemed to have indeterminate lives and a high residual value; hence the Council does not consider it appropriate to charge depreciation.

The Council's heritage assets can be classified into one of four main headings as follows:

Paintings and Drawings

It is within this category that most of the Council's heritage assets lie, the most significant of which are paintings which are on display around Bangor Town Hall in corridors and offices. The most important collections are those by James Humbert Craig and the gallery copies of Old Masters by Edwin Long. There is also a good selection of renowned Irish artists including William Conor, Maurice MacGonigal, Georgina Moutray Kyle and Charles Lamb.

Artefacts

Most of these items are small pieces relating to North Down from prehistory to modern day. Among the older artefacts is a fair example of a set of giant Irish elk antlers. However, the most valuable item is the Victoria Cross and other medals awarded to Commander Hon. Edward Barry Bingham for his role in the Battle of Jutland.

There are also some important artefacts relating to the families of Bangor Castle. Of interest are the Raven Maps, a 17th century folio mapping the estate of Sir James Hamilton. Other notable artefacts include the Bangor Bell, a bronze hand bell believed to be from the 9th century and some Blair Mayne medals and pictures.

There are also some artefacts, mostly oriental, relating to Sir John Newell Jordan. The majority of these pieces are porcelain or china but there are also scrolls, export chests and a few bronze items including representations of Buddhas.

Furniture of historical interest

This not only encompasses chairs and tables but also large pieces such as cabinets and bookcases. There are a number of 17th century chairs originating from the Ward family. Of particular note is a large Regency bookcase in mahogany.

Other Heritage Assets

Civic Regalia

This collection consists of the Mayor's Gold Chain of Office, Deputy Mayor's Gold Chain of Office, Council Mace and other assorted items received or acquired by the Council as part of its Civic role.

Statues, War Memorials and Public Art

These encompass the Blair Mayne Statue (situated in Conway Square, Newtownards), Gillespie's Monument (situated in the Square, Comber), Cenotaph (situated in Court Square, Newtownards), the Bangor Bell Public Art piece and some other less prominent pieces.

The entire collection is relatively static, acquisitions and donations are infrequent. Where they do occur, acquisitions are initially recognised at cost and donations are recognised at valuation. Valuations are ascertained by a suitably experienced expert in their respective fields. However, there are some for which a nominal value is assigned as this would involve a disproportionate cost in comparison to the benefits to the users of the Council's financial statements. This is because of the diverse nature of the assets held and the lack of comparable values.



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xxii) Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. For instance, the Council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the Council becomes aware of the obligation, and measured at the best estimate at the balance sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year – where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered from another party (e.g. from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income for the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the Council settles the obligation.

xxiii) Reserves and Funds

The Council sets aside specific amounts as funds for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then appropriated back into the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against District Rates for the expenditure.

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, accumulated absences and retirement benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Council – these reserves are explained in the relevant note to the accounts.

xxiv) Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets

Charges to revenue (e.g. services, support services and trading accounts) for non-current assets are debited with the following amounts to record the cost of holding fixed assets during the year:

- depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service;
- revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be written off; and
- amortisation of intangible non-current assets attributable to the service.

The Council is not required to raise District Rates to cover depreciation, impairment losses or amortisations. However, it is required to make an annual provision from revenue to contribute towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance, referred to as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) in the General Fund balance. Depreciation, impairment



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losses and amortisations are therefore replaced by MRP in the General Fund balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

xxv) Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS)

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but that does not result in the creation of a non-current asset has been charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year. Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources or by borrowing, a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement from the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account then reverses out the amounts charged, so that there is no impact on the level of District Rates.

xxvi) Value Added Tax

All expenditure and income, irrespective of whether it is revenue or capital in nature, is shown net of Value Added Tax, unless it is irrecoverable.

xxvii) Fair Value Measurement

The Council measures some of its non-financial assets such as surplus assets and investment properties at fair value at each reporting date. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurement assumes that the transaction to sell the asset or transfer the liability takes place either:

- a. in the principal market for the asset or liability; or
- b. in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market for the asset or liability.

The Council measures the fair value of an asset or liability using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming that market participants act in their economic best interest. When measuring the fair value of a non-financial asset, the council takes into account a market participant's ability to generate economic benefits by using the asset in its highest and best use or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its highest and best use. The Council uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the Council's financial statements are categorised within the fair value hierarchy, as follows:

- Level 1 – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the authority can access at the measurement date;
- Level 2 – inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly;
- Level 3 – unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

1B Accounting Standards that have been issued but have not yet been Adopted

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) requires an authority to disclose information relating to the expected impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has been issued but not yet adopted. The Code



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

also requires that changes in accounting policy are to be applied retrospectively unless transitional arrangements are specified, this would result in an impact on disclosures spanning two financial years.

The standards introduced by the 2022/23 Code where disclosures are required in the 2021/22 financial statements in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 3.3.4.3 of the Code are:

- IFRS 16 Leases (but only for those local authorities that have decided to adopt IFRS 16 in the 2022/23 year – deferred until 1st April 2024). Conrad Hall, CIPFA LASAAC chair, said: "CIPFA LASSAC is of the view that IFRS 16 remains the best form of reporting local authority leases and shares the Government's Financial Reporting Advisory Board's (FRAB) objective of promoting excellence in financial reporting. The decision to defer IFRS 16 is a pragmatic response due to the severe delays in the publication of audited local authority financial statements in England. The decision should not be viewed as a commentary on the usefulness of the information derived from the implementation of the Standard." FRAB advised CIPFA / LASAAC that it agreed with the deferral of IFRS 16 Leases until 1 April 2024 when Council will adopt in line with all Northern Ireland councils.
- Annual Improvements to IFRS Standards 2018-2020. The annual IFRS improvement programme notes 4 changed standards:
 - IFRS 1 (First-time adoption) – amendment relates to foreign operations of acquired subsidiaries transitioning to IFRS
 - IAS 37 (Onerous contracts) – clarifies the intention of the standard
 - IFRS 16 (Leases) – amendment removes a misleading example that is not referenced in the Code material
 - IAS 41 (Agriculture) – one of a small number of IFRSs that are only expected to apply to local authorities in limited circumstances.

None of the matters covered in the annual improvements are dealt with in detail in the 2022/23 Code. During the consultation process on the 2022/23 Code CIPFA/LASAAC did not envisage them having a significant effect on local authority financial statements.

- Property, Plant and Equipment: Proceeds before Intended Use (Amendments to IAS 16).

The Council expects none of the above amendments to have a material impact on information in the financial statements.

1C Critical Judgments in Applying Accounting Policies

For the 2021/22 financial year, the Council has not made any critical judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events.

1D Assumptions Made About the Future and Other Major Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Council about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2022 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

i) Insurance Claims

The Council has made a provision of £423,900 for the settlement of insurance claims, arising from claims submitted to the Council under its self-insurance scheme for public and employee liability. These claims are those that have been received since 1 April 2015 and those claims still outstanding from the legacy North Down Borough Council, which were still outstanding at 31 March 2022.

This is a general provision, based on average settlement rates and represents an estimated liability in respect of claims lodged but being strongly contested by the Council.

ii) Environmental Provision

The Council has made a provision of £95,005 that relates to the need for remedial works to be undertaken to address environmental damage at two properties in the Council area. One relates to consultants fees associated with the required, settled and contracted remedial work whilst the other is remediation work agreed as part of the settlement to militate against future run-off of storm water from Council land into the third party's site.

iii) Pensions Liability

Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. The Council's pension provider's actuaries, Aon Hewitt, are engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.

The effects on the net pension liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For instance, a 0.1% increase in the discount rate would result in a decrease of 1.90% in the present value of the pension liability. Further information on the effects on the net pension liability of changes in assumptions is disclosed in note 22e on pages 112 and 113.

iv) Holiday Pay Provision

Court judgments have established the law as requiring employees to receive acknowledgement of overtime payments as part of their holiday pay entitlement calculations, which the Council acknowledges. The Northern Ireland Court of Appeal turned down an appeal by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) regarding the potential liability arising to that organisation in this regard. This decision was appealed to the Supreme Court. The Council has a signed agreement with the recognised trade unions, however individual employees will also be required to sign compromise agreements before receiving their payment.

However, as a consequence of a mediation process entered into between NIPSA and the PSNI in relation to Agnew, NIPSA are no longer in a position, at this point, to enter into any agreement which compromises the full extent of the law as determined by the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal in Agnew. NIPSA's current position is therefore to pause any current negotiations. The matter remains as a standing item on the Joint Forum agenda.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

2a) Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, service charges and district rates) by local authorities in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the council's directorates and services. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

	2021/22			2020/21		
	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Community & Wellbeing HQ	888,713	33,300	922,013	348,709	19,408	368,117
Environmental Health	1,677,408	454,666	2,132,074	1,609,037	237,993	1,847,030
Community & Culture	1,895,543	412,616	2,308,159	1,153,304	203,013	1,356,317
Parks and Cemeteries	3,266,012	1,585,622	4,851,634	2,918,883	1,632,248	4,551,131
Leisure	2,538,627	3,177,463	5,716,090	4,340,834	4,711,252	9,052,086
Environment HQ	960,858	31,873	992,731	624,218	19,597	643,815
Waste and Cleansing Services	14,270,661	2,564,537	16,835,198	14,716,366	1,722,735	16,439,101
Assets and Property Services	6,924,937	2,452,216	9,377,153	5,580,758	2,498,295	8,079,053
Regulatory Services	347,347	755,208	1,102,555	823,506	526,053	1,349,559
Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	299,217	36,675	335,892	306,167	21,565	327,732
Regeneration	786,872	382,167	1,169,039	736,138	240,828	976,966
Economic Dev	951,787	1,329,441	2,281,228	947,431	1,216,093	2,163,524
Planning	1,277,812	78,156	1,355,968	1,322,412	68,450	1,390,862
Tourism	1,197,461	315,667	1,513,128	1,067,822	132,558	1,200,380
Finance & Performance HQ	121,727	49,576	171,303	133,807	14,656	148,463
Internal Audit	55,870	-	55,870	56,610	-	56,610
Finance	953,120	165,734	1,118,854	924,413	116,938	1,041,351

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

	2021/22			2020/21		
	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Strategic Transformation & Performance	1,744,345	295,451	2,039,796	1,629,628	(18,780)	1,610,848
Strategic Capital Development	339,731	57,232	396,963	315,250	28,211	343,461
Organisational Development & Admin HQ	157,174	34,459	191,633	225,270	14,838	240,108
HR & OD	982,133	169,834	1,151,967	877,673	91,975	969,648
Administration & Customer Services	3,263,108	641,290	3,904,398	3,122,479	373,350	3,495,829
Chief Executive	308,058	56,339	364,397	361,121	31,440	392,561
Community Planning	156,489	38,627	195,116	118,797	11,317	130,114
Corporate Communications	773,840	122,146	895,986	411,610	49,991	461,601
Capital Financing	5,489,643	(5,489,643)	-	5,415,492	(5,415,492)	-
Year End Transactions	(228,861)	314,583	85,722	(41,041)	41,041	-
REFCUS	-	1,458,209	1,458,209	-	1,321,514	1,321,514
Net Cost of Services	51,399,632	11,523,444	62,923,076	50,046,692	9,911,087	59,957,779
Other Income and Expenditure	(54,973,502)	(715,397)	(55,688,899)	(61,018,630)	(3,182,614)	(64,201,244)
(Surplus) or Deficit	(3,573,870)	10,808,047	7,234,177	(10,971,938)	6,728,473	(4,243,465)
Opening General Fund			4,527,365			3,015,480
Surplus/ (Deficit) on General Fund Balance in Year			3,573,870			10,971,938
Transfers (to)/from Statutory and Other Reserves			(2,613,712)			(9,460,053)
Closing General Fund			5,487,523			4,527,365



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

2b) Note to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis

This note provides a reconciliation of the main adjustments to Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund to arrive at the amounts in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The relevant transfers between reserves are explained in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis 2021/22				
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net Change for the Pension Adjustments	Other Statutory Adjustments	Total
	£	£	£	£
Community & Wellbeing HQ	-	35,194	(1,894)	33,300
Environmental Health	5,045	449,162	459	454,666
Community & Culture	70,532	331,990	10,094	412,616
Parks and Cemeteries	1,044,563	566,526	(25,467)	1,585,622
Leisure	2,408,090	766,383	2,990	3,177,463
Environment HQ	-	35,238	(3,365)	31,873
Waste and Cleansing Services	1,186,648	1,407,964	(30,075)	2,564,537
Assets and Property Services	2,149,662	318,843	(16,289)	2,452,216
Regulatory Services	421,812	349,767	(16,371)	755,208
Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	-	35,256	1,419	36,675
Regeneration	147,780	236,042	(1,655)	382,167
Economic Dev	1,196,073	137,744	(4,376)	1,329,441
Planning	-	96,159	(18,003)	78,156
Tourism	44,595	257,058	14,014	315,667
Finance & Performance HQ	-	45,854	3,722	49,576
Internal Audit	-	-	-	-
Finance	-	167,461	(1,727)	165,734
Strategic Transformation & Performance	160,233	133,382	1,836	295,451
Strategic Capital Development	-	56,021	1,211	57,232
OD & Admin HQ	-	31,291	3,168	34,459
HR & OD	-	171,446	(1,612)	169,834
Administration & Customer Services	53,707	576,436	11,147	641,290
Chief Executive	-	57,102	(763)	56,339
Community Planning	-	34,914	3,713	38,627
Corporate Communications	3,498	114,767	3,881	122,146
Capital Financing	(5,489,643)	-	-	(5,489,643)
Year End Transactions	305,583	9,000	-	314,583
REFCUS	1,458,209	-	-	1,458,209
Net Cost of Services	5,166,387	6,421,000	(63,943)	11,523,444
Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(1,922,243)	1,229,000	(22,154)	(715,397)
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	3,244,144	7,650,000	(86,097)	10,808,047

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis 2020/21				
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net Change for the Pension Adjustments	Other Statutory Adjustments	Total
	£	£	£	£
Community & Wellbeing HQ	-	18,380	1,028	19,408
Environmental Health	2,897	222,222	12,874	237,993
Community & Culture	53,410	157,245	(7,642)	203,013
Parks and Cemeteries	1,294,218	320,026	18,005	1,632,249
Leisure	4,342,826	356,744	11,681	4,711,251
Environment HQ	-	18,404	1,193	19,597
Waste and Cleansing Services	847,018	779,927	95,790	1,722,735
Assets and Property Services	2,295,942	195,257	7,096	2,498,295
Regulatory Services	305,832	196,765	23,456	526,053
Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	-	18,381	3,184	21,565
Regeneration	150,753	81,154	8,921	240,828
Economic Dev	1,145,246	72,625	(1,778)	1,216,093
Planning	-	45,172	23,278	68,450
Tourism	21,047	106,672	4,839	132,558
Finance & Performance HQ	-	14,033	623	14,656
Internal Audit	-	-	-	-
Finance	-	100,015	16,923	116,938
Strategic Transformation & Performance	(93,665)	70,600	4,285	(18,780)
Strategic Capital Development	-	27,356	855	28,211
OD & Admin HQ	-	16,297	(1,459)	14,838
HR & OD	-	89,270	2,705	91,975
Administration & Customer Services	75,956	296,266	1,128	373,350
Chief Executive	-	30,021	1,419	31,440
Community Planning	-	13,514	(2,197)	11,317
Corporate Communications	5,952	44,422	(383)	49,991
Capital Financing	(5,415,492)	-	-	(5,415,492)
Year End Transactions	118,785	(77,744)	-	41,041
REFCUS	1,321,514	-	-	1,321,514
Net Cost of Services	6,472,239	3,213,024	225,824	9,911,087
Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(4,205,614)	1,023,000	-	(3,182,614)
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,266,625	4,236,024	225,824	6,728,473



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Adjustments for Capital Purposes

Adjustments to General Fund Balances to meet the requirements of generally accepted accounting practices, this column adds in depreciation and impairment and revaluation gains and losses in the services line and for:

- i) Other operating expenditure – adjusts for capital disposals with a transfer of income on disposal of assets and the amounts written off for those assets;
- ii) Financing and investment income and expenditure - the statutory charges for capital financing i.e. Minimum Revenue Provision and other revenue contributions are deducted from financing and investment income and expenditure as these are not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices; and
- iii) Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income and Expenditure – Capital grants are adjusted for income not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices. Revenue grants are adjusted from those receivable in the year to those receivable without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied throughout the year. The Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income and Expenditure line is credited with capital grants receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied in the year.

Net Change for the Pension Adjustments

Net change for the removal of pension contributions and the addition of IAS 19 Employee Benefits pension related expenditure and income:

- For services this represents the removal of the employer pension contributions made by the authority as permitted by statute and the replacement with current service costs and past service costs;
- For Financing and investment income and expenditure - the net interest on the defined benefit liability is charged to the CIES.

Other Statutory Differences

Other statutory adjustments for services represent the accrual of absences earned but not taken in the year, e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31 March 2022 along with TOIL and flexi balances; along with the reversal of the same accrual from the previous year end.

There were no other differences between amounts debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and amounts payable or receivable to be recognised under statute.

Other Non-Statutory Adjustments

Other non-statutory adjustments represent amounts debited/credited to service segments which need to be adjusted against the 'Other income and expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis' line to comply with the presentational requirements in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

2c) Segmental Income and Expenditure

Income and expenditure on a segmental basis are analysed below:

	2020/21									
	Revenue from External Customers	Revenues from Transactions with Other Operating Segments of the Authority	Interest Revenue	Interest Expense	Depreciation and Amortisation	Material Items of Income and Expense	Interest in the Profit or Loss of Associates and Joint Ventures Accounted for by the Equity Method	Income Tax Expense or Income	Material Non cash items other than Depreciation and Amortisation	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Community & Wellbeing	(13)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Environmental Health	(611,445)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community & Culture	(1,205,500)	(505)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parks and Cemeteries	(457,928)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Leisure	(2,084,626)	(98,829)								
Environment HQ	(1,965)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Waste & Cleansing Services	(1,063,553)	(50,099)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assets & Property	(204,282)	(43,750)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Regulatory Services	(2,049,455)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	(8,334)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Regeneration	(137,728)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Economic Development	(533,819)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Planning	(1,007,463)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tourism	(236,590)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Finance & Performance	(30)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internal Audit	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Finance	(4,139)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Strategic Transformation	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Strategic Capital	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OD & Admin HQ	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HR & OD	1,075	(1,975)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Admin & Customer	(345,256)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chief Executive	(257)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community Planning	(1,000)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Comms	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Financing	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Year End Transactions	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
REFCUS	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Income Analysed on a segmental basis	(,952,308)	(195,199)								



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Comparative year (2020/21):

	2020/21									
	Revenue from External Customers	Revenues from Transactions with Other Operating Segments of the Authority	Interest Revenue	Interest Expense	Depreciation and Amortisation	Material Items of Income and Expense	Interest in the Profit or Loss of Associates and Joint Ventures Accounted for by the Equity Method	Income Tax Expense or Income	Material Non cash items other than Depreciation and Amortisation	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Community & Wellbeing HQ	(1,348)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Environmental Health	(576,611)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Community & Culture	(1,874,401)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Leisure and Amenities	(831,289)	(32,279)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Environment HQ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Waste & Cleansing Services	(791,419)	(43,326)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Assets & Property Services	(137,698)	(54,900)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Regulatory Services	(1,479,212)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Regeneration	(106,030)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Economic Development	(411,308)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Planning	(846,542)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Tourism	(35,689)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Finance & Performance HQ	(10)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Internal Audit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Finance	(389)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Performance & Projects	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
OD & Admin HQ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
HR & OD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Admin & Customer Services	(277,669)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Chief Executive	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Community Planning	(4,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Corporate Comms	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Capital Financing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Year End Transactions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
REFCUS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Income Analysed on a segmental basis	(7,373,615)	(130,505)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

3 Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature

Expenditure is analysed as follows:

	Note	2021/22	2020/21
		£	£
Employee Benefits Expenses	7	28,272,376	28,058,787
Other Services Expenditure		35,905,967	28,648,433
Depreciation, Amortisation, Impairment	4a	8,892,239	10,754,679
Interest Payments		3,973,376	3,929,338
Other Expenditure	8	260,583	118,785
Total Expenditure		77,304,541	71,510,022

Income is analysed as follows:

	Note	2021/22	2020/21
		£	£
Fees, Charges and other service Income		(10,147,506)	(7,504,120)
Interest and Investment Income		(130,437)	(127,959)
District rate income	10e	(54,421,618)	(52,815,474)
Government grants and Contributions	10a/c/d	(5,370,803)	(15,305,934)
Other Income			-
Total Income		(70,070,364)	(75,753,487)
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	2	7,234,177	(4,243,465)

In the Narrative Report on Page 12 a table details the COVID-19 funding specifically received from Government Departments in 2021/22. All of this has been reflected in the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

4 Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations

4a) Amounts included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but required by statute to be excluded when determining the Movement on the General Fund Balance for the year:

	Notes	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Impairments (losses & reversals) of non-current assets	12a/ b	-	-
Revaluation (increases)/decreases taken to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	12a/ b	(964,648)	798,188
Depreciation charged in the year on non-current assets	12a/ b	9,856,887	9,956,491
		8,892,239	10,754,679
Net Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute		1,458,209	1,321,514
Carrying amount of non-current assets sold	26a	2,155,742	138,785
Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets	26a	(1,850,159)	(20,000)
		1,763,792	1,440,299
Net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with IAS19	22b	11,803,000	8,675,000
Direct revenue financing of Capital Expenditure	13	(168,839)	(468,790)
Capital Grants and Donated Assets Receivable and Applied in year	10	(455,971)	(1,778,081)
Capital & Revenue Grants Receivable and Unapplied in year	27b/ 27c	(1,488,427)	(2,427,533)
Adjustments in relation to short-term compensated absences	28d	(63,943)	225,824
Statutory provision for the financing of Capital Investment	13	(5,320,804)	(5,253,949)
Employers contributions payable to the NILGOSC and retirement benefits payable direct to pensioners	22b	(4,153,000)	(4,438,976)
		152,016	(5,466,505)
Total Adjustments		10,808,047	6,728,473



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

4b) Net transfers (to)/from Reserves:

	2021/22	2020/21
Repairs and Renewal Fund		
Interest	-	-
Other	-	-
	-	-
Other Funds and Earmarked Fund		
Interest	9b (7,836)	(1,488)
From Other funds	-	-
Other	(2,605,876)	(9,458,565)
27d	(2,613,712)	(9,460,053)
	(2,613,712)	(9,460,053)

5. The Cost of Services on continuing Operations

5a) General Power of Competence

Prior to Local Government Reform on 1st April 2015, expenditure for special purposes was limited under Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This section was repealed by Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Under Section 79 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, the Council has the power to do anything that individuals generally may do. Councils have the power to do this without charge. The power of competence is not limited to benefiting the area or its residents nor is it limited by existing powers. The actual expenditure incurred during 2021/22 amounted to £Nil (2020/21: £Nil).

5b) External Audit Fees

The Council has incurred the following costs relating to the annual audit of the Statement of Accounts, Performance Improvement Audit and other services provided by the Council's external auditors.

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Statement of Accounts Audit	49,000	48,000
Performance Improvement Audit	19,000	4,750
Under/(Over) accrual in previous years	9,850	(14,225)
National Fraud Initiative	-	1,298
	77,850	39,823

There were no other fees payable in respect of any other services provided by the appointed auditor over and above those described above.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

6. Operating and Finance Leases

Council as a Lessor

6a) Finance Leases (Council as a lessor)

The Council has a number of properties that are leased on a finance lease with terms ranging from 99 to 10,000 years. As these are long leases they have been treated as disposals for accounting purposes in the year of granting the lease. Any ground rent collected has been recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and any residual values are considered immaterial.

6b) Operating Leases (Council as a lessor)

The Council, in accordance with its statutory and discretionary responsibilities, leases out property under operating leases for the following purposes:

- for the provision of community services, advice services and meeting places for clubs and societies;
- for economic development purposes to provide suitable affordable accommodation for small local businesses; and
- for income generation.

Rental income recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the current year amounts to £361,882 (2020/21: £382,822). No contingent rents were recognised.

The lease terms are between 1 and 95 years. Future minimum lease income is set out below:

	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Minimum lease rentals receivable:		
No later than 1 year	275,240	291,813
Later than 1 year and no later than 5 years	246,756	427,675
Later than 5 years	1,485,265	1,540,575
	2,007,261	2,260,063

All the assets leased out by the Council to third parties are Land & Buildings with carrying values of:

	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Cost	9,114,711	9,466,494
Accumulated depreciation and impairments at 1 April	610,176	614,520
Depreciation charge for the year	(610,176)	(614,520)
Impairments/Revaluations	6,168,028	5,857,967
	15,282,739	15,324,461



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Council as a Lessee

6c) Finance Leases (Council as a lessee)

The Council has no finance leases where the Council is a lessee.

6d) Operating Leases (Council as a lessee)

The Council has acquired vehicles and safety cameras by entering into operating leases with typical lives of 5 years for the vehicles. The Council also leases land on which some of its waste management facilities are situated (these leases are for a period of 125 years but with an option to break at the end of 30 years) and foreshore on which it has constructed a marina. The Council leases other land with lease periods varying between 3 years and 35 years.

The expenditure charged to services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement during the year in relation to these leases was:

	2021/22		2020/21	
	Land & Buildings £	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £	Land & Buildings £	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £
Minimum lease payments	316,991	18,235	296,622	20,550
Contingent rentals	-	-	-	-
Sub- lease payments receivable	(92,200)	-	(98,836)	-
	224,791	18,235	197,786	20,550

The future minimum lease payments due under operating leases in future years are set out below:

	2021/22		2020/21	
	Land & Buildings £	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £	Land & Buildings £	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £
Minimum lease rentals payable:				
No later than 1 year	316,791	-	288,772	1,466
Later than 1 year and no later than 5 years	1,249,386	-	1,141,317	-
Later than 5 years	5,940,818	-	5,531,688	-
	7,506,995	-	6,961,777	1,466



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

7. Employee Costs and Members' Allowances

7a) Employee Costs

	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Salaries and Wages	21,888,881	21,834,599
Employer National Insurance	2,007,304	1,904,254
Employer Pension costs	4,282,028	4,226,571
Apprenticeship Levy	94,163	93,363
	28,272,376	28,058,787

The agency costs incurred during the 2021/22 year amounted to £2,013,501 (2020/21 £1,427,058).

The Council's contribution rate to the NILGOSC scheme in 2021/22 is 19.5%. The Council's contribution rate for 2022/23 is 19.5%. At the last actuarial valuation, dated 31 March 2019, the Fund's assets were £8,039.9M and the past service liabilities £7,203.0M, corresponding to a surplus of £836.9M and a funding level of 112% (2016: 96%).

7b) Average Number of Employees

The average number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees and the actual number of employees employed by the Council, at 31 March, are set out below.

	2021/22 FTE	2020/21 FTE
Community & Wellbeing HQ	2.75	2.10
Environmental Health	45.16	40.78
Community & Culture	33.00	32.72
Leisure	104.78	107.08
Parks & Cemeteries	77.59	83.16
Environment HQ	4.08	2.00
Waste and Cleansing Services	212.43	214.69
Assets and Property Services	50.00	50.75
Regulatory Services	42.00	40.08
Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	2.25	2.00
Regeneration	11.75	12.00
Economic Dev	13.39	15.23
Planning	42.39	42.31
Tourism	22.57	22.95
Finance & Performance HQ	2.75	1.00
Finance	18.94	20.69
Performance & Projects	11.75	17.75
Strategic Capital Development	4.80	-
OD & Admin HQ	2.50	1.95
HR & OD	15.44	16.57
Administration & Customer Services	42.70	42.47
Chief Executive	3.00	3.25
Community Planning	3.00	2.00
Corporate Communications	8.85	8.44
	777.87	781.97



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

	Actual Numbers	Actual Numbers
Full-time numbers employed	648	647
Part-time numbers employed	191	209
	839	856

7c) Senior Employees' Remuneration

	2021/22 Number	2020/21 Number
£80,001 to £90,000	5	5
£90,001 to £100,000	-	-
£100,001 to £110,000	-	-
£110,001 to £120,000	-	-
£120,001 to £130,000	1	1
	6	6

7d) Members' Allowances

During the year Members' allowances, including Employer's costs, totalled £1,003,867. The breakdown is as follows:

	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Basic Allowance	599,933	602,678
Mayor's & Deputy Mayor's Allowance	22,294	22,284
Special Responsibility Allowances	27,950	27,409
Dependents' Carers Allowances	-	-
Employer's Costs	341,380	264,463
Mileage	2,527	1,661
Conferences & Courses	-	-
Travel & Subsistence Costs	1,814	124
Miscellaneous	7,969	6,099
	1,003,867	924,718

7e) Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension Arrangements

As a result of Reform of Local Government on 1 April 2015, 36 staff transferred from Central Government to the Council. These employees are members of the Northern Ireland Civil (NICS) Service Pension Scheme.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension arrangement is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme, but the Council is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. As a result of these arrangements the scheme is accounted for as a defined contribution scheme in line with the Code. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2016. This valuation is then reviewed by the Scheme Actuary and updated to reflect current conditions and rolled forward to the reporting date of the Department of Finance Superannuation and Other Allowances Resource Accounts as at 31 March 2022.

For 2021/22, employers' contributions of £384,858 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements at one of three rates 28.7% (up to £28,599); 30.7% (£28,600 to £57,499) and 34.2% (£57,500 and over) of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The scheme's Actuary

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. A new scheme funding valuation based on data as at 31 March 2016 was finalised by the Actuary during 2019-20. This valuation was used to determine employer contribution rates for the introduction of a new career average earning scheme from April 2015. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2021/22 to be paid when the member retires, and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

No persons retired early on ill-health grounds and therefore no additional accrued pension liabilities were incurred during the year.

8. Other Operating Income & Expenditure

Surplus or Deficit on Non-Current Assets	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Proceeds from Sale	(1,850,159)	(20,000)
Carrying amount of non-current assets sold	2,110,742	138,785
Total	260,583	118,785

The surplus on non-current assets represents a gain on the disposal of those assets.

9. Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

9a Interest Payable and Similar Charges

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Government Loan Interest	2,315,939	2,486,545
Commercial Loan Interest	363,480	398,245
Loan Interest	2,679,419	2,884,790

9b Interest and Investment Income

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Bank Interest	(8,188)	(9,166)
Employee Car Loan Interest	(280)	(697)
Northern Ireland Housing Executive Loan interest receivable	(37,603)	(40,922)
Investment income on fund balances		
Earmarked Fund	(7,836)	(1,488)
Other investment Income & Expenditure	7,836	1,488
	(46,071)	(50,785)

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

9c Pensions Interest Cost

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Net interest on the net defined benefit liability / (asset)	1,229,000	1,023,000

9d Income, Expenditure and changes in Fair Value of Investment Properties

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Income (including rental income)	(76,531)	(75,686)
Expenditure	622	3,060
Net Income from investment properties	(75,909)	(72,626)
Proceeds from sale	-	-
Carrying amount of investment properties transferred	45,000	-
(Surplus)/Deficit on sale of investment properties	45,000	-
Change in fair value of investment properties	11,500	17,000
Total	(19,409)	(55,626)

The net cost of financing and investing activities is due to the net effect of revaluations carried out on all investment properties in 2021/22. During this review, it was identified that the Council's interest in some investment property assets had been transferred to other parties under the terms of a long lease, with the Council only receiving a nominal rental value. These assets, with a carrying amount of £45,000, have been transferred out of the Council's asset register. See notes 12a and 12b for further details.

Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	2,679,419	2,884,790
Interest and Investment Income	(46,071)	(50,785)
Pensions Interest Cost	1,229,000	1,023,000
(Surplus) / deficit on trading operations	-	-
Other Investment Income	(30,909)	(72,626)
Changes in Fair Value of Investment Properties	11,500	17,000
Total	3,842,939	3,801,379

10. Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income

10a Revenue Grants

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
General	(1,871,999)	(1,797,344)
Other – COVID-19 Funding	(1,576,561)	(9,181,778)
	(3,448,560)	(10,979,122)



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

10b Revenue Grants - Unapplied

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Government & Other Grants - Conditions met and not applied in year	301,460	279,305

10c Capital Grants and Donated Assets - Applied

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Government & Other Grants - Conditions met and applied in year	(455,971)	(1,778,081)

The taxation and non-specific grant income includes the recognition of capital grants in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, as required by the Code when the conditions attached to those grants have been satisfied.

10d Capital Grants - Unapplied

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Government & Other Grants - Conditions met and not applied in year	(1,466,272)	(2,548,731)

10e District Rates

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Current year	(53,147,653)	(51,972,826)
Finalisation	(1,273,965)	(842,648)
Totals	(54,421,618)	(52,815,474)

Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
District Rate Income	(54,421,618)	(52,815,474)
Revenue Grants	(3,448,560)	(10,979,122)
Capital Grants and Contributions	(1,922,243)	(4,326,812)
	(59,792,421)	(68,121,408)

11 Acquired and Discontinued - Operations

The Council has not acquired or discontinued any material operations.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

12a) Fixed Assets

Cost or Valuation	Property, Plant and Equipment						Heritage Assets	Investment Properties	Intangible Assets	TOTAL
	Land	Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets				
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
At 1 April 2021	26,962,104	199,919,940	21,715,506	76,178	376,698	3,373,198	2,503,625	1,880,000	1,169,667	257,976,915
Additions	-	1,052,882	2,069,843	-	176,245	-	35,908	-	79,432	3,414,309
Revaluation increases / (decreases) to RR	1,006,355	3,156,899	-	-	-	26,250	-	-	-	4,189,504
Revaluation increases / (decreases) to SDPS	212,195	54,687	-	-	-	-	-	(11,500)	(125,000)	130,382
De-recognition & Disposals	(9,000)	-	(683,405)	-	-	(235,950)	-	(45,000)	-	(973,355)
Reclassifications & Transfers	75,000	330,160	(21,225)	-	(300,160)	250,000	-	(455,000)	21,225	(100,000)
At 31 March 2022	28,246,654	204,514,568	23,080,719	76,178	252,783	3,413,498	2,539,533	1,368,500	1,145,323	264,637,755
At 1 April 2021	-	(5)	14,740,511	-	-	-	-	-	805,297	15,545,803
Depreciation Charge	-	7,763,365	1,988,564	-	-	-	-	-	104,958	9,856,887
Depreciation written out on RR	-	(6,952,013)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(6,952,013)
Depreciation written out on SDPS	-	(808,016)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(808,015)
Impairment losses to RR	-	455,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	455,000
Impairment losses / Reversals to SDPS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
De-recognition & Disposals	-	-	(632,863)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(632,863)
Reclassifications and Transfers	-	-	(21,225)	-	-	-	-	-	21,225	-
At 31 March 2022	-	458,331	16,074,987	-	-	-	-	-	931,480	17,464,799
Net Book Value At 31 March 2022	28,246,654	204,056,237	7,005,732	76,178	252,783	3,413,498	2,539,533	1,368,500	213,843	247,172,959
Net Book Value At 31 March 2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

12b) Fixed Assets – Comparative Year

Cost or Valuation	Land		Buildings		Property, Plant and Equipment		Surplus Assets	Heritage Assets	Investment Properties	Intangible Assets	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£					
At 1 April 2020	26,999,455	202,781,738	21,739,719	76,178	1,001,408	4,048,198	2,367,200	1,815,500	1,206,030	259,818,042	
Additions	-	1,359,811	1,052,938	-	1,993,707	-	2,367,199	1,897,000	973,118	261,884,013	
Revaluation increases / (decreases) to RR	342,610	(4,953,437)	-	-	-	845,800	-	-	201,548	4,608,004	
Revaluation increases / (decreases) to SDPS	(20,760)	(1,750,162)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(3,765,027)	
De-recognition & Disposals	(1)	-	(1,077,151)	-	-	(80,000)	-	(17,000)	(5,000)	(1,792,922)	
Reclassifications & Transfers	(359,200)	2,481,993	-	-	(2,618,419)	(1,440,800)	-	-	-	(1,157,152)	
At 31 March 2021	26,962,104	199,919,943	21,715,506	76,178	376,696	3,373,198	136,426	1,880,000	1,169,666	257,976,916	
At 1 April 2020	-	(5)	13,992,979	-	-	-	-	-	718,511	14,711,485	
Depreciation Charge	-	8,103,806	1,765,900	-	-	-	-	-	86,785	9,956,491	
Depreciation written out on RR	-	(7,109,072)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(7,109,072)	
Depreciation written out on SDPS	-	(994,734)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(994,734)	
Impairment losses to RR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Impairment losses / Reversals to SDPS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
De-recognition & Disposals	-	-	(1,018,367)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,018,367)	
Reclassifications and Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
At 31 March 2021	-	(5)	14,740,512	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Net Book Value At 31 March 2021	26,962,104	199,919,938	6,974,994	76,178	376,696	3,373,198	-	-	805,296	15,545,803	
Net Book Value At 31 March 2020	26,999,455	202,781,743	7,746,740	76,178	1,001,408	4,048,198	2,503,625	1,880,000	364,370	242,431,113	

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

12c) Intangible Assets

Intangible assets are made up of three different classes of asset:

- market trading rights which, due to their indefinite life, are not amortised;
- public path creation agreements; and
- computer software which is depreciated over a useful life of 4 years.

The net book value of each class of intangible asset at 31 March is:

	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Market Trading Rights	100,000	225,000
Public Path Creation Agreements	7	7
Computer Software	113,836	139,363
	213,843	364,370

12d) Investment Properties

There were no additions to investment properties in year.

	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Rental Income from Investment Activities	76,531	75,686
Direct Operating expenses	(622)	(3,060)
Net gain/(loss)	75,909	72,626

12e) Heritage Assets

	Artefacts £	Paintings & Drawings £	Historical Furniture £	Other £	Total Heritage Assets £
Cost or Valuation:					
At 1 April 2021	669,450	1,286,750	40,000	507,425	2,503,625
Additions/(Disposals)	-	-	-	35,908	35,908
Derecognitions	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations to Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2022	669,450	1,286,750	40,000	543,333	2,539,533

The Council's heritage assets are reported in the Balance Sheet at their most up to date insurance valuation, which is based on valuations carried out by independent experts. The last valuation was carried out during the financial year 2019/20. See note 1xxi for further details on the Council's policy for heritage assets.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

12f) Assets held for Sale

	Assets Held for Sale Current £	Total £
Cost or Valuation:		
At 1 April 2021	1,800,000	1,800,000
Transferred from Non-Current Assets	100,000	100,000
Disposals	(1,800,000)	(1,800,000)
At 31 March 2022	100,000	100,000
Net Book Value at 31 March 2022	100,000	100,000
Net Book Value at 31 March 2021	1,800,000	1,800,000

During the year, Council disposed of the land at the former Ards Leisure Centre site in Newtownards under a Vesting Order made by the Department for Infrastructure – Roads. The gain/loss on assets classified to held for sale and sold during the year was £nil.

As at 31 March 2022, one asset was identified as meeting the criteria for an asset held for sale. The disposal of this asset, land at Belfast Road in Holywood, completed at the beginning of the 2022/23 financial year.

12h) Valuations

Valuations of Land and Buildings are carried out externally by Land and Property Services (LPS), in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as applied to the UK public sector and interpreted by the CIPFA Code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting, International Valuation Standards and the requirements of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Global Standards 2022. For the asset revaluations carried out this year, no special assumptions were made. Please refer to Note 1xx for further information on revaluation and depreciation policies.

The revaluation results for land and buildings, including an analysis of the revaluations amounts taken to the Revaluation Reserve and the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, are detailed in note 12a.

12i) Impairments

Council carried out an impairment review during the year and identified impairment losses of £455k relating solely to one asset. The Bangor Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex suffered significant damage to a section of the roof and rooflights following a storm in November 2021. As at 31 March 2022, significant refurbishment works remained outstanding to bring this section of the asset back into a useable condition.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

13. Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

The Capital Financing Requirement measures the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose. The total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year is shown in the table below (including the value of assets acquired under leases and PFI contracts), together with the resources that have been used to finance it. Where capital expenditure is to be financed in future years by charges to revenue as assets are used by the Council, the expenditure results in an increase in the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the Council that is yet to be financed. The CFR is analysed in the second part of this note.

	Notes	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Opening Capital Financing Requirement		82,426,245	86,406,472
Capital Expenditure:			
Property, Plant & Equipment	12a & b	3,334,877	4,406,456
Intangible Assets	12a & b	79,432	201,548
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS)	28a	1,458,209	1,321,514
Sources of Finance:			
Capital receipts	27a 10c /	(142,620)	(456,857)
Capital Grants & Other Contributions	27b	(2,162,042)	(3,730,149)
Transfers from Earmarked Fund	28a	-	-
Sums sets aside from Revenue:			
Direct Revenue Contributions	4,27	(168,839)	(468,790)
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	28a	(5,320,804)	(5,253,949)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement		79,504,458	82,426,245
		2021/22	2020/21
		£	£
Explanation of Movements in Year			
Increase / (decrease) in underlying need to borrow		(2,921,787)	(3,980,227)
Assets acquired under leases		-	-
Assets acquired under PFI/PPP contracts		-	-
Increase/(decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement		(2,921,787)	(3,980,227)

14. Future Capital Commitments

The Council has an ongoing programme of capital works and the estimated cost of the capital schemes which the Council is undertaking, is as follows:

	Gross Cost £	Grant Aid £	Net Cost £
Schemes underway	170,308	-	170,308
Other commitments	648,118	-	648,118
Total	818,426	-	818,426



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

15. Inventories

The stock of goods held at 31 March was:

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Waste Transfer Station, Bangor - Fuel	30,850	33,368
North Road Depot, Newtownards - Fuel	32,725	21,372
North Road Depot, Newtownards – Stores	113,939	76,864
North Road Depot, Newtownards – Vehicle Parts	74,417	126,656
North Down Museum & Tourist Information Shops	7,750	8,062
Bangor Visitor Information Centre	3,883	6,234
Groomsport Visitor Information Centre	197	1,528
Newtownards Visitor Information Centre	8,295	7,878
Portaferry Visitor Information Centre	-	1,436
Total	272,056	283,398

The cost of inventories recognised as an expense in services at 31 March 2022 amounted to £1,414,595.

16. Debtors

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
16a) Long-Term Debtors		
Government Departments	-	-
Employee car loans	-	3,885
NIHE loans ¹	539,642	605,942
Total Long-Term Debtors	539,642	609,827
16b) Short-Term Debtors		
Government Departments	3,359,104	1,053,946
Other Councils	126,533	118,558
Bodies External to General Government	-	-
NIHE loans ¹	66,300	62,547
Employee car loans	1,938	4,024
Revenue Grants	1,253,472	1,342,677
Capital Grants	556,918	2,135,321
Value Added Tax	974,102	712,512
Prepayments	604,702	553,280
Other	145,336	220,716
Trade receivables	416,463	393,922
Impairment loss - Trade receivables	(79,568)	(153,818)
Total Short-Term Debtors	7,425,300	6,443,685
Total Debtors	7,964,942	7,053,512

¹ This debtor relates to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) debt brought about by the local government re-organisation in 1972 with establishment of the NIHE. However, the loans relating to the assets transferred to the NIHE remain with the Council whilst interest and principal are received annually from NIHE.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

17. Investments

17a) Long-Term Investments (more than 12 months)

There were no long-term investments in the reporting period.

17b) Short-Term Investments (more than 3 months)

There were no short-term investments in the reporting period.

The Council also administers deposits held on behalf of third parties, namely the Ards and North Down Mayor's Charity Appeals, the Holywood District Nursing Society and the Blair Mayne Bursary. The total balances held as at the 31 March 2022 amount to £11,633.

18. Borrowings

18a) Short-Term Borrowing

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Loans re-payable within one year	3,135,428	6,170,269
Finance Lease Principal	-	-
Total Short-Term Borrowing	3,135,428	6,170,269

18b) Long-Term Borrowing

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Between 1 and 2 years	4,073,849	3,135,428
Between 2 and 5 years	9,453,118	10,441,772
Between 5 and 10 years	15,330,647	15,986,188
In more than 10 years	34,866,933	37,296,584
Total Long-Term Borrowing	63,724,547	66,859,972
Total Borrowing	66,859,975	73,030,241

18c) Total Borrowing by Type

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Annuity Repayment	25,427,179	27,574,441
Equal Instalments of Principle Borrowings	25,747,124	26,770,128
Maturity Repayment	15,685,672	18,685,672
Total Borrowing	66,859,975	73,030,241

Interest rates on Government Loans range between 2.24% and 9.875%. The average interest rate on all long-term borrowings is 3.9%.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

19. Creditors

19a) Short-Term Creditors

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Government Departments	765,664	1,432,636
Other Councils	68,987	316,338
Public Corporations and Trading Funds	105,222	105,222
Bodies External to General Government	20,995	17,383
Remuneration due to employees	164,568	98,235
Accumulated Absences	694,824	758,767
Loan Interest Payable	118,194	118,548
Capital Creditors	336,844	1,059,515
Receipts in advance	877,609	767,924
Trade creditors	2,554,163	2,626,428
Other	-	-
Total Short Term Creditors	5,707,070	7,300,996

19b) Long-Term Creditors

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Total Long-Term Creditors	-	-
Total Creditors	5,707,070	7,300,996

19c) Payment of Invoices

The Council has a target of paying supplier invoices within 30 calendar days. During the year the Council paid 16,155 invoices totalling £46,176,600.

Invoices Paid	2021/22		2020/21
	No.	%	%
Within 30 calendar days	15,826	98%	96%
Within 10 working days	13,649	84%	80%
Outside the 30-day target	329	2%	4%
Average days to pay	13.31		14.25
Median days to pay	12		14



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

20. Provisions

Current Year:	At 1 April 2021	Increase in provision during year	Utilised during year	Unused Reversals	At 31 March 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Insurance	333,288	296,179	(168,871)	(36,696)	423,900
Environmental	95,005	-	-	-	95,005
Legal	30,440	-	-	-	30,440
Other	681,100	-	-	-	681,100
	1,139,833	296,179	(168,871)	(36,696)	1,230,445
Current Provisions	776,105	-	-	-	776,105
Long Term Provisions	363,728	296,179	(168,871)	(36,696)	454,340
	1,139,833	296,179	(168,871)	(36,696)	1,230,445

Comparative Year:	At 1 April 2020	Increase in provision during year	Utilised during year	Unused Reversals	At 31 March 2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Insurance	351,853	114,792	(122,556)	(10,801)	333,288
Environmental	95,005	-	-	-	95,005
Legal	30,440	-	-	-	30,440
Other	635,600	45,500	-	-	681,100
	1,112,898	160,292	(122,556)	(10,801)	1,139,833
Current Provisions	730,605	45,500	-	-	776,105
Long Term Provisions	382,293	114,792	(122,556)	(10,801)	363,728
	1,112,898	160,292	(122,556)	(10,801)	1,139,833

Insurance Provision

The Council operates a self-insurance scheme for public and employee liability insurance and has a number of claims which require to be settled. A provision at 31 March 2022 has been made on the basis of Council's experience of settlement rates over recent years.

Environmental Provision

This provision relates to the need for remedial works to be undertaken to address environmental damage at two properties in the Council area. One relates to consultants' fees associated with the required, settled and contracted remedial work whilst the other is remediation work agreed as part of the settlement to militate against future run-off of storm water from Council land into a third party's site.

Legal Provision

This provision relates to legal fees in relation to ongoing legal cases and potential contractual obligations.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

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Other

Court judgments have established the law as requiring employees to receive acknowledgement of overtime payments as part of their holiday pay entitlement calculations, which the Council acknowledges. The Northern Ireland Court of Appeal turned down an appeal by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) regarding the potential liability arising to that organisation in this regard. This decision was appealed to the Supreme Court. The Council has a signed agreement with the recognised trade unions, however individual employees will also be required to sign compromise agreements before receiving their payment.

However, as a consequence of a mediation process entered into between NIPSA and the PSNI in relation to Agnew, NIPSA is no longer in a position, at this point, to enter into any agreement which compromises the full extent of the law as determined by the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal in Agnew. NIPSA's current position is therefore to pause any current negotiations. The matter remains as a standing item on the Joint Forum agenda.

21. Financial Instruments

The Council has no material exposure to any of the risk types identified below in its dealings with financial instruments.

Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the Council's customers. Authorised institutions for investments under the Council's Treasury Policy are assessed for financial strength and risk exposure. The provision for bad and doubtful debts reflects the Council's assessment of the risk of non-payment by debtors and as such, there is no additional estimated exposure to default and inability to collect.

Liquidity Risk

The Council's net operating costs are funded through district rates and government grants. Capital expenditure is largely financed by borrowing from the Government Loans Fund. The Council is not therefore exposed to significant liquidity risk. The analysis of financial liabilities is included in notes 18 and 19. All trade and other payables are due for payment within one year.

Market Risk

Interest Rate Risk

The Council finances capital expenditure in the longer term through fixed rate borrowings in line its Treasury Management Strategy Statement and its Medium-Term Financial Plan. The Council takes out short-term loans to benefit from the very low interest rates available. This strategy is carried out with advice from the Council's treasury advisors and reviewed at the end of every term to minimise risk. In addition, Council has a limit of 30% of borrowing to be short-term in nature.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Foreign Exchange Risk

The Council has no financial assets or liabilities denominated in foreign currencies and thus has no material exposure to loss arising from movements in exchange rates.

Employee Car Loans

The Council makes loans for car purchases to employees in the Council who are in posts that require them to drive regularly on the Council's business. Currently there are 5 employees who have loans which are reflected in Note 16.

The following categories of financial instrument are carried in the Balance Sheet:

Financial Assets as at 31 March 2022

	Non-Current		Current		Total
	Investments	Debtors	Investments	Debtors	
	£	£	£	£	£
Fair Value through profit or loss	-	-	-	-	-
Amortised cost	-	-	9,000,000	416,463	9,416,463
Fair Value through other comprehensive income - designated equity instruments	-	-	-	-	-
Fair Value through other comprehensive income - other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Financial Assets	-	-	9,000,000	416,463	9,416,463
Non-Financial Assets	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	9,000,000	416,463	9,416,463

Financial Assets as at 31 March 2021

	Non-Current		Current		Total
	Investments	Debtors	Investments	Debtors	
	£	£	£	£	£
Fair Value through profit or loss	-	-	-	-	-
Amortised cost	-	-	9,000,000	393,922	9,393,922
Fair Value through other comprehensive income - designated equity instruments	-	-	-	-	-
Fair Value through other comprehensive income - other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Financial Assets	-	-	9,000,000	393,922	9,393,922
Non-Financial Assets	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	9,000,000	393,922	9,393,922

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Financial Liabilities as at 31 March 2022

	Non-Current		Current		Total £
	Borrowings	Creditors	Borrowings	Creditors	
	£	£	£	£	
Fair Value through profit or loss	-	-	-	-	-
Amortised cost	63,724,547	-	3,135,428	2,629,427	69,489,402
Total financial liabilities	63,724,547	-	3,135,428	2,629,427	69,489,402
Non-financial liabilities	-	-	-	-	-
Total	63,724,547	-	3,135,428	2,629,427	69,489,402

Financial Liabilities as at 31 March 2021

	Non-Current		Current		Total £
	Borrowings	Creditors	Borrowings	Creditors	
	£	£	£	£	
Fair Value through profit or loss	-	-	-	-	-
Amortised cost	66,859,972	-	6,170,269	2,626,428	75,656,669
Total financial liabilities	66,859,972	-	6,170,269	2,626,428	75,656,669
Non-financial liabilities	-	-	-	-	-
Total	66,859,972	-	6,170,269	2,626,428	75,656,669

Fair Values of Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities that are not Measured at Fair Value (but for which Fair Value Disclosures are Required).

Except for the financial assets carried at fair value (described in the table above) all other financial liabilities and financial assets held by the authority are classified as loans and receivables and long-term debtors and creditors and are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. The fair values calculated are as follows.

Financial Assets / Liabilities	31 March 2022		31 March 2021	
	Carrying amount	Fair value	Carrying amount	Fair value
	£	£	£	£
Financial liabilities held at amortised cost	66,859,975	73,230,483	73,030,241	87,451,579
Financial assets held at amortised cost	9,000,000	8,999,596	9,000,000	9,000,312

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

22. Retirement Benefits

22a) Participation in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its employees, the Council offers retirement benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Council has a commitment to make the payments that need to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The Council participates in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund administered by the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (commonly known as NILGOSC). This is a funded scheme, meaning that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension's liabilities with investment assets.

22b) Transactions relating to Retirement Benefits – Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement

The Council recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the Cost of Services on Continuing Operations when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions.

However, the charge the Council is required to make against District rates is based on the cash payable in the year, and the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out in the adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations line, in the Movement on Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations line, in the Movement on Reserves Statement during the year:

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Net cost of services:		
Current service cost	10,565,000	7,652,000
Past service cost/(gain)	9,000	-
(Gains)/Losses on settlements and curtailments	-	-
Net operating expenditure:		
Net Interest on the net defined liability (asset)	1,229,000	1,023,000
Total Post-Employment Benefits charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	11,803,000	8,675,000
Movement in Reserves Statement:		
Reversal of net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with IAS 19 and the Code	(11,803,000)	(8,675,000)
Actual amount charged against the general fund balance for pensions in the year:		
Employers' contributions payable to scheme	4,153,000	4,438,976
Net Adjustment to the General Fund	(7,650,000)	(4,236,024)

The service cost figures include an allowance for administration expenses of £0.104m or 0.98% of current service cost.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Re-measurements recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Liability gains/(losses) due to change in assumptions	16,186,000	(41,874,000)
Actuarial gains/(losses) due to changes in demographic assumptions	2,315,000	-
Liability experience gains/(losses) arising in the year	(525,000)	1,647,000
Actuarial Gains/(Losses) on plan assets	3,367,000	30,759,000
Other	-	-
Total Gains/(Losses) recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	21,343,000	(9,468,000)

22c) Assets and Liabilities in relation to Retirement Benefits

Reconciliation of present value of the scheme liabilities:	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Balance as at 1 April	234,223,000	184,474,170
Current service cost	10,565,000	7,652,000
Interest cost	4,889,000	4,223,000
Contributions by members	1,320,000	1,314,000
Re-measurement (gains) and losses:		
Actuarial gains/losses arising on liabilities from changes in financial assumptions	(16,186,000)	41,874,000
Actuarial gains/losses arising from demographic changes	(2,315,000)	-
Actuarial gains/losses arising on liabilities from experience	525,000	(1,647,000)
Other	-	-
Past Service Costs / (gains)	9,000	-
Losses/(gains) on curtailments	-	-
Liabilities extinguished on settlements	-	-
Estimated unfunded benefits paid	(73,000)	(75,000)
Estimated benefits paid	(4,181,000)	(3,592,170)
Balance as at 31 March	228,776,000	234,223,000

Reconciliation of present value of the scheme assets:	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Balance as at 1 April	173,609,000	137,564,194
Interest Income	3,660,000	3,200,000
Contributions by members	1,320,000	1,314,000
Contributions by employer	4,080,000	4,363,976
Contributions in respect of unfunded benefits	73,000	75,000
Re-measurement gains/(losses)	3,367,000	30,759,000
Assets distributed on settlements	-	-
Unfunded benefits paid	(73,000)	(75,000)
Benefits paid	(4,181,000)	(3,592,170)
Balance as at 31 March	181,855,000	173,609,000



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

The expected return on scheme assets is determined by considering the expected returns available on the assets underlying the current investment policy. Expected yields on fixed interest investments are based on gross redemption yields as at the Balance Sheet date. Expected returns on equity investments reflect long-term real rates of return experienced in the respective markets. The actual return on scheme assets in the year was a gain of £7,027,000 (2020/21 gain of £33,959,000).

Fair Value of Plan Assets:	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Equity investments	73,833,130	80,380,967
Bonds	47,100,445	61,978,413
Property	19,822,195	15,451,201
Cash	11,275,010	9,201,277
Other	29,824,220	6,597,142
	181,855,000	173,609,000

The above asset values are at bid value as required by IAS 19. The bid values were provided by NILGOSC, the administering authority. The amounts included in the fair value of plan assets for property occupied by the Council was £nil.

The Council's share of the Net Pension Liability (included in the Balance Sheet):	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Fair Value of Employer Assets	181,855,000	173,609,000
Present value of funded defined benefit obligation	(227,886,000)	(233,219,000)
Pension asset/(liability) of Funded Scheme	(46,031,000)	(59,610,000)
Present Value of Unfunded defined benefit obligation	(890,000)	(1,004,000)
Net Asset/(Liability) arising from the defined benefit obligation	(46,921,000)	(60,614,000)
Amount in the Balance sheet:		
Liabilities	(228,776,000)	(234,223,000)
Assets	181,855,000	173,609,000
Net Asset/(Liability)	(46,921,000)	(60,614,000)

22d) Scheme History

Analysis of scheme assets and liabilities	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Fair Value of Assets in pension scheme	181,855,000	173,609,000
Present Value of Defined Benefit Obligation	(228,776,000)	(234,223,000)
Surplus/(deficit) in the Scheme	(46,921,000)	(60,614,000)



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Amount recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure:	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Actuarial gains/(losses)	17,976,000	(40,227,000)
Expected Return on Plan Assets	3,367,000	30,759,000
Re-measurements recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	21,343,000	(9,468,000)
Cumulative actuarial gains and losses	4,821,000	(16,522,000)
History of experience gains and losses:		
Experience gains and (losses) on assets	3,367,000	30,759,000
Experience gains and (losses) on liabilities	(525,000)	1,647,000

The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the Council has in the long run to pay retirement benefits. The total liability of £228,776,000 has a substantial impact on the net worth of the Council as recorded in the Balance Sheet, resulting in a net liability of £46,921,000.

However, statutory arrangements for funding the deficit mean that the financial position of the Council remains healthy. The deficit on the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund will be made good by increased contributions over the remaining working life of employees, assessed by the scheme actuary.

Analysis of projected amount to be charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year to 31 March 2023:

	31/03/2023	31/03/2023
	£	% of pay
Projected current cost	9,888,000	45.3
Net Interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset)	1,209,000	5.5
	11,097,000	50.8

Allowance for administration expenses included in Current Service Cost £109,000 and estimated pensionable payroll over the period £21,814,000.

The total contributions expected to be made to the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund by the Council in the year to 31 March 2023 is £4,254,000.

History of experience gains and losses

The actuarial gains/losses identified as movements on the Pensions Reserve 2021/22 can be analysed into the following categories, measure as a percentage of assets or liabilities at 31 March 2022.

	2021/22	2020/21
	%	%
Experience Gains and (losses) on Assets	1.85	17.72
Experience gains and (losses) on Liabilities	0.23	(0.70)

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

22e) Basis for estimating assets and liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in the future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc. The Council's Fund liabilities have been assessed by Aon Hewitt Ltd, an independent firm of actuaries, estimates for the Council Fund being based on data pertaining to the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2019.

Mortality assumptions:		2021/22	2020/21
<i>Longevity at 65 current pensioners:</i>	Men	21.8 years	21.9 years
	Women	25.0 years	25.1 years
<i>Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:</i>	Men	23.2 years	23.3 years
	Women	26.4 years	26.5 years
Inflation/Pension Increase Rate		3.00%	2.70%
Salary Increase Rate		4.50%	4.20%
Discount Rate		2.70%	2.10%
Pension Accounts Revaluation Rate		3.00%	2.70%
Take-up of option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum:			
Service to April 2009		75%	75%
Service post April 2009		75%	75%

Pension Assumptions Sensitivity Analysis

The pension figures disclosed in these financial statements are sensitive to the assumptions used.

The approximate impact of changing key assumptions on the present value of the funded defined benefit obligation as at 31 March 2022 is set out below.

In each case, only the assumption noted below is altered; all other assumptions remain the same and are summarised in the disclosure above.

Discount Rate Assumption

	+0.1% p.a.	-0.1% p.a.
Adjustment to discount rate		
Present value of the total obligation (£Ms)	£223.556	£232.216
% change in the present value of the total obligation	-1.90%	1.90%
Projected service cost (£Ms)	£9.562	£10.224
Approximate % change in projected service cost	-3.30%	3.40%



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Rate of General Increase in Salaries

Adjustment to salary increase rate	+0.1% p.a.	-0.1% p.a.
Present value of the total obligation (£Ms)	£228.798	£226.974
% change in the present value of the total obligation	0.40%	-0.40%
Projected service cost (£Ms)	£9.888	£9.888
Approximate % change in projected service cost	0.00%	0.00%

Rate of Increase to Pensions in Payment, Deferred Pensions Increase Assumption and rate of Revaluation of Pension Accounts Assumption

Adjustment to pension increase rate	+0.1% p.a.	-0.1% p.a.
Present value of the total obligation (£Ms)	£231.304	£224.468
% change in the present value of the total obligation	1.50%	-1.50%
Projected service cost (£Ms)	£10.224	£9.562
Approximate % change in projected service cost	3.40%	-3.30%

Post Retirement Mortality Assumption

Adjustment to the mortality age rating assumption *	-1 Year	+1 Year
Present value of the total obligation (£Ms)	£235.862	£219.910
% change in the present value of the total obligation	3.50%	-3.50%
Projected service cost (£Ms)	£10.284	£9.502
Approximate % change in projected service cost	4.0%	-3.90%

* A rating of +1 year means that members are assumed to follow the mortality pattern of the base table above for an individual that is 1 year older than them.

22f) Major categories of plan assets as percentage of total plan assets

The Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund's assets consist of the following categories, by proportion of the total assets held:

	31/03/2022	31/03/2021
Equity investments	40.60%	46.30%
Bonds	25.90%	35.70%
Property	10.90%	8.90%
Cash	6.20%	5.30%
Other	16.40%	3.80%
	100.00%	100.00%

22g) Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension Arrangements

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension arrangement is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Council is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities and therefore has accounted for this scheme as a defined contribution scheme. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2016. This valuation is then reviewed by the Scheme Actuary and updated to reflect current conditions and rolled



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

forward to the reporting date of the DoF Superannuation and Other Allowances Resource Accounts as at 31 March 2022.

23 Donated Assets Account

The Council does not have any donated assets for which conditions have not been met.

24 Capital Grants Received in Advance

There were no capital grants received in advance during 2021/22.

25 Contingencies

In accordance with the Code (and IAS 37), Councils should disclose by way of note if there is a possible obligation arising from past events and whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the authority, or a present obligation that arises from past events but is not recognised because:

- a) it is not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits or service potential will be required to settle the obligation, or
- b) the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

25a) Self-Insurance Scheme

The Council operates a self-insurance scheme for public and employee liability insurance. As at 31 March 2022, claims with a total value of £1,022,610 had been lodged but continue to be actively challenged. Whilst the Council continues to strongly contest liability in respect of each of these claims, a provision has been made based on the Council's experience of settlement rates over the previous years. Movement on the Insurance Provision during the year is set out in note 20.

25b) Residual Waste Treatment Project

The arc21 Joint Committee has, with the approval of its participant Councils, entered into a Contingent Liability Undertaking with the bidding consortium in the procurement for a Residual Waste Treatment Project and Ards and North Down Borough Council has agreed its share of the contingent liability. The risks of any potential financial penalties associated with the procurement process are limited but payments, if any, become due in accordance with this undertaking, they will be funded by the participant Councils. No further information on this agreement can be disclosed due to the commercial sensitivity of the procurement process.

25c) Special Legal Regime – VAT Tribunal

On 17 October 2020, the First-tier Tribunal issued its decision in relation to a dispute concerning the VAT liability of charges paid by members of the public for access to sport and leisure facilities provided by Mid-Ulster District Council. HMRC contended that the charges should bear VAT at the standard rate, while Mid Ulster District Council contended that the charges in dispute did not attract VAT as they were provided by the Council in its role as a public authority acting under a special legal regime, within the meaning of the EU Principal VAT Directive.

The appeal by Mid Ulster District Council was allowed and now the quantum has to be agreed between both parties. However, pursuant to Rule 39 of the Tribunal Procedure (First-tier Tribunal) (Tax Chamber) Rules 2009, any party dissatisfied with the decision has a right to apply for permission to appeal not later than 56 days after the date of this decision. HMRC appealed the decision. The hearing was held in May 2022 and the decision is still pending.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

25d) General

The Council has a number of other general litigious matters ongoing. It is uncertain whether these matters will proceed to court or if they do, whether the courts will have reached a decision in relation to them before the Council's financial statements have been certified and published. Council is of the opinion that, in the majority of matters, it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the claim. Council is also of the opinion that, in any event, it is not possible to make a sufficiently reliable financial estimate of potential contingent liabilities for disclosure purposes.

26 Other Cash Flow Notes

26a) Analysis of Adjustments to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services

Adjustment to surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements:	No	2021/22	2020/21
	tes	£	£
Depreciation	4	9,856,887	9,956,491
Impairment & downward revaluations (& non-sale de-recognitions)	4	(964,648)	798,188
(Increase)/Decrease in Inventories		11,342	57,138
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors		(2,759,900)	(713,770)
Increase/(Decrease) in impairment provision for bad debts		(74,250)	(2,686)
Increase/(Decrease) in Creditors		(406,398)	56,486
Increase/(Decrease) in Interest Creditors		(24,846)	(25,931)
Pension Fund Adjustments	22	7,650,000	4,236,024
Carrying amount of non-current assets sold	4	2,155,742	138,785
AUC written off to Net Cost of Services		-	-
Contributions to Other Reserves/Provisions		90,612	26,935
Movement in value of Investment Properties		-	-
Amounts posted to CIES from Donated Assets Account	22	-	-
		15,534,541	14,527,660
Adjust for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities:			
Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, Investment Property and Intangible Assets		(1,850,159)	(20,000)
		(1,850,159)	(20,000)

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

26b) Cash and Cash Equivalents

For the purposes of the cash flow statement, cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand and in bank and short-term deposits and investments (considered to be cash equivalents), net of outstanding bank overdrafts. Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period as shown in the statement of cash flows can be reconciled to the related items in the Balance Sheet as follows:

	31/03/2022	31/03/2021
	£	£
Cash and Bank balances	1,403,275	1,927,449
Short Term Investments (considered to be Cash Equivalents)	9,000,000	9,000,000
Short Term Deposits (considered to be Cash Equivalents)	-	-
Bank Overdraft	-	-
	10,403,275	10,927,449

26c) Cash Flow Statement - Operating Activities

The cash flows from operating activities include:

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Interest received	51,040	50,785
Interest paid	2,677,964	2,884,790

26d) Cash flows from Investing Activities

Purchase of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets
 Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, Investment Property and Intangible Assets
 Capital Grants and contributions received

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Purchase of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets	4,212,245	4,993,211
Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, Investment Property and Intangible Assets	(1,850,159)	(20,000)
Capital Grants and contributions received	(1,578,403)	(396,012)
Net Cash flows from Investing Activities	783,683	4,577,199

26e) Cash flows from Financing Activities

Cash Receipts from Short and Long-Term Borrowing
 Repayment of Short and Long-Term Borrowing

Net Cash flows from Financing Activities

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Cash Receipts from Short and Long-Term Borrowing	-	6,000,000
Repayment of Short and Long-Term Borrowing	(6,170,265)	(14,213,710)
Net Cash flows from Financing Activities	(6,170,265)	(8,213,710)



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

27 Usable Reserves

27a) Capital Receipts Reserve

These are capital receipts which have originated primarily from the sale of assets which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure.

The Capital Receipts Reserve is credited with the proceeds from fixed asset sales and other monies defined by statute as capital receipts. These are originally credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain/loss on disposal and posted out via the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Capital Receipts Reserve. The reserve is written down when resources are applied to finance new capital expenditure or set aside to reduce an authority's capital financing requirement (or used for other purposes permitted by statute).

	Notes	31/03/2022 £	31/03/2021 £
At 1 April		1,619,304	2,056,161
Movement			
Disposal of Non Current Assets/ Capital Sales	4,26	1,850,159	20,000
Capital Receipts used to finance capital expenditure	28a, 13	(142,620)	(456,857)
At 31 March		3,326,843	1,619,304

27b) Capital Grants Unapplied account

Where a capital grant or contribution (or part thereof) has been recognised as income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, but the expenditure to be financed from that grant or contribution has not been incurred at the Balance Sheet date, the grant or contribution shall be transferred to the Capital Grants Unapplied Account (within the usable reserves section of the balance sheet), reflecting its status as a capital resource available to finance expenditure. This transfer is reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

When, at a future date, the expenditure to be financed from the grant or contribution is incurred, the grant or contribution (or part thereof) shall be transferred from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account to the Capital Adjustment Account, reflecting the application of capital resources to finance expenditure. This transfer is also reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement or in the notes to the accounts.

	Notes	31/03/2022 £	31/03/2021 £
At 1 April			
Movement			
Received in year		2,739,841	2,143,177
Transferred to CAA in year		1,466,272	2,548,731
		(1,706,072)	(1,952,068)
At 31 March		2,500,040	2,739,841



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

27c) Revenue Grants Unapplied account

Where a revenue grant or contribution (or part thereof) has been recognised as income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, but the expenditure to be financed from that grant or contribution has not been incurred at the Balance Sheet date, the grant or contribution shall be transferred to the Revenue Grants Unapplied Account (within the usable reserves section of the balance sheet), reflecting its status as a resource available to finance expenditure. This transfer is reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

When, at a future date, the expenditure to be financed from the grant or contribution is incurred, the grant or contribution (or part thereof) shall be transferred from the Revenue Grants Unapplied Account to the General Fund, reflecting the application of revenue resources to finance expenditure. This transfer is also reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement or in the notes to the accounts.

	Notes	31/03/2022 £	31/03/2021 £
At 1 April		279,305	400,503
Movement			
Received in year		301,460	53,845
Released from reserve		(279,305)	(175,043)
At 31 March	10b	301,460	279,305

27d) Earmarked Reserve

The Council has established an Earmarked Reserve under Section 9(1) of the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 for the purposes of setting aside funds required for future purposes, for example to set up an innovation fund or to smooth the cost of elections.

	Notes	31/03/2022 £	31/03/2021 £
At 1 April		10,812,488	1,352,435
Transfers between statutory & other reserves & the General Fund	4b	2,613,712	9,460,053
Transfers between Capital Fund, Renewal & Repair Fund & CAA to finance capital expenditure	12	-	-
At 31 March		13,426,200	10,812,488

The Earmarked Fund balance has increased during the year as part of the Council's arrangements to build resilience, for reform, for managing the financial impact of COVID-19 and managing the inflationary environment in the 2022/23 financial year and beyond. The Council received COVID-19 Funding Support of £1.538M from the Department for Communities. The amount of unspent funding at the end of 2021/22 which has been allocated to Earmarked Reserves to provide support going forward is £1,752k.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

27e) General Fund

This reserve shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from District Rates. Councils raise rates to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

	Notes	31/03/2022 £	31/03/2021 £
At 1 April		4,527,365	3,015,480
Applied Capital Grants	4,10c	(455,971)	(1,778,081)
Unapplied Capital Grants received in year	10d	(1,466,272)	(2,548,731)
Unapplied Revenue Grants rec'd in year		(22,154)	121,198
Direct Revenue Financing	4, 13	(168,839)	(468,790)
Depreciation and Impairment adjustment	4	8,892,239	10,754,679
Statutory Provision for financing Capital Investment	4	(5,320,804)	(5,253,949)
Net Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	4, 13	1,458,209	1,321,514
Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services	CIES	(7,234,177)	4,243,465
Transfers between Statutory and Other Reserves and the General Fund	4	(2,613,712)	(9,460,053)
Net movements on Pension Reserve	4, 22b	7,650,000	4,236,024
Disposal of Fixed Assets/Capital Sales	4, 8	305,583	118,785
Difference between finance and other costs and income calculated on an accounting basis and finance costs calculated in accordance with statutory requirements	28d	(63,943)	225,824
Other Movements		-	-
At 31 March		5,487,523	4,527,365

28 Unusable Reserves

28a) Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions.

The Account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert fair value figures to an historic cost basis.

The Account contains accumulated gains and losses on Investment Properties and gains recognised on donated assets that have yet to be consumed by the Council.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2008, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains.

	Notes	31/03/2022 £	31/03/2021 £
At 1 April		81,805,589	80,874,228
Applied Capital Grants	4,10c	455,971	1,778,081
Unapplied Capital Grants transferred to CAA in year	27b	1,706,072	1,952,068
Direct Revenue Financing	4, 13	168,839	468,790
Depreciation & Impairment adjustment	12	(8,892,239)	(10,754,679)
Statutory Provision for financing Capital Investment	4	5,320,804	5,253,949
Net Revenue expenditure funded from Capital under statute	4, 13	(1,458,209)	(1,321,514)
Disposal of Fixed Assets/ Capital Sales	4, 8	(2,155,742)	(138,785)
Capital Receipts used to finance capital expenditure	13,27a	142,620	456,857
Other Movements		4,486,887	3,236,594
Transfers between Capital Fund or Repairs and Renewals Fund & CAA to finance capital expenditure	13	-	-
At 31 March		81,580,592	81,805,589

28b) Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment and Intangible Assets. The reserve is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

- revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost
- used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation, or
- disposed of and the gains are realised.

The reserve contains only revaluation gains accumulated since 1 April 2008, the date the reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on the Capital Adjustment Account.

The purpose of this account is to build up a balance based on the revaluation (upwards or downwards) of individual assets. All such revaluations (excluding impairment losses that have been debited to Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services) are mirrored in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. It is a fundamental principle of this account that it never becomes negative. If an asset was held at current value when derecognised, the balance held on the Revaluation Reserve is written off to the Capital Adjustment Account.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

	Notes	31/03/2022 £	31/03/2021 £
At 1 April		79,999,277	79,891,827
Revaluation & Impairment	12	10,675,518	3,344,044
Other Movements		(4,486,887)	(3,236,594)
At 31 March		86,187,908	79,999,277

28c) Pension Reserve

Full details on the Pension Reserve are disclosed in Note 22.

	Notes	31/03/2022 £	31/03/2021 £
At 1 April		(60,614,000)	(46,909,976)
Net Movements on Pension Reserve	4, 22b	(7,650,000)	(4,236,024)
Revaluation & Impairment	22b	21,343,000	(9,468,000)
At 31 March		(46,921,000)	(60,614,000)

28d) Accumulated Absences Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year e.g. staff annual leave entitlement carried forward at the end of the financial year. Statutory arrangements are in place to ensure that the impact on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is neutralised by transfers to or from this Accumulated Absences Account.

	Notes	31/03/2022 £	31/03/2021 £
At 1 April		(758,767)	(532,943)
Adjustments in relation to short term accumulated absences	4	63,943	(225,824)
At 31 March		(694,824)	(758,767)

29. Significant Trading Operations

The Council did not operate any significant trading operations during the 2021/22 financial year.

30. Related Party Transactions

A related party is one that has the ability to control the other party or exercise significant influence over the other party in making financial and operating decisions. This includes cases where the related party entity and another entity are subject to common control but excludes providers of finance in the course of their normal business with the Council and Trade Unions in the course of their normal dealings with the Council. In addition, where the



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

relationship between the Council and the entity is solely an Agency agreement, this is not deemed to be a Related Party Transaction.

A Related Party Transaction is a transfer of resources or obligations between related parties, regardless of whether a price is charged. They exclude transactions with any other entity that is a related party solely because of its economic dependence on the Council or the Government of which it forms part.

All transactions detailed below have been entered into in full compliance with the Council's Standing Orders.

Organisations in which Councillors have an interest

Councillors have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. During the year, the Council paid for works and services amounting to £1,559k (2020/21: £1,133k) from organisations in which individual Councillors have an interest. In the majority of cases this was not a personal interest, but rather they were representing Council. The main recipient within this total is £1,545k (2020/21: £1,127k) to the Northern Community Leisure Trust.

The Council also paid grants and contributions of £679k (2020/21: £633k) to a number of organisations in which Councillors represented the Council's interest. The main grants and contributions were £457k paid to Community Advice Ards and North Down; £55k paid to the Northern Ireland Local Government Association and £85k paid to Open House Festival Ltd. These grants and contributions were made with proper consideration of declaration of interests.

Joint Committees and Other Councils

The Council is a member of the arc21 Joint Committee which is established for the purposes of managing waste. arc21 accounts for its funding by the provision of a statement of accounts which is prepared under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations 2015. During the year the Council incurred expenditure of £6,700k (2020/21: £6,651k) and received income of £169k (2020/21: £51k).

Council also received services amounting to £305k (2020/21: £320k) from other Councils and provided services of £408k (2020/21: £325k) to other Councils.

Details of all amounts outstanding to Councils and Joint Committees at 31 March 2022 are set out in notes 16 and 19.

During the year Council repaid a £3,000K short-term loan leaving no short-term loans outstanding at the end of the financial year.

Other Public Bodies

In the course of the year, the Council incurred expenditure of £2,417k (2020/21: £1,986k) to other public bodies. £597k (2020/21: £598k) was in respect of property rates; £91k (2021: £84k) was in relation pension contributions. The balance of the amounts mainly relates to services received and the Council contribution towards the development and configuration of the regional planning IT system (£220K). The Council received other income of £670k (2020/21: £578k) from other public bodies for services provided and £1,800K in relation to the disposal of the former Ards Leisure Centre site under a vesting order by the Department for Infrastructure - Roads.



Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

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The Council made principal and interest loan repayments of £5,506k to the Department of Finance. An analysis of amounts outstanding to both the Department and other institutions at 31 March 2022 are set out in note 18b.

Details of amounts outstanding are set out in notes 16 and 19.

Council received grants from other public bodies of £5,371k (2020/21: £15,306k), including Department for Communities £2,271k (2020/21: £9,297k).

31. Events after the Reporting Period

There were no events occurring after the 31 March 2022 which require adjustment to the Council's financial statements or additional disclosures.

Accounts Authorised for Issue Certificate

The Chief Financial Officer authorised these for issue on 19 September 2022.





Ards and North Down Borough Council

Audit Committee Progress Report

September 2022



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Progress to Date

Summary Status of the 2022/23 Plan

Progress to Date

Summary Status of the 2022/23 Plan

We have commenced delivery of our 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan. An overview of our progress for the year to date (as at 12th September 2022) is set out below:

Final Report	Draft Report	Fieldwork	Planning	Yet to Commence	Cancelled/Deferred	Total
2	-	-	5	4	-	11

Further detail on reviews is provided in Appendix I.

Final Reports

Findings Identified

Final Report

Strategic Capital Development Service Review

Background

The scope of this internal audit included a review of the controls in place within the Strategic Capital Development Service to manage risks associated with Service planning, budgetary control, risk management and performance monitoring/reporting.

Overview of Approach

In order to complete this engagement, we used the following:

- Discussions with key members of the Service such as Head of Service and Service Unit Managers to walkthrough key processes.
- Review of key items of documentation such as policies and procedures, Service Plans, Service risk register and performance improvement reports.
- A limited programme of sample testing to assess control operating effectiveness, including:
 - Review of a sample of two monthly Strategic Capital Development manager detail reports from Finance, to determine whether variances requiring clarification have completed accompanying budget holder comments;
 - Review of a sample of five weekly Strategic Capital Development management meetings, to determine whether Service level risk was adequately discussed and whether input was sought from Service unit management to feed into the Strategic Capital Development Service Risk Register;
 - Review of a sample of two quarterly Service assurance statements from the Head of Service to the Risk Manager, to determine whether this is appropriate for escalating significant or emerging risks;
 - Review of a sample of two quarterly performance review reports from the Head of Strategic Capital Development Service to evidence reporting of performance against objectives within the Service Plan, as well as evidence of reporting of these reports to the Corporate Services Committee and to the Council, to evidence oversight of performance against objectives within the Service Plan.
- Consideration of possible improvements or alternatives for the controls in place.
- Held a close out meeting with relevant stakeholders to discuss any review outcomes.
- Prepared a draft report, to report findings with practical recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- Prepared a final report, including management action plans in response to any recommendations



Overall Opinion

As a result of our audit a **Satisfactory** assurance opinion was provided.

Findings

There were no **Priority 1 or 2** findings identified during our review.

There were two **Priority 3** findings identified during our review.

Final Report

New Ways of Working

Background

The scope of this advisory internal audit included a review of the Council's strategic planning for new ways of working (e.g. hybrid working, remote working) in a post-Covid environment, including consideration of plans for understanding workforce sentiment to new ways of working, creation of new HR policies and business technology planning, including data and information management, and estates to support new ways of working.

Overview of Approach

In order to complete this engagement, we used the following:

- Review of Council's documentation relating to strategic planning for new ways of working including the issued Workforce Planning survey and Future Working Arrangements survey, interim Home Working Policy, Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme progress reports, and meeting minutes from HOST and from the Strategic Policy and Finance Group (SPFG);
- Discussions with key stakeholders including the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Performance, Director of Organisational Development and Administration, Head of Finance, Head of Administration, Head of HR and Organisational Development, Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance and the Business Technology Manager;
- Consideration of approaches to new ways of working being adopted in other organisations which may help inform the Council's position on new ways of working;
- Consideration of possible improvements or alternatives for the controls in place.
- Held a close out meeting with relevant stakeholders to discuss any review outcomes.
- Prepared a draft report, to report findings with practical recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- Prepared a final report following management feedback.

High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
3	1	1

Overall Opinion

As this was an advisory review, no level of assurance has been provided. The high, medium, low grading is the rating system used for advisory reviews as opposed to the assurance ratings of priority 1,2 and 3.

Findings

There were three **High priority** findings identified during our review. They can be summarised as follows;

- Governance and Establishing Direction – The risk of a lack of defined direction for HOST due to staff having different views on what the future work strategy should look like.
- Stakeholder Engagement - Engagement with staff has primarily focused on those whose roles could be carried out on a hybrid basis. How staff work when they are in the office will be equally important.
- Information Management – There is currently no standardised approach to information and data management across the Council

There was one **Medium priority** finding identified during our review. This can be summarised as follows;

- Availability of technology and hybrid working facilities – Business technology and estates planning should be strategically planned to support hybrid working.

There was also one **Low priority** finding identified during our review.

Appendix I

Progress to Date

Progress to Date

Update on Annual Internal Audit Plan – 2022/23

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In this section we have provided an overview of our progress regarding the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan as at 12/09/2022.

Ref	Review Area	Sponsor	Planned Days	Actual Days to Date	Audit Status	Assurance Level	Planned Start Date	Actual Start Date	Notes
Quarter 1									
ANDBC 22/23 - 01	Planning for new ways of working in post-Covid environment	Head of HR and Organisational Development, Business Technology Manager	10	10	Final Draft Report for Audit Committee	N/A - Advisory	13/06/2022	13/06/2022	Final Draft Report for Audit Committee issued 31/08/2022.
ANDBC 22/23 - 02	Service Review – Strategic Capital Development	Head of Strategic Capital Development	15	15	Final Draft Report for Audit Committee	Satisfactory	27/06/2022	27/06/2022	Final Draft Report for Audit Committee issued 08/09/2022.
Quarter 2									
ANDBC 22/23 – 04	PCSP	Head of Community and Wellbeing	8	0.5	Terms of reference agreed	-	12/09/2022	-	Final terms of reference issued 09/08/2022.
ANDBC 22/23 – 05	Strategic financial planning	Head of Finance	12	0.5	Terms of reference agreed	-	19/09/2022	-	Final terms of reference issued 05/09/2022.
ANDBC 22/23 – 06	Treasury management	Head of Finance	15	0.5	Terms of reference agreed	-	26/09/2022	-	Final terms of reference issued 05/09/2022.

Progress to Date

Update on Annual Internal Audit Plan – 2022/23

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Ref	Review Area	Sponsor	Planned Days	Actual Days to date	Audit Status	Assurance Level	Planned Start Date	Actual Start Date	Notes
Quarter 3									
ANDBC 22/23 – 07	Procurement	Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance	10	0.5	Terms of reference agreed	-	14/11/2022	-	Final terms of reference issued 10/08/2022.
ANDBC 22/23 - 03	Waste Management	Head of Waste Services	10	3	Terms of reference agreed	-	21/11/2022	-	Final terms of reference issued 16/06/2022. Fieldwork rescheduled to commence 21/11/2022 due to management request and sickness absence of Council staff.
Quarter 4									
ANDBC 22/23 – 08	Labour Market Partnership	Head of Economic Development	10	0	Planning to commence	-	09/01/2023	-	Planning to commence.
ANDBC 22/23 – 09	Strategic environmental planning	Head of Administration	10	0	Planning to commence	-	19/01/2023	-	Planning to commence.
ANDBC 22/23 - 10	Service Review – Environmental Health	Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development	15	0	Planning to commence	-	23/01/2023	-	Planning to commence.
ANDBC 22/23 - 11	Cyber Security	Business Technology Manager	15	0	Planning to commence	-	09/01/2023	-	Planning to commence.

Changes to the Internal Audit Plan and AOB

Amendments and AOB to be noted by the Audit Committee

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We have no other business to present however would be happy to discuss any other business that Ards and North Down Borough Council may wish to consider.

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Ards and North Down Borough Council

Strategic Capital Development Service Review – Draft Report

September 2022

This document is a draft report. This document is confidential and is issued to a limited circulation for discussion only. Matters of fact and opinion have yet to be fully clarified and finalised. Details may change between this draft and the final report. It is not intended that management rely on the contents of this document until a final report is issued.

Matters noted in this draft report are only those, which came to our attention up to this point of our work and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all issues that exist, or all actions that might be taken. This draft report is made solely to Ards and North Down Borough Council for discussion purposes only.

We do not accept or assume responsibility for our work to anyone other than Ards and North Down Borough Council. This draft document must not be circulated or referred to without our express written consent.



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Draft Report	Eddy Breslin	23/08/2022
Final Draft Report	Eddy Breslin	08/09/2022



1. Overview

1.1. Introduction

This assurance review was undertaken as part of the 2022/23 Internal Audit Operational Plan and focused on the key controls in place to manage risks associated with Service planning, budgetary control, risk management and performance monitoring/reporting.

Overview

The purpose of the Strategic Capital Development Service is to support, advise and provide strategic direction across all Council directorates, to support the successful delivery of Council's Capital Projects Portfolio in line with the Council's PEOPLE focused priorities, the Council's Community Plan, or "the Big Plan" 2017-2032.

The Strategic Capital Development Service consists of the Capital Projects Service Unit. The Service comprises of a Head of Service, and two Service Unit managers and is a part of the Finance and Performance Directorate. The Strategic Capital Development Service also has a small number of officers, as well as two admin support staff.

The Strategic Capital Development Service provides support and insight to other Directorates within the Council, as well as engaging with other key stakeholders such as Elected Members, consultants, contractors, funding bodies, operators, suppliers and Borough residents, to deliver the capital portfolio of the organisation.

Scope and Objectives

The scope of this internal audit included a review of the controls in place to manage risks associated with Service planning, budgetary control, risk management and performance monitoring/reporting. The objectives of the Internal Audit review were to:

- Gain an understanding of the Service planning and reporting process, including the processes to identify stakeholder analysis, PESTLE analysis and future challenges.
- Assess whether Service objectives are aligned to support the achievement of corporate objectives, and whether KPIs and measures to track achievement of objective outcomes are reported to Management.
- Determine how progress against objectives and outcomes are monitored and reported, including verifying that KPIs are set and monitored for each.
- Assess whether the impact of Covid-19 has been considered in designing the Service objectives for FY 2021/22.
- Determine whether Service objectives remain relevant and aligned to corporate objectives as per the Corporate Plan 2020-2024.



- Determine whether the budget setting process is appropriately communicated to members of staff, including the use of documented policies and procedures.
- Determine how the Service identifies its annual budget needs and whether it aligns these to delivery of its annual objectives as expressed in the Service Plan.
- Determine if the Service identified the impact of Covid-19 on its annual budget needs and ascertain if this was considered during the budget setting process for FY2021/22.
- Assess whether actual Service performance is measured against the budget and ascertain whether variances in income and expenditure are investigated (against clearly defined variance reporting levels) and reported to Management monthly.
- Consider how risk management is embedded and communicated, across the Service and Service Units, including: assessing the process for identifying, assessing, and monitoring risks facing the Service, and considering whether there are appropriate reporting structures for escalating significant or emerging risks.
- Gain an understanding of the process to set Service performance improvement objectives and how these differ from the Service objectives, including verifying whether there is a clear understanding of what performance improvement looks like for the Service.
- Consider how performance improvement is embedded and communicated within the Service and Service Units.
- Assess whether the process for monitoring and reporting KPIs against Service performance improvement objectives is appropriate for determining if the Service is meeting these.

1.2. Approach

In order to complete this engagement, we used the following:

- Discussions with key members of the Service such as Head of Service and Service Unit Managers to walkthrough key processes.
- Review of key items of documentation such as policies and procedures, Service Plans, Service risk register and performance improvement reports.
- A limited programme of sample testing to assess control operating effectiveness, including:
 - Review of a sample of two monthly Strategic Capital Development manager detail reports from Finance, to determine whether variances requiring clarification have completed accompanying budget holder comments;
 - Review of a sample of five weekly Strategic Capital Development management meetings, to determine whether Service level risk was adequately discussed and whether input was sought from Service unit management to feed into the Strategic Capital Development Service Risk Register;
 - Review of a sample of two quarterly Service assurance statements from the Head of Service to the Risk Manager, to determine whether this is appropriate for escalating significant or emerging risks;
 - Review of a sample of two quarterly performance review reports from the Head of Strategic Capital Development Service to evidence reporting of performance against objectives within the Service Plan, as well as evidence of reporting of these reports to the Corporate Services Committee and to the Council, to evidence oversight of performance against objectives within the Service Plan.
- Consideration of possible improvements or alternatives for the controls in place.

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- Held a close out meeting with relevant stakeholders to discuss any review outcomes.
- Prepared a draft report, to report findings with practical recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- Prepared a final report, including management action plans in response to any recommendations.

Our sole source for information has been management information and representations. We do not accept responsibility for such information and have not performed any substantiation or external confirmation procedures to establish its accuracy.

Our work was performed in accordance with the Deloitte Internal Audit Methodology which is consistent with the standards of the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors. Our work was carried out remotely between June 2022 and August 2022.

1.3. Summary of findings

In **Section 2** we have set out our detailed findings and recommendations arising from our review. Our findings have been graded using the scale outlined in **Appendix 1**. The number of findings by risk grade can be summarised as follows:



There were no **Priority 1** findings identified during our review.

There were no **Priority 2** finding identified during our review.

There were two **Priority 3** findings identified during our review. These can be summarised as follows:

- Service Risk Register Review (see **Section 2.1**);
- Incomplete signatures on Service Plan and Risk Assurance Statement (see **Section 2.2**);

Full details of the issues may be found in **Section 2** of this report



1.4. Conclusion

Overall, there is a satisfactory system of governance, risk management and control in relation to the Strategic Capital Development Service. While there may be some residual risk identified, this should not significantly impact on the achievement of system objectives.

Consequently, on the basis of the Internal Audit work undertaken, we have given a **satisfactory** level of assurance that the system objectives will be achieved. Refer to **Appendix I** for a definition of the assurance level given.

1.5. Observations

In line with our commitment to adding value through our internal audit services, we have noted two minor observations relating to update of the Council's Budget Setting Procedure and Risk Management Strategy, in addition to the formal recommendations included in **Section 2**:

- **Update of Budget Setting Procedure**

We identified that the process for moving funds between service units or releasing funds back to the Council budget has not been documented within this procedure.

We also identified that the Budget Setting Procedure does not include detail on a variance threshold amount / criterion for a threshold to be determined or calculated regarding variances highlighted by Finance through the monthly budget reporting process as requiring further explanation from the budget holders. Additionally, we identified that there is no detail regarding the periodic monitoring of budgets and Service Unit Managers' responsibilities for monitoring budgets in the procedure.

These areas were raised as findings in the prior year HR & OD Service Review report, therefore we have not raised this as a repeat formal recommendation in this instance.

- **Update of Performance Improvement Report**

Council Services are required to provide a report to the Performance Improvement Manager on performance against Service Plan objectives on a quarterly basis. This includes Service Plan KPI performance, and the report includes a traffic light rating system, with green items meaning a target has been achieved, amber items are in progress and red items are not yet started.

Progress against Service Plan objectives within these quarterly reports are reviewed by the Corporate Service Committee and then presented to the Council. Actions to be taken have been outlined in the performance improvement report summary to address the missed Service Plan targets.



We identified that there is no requirement to specify due dates or assigned responsible owners for these actions to assist with tracking progress within the quarterly performance improvement report.

These areas were raised as findings in the prior year HR & OD Service Review report, therefore we have not raised this as a repeat formal recommendation in this instance.

- **Update of Risk Management Strategy**


- (i) The responsibility of the risk owner and the Head of Service (p5 and p6 of the Risk Strategy) is to "escalate risks where these exceed the identified risk tolerance threshold." On review of the Risk Strategy, we identified there is no defined risk tolerance threshold which has been referred to regarding the escalation of risks.
- (ii) We identified that the "date of Council approval" has been recorded on the policy as 'Corporate Services Committee approval' instead of the date on which the policy was approved by the Council.

These areas were raised as findings in the HR & OD Service Review, therefore we have not raised this as a repeat formal recommendation in this instance.

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2. Detailed findings and recommendations

2.1. Service Risk Register Review

Finding	Recommendation	Priority
<p>The Risk Management Strategy requires that each Directorate should plan to review their Service Risk Register periodically, and at least quarterly, to ensure that progress is being made towards controlling the risks and to identify any changes or emerging risks, for example those arising from new legislation or brought about by unforeseen events.</p> <p>We noted that during bi-weekly management meetings, risks relating to individual capital projects are discussed. However, Management advised that there is no formalised process to review the Service risk register, as set out in the Service Plan, on a periodic basis, apart from during Service Planning each year.</p> <p>Potential Impact</p> <p>Where the focus is on individual project risks, a failure to periodically review the Service's risk register may lead to overall Service risks not being updated and mitigated accordingly. It may also lead to new general Service risks not being identified and escalated appropriately.</p>	<p>The Strategic Capital Development Service should ensure that its Service risk register is reviewed in line with the frequency documented within the Risk Management Strategy.</p>	
Management response		
Action Plan	Owner/ Title	Target Date of Implementation
<p>1. Head of Strategic Capital Development has requested a draft Governance Report schedule from Performance Manager as it would be useful to have a record of key dates and schedule in quarterly Service Risk Register reviews as recommended in this Audit, to coincide with other reporting requirements.</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Capital Development</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>
<p>2. Set up Risk Management Meetings quarterly to review and update the Service Risk Register. In the meantime, escalate any identified risk to senior management (for example, Lack of resources due to illness, and the like)</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Capital Development</p>	<p>Quarterly/ report as and when required</p>



2.2. Incomplete signatures on Service Plan and Risk Assurance Statement

Finding	Recommendation		Priority
<p>We reviewed Strategic Capital Development’s Service Plan and identified that the Service Plan had not been signed off as peer reviewed by another Head of Service, in line with the Council’s Service Planning requirements. The Service Plan was, however, signed by the Director of Finance and Performance.</p> <p>We also noted that the Period 3-4 Risk Assurance Statement for Strategic Capital Development was not signed by the Director of Finance. This was signed by the Head of Service; however, the Risk Management Strategy states risk assurance statements must be signed by both the Head of Service and Director.</p> <p>Potential Impact</p> <p>Failure to receive appropriate review and approval may lead to a failure to include key areas and risks within the Service Plan and Risk Assurance Statement.</p>	<p>The Service should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that future Service Plans are peer reviewed by another Head of Service to ensure the Service Plan meets all requirements and will prove beneficial to the Service. 2. Ensure that all risk assurance statements are signed by the appropriate Director, prior to the Risk Manager receiving them. 		
Management response			
Action Plan	Owner/ Title	Target Date of Implementation	
<p>Share Reporting Schedule with other Heads of Service to notify and allow them the time to review and sign the report.</p>	<p>Head of Strategic Capital Development</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>	



3. Statement of Responsibility

We take responsibility for this report, which is prepared on the basis of the limitations set out below.

The scope and objectives of this review are summarised in **Section 1.3** of this report. This is not an attest engagement and the matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all weaknesses that exists, or of all improvements that might be made. Recommendations for improvement should be assessed by Ards and North Down Borough Council for their full implications before they are implemented. This report has been prepared solely for Ards and North Down Borough Council and should not be quoted or referred to in whole or part without prior written consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the report has not been prepared and is not intended, for any other purpose.

David Kinsella

For and on behalf of

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Appendix I: Reporting Definitions

Assurance Opinion

For each report delivered in the annual Internal Audit Plan, we will provide one of three levels of assurance, ranging from satisfactory assurance to unacceptable assurance. These assurance levels reflect the latest requirements of the Department of Finance (DAO (DoF) 07/16).

Assurance Level	Evaluating and Testing Conclusion
Satisfactory	Overall there is a satisfactory system of governance, risk management and control. While there may be some residual risk identified, this should not significantly impact on the achievement of system objectives.
Limited	There are significant weaknesses within the governance, risk management and control framework which, if not addressed, could lead to the system objectives not being achieved.
Unacceptable	The system of governance, risk management and control has failed or there is a real and substantial risk that the system will fail to meet its objectives.



Recommendation Priorities	
Priority 1	Failure to implement the recommendation is likely to result in a major failure of a key organisational objective, significant damage to the reputation of the organisation or the misuse of public funds.
Priority 2	Failure to implement the recommendation could result in the failure of an important organisational objective or could have some impact on a key organisational objective.
Priority 3	Failure to implement the recommendation could lead to an increased risk exposure.

These definitions of evaluations should be interpreted in conjunction with the scope of the audit work and in the overall context that our findings should only be relied upon to be representative of the operation of control procedures at the time of discussion or observation of these control practices and in relation to the transactions tested. Projection of evaluations of future periods is subject to the risk that the policies and procedures may become inadequate because of changes in conditions, or that the degree of compliance with these policies and procedures may deteriorate. The performance of Internal Audit work should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and work performed by Internal Audit should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should Internal Audit work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud or irregularity should there be any, although our audit procedures have been designed so that any material irregularity has a reasonable probability of discovery. Even sound systems of internal control may not be proof against collusive fraud. Internal audit procedures are designed to focus on areas as identified by management as being of greatest risk and significance. Effective implementation of our recommendations by management is important for the maintenance of a reliable internal control system.

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Ards and North Down Borough Council

New Ways of Working Advisory Review

August 2022

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Final Draft Report	Una McGarry	31/08/2022

1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

This advisory review was undertaken as part of the 2022/23 Internal Audit Operational Plan and focused on a review of the Council's strategic planning for new ways of working (for example hybrid working, remote working) in a post-Covid environment, including consideration of plans for understanding workforce sentiment to new ways of working, creation of new HR policies and business technology planning, including data and information management, and estates to support new ways of working.

1.2 Overview of Council Planning to Date

The Head of Service Team (HOST) are currently leading on the strategic planning for new ways of working in a post-Covid environment. In June 2022, the Northern Ireland (NI) Executive lifted working from home guidance which had been issued during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) completed a new hybrid working policy with plans to open 11 regional 'Connect2' hubs to support and facilitate the return of civil servants to offices and in-person working.

Given this public sector context, it is pertinent for organisations across NI to consider how remote and/or flexible new ways of working could be used effectively in a way which meets business need.

Governance and guidance

The Council currently has an interim work from home policy, which will remain effective until the end of November 2022. The interim policy allows Council staff to work either remotely or in-person dependent on management need and outlines the IT equipment available to employees while working from home, for example, monitors and keyboards. Interim home working arrangements, including technology and equipment requirements for staff across the Council have been governed and approved by the Corporate Services Committee and the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and throughout the internal Council pandemic recovery period.



Stakeholder Engagement

At the time of our fieldwork, HOST had issued two formal surveys to two Council employee groups. The Future Working Arrangements survey had been issued to all Council staff who are working, or whose role could work, remotely to determine equipment requirements and to gain perspective on workforce sentiment with regards to new ways of working. The results of this survey will help inform the Council's permanent work from home policy and will support decision-making and business cases around strategic planning for new ways of working, including for additional equipment.

In addition to this, a Workforce Planning Survey has been issued to Service Unit Managers and HOST to improve Council staff recruitment and retention and to gain insight into current staff issues faced.

The Council has also engaged with external consultants for delivery of post pandemic recovery workshops in order to engage with staff in creating Service-based action plans around staff management ('Heads Together' workshop) and performance improvement, which are areas which impact and are impacted by new ways of working. We were advised that this is an optional activity for Service staff to engage in and that at the time of our fieldwork not all Services have chosen to take up these sessions.

Employees are also engaged with through Pride in Performance conversations, and there are plans to engage focus groups to gain perspective on employee aspirations and expectations with regards to remote and hybrid working as part of the Council's work in securing the Investors in People (IIP) accreditation.

Estates and Technology

Discussions are ongoing around the infrastructure required to support new ways of working. Given the historic status of much of the Council's estate and buildings, there is an awareness and understanding of the need for updated facilities to accommodate for example, hybrid meetings. Issues and requirements such as these will be considered as part of wider discussions relating to the Council's Civic and Office Rationalisation project which is being considered to look at the future estate requirement.

The Business Technology department have upgraded the Council's Virtual Private Network (VPN) in order to handle greater usage. In addition, HOST carried out an assessment, as part of the Future Working Arrangements survey, to identify laptop requirements for teams across the Council. We were advised by Business Technology at the time of our fieldwork, that the Council had issued approximately 140 new laptops to employees working remotely or on a hybrid basis, 60 of these being in the last 10 months.

Strategic Transformation Projects

The Council have identified a number of projects to support its vision of strategic transformation, which are to be coordinated by the Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance. Currently there are 23 established projects within the Council's Transformation and Efficiency Programme covering a number of areas such as strategic asset and estate reform, digitalisation, and workforce planning amongst other areas. Progress against project objectives is overseen by the Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme Board and is also reported to the Council through the Strategic Corporate Services Committee.

Achievement of the Council's strategic transformation ambition requires collaboration and cohesion between multiple work streams across the organisation and will progress interdependently alongside strategic planning around new ways of working.

1.3 Scope and Objectives

The scope of this advisory internal audit included a review of the Council's strategic planning for new ways of working (e.g. hybrid working, remote working) in a post-Covid environment, including consideration of plans for understanding workforce sentiment to new ways of working, creation of new HR policies and business technology planning, including data and information management, and estates to support new ways of working.

The audit focussed on the following areas:

- Determine whether there is a clear framework for the strategic planning for new ways of working, including the following key areas:
 - o a framework for developing a project or a plan for the Council's move towards new ways of working;
 - o identified workstreams to include within the project or plan;
 - o plans for arriving at a Council position to support the strategic planning of new ways of working;
 - o definition of roles and responsibilities to drive strategic planning of new ways of working at a corporate level.
- For each identified workstream, including people, technology, data and information management, and estates and resourcing, determine whether a project management approach is being followed including the following key areas:
 - o definition of roles and responsibilities within each workstream to drive strategic planning of new ways of working;
 - o clear aims and objectives including defined timescales for achievement of objectives, and translation of aims and objectives to action plans within each workstream;
 - o engagement with stakeholders across the Council across all workstreams;
 - o processes to identify, consider and document risks and mitigating actions around new ways of working within each workstream.
- Determine whether there are data gathering processes in place to understand workforce sentiment on new ways of working, and whether there are planning processes around the communication of the Council's aims for new ways of working to staff and wider stakeholders.

1.4 Approach

In order to complete this engagement, we used the following:

- Obtaining the Council's documentation relating to strategic planning for new ways of working including the issued Workforce Planning survey and Future Working Arrangements survey, interim Home Working Policy, Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme progress reports, and meeting minutes from HOST and from the Strategic Policy and Finance Group (SPFG);
- Discussions with key stakeholders including members of the Head of Service Team (HOST) and Corporate Leadership Team, including the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Performance, Director of Organisational Development and Administration, Head of Finance, Head of Administration, Head of HR and Organisational Development, Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance and the Business Technology Manager;
- Consideration of approaches to new ways of working being adopted in other organisations which may help inform the Council's position on new ways of working;

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- Consideration of possible improvements or alternatives for the controls in place.
- Held a close out meeting with relevant stakeholders to discuss any review outcomes.
- Prepared a draft report, to report findings with practical recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- Prepared a final report, including management action plans in response to any recommendations.

Our sole source for information has been management information and representations. We do not accept responsibility for such information and have not performed any substantiation or external confirmation procedures to establish its accuracy.

Our work was performed in accordance with the Deloitte Internal Audit Methodology which is consistent with the standards of the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors. Our work was carried out remotely between June and July 2022.

1.5 Summary of findings

In **Section 2** we have set out our detailed findings and recommendations arising from our review. To support management's continuation of strategic planning processes around new ways of working, we have graded these recommendations as High, Medium or Low priority for action. The number of findings can be summarised as follows:

High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
3	1	1

We have also noted in Appendix I, some other approaches to hybrid working policy development we have identified from our research that the Council may wish to consider in its work.

1.6 Conclusion

As this was an advisory review, no level of assurance has been provided.

2. Detailed Findings and Recommendations

2.1 Governance and Establishing Direction

Finding	Recommendation	Priority
<p>New ways of working will mean different things to different people. Some organisations have moved to being able to facilitate fully remote working for some of their staff, whilst others have adopted a more fixed approach where staff work from the office two days per week and from home the rest of the time (if they wish). Some, such as NICS, have also taken the opportunity to think about working in a more agile way; thinking about the use of their estate to create hubs that facilitate staff to be in the 'office' rather than at home, but at a location that may be more convenient to their home or for other meetings they may have that day.</p> <p>As outlined in Section 1.2, there have been a number of actions taken which will inform strategic planning for new ways of working such as distribution of surveys to employees with the intention to collate and analyse feedback imminently. The Council has an interim work from home policy, effective until the end of November 2022 and work is ongoing to update this guidance to outline the Council's policy towards new ways of working. At the time of this review, the Council had not communicated a final position in relation to remote or hybrid working to employees, although staff working from home had been asked by the Chief Executive to return to the office two days a week from July 2022.</p> <p>During discussions, the risk of a lack of defined direction for HOST was expressed, primarily due to the fact that staff may have different views on what the future work strategy should look like. This also impacts on structures to deliver and we noted that there is currently no overarching formal framework and/or workstreams in place to bring together all the elements that will require to be considered in terms of new ways of working: for example regarding estates, information management, business technology, and workforce planning. Many of the actions or workstreams will relate to aspects of the Strategic Transformation and Efficiency projects already identified but consideration of new ways of working as a formal theme or element within each of these projects or the overall programme has not been formally established.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council should continue to work towards establishing a formal agreed position with respect to new ways of working, including hybrid and remote working, as a starting point. This corporate position can then be used to drive and inform the update and communication of the Council's formal policy to new ways of working and will feed directly into the Council's strategic transformation ambition. 2. As the Council progresses in its strategic planning around new ways of working, the Council should consider the need and value which may be added in establishing an overarching formal framework and/or workstreams to unite all the elements of new ways of working planning that are currently being taken or planned in areas of estates, business technology, workforce planning. From review of the September 2021 Transformation Programme progress report, we identified a number of key Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme projects which could be considered relevant for the Council's strategic planning around new ways of working. Therefore, the Council may wish to consider formally linking these projects with strategic planning for new 	High

Finding	Recommendation	Priority
<p>It is also important to ensure that delivery of the Strategic Transformation and Efficiency programme and workstreams, and any associated strategic planning for new ways of working, is appropriately resourced from a personnel perspective. We noted from our discussions that staff highlighted significant workloads already, in particular in areas where there have been challenges for recruitment on large-scale projects. We were also advised that the Workforce Strategy will not be completed until April 2023 – there may be a need for interim direction regarding workforce so as to inform estates and business technology planning.</p> <p>Potential impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a risk that if not appropriately resourced, planning for new ways of working becomes piecemeal rather than as part of a joined-up approach. • Defining the direction of travel or ambition for new ways of working will be important in ensuring that actions to deliver against it can be appropriately taken and to reduce any risk of ineffective use of resources in estates or business technology planning. • Being clear about ambition for the future of work will be important in supporting the Council to recruit and retain staff and also for the public to understand how Council will plan to work with them in future. We noted from our discussions that some staff had already faced instances where interviewees or potential candidates wanted a firm commitment to hybrid or remote working and there may be a risk that, if Council does not move pace with other public and private sector organisations, recruitment and retention of staff may become more challenging. 	<p>ways of working, particularly in the areas of workforce planning, estates/facilities planning and management, internal and external communications and information and data management.</p>	

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2.2 Stakeholder Engagement

Finding	Recommendation	Priority
<p>Engagement with staff regarding new ways of working has primarily consisted of the Future Working Arrangements Survey and Workforce Planning Survey. These have primarily focused on those whose roles could be carried out on a hybrid basis. How staff work when they are in the office will be equally important; for example, how frequently do staff want to come together with their whole team, how do they envisage working when in the office (e.g. primarily for meetings or for team interaction), what kind of spaces will teams need for working together, what would help them to engage effectively with people (either internal or external) who are working remotely?</p> <p>Potential impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a risk that by not engaging staff more broadly creates a perception of inequality or that new ways of working are only for those who can work from home. • Additionally, there may be a lack of data to support decisions around new ways of working and to create a business case for any particular direction of travel. 	<p>In formalising its strategic planning approach to new ways of working, the Council should finalise collation and analysis of feedback from both surveys issued at the time of fieldwork. In addition to this, the Council should consider additional ways to collect data and engage with staff across the Council and at all levels to understand how they wish to work as teams (both in person and engaging with people virtually) and support decisions/business cases around new ways of working.</p>	<p>High</p>

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2.3 Information Management

Finding	Recommendation	Priority
<p>Having effective digital information management systems is the primary enabler for being able to effectively work outside the office, or from another location that is not an individual's normal office base.</p> <p>There is currently no standardised approach to information and data management across the Council, or a digital information management system in place, resulting in Services adopting their own individual approaches for electronic and hard copy file management.</p> <p>We noted from our discussions that some staff (for example, administrative staff) are required to work in the office full time while other staff in similar roles work from home – primarily because much of the data they work with is not digitised.</p> <p>Potential impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of standardised approach to information management is likely to lead to inconsistent use of collaboration/information sharing tools. It may also impede the Council's ability to identify where documentation is stored and could lead to issues around succession planning where knowledge is not shared. There are also broader questions related to digital data management such as confidentiality and data privacy. A perceived difference between home and office-based staff, may lead to a risk of low staff morale and a sense of division within teams. This could also lead to a risk of division in the employee and management relationship, for example, if management are working remotely whilst admin staff are in the office full time. 	<p>The Council should implement a standardised approach to information and data management across the organisation and consider the need for procuring an organisational information management system to ensure consistent use of collaboration/information sharing tools and that storage of documentation across Services is standardised.</p>	<p>High</p>

2.4 Availability of technology and hybrid working facilities

Finding	Recommendation	Priority
<p>Throughout interviews with key stakeholders for this review, lack of suitable office-space, facilities and technology within the Council to support hybrid working was raised as an issue which would impede an immediate transition to effective hybrid working. For example, we were advised that there is facility in one room of the Town Hall in Bangor for a screen to be brought in so that those in the room can connect with others outside the building. However, if there is to be a higher level of hybrid working, staff may need more office space with the capability for video conferencing as well as smaller, private spaces where staff could take part in video calls (for example, if they are in the office but all those they are speaking to are connecting remotely). Issues such as room acoustics were also highlighted in discussions – for example, where a team had removed files from their offices as they were digitised, the room acoustics changed so calls had a greater echo.</p> <p>There are also other considerations for new ways of working in terms of maximising the Council's estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to the pandemic all staff worked in the office and, as such, there was no need for 'hot-desking' (where staff are not allocated a permanent desk but may use a pool of desks available when they are in). For staff in the office, the Council may need to consider therefore the number of desks needed and also whether to introduce, for example, a booking system for desk space. • The business technology provided to staff – both built in to office design and staff computers – will be important to successful hybrid working. For staff to work effectively in a hybrid way, they will require access to laptops and therefore may also need larger monitors at the office / home, as well as headset devices. <p>Business technology and estates planning are areas which should therefore be strategically planned for in conjunction with the Council's Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme and the Council's new Civic and Office Rationalisation project. As outlined above, the NICS have introduced a number of Connect2 hubs to support agile working which enable eligible employees to work in locations closer to home, based on the nature and suitability of their role.</p> <p>Potential impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of technology or office space to manage video conferencing or hybrid meetings will impact on staff effectiveness and could lead to dissatisfaction for those involved in such meetings/calls. • Without clear planning regarding office usage, the Council estate risks being larger than needed as more staff work from home (resulting in poor value for money), or that there is insufficient or unsuitable office/desk space for teams to come together. 	<p>The Council should formally assess its current business technology and estates capabilities to facilitate remote and hybrid working, for example, to conduct hybrid meetings or maximise office space through hot-desking, in alignment with its prospective agreed corporate position to new ways of working. As part of this, the Council may wish to consider the longer-term establishment of 'hubs' to allow employees to work in a more agile way.</p>	<p>Medium</p>

2.5 Policy development and training

Finding	Recommendation	Priority
<p>In addition to the above findings, we also noted the following for consideration in the hybrid working policy that is being developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It will be important for the policy to include information and clarification in relation to staff members' ability to work from different locations; for example, working outside the UK, to limit possible tax obligations. The policy or associated resources may need to provide guidance to teams as to how they can consider how they work practically together. During the pandemic many staff have been able to reset their daily routines – for example, taking/collecting children to/from school. Staff may be reluctant to give up these new routines and teams may therefore have to agree on when they will expect staff to be available for meetings, in line with the Council's Flexi Working Policy (update of which was postponed due to Covid) and core hours. <p>Additionally, managers across the Council may require training in the new policy or support in being able to manage their remote and hybrid teams; for example, adapting management styles to maximise effectiveness and productivity of remote and hybrid working teams, conducting hybrid meetings and performance management of remote and hybrid employees.</p> <p>Potential impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clarity within any new hybrid working policy could lead to inconsistent approaches being taken across the Council resulting in liabilities for the Council/staff and a sense of inequality between teams. If managers are not equipped to lead teams in new ways of working, there is a risk of poor people development and performance management. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Council should consider the points noted in the finding regarding guidance within the hybrid working policy planned to be developed. The Council should consider how training and development needs may differ in any new working arrangement, e.g. training for managers in managing hybrid teams. The Council should continue with this policy update and consider further required updates as a result of strategic planning around future new ways of working arrangements. 	Low



3. Statement of Responsibility

We take responsibility for this report, which is prepared on the basis of the limitations set out below.

The scope and objectives of this review are summarised in **Section 1.3** of this report. This is not an attest engagement and the matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all weaknesses that exists, or of all improvements that might be made. Recommendations for improvement should be assessed by Ards and North Down Borough Council for their full implications before they are implemented. This report has been prepared solely for Ards and North Down Borough Council and should not be quoted or referred to in whole or part without prior written consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the report has not been prepared and is not intended, for any other purpose.

David Kinsella

For and on behalf of

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Appendix I - New Ways of Working: Other Approaches

We reviewed publicly available information on approaches to new ways of working for seven Councils across the UK and identified four Councils which had introduced or are planning to introduce remote/hybrid working. The Councils we identified as having a remote/hybrid policy in place all stated that the hours worked at home by employees were based on the requirements of the team and had to be pre-approved.

We also reviewed the publicly available NHS Hybrid Working policy and identified the following areas the Council may wish to review to determine if similar such guidance would be helpful to include in any Council policy:

1. A flowchart for assessing an employee's suitability for home / hybrid working based on their role and responsibilities;
2. A home/ hybrid working agreement form;
3. A feedback checklist for home and hybrid workers;
4. An audit checklist for home or hybrid workers.

In consideration of the work being currently undertaken by the Council to update its interim Home Working Policy, we have also set out below points that were included in policies we reviewed (both in local government and private sector) that Council may wish to consider in its policy development:

Section	Contents/Information that could be included
Reasons for remote working	The Council may wish to consider highlighting the benefits and opportunities which are typically associated with hybrid working.
Raising hybrid working preferences	Council employees may be advised in this section to speak to the team lead (for example, through Pride in Performance conversations). Provide links to Council intranet resources to support hybrid working (training, technology guides etc).
Outline of arrangements to support flexible working and hours of work	Outline which policies and practices are in place to support flexible working e.g. reduced contractual hours, flexi-time, personal leave, special leave. Outline of normal Council working hours as well as reference to any arrangements for reduced hours and flexibility.

Section	Contents/Information that could be included
	Provide links to Council Flexi and Overtime policies, and other HR policies related to the Council's working practices.
Place of work and tax implications	<p>Outline individual employees have a normal place of work set within their contract of employment (if applicable).</p> <p>Include guidance that working from outside this jurisdiction gives rise to personal and Council tax obligations and legal implications, linking further Council and external (for example, HMRC) guidance.</p>
Workspace	<p>Note that individuals are responsible for ensuring their workspace, when working remotely, is appropriate and safe with a list of requirements to facilitate an appropriate and safe workplace included.</p> <p>Link to DSE (Workstation) Assessment tool to assess employees' current workstation.</p> <p>Outline of services/equipment Council provides (e.g. headsets, monitors) and a link to where to access these.</p>
Technology and information security	<p>Reminder that employees should ensure that they have adequate fixed broadband to carry out virtual working effectively and securely.</p> <p>Reminder to ensure that workspaces and Council documentation are secured and data confidentiality/protection is maintained if working from home or at a location that is not the office base.</p> <p>Link to further Council guidance and policies related to business technology, information security and data protection.</p>
Expenses	<p>Provide a link to Council expenses policy (if applicable) and guidance on what/how expenses can be claimed as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guidance on travel and other related expenses i.e. can only be claimed from the normal place of work to destination e.g. client premises; • outline of standard equipment provided by Council for remote working; • disclaimer that the Council is not responsible for additional costs that may result when working from home such as internet / connectivity, heating or electrical costs etc; • guidance for individual employees around making claim for tax relief where they work from home for substantial periods on a full or part-time basis, guidance around qualifying for this tax relief and link to further government guidance.

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ITEM 8a**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting	22 September 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Organisational Development and Administration
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	13 September 2022
File Reference	AUD02
Legislation	Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations 2015
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Corporate Risk Register
Attachments	Corporate Risk Register - version 20, September 2022 Draft2

As members will be aware, the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) is a live document which is amended as required to reflect new or changing risk factors. The CRR is currently being revised to facilitate improved reporting on risks and progress on risk improvements, and to bring it in line with the revised Risk Strategy. The reformatting of the CRR is currently being tested. The format and content will be consulted on before being finalised in October.

The outworking of the CRR aims to:

- Ensure substantial risks are reflected in both Service Risk Registers (SRR) and the CRR.
- Improve on the identification and recording of risks, controls and actions. Risks identified in Service Risk Registers are now aligned with CRR risks and the current review will ensure that risk improvements, made or required, are clearly recorded in the SRR with target completion dates, where applicable. Whilst the SRRs will not be directly reported to Council, the risks and actions detail will facilitate improved reporting of the CRR to Audit Committee.
- Assign Risk Owners, for each risk in the CRR. The Risk Owner will be a Director who will be responsible for an identified risk through all the stages of

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the risk methodology, including reporting and escalation. A Head of Service lead will also be identified to support the Risk Owner.

- Assign a Risk Appetite for each CRR Risk. This will ensure that risks exceeding the tolerance threshold identified are escalated for review.
- Ensure CRR risk descriptions remain relevant.

In the current review of risks, the removal of COVID-19 as a stand-alone risk (CR14) is recommended however this risk will remain to be identified within CR6, Health and Safety, to ensure that this risk continues to be appropriately assessed, monitored and controlled.

Two new temporary risks are being considered for addition due to potential financial and reputational impacts:

- The integration of legacy North Down sporting facilities through the insourcing project.
- Aurora defects.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the report be noted.

				Plan for Training in place Staff Welfare Group has been established PERFORM performance framework in place Behaviour Charter agreed, training delivered and guidance produced Implemented high priority recommendations from IIP assessors report following accreditation in December 2019 Coaching and mentoring programme reintroduced in 2022. Customer Service criteria, in line with Customer Service Excellence standards, reviewed and updated annually. Implementation of Heads Together sessions - hybrid working and communication facilitated sessions for teams/services Customer services strategy being produced Customer excellence working group back in operation						
	Risk Owner (Director)			Head of Service Lead:						Risk Appetite
CR3	Inadequate controls over financial management and resource planning resulting in poor service delivery and financial loss to the Council	5	4	20	Corporate Plan. Medium term financial strategy agreed Medium term financial Plan and Capital Investment plan reviewed regularly. Use of business cases to underpin decision making Professionally qualified finance staff with integrity and segregation of duties in a robust hierarchy of management and supervision. Oversight by audit committee. Internal audit arrangements in place. Fixed assets register. Capital Projects Portfolio Board and Capital Projects Advisory Group established and routinely meeting. Service Unit budgets are regularly monitored. Council Grants Policy implementation with staff training for grant management and verification DAERA and DfC Plans agreed for 3 rd party funding eg Rural Development and Urban Regeneration. Working with these agencies and DFI to obtain extension to current deadlines. Service Plans and Service Risk Registers developed in line with Corporate Plan. Annual Performance Improvement Plan in place Alignment of Service Planning and Budget Setting Estates Management Strategy and Estates Management Plan agreed City Deal – established internal and external work groups and project boards with OBCs under development in line with City Deal timeline Business Case training held and available on demand, new business case templates based on Department of Finance proformas Revised supplier payments guidance emphasising the importance of maintaining internal controls Vehicle, plant and machinery strategy now in place	3	3	9	Action	Estates Development Programme Board to be ratified by Council Management Plan Development of Financial Assistance Policy Development of other Finance policies Recruit additional qualified accountants to increase capacity and resilience. Complete implementation of Core 2 system. Further alignment of City Deal financing to realise full potential of projects against funding secured. Introduction of Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme Consider acquisition of new financial management system and consider dashboard style reporting across 'corporate' services Review user processing and file maintenance rights Appropriately test Strategic Need and Economic Viability at an early stage for capital projects
	Risk Owner (Director)			Head of Service Lead:						Risk Appetite

CR4	Lack of adequate and effective business continuity, disaster recovery and emergency planning processes leading to inability of the Council to deliver on its core functions.	5	3	16	Legacy Business Continuity plans	4	3	12	Action	Monitor for potential impacts of Russia's invasion in Ukraine (the Ukraine Crisis) – consider supply chain checks and any other potential impacts.
					ANDBC First Steps Document regularly reviewed and updated, refresher training with HOST/CLT carried out in January 2022.					Give effect to any actions deemed necessary to maintain services following the monitoring and review of the Ukraine Crisis.
					Revised Emergency Plan in place, activated March 2020 (Live Testing)					New Emergency Plan being tested in real time (COVID 19 response)
					COVID 19 - Regional arrangements for monitoring, ensuring a consistent co-ordinated approach and escalation of issues to the Hub / TEO					Full roll out of development of Business Impact Analysis (BIA) for Business Continuity (commenced February 2022)
					COVID 19 - Amended Regional Emergency Support Centre plans and grab bags					Overarching Business Continuity Plan (in development)
					COVID 19 Business Continuity Plan in place					Review and update business continuity plans in line with new overarching plan / template.
					Business Continuity training through the Emergency Planning College					Review of Business Continuity Policy and Strategy.
					Coronavirus sub-groups set-up to assist with response					Further Community engagement with relevant interest/community
					COVID 19 specific risk assessments carried out and controls, mitigations and other measures in place					Development of Policy to encourage volunteer civil contingency support
					COVID 19 Staff awareness raised through emails, News and Info, SMS texts, signage and instruction / discussion, in addition a centralised email contact for Coronavirus advice and guidance has been established.					Identify and address inhibitors to staff engagement in civil contingency response.
					Southern Emergency Preparedness Group established from January 2018					Continue to carry out EP / BC Activation Exercises and systems testing
					Other well established multi-agency, mutual aid groups					Capacity Building Programme
					Strong communications links and mutual aids arrangements in place via EPG PI/Media WG					Identify Procurement Frameworks for Contractors for contingency use
					Agreed communications plans and protocols for emergency and business continuity situations.					CCGNI Protocols are not in embedded within the region
					Trained staff					Updated protocols required
					New Regional emergency planning arrangements in place.					Clarity regarding funding required
					Emergency Planning Officer in place (part time)					Lobbying for appropriate legislation and clarity with regard to the role of Council in emergency response and recovery.
					Emergency Planning Implementation Group established (internal)					Establish if there are lessons from other national disasters that may be useful to ANDBC's planning and capital projects
					Multi-agency responses and debrief sessions following severe weather incidents					Develop and establish a Safety Advisory Group (SAG) for Major or significant Events held within the borough, to include Council run events.
					Disaster Recovery/ICT Plan (ext./Cloud based)					Multi-agency Regional Reservoir Safety Group to Meet (recently set up)
					SAG training (EPC multi-agency SAG training delivered 2019)					Cloud based customer systems (Leisure)
					SAG established for Major 3rd Party events on Council land.					Complete implementation of cloud based HR and Employee payments system (Core2)
					Insurance cover in place for main risks					Consideration of acquisition of cloud based financial software.
					Regular Desktop EP Exercises carried out					Consideration to cloud based EDRMS
					Elected Member training provided in November 2017					Review of remote working arrangements (HR, Business Technology).
					Provision of sandbag containers by Rivers Agency at Groomspoint, Ballywalter, Portavogie and Portaferry.					
					Community Engagement with Street Pastors and other groups					
					EMT and Control Room set up complete					
					Resilience Direct resources and guidance and JESIP toolkits					
					Business Continuity strategy and policy in place					

				Regional EP awareness training for Elected Members provided by NIEPG							
				Use of Signal as a back-up processing location for transactions							
				Potential further strike action by UNITE causing complete disruption to kerbside collection and street litter bins plus closure of some HRCs						Potential mitigation from my side would be that management continues to talk to all 3 recognised trade unions on a regular basis to attempt to resolve the issue. However it should be noted that this is a regional dispute.	
	Risk Owner (Director)			Head of Service Lead:						Risk Appetite	
CR5	Failure to effectively and consistently engage with residents, service users and partners leading to inability to meet expectations and reputational damage	4	3	12	Corporate Plan in place and shared with internal and external partners.	3	3	9	Action	Introduce greater consistency of service level customer satisfaction measures	
					Service specific strategies and plans in place to help inform and engage residents/ partners with key areas of the Council's work					Roll out of TeCare across service units	
					Regular update meetings with service areas to plan pro-active and reactive comms around service developments.					Ongoing management of agreed working groups to deliver ITRDS	
					Ongoing corporate and service level communications via traditional channels and online					Review Council's approach to engagement including use of advanced digital channels and Big Data.	
					Proactive media relations management at a local and regional level					Consult with communities on the Big Plan priorities identified by the review	
					Management of social media channels to share information, promote engagement and answer customer care queries					Customer Service Excellence Strategy to be created.	
					The Big Conversation Panel					Events Panel to be reintroduced (paused due to Covid 19).	
					Youth Voice established in partnership with Education Authority					Customer service / complaints training to be included in new start Induction.	
					Residents Survey and focus groups					E Learning module in under development (training module for all staff).	
					Service consultation as required						
					Stakeholder/partnership groups established						
					New Town Advisory Groups have been formed with elected members and social partners. Defined terms of reference in place for each group and appropriate administration.						
					Internal and External Equality Screening Panel						
					Complaints Procedure and Customer Care Standards						
					Use of CRMS (TeCare) in some sections						
					Positive Behaviour Training provided to staff						
					Statement of Community Involvement for Planning						
					Residents encouraged to submit performance improvement ideas through Your Opinion Matters via multiple channels						
					Elected Members' Charter						
					Committee/ Council agenda/reports/minutes/audio available online (subject to change)						
Protocols agreed for communications team to identify and respond to identified critical issues out of hours											
New Intranet in place for internal knowledge sharing											
Development and introduction of Customer Service Excellence Strategy and Action Plan											
Annual Business Survey conducted and ongoing feedback from events											
Risk Owner (Director)				Head of Service Lead:					Risk Appetite		
				Corporate H&S Policy and Procedures in place with specific plans were required						Service area review and update of risk assessments (rolling programme)	
				Rolling Training programme						Review of Contractor monitoring arrangements	
				External - Occupational health and welfare provision in place, including Health Surveillance were need identified.						Ongoing audits & review meetings	

CR6	Failure to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees and others affected by the Council's undertakings, leading to death or injury or poor well-being and resulting in claims against the Council and significant reputational damage to the Council.	5	4	20	Internal - Wellbeing Group	5	3	15	Action	Formalisation of home and agile working arrangements (HR and Business Technology)
					H&S Monitoring, including inspections and audits.					Review COVID 19 Health, Safety & Welfare arrangements
					Incident reporting and investigation					Review return to office arrangements due to ongoing pandemic
					Events Risk Management					Implementation of new Incident management software in progress.
					Corporate & Directorate H&S Committees.					Investigate introduction of mobile inspection software for reporting of defects
					Complementary policies and procedures and review, eg HR&D, Corporate Risk Strategy and Customer care standards					
					Drugs and Alcohol at Work policy implemented and training provided to all employees and managers.					
					Lone Working Policy					
					Contractor competency assessments at procurement stage					
					Regular updates on H&S/working practices in regard to COVID 19					
					COVID 19 specific assessments, instructions and guidance for staff and public					
					COVID 19 specific measures in place, eg signage, instructions, barriers, PPE, sanitiser, re-organisation of the workplace or how work is performed eg additional drivers for refuse collection, home working, external site meeting protocol, etc.					
					Introduction of Interim Homeworking Arrangements policy in November 2021.					
					Inspection of playgrounds and lifebelts on a weekly basis to ensure suitability for users					
Implementation of a Port Marine Safety System for Council harbours addressing all risks and demonstrating compliance with the PMSC										
Use of technological aids to assist LGV drivers										
Risk Owner (Director)									Risk Appetite	
CR7	Failure to comply with statutory obligations and good practice leading to financial penalties and damage to the Council's reputation.	4	4	16	Schemes of Delegation	4	3	12	Action	Mandatory training on Council procurement
					Code of Conduct – Officers and Members					Adhere to procurement/funding requirements of lead partner organisations
					Report writing protocol					Audit full implementation of GDPR requirements
					Policies and procedures reviewed					Consider upskilling of Key Staff via formal qualification
					Strategies and action plans to meet statutory obligations					Review of Information Security Systems, Contracts, Practices and Procedures and Associated Staff Training
					Maintenance, training and audit programmes to ensure compliance with regulations (eg Fleet / Driver)					Further process to scope out requirements for EDRMS
					Equality and Disability Action Plans					Report template to be reviewed to include whether subject matters is 'in plan' , 'in budget' , has been screened and ensure accessibility
					GDPR Officer Post –					Cyber Security Action Plan to be approved
					Information Assets Register compiled					DPO recruitment exercise initiated following current position holder departure. HOS assumed role during vacancy, agency position in meantime. Previous DPO on call as backup if required and will provide training to new DPO.
					GDPR statements developed according applicable to service needs					Review of training needs, eg screening.
					Agreed protocols for responding to requests for information under the FOIA, DPA or EIR					Finalise the CCTV and Surveillance Policy.
					Policy on land and property, including strategy for Disposal of Surplus assets (under review)					Finalise the Lands Policy.
					Corporate Policies					Finalise the Information Access Policy.
					Corporate Returns					Finalise the Data and Retention Schedule.

				External Scrutiny by statutory bodies					Business case to be developed in relation to consideration of EDRMS.	
				Internal assurance processes					Check that contractors are on record as licensed waste carrier	
				Governance and Scrutiny Group, with cross partnership representation established to review the outputs of the Community Planning Partnership						
				Baseline and timetable for Local Development Plan						
				Professional Officer Groups						
				Equality and Disability Training delivered across Council						
				Estimates and Financial reporting deadlines met						
				EDRMS Project initiation Document complete						
				Checks on contractors to ensure that all waste is disposed of in accordance with legislation						
				Procurement/funding requirements of lead partner organisations defined						
				Data Sharing Agreements put in place as required						
	Risk Owner (Director)			Head of Service Lead:					Risk Appetite	
CR8	The failure to transfer envisaged and future powers and budgets to Council impacting negatively on Council's ability to deliver its corporate plan and failure to deliver projects through lack of funding from Central Government.	4	4	18	Lobbying of government	3	3	9	Action	Report to Committee a status report on all central Government funding sources and ensure Council is not spending money where there is a potential of it not ultimately receiving itself
					Working in partnership with relevant departments and agencies					Review projects to establish priority.
					Capital Programme list and Prioritisation process agreed					Investigate alternative funding streams
										Capital Programme list to be reviewed and Prioritisation process to be implemented in line with the Corporate Plan 2020-2024
	Risk Owner (Director)				Head of Service Lead:					Risk Appetite
CR9	Decisions being made outside of the planning and budgeting process, leading to financial shortfall, inability to deliver the corporate plan and failure to meet stakeholder expectations	4	5	20	Strategic Finance and Policy Group established	3	4	12	Action	Develop governance arrangement to produce and obtain commitment to medium to long term Strategic Capital Investment Plan
					Officer recommendations					Develop medium to long term financial plans informed by Council appetite on affordability
					Training needs analysis for members					Increase rigour to the challenge of proposals that are not budgeted for
					Party Leaders meetings					Encourage consistent use of business cases on any significant expenditure
					Corporate Planning and Service Planning Process					Capital Investment Programme list to be reviewed and Prioritisation process to be implemented in line with the Corporate Plan 2020-2024
					Budgetary control process					Review the Report template to establish if greater clarity can be provided to highlight any financial or other corporate risk implications of the matters under consideration within the report.
					Corporate Projects Portfolio, plus governance (including CPP Board) and committee visibility of same					
					Business Cases processes in place					
					Capital Programme list and Prioritisation process agreed					
					Corporate Plan in place					
	Risk Owner (Director)				Head of Service Lead:					Risk Appetite
	Inability to prepare and deliver the local development plan,				Legacy DOE development plans (notional end dates for plans exceeded)					Ongoing engagement with DfI and Planning Appeals Commission regarding ad hoc processes being progressed outside of legislation
					LDP workshops successfully undertaken with elected members, culminating in options being agreed for testing through Sustainability Appraisal in 2018.					Approval of business cases for studies and related procurement

CR10	leading to non-compliance with the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 and negative impact on development decisions	5	5	25	Preferred Options Paper on the LDP published in March 2019 Engagement sessions with elected members and officers to consider planning policy review for Draft Plan Strategy commenced September 2019 Business Cases prepared for ad hoc studies required by regional planning policy i.e. Landscape Character Assessment, Retail Study, and Open Space Strategy – to commence in Q4 of 2019/20	4	3	12	Action		Ongoing liaison with cross-council LDP Teams through professional working group
	Risk Owner (Director)				Head of Service Lead:						Risk Appetite
CR10(a)	Failure of DfI to produce a Draft Belfast Metropolitan Transport Strategy in line with Council's timetable for publication of its Draft Plan Strategy, leading to the LDP being found unsound	5	5	25	Attendance of Head of Planning on BMTP Project Board and updates from DfI to SOLACE DfI now terming as 'Plan' as opposed to 'Strategy'. Revision of Draft Local Transport Studies Retained as Risk on Strategic Planning Group Issues Log	4	4	16	Action		Seek clarification via DfI regarding status of 'Plan' once published, integrity of data and details regarding 'hosting' as evidence and confirmation that DfI will defend at Independent Examination
	Risk Owner (Director)				Head of Service Lead:						Risk Appetite
CR11	Impact of BREXIT on Council to deliver services	5	5	25	Day One Working Group set up Review of local legislation in relation to statutory delivery of services See departmental risk registers for details Review carried out on activities, projects and plans against current knowledge to identify the potential threats (including conflicting priorities) or opportunities which may affect Council services, activities or future plans Emergency planning and business continuity arrangements reviewed in light of available information	4	5	20	Action		Contact key suppliers to check likely impact of BREXIT on their ability to supply goods and services Work in partnership with the PSNI and other agencies to minimise potential impact within our communities Review service income projections, and likely effect on ability to deliver outcomes. Monitor advice relating to Brexit and research alternative sources of funding for programmes which previously had EU funding
	Risk Owner (Director)				Head of Service Lead:						Risk Appetite
CR12	Failure of DfI to have implemented replacement of Planning Portal replacement within ANDBC by early 2022 with no secure contract to maintain/support existing Planning Portal system beyond 31 December 2021, leading to inability to deliver Planning Services	5	5	25	Ongoing engagement with DfI and DXC (service provider) through Planning Portal Governance Board Extension of current contract with minimum upgrades secured until end of December 2021 DfI business case on the Planning Portal and Council's contribution to same has been agreed by Council. Procurement timelines are on track	4	4	16	Action		Ongoing updates to SOLACE and Planning Portal Governance Board in respect of timetabling of implementation across councils
	Risk Owner (Director)				Head of Service Lead:						Risk Appetite
CR13	Breach of Cyber Security. Damage to systems, or theft, leading to a failure to deliver services, financial loss, legal action, or regulatory action due to non-compliance with information management	5	5	25	Next generation firewalls with web filtering E-Mail filtering Anti-Malware Anti-Spam Anti-Spoofing Advanced Threat Protection (safe links and attachments) Anti-Virus Mobile Device Management	5	4	20			Cyber security action plan to be agreed and actions to integrate cyber security across the organisation Multi-factor authentication in progress. Review training and awareness sessions for staff following role out of ELearning module Review processes to ensure sensitive data is accessible only to those who require it Testing / exercising for incidents and responses HR and Business Technology Services to implement and monitor security awareness initiatives Review potential sources of risk across the organisation, eg security of Point of Sale devices Review technical solutions and develop "play books" to manage incidents.

	legislation (including GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018).			VPN to facilitate working from home during COVID19				Assess and mitigate risk potentially created with the implementation of agile working in the medium to long term (includes consideration of equipment provision).
				Client Machines and Servers on new AND domain receive monthly security patches				Put program in place to remove remaining old/legacy servers running 2003/2008 and patch other vulnerable client software
				Organisational and Data Breach Incident Management plan has been developed.				
				E-learning module rolled out to all staff				
				Protection Our Data working group set up				
	Risk Owner (Director)			Head of Service Lead:				Risk Appetite
CR13 (a)	Data Breach Response & Recovery	5	5	As above	5	4	20	Development of a Critical Incident policy and process (generic document to deal with range of risks but including specific section on Data Breach)
	Inadequate response (speed / statutory compliance / inadequate controls / process / risk mitigation & provision / reputation / resourcing)			Internal data breach management team in place (to be reviewed according to incident)				Data breach section to include sections on Response and Recovery
				Staff Confidentiality Agreements in place				Development of risk register to identify and capture risk – perceived risk and risk assessment template for breach
				ICO notification process in place				Review of Cyber risks
				3 rd party specialist investigative and response provider				Review of current systems in place, including escalation (GDPR, Business Technology, Corporate Communications, Risk Management)
				PSNI notification				Staff training – minimising, identification of, and responding to potential incident. Response team – eg investigation and call handling
				Communications plan – notification to affected, media response and staff				Implementation of NCSC and Microsoft 'Good' recommendations to secure the Microsoft 365 environment
				Call handling plan / training				
				Review of systems to identify gaps				
				Risk Owner (Director)				
CR15	Impact of excessive inflation on Council Operations leading to an inability of Council to perform it's functions	5	4				Action	
	Risk Owner (Director)			Head of Service Lead:				Risk Appetite
CR16	Failure of Council to successfully integrate the North Down Leisure facilities and staff into the Council by way of insourcing	4	4	Multi-disciplinary working group within Council working on the insourcing exercise			Action	
				Consultants appointed (V4 Services) to provide assistance with this exercise				
	Risk Owner (Director)			Head of Service Lead:				Risk Appetite