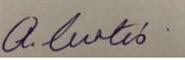
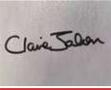

ADMINISTRATION

1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

Head of Service signature	
Date	<u>13/04/2021</u>
Peer Review signature	
Date	<u>13/04/2021</u>
Director signature	
Date	<u>13/04/2021</u>



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	4
2.	How does our Service contribute to community planning outcomes and PEOPLE priorities?	8
3.	Key activities for 2021/2022	9
4.	Risks	18
5.	Resources	24
6.	Monitoring and Review	25
7.	Conclusions.....	25
8.	Appendices	25

1. Introduction

Name of Service	Administration
Included Service Units	Compliance Customer Services Democratic Services Risk
Directorate	Organisational Development and Administration
Purpose of Service	To provide key administrative, risk management and statutory compliance functions.
Key customers/ stakeholders and their needs	<p>External: Residents and visitors, customers, service users, ratepayers, businesses, tenants, franchisees, contactors and public/private partnerships, Central Government, OFMDFM (Civil Contingencies Branch), SCEP, Statutory Agencies (e.g. Transport NI, NI Water, NIHE, PSNI, NIFRS, NIEA, DARAD, Rivers Agency), Utility Providers (e.g. NIE Networks), Crown Estate Commissioners, Voluntary Sector, Community Sector, Community Groups, Special Interest Groups, Oversight bodies (e.g. HSE, ICO, Equality Commission), Other Councils in Northern Ireland, Schools, Charities, Churches, Sports Clubs, Youth Clubs, Funeral Directors, The Coroner's Office, Immigration Authority</p> <p>Internal: The Mayor, The Council, Committees, Elected Members, Senior Management, Council Staff</p> <p>Professional advisors: Insurance Brokers and Insurers, Solicitors, Estate Agents, LPS Valuers, General Register Office, Local Government Staff Commission, Northern Ireland Audit Office</p>
Context, challenges & key assumptions	<p>Context: This plan strives to reflect the outcome approach of the Community Plan and is relevant to the Council's Performance Improvement Plan, particularly Performance Plan Improvement Objective 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver high quality customer focussed services • Engage, communicate and listen to our residents and customers <p>It should be noted at this time that this Service Plan will be delivered in the context of COVID Regulations. Best efforts will be made to ensure that planning will take regulations into consideration but where possible business as usual will be the aim.</p> <p>Political: This service area responds to many requests from political representatives and ensures that any matters are dealt with in compliance with Council Policies.</p> <p>Economic: The service area ensures that the programme of activity has allocated budget and ensures due diligence in terms of spending of this budget.</p> <p>Social: The Council's ratepayers are the core audience for what this service area delivers.</p>

	<p>Technological: The service area relies on many aspects of technology. It is always looking at ways to improve efficiencies and modernise the service to make it more user friendly and accessible to all.</p> <p>Legal: The service area works within the legislative context at all times, ensuring that Council is compliant.</p> <p>Environmental: The service area leads the sustainability agenda ensuring that consideration for sustainable practices is made in all aspects of corporate activity.</p> <p>Challenges: Challenges include legislative compliance, economic, social, technological and political factors in a changing environment, responding to threats and opportunities presented, and supporting the Council to deliver services in the context of finite financial resources.</p> <p>Strengths: The strength of this Service is that it has the opportunity to reach across and work with all service area in Council.</p> <p>Weaknesses: The weakness of this Service is that often other Services feel that the work is the team's responsibility as opposed to each Service having obligations and ownership with Administration as a key support. Others perceive ownership sits in Administration.</p> <p>Opportunities: The opportunities that are available to this Service are endless, it is simply a matter of the Council prioritising what they wish to do.</p> <p>Threats: The threats to this service are lack of buy-in from other service areas as they see the responsibility as being corporate.</p> <p>Assumptions: That the service can go back to 'normal' post pandemic.</p>
<p>Reflection on previous performance – successes and lessons learned</p>	<p><i>Reflect on prior year and year to date</i></p> <p><i>Reflect on</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Key successes</i> • <i>Key Learning (Identify any objectives, KPIs or actions that you are not taking forward to this year and why e.g. achieved, shift in focus or have a better version of it etc. If it was achieved state what difference it made.)</i> <p>The performance of the Administration Section was measured in its 2020-21 Service Plan and subsequently revised plan and also in the Council's more high-level Performance Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Key Successes</p> <p>Compliance based activities continued throughout year despite restrictions in place. Some of the timelines were not met but this was for issues beyond the team's control due to the pandemic, like staff shortages to respond to queries.</p> <p>Despite the mode of delivery of Council meetings completely changing from 'in person' to virtual, 100% of Agendas went out 5 days in advance of all Committee and Council meetings.</p> <p>The Information Management (Compliance) Section did not meet its target of responding to 100% of requests for information under the FOI Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2014 within the statutory timeframe. This small section received and processed 452 number requests in Q1-Q3 of 2020-</p>

2021. 84% of these were responded to within the timeframe, with the primary reason for the delay being resources directed away from both information rights/other staff work during COVID-19 which made processing and getting information difficult. The average response time was 12 working days. By year end response time should be reduced again. This should be deemed a success given the circumstances.

The Council retained the EMS accreditation this year and the plan is to expand the framework to all Council buildings with a view to accreditation in future years.

Emergency planning response protocol has been in a live state since the start of the year. The response has been nothing short of astounding from staff at all levels. An emergency test activation was carried out and the Duty Director responded in accordance with the plan.

Four Corporate Health and Safety meetings were held this year with input from directorate Health and Safety meetings which is critical to ensuring that best practice is adhered to and any issues are raised in a timely manner to ensure that they can be resolved effectively.

The Council adopted the Roadmap to Sustainability at Council in March 2021. This is a major step for the Council showing their continued and aspirational commitment to sustainability throughout all services within the Council.

Key Lessons

This year has seen a number of KPIs not realised. This however should not be seen as a failure but we should take the learning from the speed at which tasks have had to be modified and in some cases redesigned in light of the pandemic.

Examples of this are that services have had to rethink how they provide good customer service when 'in person' interactions have not been possible. Although we believe that there will always be an element of personal touch the shift towards digital provision of services is achievable in many cases e.g. Internal Incident Reporting, Teams Meetings for some internal and external interactions. The updated Customer Service Excellence Strategy and Action Plan will reflect these changes.

Whilst initial scoping work was undertaken to pilot a paperless filing system, the formal pilot did not take place this year. Having said this, the Council saw a shift in processing of information during the enforced working from home arrangements. Many employees claim that they have printed little or no paperwork since making the change to a home setting. Whilst it is appreciated that many functions still have a requirement for hard copy originals, many sections are looking at how to design this out going forward. Work must still be undertaken to formally pilot a service to see if this can be formalised where it is possible to be truly paperless.

A budget has now been secured to procure and introduce integrated Health and Safety and Risk/Claims Management system over the next 2 years. The specification of this is being currently drawn up and once implemented the efficiencies will be seen with immediate effect.

The Equality Action Plan consultation was delayed and the Council continued to deliver under the existing EAP and will do so until the final EAP is agreed by the

Council at the end of the consultation period. This was amended and ratified at Council in March 2021 subject to being screened.

The review of the Lands Policy has commenced but will not be completed for year end, new target date September 2021.

2. How does our Service contribute to community planning outcomes and PEOPLE priorities?

The *Administration Service* can be expected to have a direct impact on the following:

Community Planning Outcome	PEOPLE priority	Our focus for 2021/2022
Outcome 5: All people in Ards and North Down feel pride as they have access to a well-managed sustainable environment	Environment: To enable all people in AND to feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment we will provide a clean, attractive, environmentally responsible place	The roadmap to sustainability has now been approved and this will carve the way forward in all aspects of council activity including services that are in-house.
Outcome 3: All people in Ards and North Down live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure.	Pride: To enable all people in AND to live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure we will work in partnership with our communities.	The Equality Action Plan has now been approved and clearly lays out the commitment that the Council have made to ensuring this is all its activities and services.
	Excellence: To enable us to deliver the first five of our PEOPLE priorities we must be an effective, efficient and forward-thinking organisation. Excellence requires us to be innovative and partner with others to make sustainable choices that make a positive difference to everyone who has a stake in the AND area.	The way that the Council does business in terms of both in-house and public facing services is developing, taking into consideration sustainable practices in every aspect.

3. Key activities for 2021/2022

3. Key activities for 2021/2022 cont'd

SERVICE:	Compliance		
Community Plan Outcome:	Outcome 5: All people in Ards and North Down feel pride as they have access to a well-managed sustainable environment		
Corporate Plan PEOPLE priority(ies):	Environment: To enable all people in AND to feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment we will provide a clean, attractive, environmentally responsible place		
Council KPI(s):	Environment accreditations		
Service Objective:			
What difference will it make?	The roadmap to sustainability has now been approved and this will carve the way forward in all aspects of council activity including services that are in-house.		
Underpinning strategies:	Roadmap to Sustainability		
Business as Usual activities we will deliver in 2021/2022 (actions)	Due Date	Lead Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal/External partners)
Monitor the Roadmap to Sustainability	March 2022	Compliance Manager	Internal
Prioritise 5 potential Public Rights of Way (PROW) and assert at least 1 per year	March 2022	Compliance Manager	Internal/External

SERVICE:	Compliance			
Community Plan Outcome:	Outcome 3: All people in Ards and North Down live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure.			
Corporate Plan PEOPLE priority(ies):	Pride To enable all people in AND to live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure we will work in partnership with our communities.			
Council KPI(s):	n/a			
Service Objective:				
What difference will it make?	The Equality Action Plan has now been approved and clearly lays out the commitment that the Council have made to ensuring this is all its activities and services.			
Underpinning strategies:	Equality Scheme			
Business as Usual activities we will deliver in 2021/2022 (actions)		Due Date	Lead Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal/External partners)
Deliver 5-year Equality Action Plan		March 2022	Compliance Manager	Internal/External

SERVICE:	Customer Service /Compliance/Democratic Services/Risk Management		
Community Plan Outcome:			
Corporate Plan PEOPLE priority(ies):	Excellence: To enable us to deliver the first five of our PEOPLE priorities we must be an effective, efficient and forward-thinking organisation. Excellence requires us to be innovative and partner with others to make sustainable choices that make a positive difference to everyone who has a stake in the AND area.		
Council KPI(s):	n/a		
Service Objective:			
What difference will it make?	The way that the Council does business in terms of both in-house and public facing services is developing, taking into consideration sustainable practices in every aspect.		
Underpinning strategies:	Risk Management Strategy		
Business as Usual activities we will deliver in 2021/2022 (actions)	Due Date	Lead Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal/External partners)
Update and Publish Customer Service Excellence Strategy and Action Plan for 2020-2024	March 2022	Customer Services Manager	Internal
All agendas circulated within 5-day notice period	March 2022	Democratic Services Manager	Internal
FOI/EIR Information response times in compliance with legislation	March 2022	Compliance Manager	Internal
Train all CLT/HOST in emergency planning response protocol	March 2022	Risk Manager	Internal
Hold 4 Corporate Health and Safety meetings – with input from directorate Health and Safety meetings	March 2022	Compliance Manager	Internal
Have 2 emergency planning test activations	March 2022	Risk Manager	Internal
Hold 2 Emergency Planning Implementation Group meetings	March 2022	Risk Manager	Internal

Service Development / Improvement

What service development/improvement will we undertake in 2021/2022?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Due Date	Lead Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal/External partners)
Pilot paperless filing for new files in 2 Service Areas	Service Quality Efficiency	To improve effective and efficient management of this function in a sustainable way.	March 2022	Customer Services Manager	Internal/External
Procure and introduce integrated Health and Safety and Risk/Claims Management system	Efficiency	To improve effective and efficient management of these functions.	March 2022	Compliance Manager	Internal/External
EMS – Retain accreditation and expand framework to all Council buildings with a view to accreditation in future years	Sustainability	To demonstrate commitment to sustainable practices throughout all Council activities.	March 2022	Compliance Manager	Internal
Review Lands Policy	Strategic Effectiveness Efficiency	To refine the policy to include many issues that have arisen since previous version and improve effective and efficient management of this function.	September 2022	Compliance Manager	Internal
Develop Claims Management Policy	Efficiency	To set out the timeframe and processes for investigation and completion of insurance claims.	March 2022	Risk Manager	Internal

SPECIFIED ASPECTS OF IMPROVEMENT

What will this improve?	Definition
Strategic Effectiveness	<i>is key to linking the community plan, and the ongoing processes that underpin it, with a council's improvement processes. The Department would expect that a council's strategic community planning outcomes and objectives should be central to that council's improvement activity and clearly contribute to the strategic effectiveness aspect.</i>
Service Quality	<i>all relate to service provision by aiming to meet the needs of citizens and ensuring fair ease of access to the most suitable services that meet their needs. Clearly, all of these objectives can be demonstrated individually or collectively. Fairness can also be demonstrated by exercising non-service functions in ways which reduce disadvantage and improve social well-being, for instance by improving citizens' access to information or by addressing inequalities experienced by Section 75 groups.</i>
Service Availability	

SPECIFIED ASPECTS OF IMPROVEMENT

What will this improve?	Definition
Fairness	
Sustainability	<i>When carrying out its functions or providing services, a council may demonstrate improvement when it operates in a way that contributes towards the sustainability of its area, as required under the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 and the associated Northern Ireland Executive Sustainable Development Strategy. on-going efficiency may also be shown if fewer resources are utilised while maintaining provision of substantially similar or better services. Should a council choose to alter the manner by which a service is provided and in so doing it uses fewer resources or more integrated services, it will not only be demonstrating efficiency, but may demonstrate improved sustainability as well</i>
Efficiency	
Innovation	<i>any changes to service design and delivery methods that are intended to yield improvement under any other aspect, and are reasonably likely to do so. This allows councils to make changes which may not have tangible effects within the same reporting year, but are likely to in subsequent years, and still count them as improvements.</i>

Service activities being stopped / changed:

What service / activities will we be stopping / changing in 2021/2022	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
Assess 3 Customer Service Elements using Mystery Shopper	There are other ways to monitor satisfaction	£300	None	None	None
Confer 1 Freedom of the Borough	Due to the pandemic and knock-on effect this cannot happen in 2021/22	£20,000	None	Little, lack of a celebratory event to partake in	Some in terms of workload involved in the organisation

Performance Measures:

Performance Measures (should include those for the Business as Usual and Service Improvement actions outlined above and relevant measures from Community, Corporate and Statutory)	Is the measure Statutory, Corporate, Existing or New?	Reporting frequency	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 To date	2021/22
Update Customer Service Excellence Strategy and Action Plan	Existing	Annual	n/a	100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	50%	100%
Pilot paperless filing for new files in 2 Service Areas	Existing	Annual	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	25%	100%
All agendas circulated within 5-day notice period	Existing	Annual	n/a	n/a	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Prioritise 5 potential Public Rights of Way (PROW) and assert at least 1 per year	Existing	Annual	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	0%	100%
Procure and introduce integrated Health and Safety and Risk/Claims Management system	Existing	Annual	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	100%
EMS – Retain accreditation and expand framework to all Council buildings with a view to accreditation in future years	Existing	Annual	n/a	n/a	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
FOI/EIR Information response times in compliance with legislation	Statutory	Annual	n/a	n/a	93%	96%	99%	84%	100%

Performance Measures (should include those for the Business as Usual and Service Improvement actions outlined above and relevant measures from Community, Corporate and Statutory)	Is the measure Statutory, Corporate, Existing or New?	Reporting frequency	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 To date	2021/22
Train all CLT/HOST in emergency planning response protocol	Existing	Annual	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%
Hold 4 Corporate Health and Safety meetings – with input from directorate Health and Safety meetings	Existing	Annual	n/a	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Have 2 emergency planning test activations	Existing	Annual	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	100%
Hold 2 EPIG meetings	New	Annual							
Deliver 5-year Equality Action Plan	Statutory	Annual	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	75%	100%	100%
Monitor the Roadmap to Sustainability	Corporate	Annual	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	100%
Review Lands Policy	Existing	Annual	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	100%
Develop Claims Management Policy	New	Annual	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%
% Staff Attendance	Corporate	Quarterly	n/a					98.45%	
% Spend against budget	Corporate	Quarterly	n/a					90.5%	
% staff reporting regular receipt of team briefings	Corporate	Quarterly	n/a	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%
Pride in Performance Conversations	Corporate	Annually	n/a				92%	0%	100%

4. Risks

Ref:	Risk Description	Gross Risk			Current controls	Residual Risk			Risk Status	Further Action Required	Action Due by	Risk Owner	Notes to explain rationale for scoring, etc.
		I	L	R		I	L	R	Tolerate / Action				
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 if an emergency event occurs	5	3	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANDBC First Steps Document regularly reviewed and updated. • Implemented a new integrated Emergency Plan (including Business Continuity Plan) • Southern Emergency Preparedness Group established • Trained staff • Emergency Planning Officer in post • Emergency Planning Implementation Group established (internal) • Multi-agency responses and debrief sessions following severe weather incidents • Insurance cover in place for main risks • Regular Desktop EP Exercises carried out 	3	3	9	Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train staff • Development of support that could be used to encourage a culture of volunteer civil contingency support • Identify and address inhibitors to staff engagement in civil contingency response. • Continue to carry out EP / BC Activation Exercises and systems testing • Lobbying for appropriate legislation and clarity with regard to the role of Council in 	March 2021	Risk Manager/ Risk Ownership does not go below SUM Business Performance Manager	

Ref:	Risk Description	Gross Risk			Current controls	Residual Risk			Risk Status	Further Action Required	Action Due by	Risk Owner	Notes to explain rationale for scoring, etc.
		I	L	R		I	L	R	Tolerate / Action				
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Member training provided Provision of sandbag containers by Rivers Agency at two sites in Ards Peninsula EMT and Control Room set up complete Resilience Direct resources and guidance and JESIP toolkits Business Continuity strategy and policy in place 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> emergency response and recovery. Establish if there are lessons from other national disasters that may be useful to ANDBC's planning and capital projects Establishment of a Safety Advisory Group (SAG) for Major Events 			
CR5	Failure to effectively and consistently engage with residents, service users and partners leading to inability to meet expectations and	4	3	1 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing corporate and service level communications via traditional channels and online Internal and External Screening Panels Complaints Procedure and Customer Care Standards Use of CRMS (TeCare) in some sections TASCOMI	3	3	9	Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and introduction of Customer Service Excellence Strategy and action plan 	Customer Services Manager		

Ref:	Risk Description	Gross Risk			Current controls	Residual Risk			Risk Status	Further Action Required	Action Due by	Risk Owner	Notes to explain rationale for scoring, etc.
		I	L	R		I	L	R	Tolerate / Action				
	reputational damage				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Behaviour Training in provided to staff Elected Members' Charter Development and introduction of Customer Service Excellence Strategy and action plan								
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	5	4	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate H&S Policy and Procedures in place with specific plans were required Rolling Training programme External - Occupational health and welfare provision in place, including Health Surveillance where need identified. Internal - Wellbeing Group H&S Monitoring, including inspections and audits. Incident reporting and investigation Events Risk Management (SAG) 	4	2	8	Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training programme to reflect current priorities 	Compliance Manager		

Ref:	Risk Description	Gross Risk			Current controls	Residual Risk			Risk Status	Further Action Required	Action Due by	Risk Owner	Notes to explain rationale for scoring, etc.
		I	L	R		I	L	R	Tolerate / Action				
	reputational damage to the Council.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate & Directorate H&S Committees. • Complimentary 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 594 employees including 130 managers. • Lone Working Policy developed • Contractor competency assessments at procurement stage 								
CR7	Failure to comply with statutory obligations and good practice leading to financial penalties	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schemes of Delegation • Code of Conduct – Officers and Members • Report template protocol • Policies and procedures reviewed 								

Ref:	Risk Description	Gross Risk			Current controls	Residual Risk			Risk Status	Further Action Required	Action Due by	Risk Owner	Notes to explain rationale for scoring, etc.
		I	L	R		I	L	R	Tolerate / Action				
	and damage to the Council's reputation.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies and action plans-to meet statutory obligations • Equality and Disability Action Plans • GDPR Officer Appointed • Information Assets Register compiled • GDPR statements developed according applicable to service needs • Agreed protocols for responding to requests for information under the FOIA, DPA or EIR • Policy on land and property, including strategy for Disposal of Surplus assets • Internal assurance processes • Equality and Disability Training delivered across Council • Estimates and Financial reporting deadlines met EDRMS Project Initiation Document complete								

Ref:	Risk Description	Gross Risk			Current controls	Residual Risk			Risk Status	Further Action Required	Action Due by	Risk Owner	Notes to explain rationale for scoring, etc.
		I	L	R		I	L	R	Tolerate / Action				

5. Resources

Are all actions resourced within the current (2021/22) budget plan? Yes No

Will additional resources be required?

Yes No

(If no please comment in Section A below how the actions will be funded, ie Staff Resources, Equipment, Revenue Budget, Capital Budget.)

(If yes please detail additional resources in Section B below.)

Section A: Existing Budgets

Section B:

Staff: No changes, however if major transformation projects go ahead they will require additional resources for which business cases will be made.

Financial: In budget books

Other: Some of the functions within the section are statutory (e.g. compliance FOI/EIR, Democratic Services)

Customers are central to the services we provide, the impact of not delivering is not an option

If the required additional resources are NOT available, please state:

What is the likely impact on performance?

The Administration Service Area will continue to deliver its services however any major modernisation of the service will not happen.

What is the likely impact on the public?

The Administration Service Area will continue to deliver its services however any major modernisation of the service will not happen.

What is the likely impact on staffing?

Staff will continue to deliver the services however they will not be able to absorb any additional work in terms of major transformation or modernisation of the service should the council decide that this is the way they wish to go forward.

6. Monitoring and Review

The KPIs are constantly being monitored and will be reported back at appropriate reporting frequency as determined in this Service Plan. Should the KPI targets not be met or look like they will not be met action plans will be formulated to ensure that best efforts are made to meet them in a timely manner.

7. Conclusions

This service area delivers many aspects of both internal and external services. All services are extremely busy with many requirements having tight turnaround times. The team work very diligently to ensure that both statutory and non-statutory requirements are met as well as responding to a wide variety of customer service issues.

8. Appendices

None