

Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Council

Corporate Plan

2015-2017



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1.

Introducing the New Council

1.1 // A Bigger Council

This is an historic time for local government in Northern Ireland. The Reform of Local Government has reduced the number of Councils from 26 to 11. We are a new Council, unified across the whole area, bigger in scale and greater in power.

We will provide outstanding public services and unlock the potential of this region for the benefit of all its citizens, wherever they live: in the historic city of Armagh, in the vibrant towns and villages or in our beautiful countryside.

1.2 // A More Powerful Council

With a range of new powers and functions we will embrace this once in a lifetime opportunity to develop our services and put structures and systems in place that will result in a stronger, more dynamic council. Through Community Planning we will engage with our people, our business and rural communities and our public sector partners to set the future priorities for our area and address the issues that matter most.

1.3 // An Ambitious Council

While we are excited by the opportunities arising from local government reform we are mindful of the enormity of the challenge which they represent. We hope that this first plan demonstrates that we will not only continue to deliver the high levels of service that our people have come to expect, but we will also exploit every opportunity to continually improve and achieve the best we can for our region.

1.4 // A Unified Council

Delivering this plan will only be possible with the ongoing commitment of the staff who will transfer to the new organisation from the legacy councils and from other transferring functions. The progress we have made to date, as well as the high standards already in place, are a testament to the skill and dedication of these staff. We will continue to support them through this period of unprecedented change.

The new Council will build on the achievement of previous councils. Through positive civic leadership, co-operation and the courage to tackle hard issues, we will honour the rich legacy we have inherited by working together to create a better future.

1.5 // A Committed Council

Elected Members and Officers are committed to upholding the Nolan Principles which underpin local government in all aspects of how we serve our rate-payers:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

We will use our best endeavours to deliver services that are efficient economical and of an exemplary standard.

2. Profile of the New Council

The new enlarged Council area is a unique tapestry of contrasts: ancient - modern, urban - rural, industry - agriculture, waterways - road and railways, that set it apart from anywhere else in Northern Ireland and offers exciting opportunities for the future.

Key Facts:

THE AREA

Covering an area of 554 square miles and a population in excess of 204,000 outside of Belfast we are the largest council in Northern Ireland.

It is strategically positioned on the axis of the main East West and North South economic corridors and is supported by high quality road and rail links to both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

THE ECONOMY

Despite the challenges of the recent economic recession the area can boast of a vibrant and growing economic sector.

- More than 7,700 VAT or PAYE registered businesses
- Majority are small medium sized business employing 50 or less
- Notable large employers such as Moy Park, Tayto, Fane Valley, Almac, Irwins, Turkingtons and Wilsons.
- 66000 employee jobs: wholesale, retail, health and social services, manufacturing
- Total work force of 123000 of whom 84000 are economically active
- 2013 Gross Value Added: £2.7bn – 9.4% of NI total and second only to Belfast

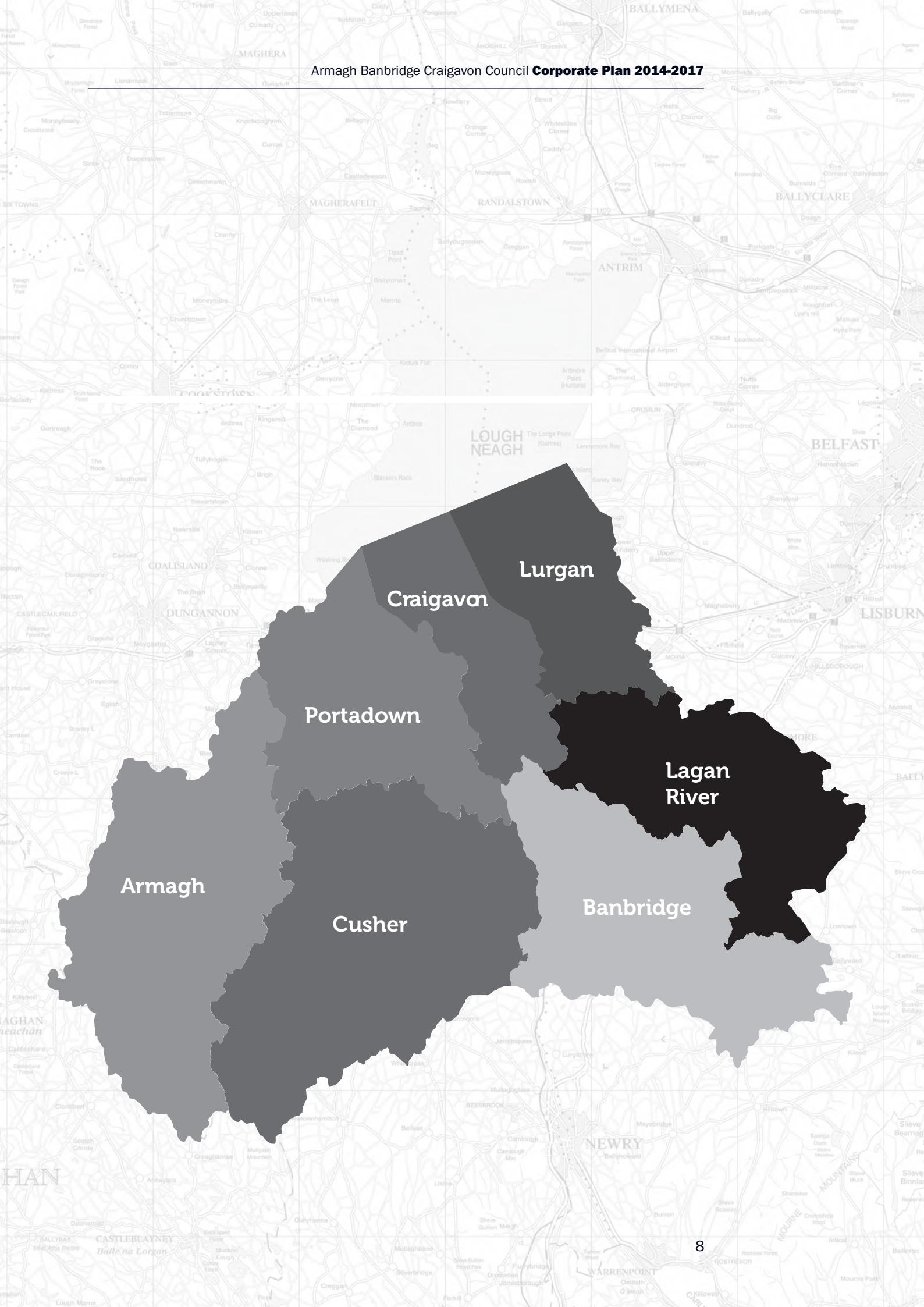
THE COUNCIL

Employing approximately 1400 staff (full and part time) and led by 41 Elected Members. The council is made up of 7 District Electoral Areas and has a budget in excess of £90 million.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Population growth greater than regional average: 15.8%, during 2001 to compared to an 8.3% in Northern Ireland overall.
- While 67% of the population live in towns, 33% live in rural areas exceeding the number of residents in the largest town..
- Higher proportion of the population aged between 0 -15 years old (22.2% vs. NI average 20.9%).
- 10 fewer crimes recorded per thousand of population in 2013 than the Northern Ireland average
- House prices in the ABC region are comparable to the NI average

Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Council **Corporate Plan 2014-2017**



3.

Our **Vision,** **Mission** and **Values**

A new beginning means a new start. We are clear about what we are here to do, what we want to achieve, and how we want to achieve it.

3.1 // Our Vision

The Council will proactively build the **economic prosperity** of the area by developing the **infrastructure** that connects **businesses and citizens** to markets and **employment** opportunities anywhere in the world. Council services will be **modern, reliable** and **efficient**.

The Council will facilitate the thriving **business** community in **growth** sectors including pharmaceuticals, engineering, rural diversification, agri-foods, creative industries and tourism as well as supporting **small enterprise** development and entrepreneurship. Strategically located on the **Belfast-Dublin** cross border commuter and transport **corridor**, the Council will work together with other partners to attract new **investment** and resources.

The area offers a good quality of life for all its residents, and will be **safe and affordable** for families and older people to live in. Local communities will be actively **engaged** on key issues in an **inclusive** manner. Young people will be able to realize their **potential** and develop their **dreams** through first class **education** and **training** provision, **employment** opportunities, as well as participating in **sport, arts** and **community** life. The Council will support communities to tackle social issues to improve **cohesion and**

tolerance across the area.

The **rural** character of the Orchard County, the upper Bann, Lagan valley and Lough Neagh southern shoreline will be **preserved** with care and developed for residents and **visitors** to enjoy. The people who live in **rural areas** are to be afforded good **services, transport** and **digital accessibility** to ensure they fully participate in all aspects of civic life and the economic development of the area. Effective systems for **waste** management and **environmental** protection safeguard nature for future generations.

The Council will support the diverse and colourful **cultural heritage** of the area: the buildings and architecture; its customs, stories, songs, poetry, music and sport; the traditions of the countryside and towns; the food and entertainment. Armagh's **ecclesiastical** prominence underlines the **significance** of the area regionally, nationally and internationally.

The Council will invest in **state of the art leisure** facilities as well as **out-door** and **adventure** activities using the beautiful natural environment. Town and village centres will be **attractive, clean and accessible** offering quality shopping and restaurants as well as cultural and entertainment experiences, which are inviting to everyone. There will be a **step change improvement** in areas of deprivation and dereliction.

3.2 // Our Mission

As a Council our aim is to:

**Prosper the Place,
Serve the People,**

**Strengthen our
Position**

3.3 // Our Values

Actions speak louder than words -

**and you will see
our values in
action every day.
We have three
core values that
will underpin all
we do and say.**

VALUE

(Prosper the) **Place**

(Serve the) **People**

(Strengthen the) **Position**
of the Council - locally,
regionally, nationally and
internationally

**WHICH MEANS WE ACT IN A
WAY THAT IS:**

Ambitious,
Protective,
Proactive

Respectful,
Responsive,
Excellent

4.

Corporate Priorities

2015 - 2017

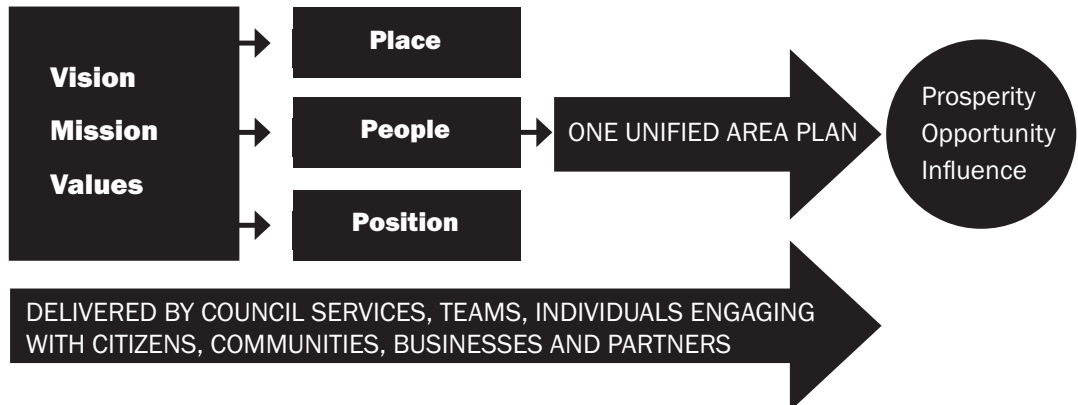
We have three Corporate Priorities which will focus our efforts and resources:

1. **Place** - increasing prosperity through developing the economy, employment, connectivity and environment
2. **People** - improving everyone's quality of life, opportunity, safety and wellbeing
3. **Position** - giving the leadership to tackle the issues that matter and influencing decision makers at all levels

This section sets out what the Council aims to achieve 2015-2017.

This is the basis for determining our annual operational plans, service and individual objectives and targets, performance monitoring and reporting progress.

Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Council 2015 - 2017



4.

Corporate Priorities 2015 -2017

Place

PROSPER THE PLACE

Growing our local economy is top of our agenda.

We will do all we can to attract investment, support businesses, protect jobs and increase employment.

We will plan for the whole area taking a balanced approach to economic, environment and social progress.

We will create the conditions to enable sustainable economic development: physical regeneration, transport and technological connectivity.

We will lead the way in the environmental management of the borough.

OUR PRIORITIES

Economy

Support business development and business growth

Increase the tourism, hospitality and entertainment economy

Maximise external funding opportunities

Campaign to increase inward investment

Bid for large scale signature events

Employment

Develop the skills of the workforce, now and for the future

Safeguard public administration jobs

Support local businesses to grow and increase jobs

Stimulate entrepreneurship and wealth creation.

Planning and Regeneration

Create an integrated Master Plan to maximise the potential of city, town and village centres, regeneration, tourism, land and property development

Progress existing regeneration plans

Complete all environmental improvement and regeneration schemes:

Develop the transport linkages to enhance travel, access and connectivity

Environment

Promote and sensitively regenerate the architectural heritage

Innovate effective waste management, cleanliness and recycling systems

Safeguard and manage the environment for future sustainable use

Develop a renewable energy strategy

DELIVERED THROUGH

A new regeneration and development strategy for the area and Council Capital Programmes

Delivering programmes and support in partnership with the Southern Regional College and higher education; providing pre-enterprise and business start up training through links with business support providers

Implementing current Master Plans for towns and villages; influencing the Northern Ireland Regional Transportation Strategy and the Regional Strategy to develop connecting linkages, ring roads, one way systems and rail links; developing a new comprehensive Area Plan

Encouraging the sustainable use of these buildings for the economic and social benefit of the area; implementing the bio diversity action plan; formulating and implementing a waste management strategy, sustainable development strategy and procurement policies.

4.

Corporate Priorities 2015 -2017

People

SERVE THE PEOPLE

Our people are the most important resource in our area.

We will provide people centred services that will improve quality of life and health and well-being.

We will offer varied leisure and recreational facilities.

We will celebrate our culture and arts.

We will support communities to develop a sense of belonging, safety and cohesion across our area

OUR PRIORITIES

Well Being

Promote well being and reduce health inequalities

Support people to be safe, healthy and productive

Encourage active citizenship and volunteering

Facilitate healthy lifestyle choices

Encourage recreational use of shared open spaces

Community

Create welcoming communities and neighbourhoods

Develop community planning capacity and involvement in local decision making

Celebrate diversity, promote equality and good relations to build a peaceful shared society

Increase the range of activities for young and old alike

Culture

Promote existing and develop new culture and arts programmes and facilities

Host major events to showcase the cultural significance of the area locally and abroad.

Quality

Consult with users of all Council services to develop and improve service delivery

Develop quality standards for all services

DELIVERED THROUGH

Programmes and projects in partnership with other agencies and the wider community; implementing the Council's environmental health enforcement duties and public awareness raising; enabling access to leisure facilities and the outdoors through placement of access paths, signage, trails and interpretation information; developing and implementing existing anti poverty strategy and health and well being strategy

Community Development and Community Support Plans, progressing Good Relations Action Plans and Rural Development Strategies; developing a new Policing and Community Safety Partnership Action Plan; extending programming in Council facilities and community centres to reduce anti-social behaviour

Developing a coherent cultural package for the area based on its rich heritage including St Patrick, Lough Neagh, The Brontës, Ecclesiastical centres, the Armagh Museum, the Orange Order, Navan Fort and the Iron Age.

Developing an integrated Customer Relationship Management system; and supporting the technical and professional skills of staff to deliver high quality services; Seeking external accreditation for quality and benchmarking where relevant

4.

Corporate Priorities 2015 -2017 **Position**

Strengthen our Position

The Council will provide civic leadership for the area to deliver on the vision.

We will seek out opportunities to bring resources to the area, working in partnership with others. We will represent the views of local people and seek to increase our influence at the highest level.

We will put in place the new organisational structures and governance arrangements that deliver sound local government for the people of the area.

We will provide information that can withstand scrutiny about our performance

Priorities

Leadership

Champion key local issues
Influence regionally on behalf of the area
Develop the community plan for the area
Promote civic pride in the Council and the community
Create productive partnerships for collaborative advantage

Transformation

Use evidence to inform policy development
Enable online citizen engagement and business/service transactions
Develop new effective service models
Promote a learning culture to drive innovation

Governance

Put in place new organisational structures
Provide public accountability and confidence,
Develop effective working relationships between elected members and officers

Communication

Keep citizens, elected members, staff and external parties well informed
Optimise information technology to support planning, 'joined up' service delivery, decision making and performance reporting

Performance

Maximise the assets of the region to increase its performance
Deliver excellent services
Create a productive working environment
Achieve performance efficiency through continuous improvement

DELIVERED THROUGH

Influencing regional policies and strategies, focussing on the next Programme for Government at the NI Assembly, scanning opportunities to bid for European funding; building partnerships with other public and private sector bodies including the implementation of Transforming Your Care with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Organisation development strategy, optimising new technology, partnerships with the private sector and social economy enterprises

Implement the scheme of delegation to streamline decision making; demonstrate robust budgetary control and transparent financial systems; fair employment policies and professional people practices; Comply with all statutory employer and governance requirements

Keeping up to date with new technology and using an effective range of communication media and information sharing systems to develop a new engagement strategy to make it easier for everyone to do business with the Council

Developing and implementing a new performance management system based on service and business plans; production of an Annual Report; increasing the quality of people management and leadership and providing meaningful performance appraisal and feedback to individuals and teams; benchmark performance through external accreditation.

5. Measuring Success

As a new organisation, during 2014 - 2017, we will set a baseline that will allow for meaningful measures of success to be taken in the future. The table below sets out key indicators of success around which we will develop future measures.

Success Indicator	Measured by
1. Happiness with our service	# using Council facilities % satisfied with services
2. Wealth generated for the area	£ invested in the area # jobs created % business start up % employment increase
3. Hope for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of Community Plan • Partnerships for collaborative advantage • Quality of life indicators
4. Trust in our delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of planned strategies • Completion of projects • Achievement of quality standards
5. The reputation and good name of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark with best in class # visitors to area # high profile events

This Corporate Plan is a strategic framework for the development of:

- Annual service plans
- Team performance plans
- Individual forward work plans

Each of these will have clear objectives and targets which will be monitored through performance management systems. Results will be published in our Annual Reports.

6.

Immediate Focus

Our immediate focus is to put in place the arrangements for the New Council and to prepare elected members and council staff to deliver new local government services on the 1st April 2015. This will be achieved through our top ten priorities:

1. Establish new governance arrangements for Council and the supporting organisational structure
2. Equip elected members and council staff with the support, knowledge and skills to deliver on our mission, vision and values
3. Integrate transferring functions from DETI, DSD and DARD into existing service areas to achieve positive economic and social benefits
4. Unify our service delivery systems to provide balanced and efficient services across the area
5. Agree an integrated finance system, capital and revenue budgets and strike the first new rate
6. Implement our asset management strategy to ensure the Council's physical estate is maintained safely and in good operational order
7. Put in place our new local planning system and procedures
8. Commence preparatory work on developing our area community plan and related local development plans.
9. Agree our new identity as a Council to unify the people and the place
10. Establish cooperative working relationships between elected members, council staff, our wider community and partners