

# Corporate Plan 2015-2019

Realising our potential



### **Foreword**

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's first Corporate Plan is our statement of intent. It describes our aims and ambitions for the next four years and how we will achieve our vision of "Mid and East Antrim: Working together to create a better future for all."

The plan outlines the transformational change required to ensure we deliver better services for our citizens and continually improve services year on year.

It also sets out how we will utilise the new powers of planning, urban regeneration, off street car parking and community planning to deliver real, positive, outcomes for our people.

Through our Local Development Plan, as a council we will be able to use planning powers to promote Mid and East Antrim as a place to invest, work and live whilst protecting our extraordinary natural environment.

As the lead partner in the development of the Community Plan, public services will for the first time be able to take a truly joined up approach to service delivery, focusing on the specific social needs of this area.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is citizen focused, and in these continuing economically difficult times we will be pioneering in our approach to service delivery to make every penny count, and account for every penny.

The objectives we have set are ambitious and challenging and we can only achieve our vision for Mid and East Antrim by working closely with our partners, our communities and actively engaging with our service users.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is committed wholeheartedly to fulfilling this plan and delivering the outcomes we believe will create a better future for all.

We look forward to working with you and for you over the next four years and believe that we have a strong, joined up Elected Member and Management team that will work hard on behalf of the people of Mid and East Antrim.

Cllr Billy Ashe, Mayor of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Anne Donaghy, Chief Executive Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

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The Mid and East Antrim area is beautiful, welcoming, industrious and unique. We know it's a great place to be, and we want to share that with you.

Mid and East Antrim Borough covers an area of just over 400 square miles extending from the River Bann in the west to the beautiful Antrim coast in the east and includes part of the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

There are three main towns, Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne, and a host of welcoming villages and rural communities which are home to a population of just over 135,000 people.







### **Economy**

Mid and East Antrim benefits from its strategic location within Northern Ireland. With close proximity to both major airports, the Port of Belfast and, of course, the Port of Larne itself, the area is ideally suited for commerce.

Along with this strategic location, international manufacturing and resilient local companies, the groundwork is in place for Mid and East Antrim to capitalise on signs of economic growth and build itself a strong and formidable economic identity.

Throughout the economic downturn our area has maintained an above average employment rate due to the hard work and determination of our people. However, more can be done and we recognise that the importance of creating a thriving council area with job creation, economic investment and growth opportunity as perhaps the greatest challenge ahead for Mid and East Antrim.

Ballymena's strong manufacturing base employs a high percentage of the population and must be protected and nurtured. Ballymena also has a thriving social economy sector with 468 jobs created through a £3.7million investment to 12 social enterprise projects, though our predecessor council of Ballymena Borough Council.

Retail is also a major strength within the town of Ballymena, which is one of Northern Ireland's top retail destinations, providing a vibrant mix of both national and independent businesses.

A sign of economic regeneration in Carrickfergus is the fact all three large industrial sites vacated in the 1980s now house vibrant industrial zones.

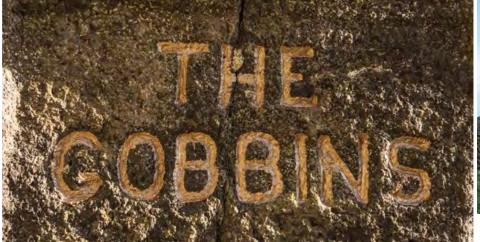
These provide commercial and manufacturing facilities to both small indigenous business as well as globally recognised brands such as Schrader International, Ryobi and Douglas and Grahame.

In June 2013, Larne-based medical device manufacturer Terumo BCT announced the creation of 400 new jobs over the next few years, following over £2million of investment from Invest NI.

As demonstrated in Larne, the relationships between Mid and East Antrim and partners such as Invest NI will be critical to success. We will work with key stakeholders to develop an integrated economic development strategy which aims to stimulate growth by addressing all related factors such as education, workforce and training.









### **Tourism**

Mid and East Antrim boasts huge tourism potential. With existing attractions and exciting new projects underway, our area has a bountiful offering that will form the basis for a comprehensive tourism strategy, bringing investment and jobs to our Borough.

Carrickfergus is one of Northern Ireland's richest heritage sites. Eight centuries of urban history, exemplified by the imposing Norman Castle and old town walls, makes the town unique in its historical significance. And with more than a mile of beautiful coastline, it allows visitors to experience the historic castle and harbour through to the state-of-art marina.

Travelling along the coast is the pretty seaside village of Whitehead. The village was the starting point for The Gobbins Path, to which visitors flocked during the Victorian and Edwardian era. After falling into disrepair in the 1950s this engineering wonder has now, following a £6million investment, been reinstated. It is estimated that 50,000 visitors a year will avail of this unique walk, with its stunning views and distinctive flora, fauna and geological features.

Larne's strategic location on the Antrim Coast welcomes the rest of the UK and beyond to our Borough. It is the starting point of one of the most beautiful coastal drives in the world, meandering past Carnfunnock Country Park and the charming villages of Glenarm, Carnlough and Glencoy.

Ballymena is known as the Gateway to the Glens and in recent years has attracted major private investment. Galgorm Resort and Spa is undergoing a £10million investment to create 48 additional bedrooms and new leisure facilities resulting in 60 new jobs once completed, and this follows on from a £2million renovation of the Adair Arms Hotel which brought 10 additional jobs.

Mid and East Antrim is blessed with a huge variety of natural resources including the wild and rugged beauty of the Antrim coastline with its huge array of wildlife, Slemish mountain, and many areas of parks and countryside including many woods and forests which are open to the public. This provides a wide range of opportunities for sport and leisure within the area including freshwater and sea fishing, sailing with marinas at Carrickfergus and Portglenone, canoeing, golf, mountain climbing, rambling and many more.

Events also continue to deliver real economic benefits to our area. The Dalriada Festival in Glenarm, St Patrick's Day at Slemish Mountain and the Carrickfergus Pageant bring visitors and spend. In 2014, the prestigious Giro d'Italia showcased our area to the world and Mid and East Antrim will continue to host high profile national and international events.









### Community

The community of Mid and East Antrim is vibrant and individual and there is a strong sense of place. Across the area, key strategies have been implemented to deliver an extensive range of sporting opportunities and facilities.

The Active Communities programme encourages participation in target groups of older people, women and children and our three predecessor councils invested in sporting infrastructure including refurbished leisure centres, outdoor gym equipment and play parks.

In partnership with our local communities we will continue to deliver an innovative programme of events, exhibitions and outreach projects. From comedy nights

to film clubs, hat making to stilt walking classes our people engage in the rich range of cultural activities available within the Mid and East Antrim area.

Community representation and partnership is recognised as a vital component in identifying and addressing need.

Council will build on the work of groups like the Carrickfergus Community Forum. Operating for over 15 years it acts as an umbrella organisation for almost 100 local community and voluntary groups and utilises a community framework to develop services.

You can expect a warm welcome from all our communities in Mid and East Antrim, and whilst we will focus on building the new Borough Community, we will recognise the uniqueness and individual needs that different groups and localities require.



### Heritage and culture

Mid and East Antrim is rich in historical interest and significance including castles at Carrickfergus, Galgorm and Glenarm, the historic town of Carrickfergus with its 16th century walls, the Moravian settlement at Gracehill, the Chaine Memorial Tower, Larne's 17th century Town Hall and many historic churches and other buildings and landmarks of historical significance.

The area also boasts strong American and Ulster-Scots connections with the ancestral homes of two United States Presidents within the area and Larne being a port of emigration from which many Ulster-Scots emigrants departed for their new lives in America.

Our Borough has a long and rich tradition of language and history.

A distinctive accent sets our people apart in conversation and the English language in the area has long been intermingled with that of the Scots and Irish. Within our area, around 18,000 people will have some knowledge of Ulster-Scots and 6,000 people will have some knowledge of Irish.

### **Your Council**

40 Councillors, elected in 7 District Electoral Areas, working together to create a better future for all in Mid and East Antrim Borough.

### Ballymena



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# Our Vision The context

Mid and East Antrim was formed in shadow format following the elections on 22 May 2014, when 40 elected members were appointed to represent the new area, replacing the predecessor councils of Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne Borough Councils from 1 April 2015.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council was established as part of the programme for local government reform, the most significant change in over 40 years.

The purpose of the reform process is to create a "thriving dynamic local government that creates

vibrant, healthy, prosperous, safe and sustainable communities that meets the needs of the citizens" and aims to deliver improved service provision and long-term cost savings.

For Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, this provides a once in a political lifetime opportunity to do things differently and to do different things.

Our focus is always to improve the quality of life for our citizens.







# A new era for Mid and East Antrim

With new responsibilities and a broader range of powers, combined with a partnership approach, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will be stronger, more effective and flexible to local need, always being focused on our citizens.

We fully recognise that in the current economic climate it is even more important to make every penny count and account for every penny. That is what our citizens expect and that is what they deserve. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will focus on delivering excellent, value for money services.

During the next number of years, the transfer of key functions from central government, to include planning, area planning, local economic development and local tourism and off-street car parking will allow us to enhance our support for local economic growth.

Council will, of course, continue to deliver to a high quality the full range of services including bin collection, street cleansing, dog control, registration of births, deaths and marriages, arts and museum services and many more.

The combination of existing council services being transferred and the new powers will be joined together using the new duty of Community Planning. This will foster a new way of working, a collaborative partnership approach and the permission to address anything that will improve the wellbeing of all our community.

The existing council services and the new council services will be delivered within a community planning approach – effectively working together to plan and deliver better public services with other partners in the area.

Creating a Community Plan for Mid and East Antrim will require Council to plan better public service delivery with the other public services. We will use the opportunity provided by our new powers and responsibilities to make sure they make a real positive difference which is realised in our communities.

# "We recognise that Mid and East Antrim must be open, transparent and responsible for all we do and accountable to the citizen."



We will do this by working in partnership with all who have a part to play to deliver value for money services in line with local need.

The Community Plan places us in a better position to work together in providing better public services and making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made which affect them.

In doing this we recognise that Mid and East Antrim must be open, transparent and responsible for all we do and accountable to the citizen. As part of our commitment we will put in place a Performance Improvement Framework.

Mid and East Antrim's 40 Elected Members will work together to create a better for future for all and we will work with the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to deliver on what we believe are the right five strategic priorities to improve health, wealth and overall wellbeing of our citizens.

We will support the development of Elected Member and Staff capacity to ensure we have the right skills, knowledge and attitudes to deliver effective services in line with citizen need. This will be supported by the Council putting in place policies and procedures that support efficient service delivery, equality and fairness, evidence-based decision making and which are flexible and adaptable to deal with future challenges.

By putting in place these foundations, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will focus on doing things right first time, every time and will develop a council which is fit for purpose, innovative, outcome focused and continually improving – always focussed on our citizen.









### Our Corporate Plan

Our first Corporate Plan for Mid and East Antrim has set out a clear and compelling vision for the people and the place.

It is the overarching plan which ties together a number of plans and strategies which will enable the Council to deliver our vision for the area and will be interlinked to our Community Plan which sees all public services and corporate priorities come together in one plan (see diagram opposite).

As the only democratically elected positions in public service the Elected Members of Mid and East Antrim will take the lead on initiating, maintaining, facilitating

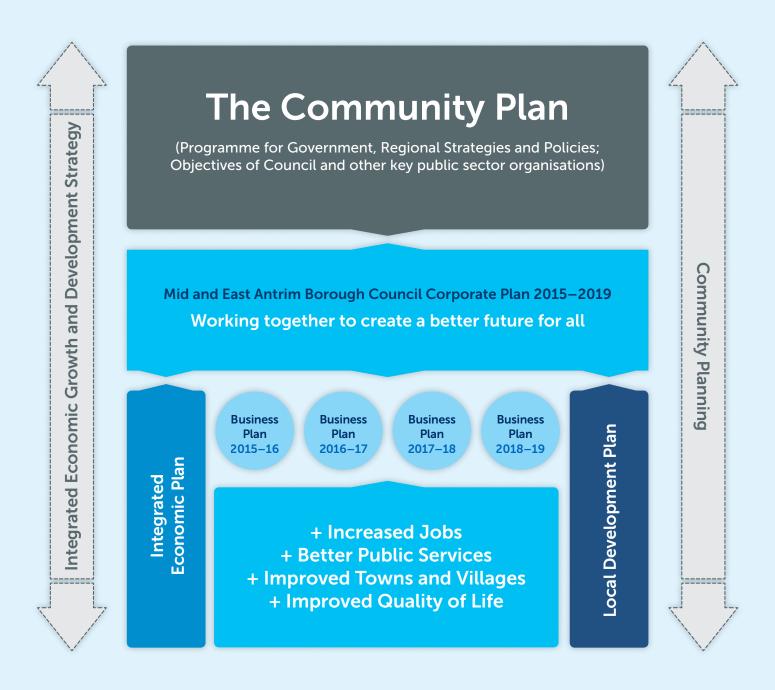
and developing the first Community Plan for Mid and East Antrim in a partnership approach.

This plan will bring together the key priorities of all public service across Mid and East Antrim to ensure that public resources are used to the best effect and in line with citizen need. Council's priorities are set out in this, our first Corporate Plan.

The Delivery Action Plans set out how we will deliver these priorities within the allocated resources. Two key plans which support the Council's priorities are an Integrated Economic Growth and Development Strategy and the Local Area Plan.

Council will be accountable for the delivery of the priorities through the annual Business Plans as part of a performance management framework.

# The diagram below outlines how these plans link together.



# Our Strategic Priorities

To deliver our vision, we agreed five integrated strategic priorities to deliver our vision of working together to create a better future for all.



### **Objectives**

Within these
five strategic
priorities a number
of high-level
objectives have
been identified.

An annual Business Plan will be developed to support the implementation of the objectives and will be made available on our website www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk



# Growing the economy

Jobs and investment in the Mid and East Antrim area are vital to meeting our vision. We are committed to growing our economy by creating the conditions which attract inward investment to our Borough, support sustainable employment, expand existing businesses, and promote entrepreneurship and innovation.

- **1.** Attract jobs and investment to the Mid and East Antrim area through an innovative and dynamic approach to economic development and regeneration.
- **2.** Build strong and effective integrated partnerships to address issues of identified economic need.
- **3.** Use our planning responsibilities to maximise impact on economic development.
- **4.** Maximise investment through effective lobbying of central government and private investors.
- **5.** Identify and secure funding from European Union, and other sources, to deliver sustainable economic development and regeneration projects.









# Developing our tourism potential

Mid and East Antrim Borough boasts some of the most beautiful and scenic land and seascapes in Northern Ireland. It is rich in culture and heritage and offers the warmest of welcomes from its local communities.

We believe that the potential of our tourism product has not been fully realised, and has the promise of delivering a great economic benefit to our area.

- **1.** Build our brand and make Mid and East Antrim Borough a "go to" destination.
- **2.** Work in partnership with Tourism NI to shape a Regional Tourism Strategy reflective of our area's tourism objectives.
- **3.** Make it easy for the visitor to get to and around the Mid and East Antrim area through improved access, transport links and signage.
- **4.** Actively involve our local businesses and communities in developing and delivering tourism products.
- **5.** Safeguard our tourism assets including the natural and built environment.









# Building stronger, safe and healthy communities

We want vibrant, safe and healthy communities for all our citizens. and the Council's lead role in developing the Community Plan for our area will be key to delivering this. Continuing to work with our communities we will secure a better quality of life, improved health and wellbeing and protection of our green and clean Borough. However, we also want to enable and empower our communities to drive improvements themselves and build stronger and sustainable communities as a result.

- **1.** Through the Community Plan ensure greater integration of public services at a local level driven through partnership, collaboration and effective local working.
- **2.** Improve and support the health and wellbeing of our people and communities through our services.
- **3.** Protect and enhance an attractive, safe and sustainable environment.
- **4.** Increase the capability and confidence of the community sector to become more self-sustainable.
- **5.** Promote equality of opportunity, good relations, and social inclusion to support a better quality of life for all.







# Delivering excellent services

During this time of transformation, we will ensure first class frontline services which make a positive impact on the quality of life for all our citizens.

Moving forward we will deliver continuous improvement in the design and delivery of our services and challenge partner organisations to do the same.

- **1.** Establish measurable service standards which will demonstrate our commitment to the provision of high quality, effective yet value-for-money services.
- **2.** Listen and learn from our customers to identify service priorities.
- **3.** Embed effective governance arrangements which support open and transparent decision making.
- **4.** Develop a joined-up approach to service delivery across the organisation where the provision of excellent service is the responsibility of all.
- **5.** Work with other service providers to design and deliver services which can be delivered in partnership and avoid duplication of public resources.





# Developing a high performing Council

As an organisation we will strive to be the best that we can be through effective leadership and a teamwork ethos at all levels and fostering a culture which is supportive of innovation and taking risks where appropriate.

- **1.** To be recognised as a leading council in all areas of service provision, both regionally and nationally.
- **2.** Invest in the people who deliver services through enhanced workforce development and effective leadership.
- **3.** Establish performance management systems which will track performance and support the reporting of the Performance Improvement Plan and statutory performance indicators.
- **4.** Undertaken baseline studies which will benchmark the Council's current performance levels and will inform future targets and measures.
- **5.** Maintain the financial health of the Council with robust mechanisms to support the effective and efficient use of resources.





### Realising Our Vision

### The values we will demonstrate which will allow us to **R.E.A.L.I.S.E.** our vision:

#### Respect

Establishing a culture of openness, trust and value.

#### Excellence

To be an exemplar - striving to be the best we can be by efficiently and effectively managing and deploying resources in order to maximise outcomes.

#### A teamwork approach

Working together and supporting each other in true partnership to make the vision of Mid and East Antrim a reality.

#### Leadership and commitment

Through strong leadership we will give direction, provide support and empower everyone to play their role in delivering the vision and strategic priorities for all our people.

#### Integrity

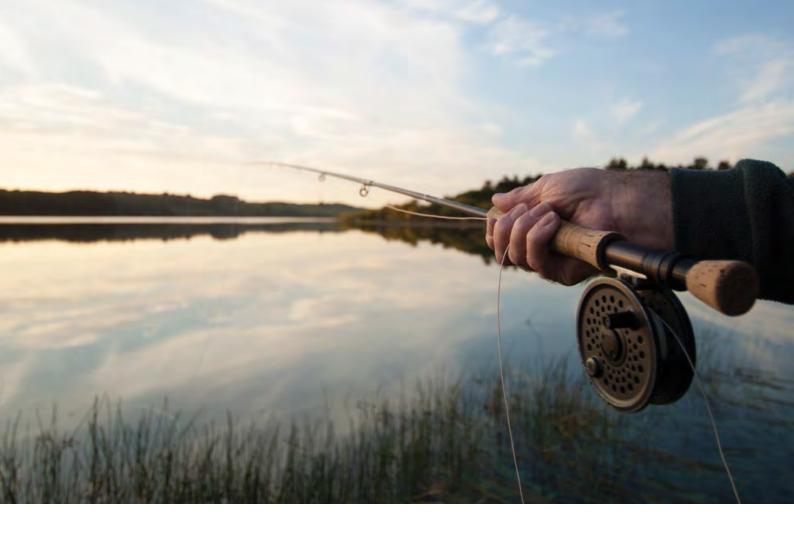
To support a spirit which enables honesty, accountability and trust throughout.

#### **S**ervice innovation

We will empower people to express their ideas and harness their creative skills through supporting them to be transformative.

#### **E**quality and fairness

To recognise and value diversity and promote opportunity and equal access to services.



## Performance Improvement Plans

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is committed to continuous improvement in the delivery of our services.

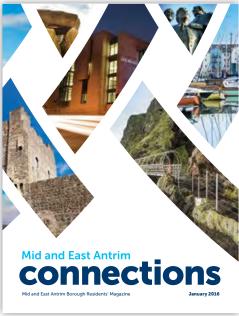
- + Strategic effectiveness
- + Service quality
- + Service availability
- + Fairness
- + Sustainability
- + Efficiency
- + Innovation

To support and demonstrate this commitment we will develop and implement an annual Performance Improvement Plan.

With our Performance Improvement Plan we will show how we will deliver improvement in at least one of these areas.

We will consult on and publish our Performance Improvement Plan annually to ensure accountability and transparency.





# Monitoring and Reporting

### Performance Management systems will be put in place which will include our new statutory duties in relation to Performance Improvement.

In line with these duties Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will produce an Annual Performance Improvement Plan which will detail our progress in achieving our corporate objectives; provide an overall assessment of our performance for the public and outline actions that are required to drive improvements.

In addition, the Council will monitor and scrutinise the implementation of the Corporate Plan twice per financial year. The scrutiny and reporting structure is detailed as follows:

#### **Council / Chief Executive**

- Twice yearly Progress Update to Council by Chief Executive
- Annual Performance Improvement Report to Council by Chief Executive
- Publication of Annual Performance Improvement Report

#### **Senior Management Team**

• Written Director's report to Chief Executive every 3 months

### **Individual Senior Management Team members**

• Included within personal objectives and Council's Performance Management arrangements.





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### **Other formats**

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