



Subject:	Medium Term Financial Plan Update 2024/25 – 2027/28
Date:	22 nd March 2024
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
Contact Officer:	Anne Millar, Financial Planning Manager

Is this report restricted? Yes No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

- Information relating to any individual
- Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
- Information in connection with any labour relations matter
- Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
- Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
- Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of the report is to present members with an update on the work underway to implement a robust approach to longer term financial planning in compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the work to be completed to agree priorities for 2025/26 to 2027/28.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	SP&R at its meeting on 19 January 2024 agreed to an update report on the development and implementation of a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
3.2	Integrating and aligning strategies with resources is central to financial resilience and stability as the impact of actions or decisions on one or more of these strategies will have an impact on the others. The key planning processes in the Council are:
3.3	<p>Financial Planning - Revenue Estimates – August to January</p> <p>The striking of the district rate by 15th February each year is a statutory requirement set out in the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland)2011. The financial planning process each August with the issuing of High-Level Guidance to Chief Officers, after consultation with Members. After consideration of draft estimates, each Standing Committee considers their cash limit for the following financial year as recommended by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. Full Council must ratify the Council estimates before 15th February each year.</p>
3.4	The revenue budgets for 2024/25 have been approved by Council in February and provide the cash limit available to each Chief Officer for delivering services. The Council's Financial Regulations require each Chief Officer to deliver a balanced budget by the year end. Should the need for unbudgeted expenditure arise during the year, the Director of Finance will assess funding options for the proposal which should only proceed with his approval.
	Corporate Planning
3.5	<p>The four-year corporate planning cycle is timed around the electoral cycle so that a new plan is agreed for the April following the local government elections. This gives elected Members approximately nine months to work with Officers in establishing the priorities for the Council over the next four years. At its meeting on 18th August 2023, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approved a report on the proposed approach and timeline for the development of the 2024 – 28 Corporate Plan and accompanying Committee and Departmental Plans for 2024-25 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party Group Leaders, Committee Chairs and Chief Officers Workshop – late September 2023 • Committee Planning Workshops – early October 2023 • Draft Corporate Plan/Committee Plans/Departmental Plans – (CMT 8th November 2023) • All Member Workshop – November 2023 • Strategic Policy and Resources Committee – 24th November and 15th December • Draft Corporate Plan and Committee Plans to Committee – January/February 2024

3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight Week Public Consultation Period – February/March 2024 • Final Four Year Corporate and Committee Plans agreed – April – May 2024 <p>The corporate planning process is ongoing and the revised timeline for the completion of the Corporate Plan and the accompanying Committee and Departmental Plans is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMT consider the draft 2024-2028 Corporate Plan and 2024-2025 Delivery Plan and Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-2025 return suggested changes/ additions to the Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Team by 20 March 2024. • Draft performance improvement objectives presented to SP&R Committee on 20 March 2024. - CMT agree that DMTs be invited to the extended CMT workshop on 27 March 2024 and inform SPP if they would like any additional officers invited. • Extended CMT discussion of draft corporate plan, delivery plan and performance objectives on 27 March 2024; • Public consultation on the draft performance improvement objectives April-May 2024 • All Member workshop with a focus on resourced delivery in 2024-2025 (to inform annual delivery plan) and performance targets (April 2024, date TBC). • Internal engagement with departments on the development of the Performance Improvement Plan (milestones, performance indicators and targets). • Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2028. Annual Delivery plan and Performance Improvement Plan to CMT for final sign off – early May • Draft Corporate Plan and draft Annual Delivery Plan to SP&R Committee for agreement, subject to public consultation (24 May 2024) • Committee Plans agreed at P&C and CG&R Committee – May 2024. • Performance Improvement Plan 2024-2025 agreed by SP&R Committee on 21 June 2024. • Public Consultation - June 2024 • Launch of internal communications plan – June 2024
	Financial Sustainability
3.7	<p>The Council relies on rate income to fund almost 80% of its services. Rate base vulnerability has been and remains a financial risk to the Council. Having an integrated MTFP showing budgetary pressures will focus on progressing income generation and investment opportunities that will lessen the reliance on rate income. In the longer term, this approach will demonstrate the Council's financial resilience which in turn will attract more investors to help achieve the ambitious long-term plans set out in the Belfast Agenda.</p>
3.8	<p>Appendix 1 provides a draft Medium Term Financial Plan Format. This provides information on the background to what is include in a MTFP. Significant work is still to be undertaken in relation to the Forward Planning and Capital Programme areas with further work on the development of these to continue over the coming months.</p>

	Next Steps
3.9	<p>A planning workshop will be held with Members in April to reaffirm Council priorities over the life of the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Chief Officers will align budgets and reserves to these priorities going forward.</p> <p>Chief Officers will outline new pressures where funding sources do not exist within departmental budgets.</p> <p>An update on the development of the MTFP will be brought to Committee in June</p>
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.10	None
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.11	None
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 To 2027/28