



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

**CORPORATE SERVICES
DIRECTORATE**

***POLICY AND COMMUNITY
PLANNING***

***BUSINESS PLAN
2023/24***

FUNCTIONS OF THE POLICY AND COMMUNITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

1. Corporate Policy

- Assist with the development and review of the Council's Council Strategy
- Development and review of the Council Constitution
- Development of policy initiatives and provide assistance and support to the policy making processes of Council.

2. Community Planning

- Evidence gathering and analysis of data for an evidence informed Community Plan
- Facilitate capacity building and culture change re community planning
- Initiate consultation, engagement and communication initiatives with stakeholders
- Develop appropriate delivery mechanisms to achieve the outcomes identified within the Community Plan.
- Develop and establish performance monitoring and reporting mechanisms for the community plan/delivery plan.

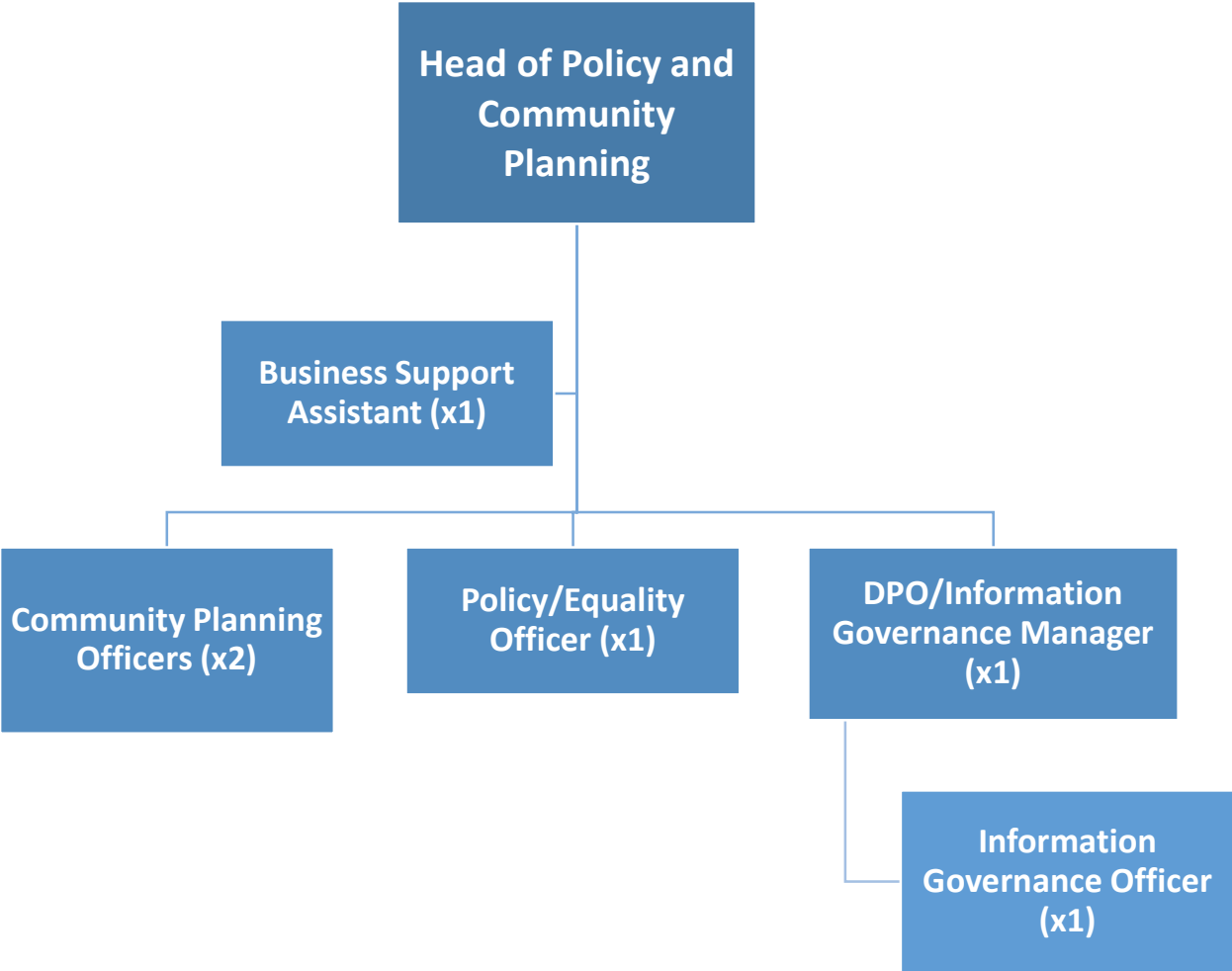
3. Information Governance

- Co-ordinate Council compliance with access to information legislation such as Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act and Environmental Information Regulations.
- Development of a corporate records management strategy and framework with associated policies, procedures and systems.
- Development and implementation of a Disposal and Retention Schedule for Council

4. Equality and Diversity

- Develop and implement strategies, policies and initiatives to promote equality of opportunity and appreciation of diversity within Council.
- Ensure Council meets its legal obligations in relation to equality and diversity.
- Ensure the Council meets its obligations in relation to the disability duties.

POLICY AND COMMUNITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

1. THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE ARE TO:

- 1.1 Ensure that the Council delivers its services in accordance with its legal obligations and best practice relating to equality and diversity and develops/implements strategies, policies and initiatives which promote equality and diversity within the Council.
- 1.2 Ensure the Council meets its obligations in relation to the promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourages participation by disabled people in public life.
- 1.3 Support the development and implementation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan which includes evidence gathering, community engagement activities, performance management and putting in place governance and reporting mechanisms.
- 1.4 Develop and implement an information management strategy and framework for the Council which co-ordinates Council compliance with a range of access to information legislation.
- 1.5 Develop and implement a records management strategy and framework for the Council with associated policies, procedures and systems, ensuring that it supports the priorities and statutory obligations of the Council.
- 1.6 Support the development of relevant strategies, policies, procedures and systems to support the priorities and statutory obligations of Council.

2. COUNCIL STRATEGY:

Aligned with the following Council Strategic Aims and Objectives:

- Cohesive Leadership
- Local Economy
- Improvement and Innovation
- Healthy, Active and Engaged Communities
- Climate Change and Our Environment.

3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT:

The functions of the service are shaped primarily by a range of legislative obligations such as the Local Government Act 2014, S75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

4. RESOURCE CONTEXT:

The functions of the service are facilitated by a small team of 7 people and the budget for the service for the 2023/24 financial year is £438,622. Staff salaries make up the bulk of the Department's budget.

5. INTERNAL CONTEXT:

The policy, equality and information governance functions of the service are primarily corporate in nature and require the co-operation and input of officers across the Council, for example in relation to dealing with requests for access to information, screening of policies, etc.

6. EXTERNAL CONTEXT:

The Community Planning function is externally influenced by legislation and by statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities. It also requires input from, and external reporting to, statutory partners, the community and voluntary sector and the general public.

The Equality Commission plays a major role in oversight and compliance as well as offering advice and guidance on the application of Section 75 Equality and Good Relations legal obligations by Council, as well as a range of other legislation relating to equality and diversity issues such as disability, race, gender, etc.,

The Information Commissioners' Officer undertakes an oversight role and compliance role in relation to how Council has dealt with requests for access to information, data protection and other information related legislation. The Information Commissioners' Office also provides guidance in relation to a range of information related legislation.

7. SWOT ANALYSIS AND PESTLE ANALYSIS:

A SWOT Analysis and a PESTLE Analysis were undertaken in relation to the Policy and Community Planning Department to help identify issues which could potentially impact on the business planning process:

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable and skilled team of staff able to use their own initiative to take forward projects. • Established systems and processes in place which underpin the functions of the service area. • Positive relationships established with a range of internal and external stakeholders. 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small team of staff and resource light. • Unforeseen or long-term absence can have a detrimental impact on the work of the service area due to lack of cover. • Lack of co-operation internally and externally can impede progress of actions.
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can access best practice ideas from other Councils. • Can provide positive PR opportunities for Council. • Can help develop a robust and effective Council Strategy. • Can help deliver positive change for people in Causeway Coast and Glens area through community planning activities. 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing use of legal actions taken against Council which impact on the service area, eg compliance issues. • Impact on resources available through the budgeting and rates setting process within Council.

<p>POLITICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme for Government to be developed which will have implications for the Community Planning process. • Introduction of legislation re Irish and Ulster-Scots language obligations. 	<p>ECONOMIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of cost of living on community planning activities. • Challenges to financial resources both internal and external. • Setting of central government budgets could potentially have an impact on the ability to progress community planning initiatives.
<p>SOCIO-CULTURAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased lobbying by special interest groups which impact particularly on the equality agenda. • An ageing population in CC&G which will impact on community planning and equality activities. 	<p>TECHNOLOGICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New technological developments which can help provide better customer accessibility to Council services, for example the introduction of SignVideo.
<p>LEGAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection issues increasingly arising, particularly data breaches. • Increasingly complex requests on a range of access to information issues. 	<p>ENVIRONMENTAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater emphasis on climate change and environmental issues and indicators which will impact on community planning activities and initiatives.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex guidance from ICO on information access issues and the need for legal guidance. • Increased likelihood of legal challenge to various decisions of Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Rural Needs Assessments in policy development work within Council.
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8. PRE-REQUISITES AND EXTERNAL DEPENDENCIES

The following outlines the pre-requisites and external dependencies which could potentially impact or influence this Business Plan (predicated on certain things being in place):

- The Equality Forum is maintained and meeting quarterly.
- The S75 consultee database is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- ICT systems will support any new technology introduced, such as SignVideo.
- The Community Planning Partnership continues to work together effectively.
- A revised/updated Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan are agreed and in place.
- Sufficient resources (people and financial) are made available to the Department to enable it to function effectively.

9. ASSUMPTIONS:

- 9.1 Sufficient resources will be available to enable the Department to function effectively.
- 9.2 The Community Planning baseline data can be reviewed and updated as required.
- 9.3 A process for the management of requests for access to information is in place and adequately resourced.
- 9.4 Processes for S75 screening, Rural Needs Assessments and Data Protection Assessments are in place and such screening is actively taking place within Council.

10. BUSINESS PLAN RISKS:

- 10.1 Failure to meet commitments in Council Equality Scheme leading to litigation and loss of reputation.
- 10.2 Failure to meet commitments in Disability Action Plan leading to litigation and loss of reputation.

- 10.3 Failure to maintain the Council Constitution leading to failure to meet statutory obligations.
- 10.4 Compromised/loss of personal data leading to litigation, loss of reputation and possible fines.
- 10.5 Complaints made to the ICO on how the Council has dealt with requests for access to information and the subsequent risk to Council's reputation.
- 10.6 Community Planning monitoring and reporting mechanisms not adhered to or not effective, leading to possible failure of progress of the community planning process.
- 10.7 Community Planning Partnership not operating effectively, for example because of lack of co-operation among partners.
- 10.8 Data analysis underpinning community planning monitoring and reporting systems not effective.
- 10.9 S75 systems and processes not adhered to resulting in challenge to Council's policy work.
- 10.10 Rural Needs Assessments not carried out as required resulting in public challenge to Council's policy work.
- 10.11 Data Protection Impact Assessments not completed which result in breaches of data protection legislation.

11. BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVES:

- 11.1 Ensure that the Council addresses equality and diversity issues in accordance with its legal obligations and best practice and develops/implements strategies, policies and initiatives which promote equality and diversity within the Council.
- 11.2 Ensure the Council meets its obligations in relation to the promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourages participation by disabled people in public life.
- 11.3 Maintain, facilitate and participate in the development and implementation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan.

- 11.4 Develop and implement an information management strategy and framework for the Council (including an effective data protection regime and records management strategy and framework).
- 11.5 Support the priorities and statutory obligations of Council by developing and maintaining relevant strategies, policies, procedures and systems.

Directorate	Corporate Services
Service Area	Policy and Community Planning
Reporting Year	2023/2024

Business Plan Objective 1

Ensure that the Council addresses equality and diversity issues in accordance with its legal obligations and best practice and develops/implements strategies, policies and initiatives which promote equality and diversity within the Council.

Work Stream	Actions	Outcome(s)	Budget £	Timescale	KPI's	Progress	RAG Status
Equality and Diversity	Undertake a review of the Equality Action Plan to ensure it addresses a range of statutory strategic equality and diversity issues.	Council services that are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of people and communities in CC&G. Raise awareness of equalities issues and tackle prejudices, both internally and externally. Through equality articles and communication promoting equality.	0	April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and promote a 360° video of the Disability Leisure Hub (JDLC) and 1 other facility. Achieve the AutismNI Impact Award in JDLC. Identify and trial a portable communication method for staff to overcome language barriers when out in the community. 		
	Develop and implement a range of communication, information and engagement activities designed to positively	Attract, recruit, retain and progress a diverse range of employees in a		April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of easy read documents across 		

	improve levels of interaction on equality and diversity issues.	<p>culture which celebrates diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>Undertake active engagement with S75 groups every quarter eg with equality forum.</p>			<p>Council by 5 on the previous year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Makaton flash cards to support communication at reception areas – pilot in the 4 Civic buildings and JDLC during 2023/2024 		
	Work with Departments of Council to positively impact on levels of understanding of equality and diversity issues among Council staff.	<p>Provide a working environment where employees are treated with fairness, dignity and respect.</p> <p>Establish a staff engagement network through Diversity Champions</p> <p>Ensure all individuals on the S75 Consultation list are aware of all consultations added to the website.</p>	0	April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Hub (JDLC) and one other facility - Staff trained on how to be Autism friendly (Neuro diverse conditions) 12 equality articles in the staff news, 4 of which must contain the lived experiences of people with disabilities Work in partnership with local groups to determine key content for Makaton flash cards 		
	Improve participation levels among under-represented groups when consulting on and		0	April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued consultation with individuals with Autism and 		

	developing Council's activities and services.				neurodiverse conditions regarding the Autism Action Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify options to improve engagement with staff on diversity matters 		
Link to Corporate Aims and Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement and Innovation Healthy, Active and Engaged Communities 							
Link to Community Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Thriving Economy A Healthy Safe Community A Sustainable Accessible Environment 							
Link to Performance Improvement Plan							

Business Plan Objective 2

Ensure the Council meets its obligations in relation to the promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourages participation by disabled people in public life.

Work Stream	Actions	Outcome(s)	Budget £	Timescale	KPI's	Progress	RAG Status
Equality and Diversity	<p>Undertake a review of the Council's Disability Action Plan.</p> <p>Develop and implement measures to improve access to Council services by people with a disability.</p>	<p>Support the participation of people with a disability in Council events and programmes.</p> <p>Support the ability of people with a disability to access and receive information about Council services.</p> <p>Promote and encourage the provision of additional changing places toilet facilities in the Borough.</p> <p>Encourage the expansion of the SignVideo service across Council.</p>	0	April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure the number of improvements actioned as a result of Every Customer Counts action plans. • Expand the Council areas where Changing places toilet provision is available (working with Town Centre Partnership section to schedule the 2 mobile changing places units). • Signvideo provision expanded into the Disability Hub (JDLC) and one other leisure facility • Identify projects for 2 other service areas regarding autism actions 		

		Encourage the expansion of Every Customer Counts Audits			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Autism friendly building visitor guide for JDLC 		
	Develop and implement initiatives to promote awareness of and positive attitudes to people with a disability.	<p>Better promotion of equality for people with a disability.</p> <p>Develop an accessible communication section in the staff portal.</p> <p>Increase staff understanding of RADAR keys and their use.</p> <p>Support the Diversity Champion to raise awareness through specific campaigns.</p> <p>Provision of articles on various disabilities.</p> <p>Staff trained on equality and diversity issues.</p>	1,000.00	April 2023 to March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote JDLCs achievement of the AutismNI Impact Award with relevant groups • Complete 5 performance indicators outlined in the Autism Action Plan. • Develop a link between the Equality Forum and Town Centre Forum to improve attitudes towards people with a disability 		

	<p>Develop and implement a range of initiatives to promote engagement and participation by people with a disability.</p>	<p>Higher levels of participation by people with a disability in public life.</p> <p>Staff trained to be disability friendly.</p>	500.00	April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange Makaton training for front line staff • Arrange Disability Hate Crime training for front line staff 		
	<p>Develop and implement a range of initiatives to mainstream issues relating to disability within Council.</p>	<p>Better promotion of equality for people with a disability.</p> <p>Improved support for people with a disability in relation to employability.</p> <p>Capacity of the organization to understand the needs of people with a disability. Promotion of positive attitudes towards people with a disability.</p> <p>Staff awareness of how to declare a disability and what reasonable adjustments are.</p>	0	April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further promote the use of Easy Read across Council. • Facilitate staff awareness of service barriers faced by individuals with disability lived experience for 4 conditions. 		

		Promote the use of positive images of people with a disability in Council campaigns.					
	Link to Corporate Aims and Objectives:						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement and Innovation • Healthy, Active and Engaged Communities 						
	Link to Community Plan						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Thriving Economy • A Healthy Safe Community • A Sustainable Accessible Environment 						
	Link to Performance Improvement Plan						

Business Plan Objective 3

Support the development and implementation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan which includes evidence gathering, community engagement activities, performance management and putting in place governance and reporting mechanisms.

Work Stream	Actions	Outcome(s)	Budget £	Timescale	KPI's	Progress	RAG Status
Community Planning	Management and facilitation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Planning Strategic Partnership.	Effective implementation of the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan.	2,000.00	April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of Partnership Meetings No of Action Steering Group Meetings Attendance Improvement (Increase by 10%) 		
	Provision of training and development opportunities for Community Planning Action Leads and Community Planning partners for progression of performance monitoring and reporting in relation to Community Planning Delivery Plan Actions for CC&G.		1,500.00	April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation Improvement (Increase by 10%) Community Planning Partners / Thematic and Action Leads participate in OBA Performance Monitoring 		
	Review of Headline Data for Causeway Coast and Glens in consultation with NISRA		3,500.00	August 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised Data Set for Causeway Coast and Glens area Evidence of new data and changing trends. 		

	Collaborative training, awareness raising sessions and events across the themes of the CC&G Community Plan. Promotion of inter-professional interactions across the themes of community, health, the environment, tourism and the economy.		1,000.00	April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation Improvement (Increase by 10%) • Number of Community Planning collaborative events / training taking place locally • Inter-professional participation and engagement at Community Planning events. 		
	Participative and innovative community engagement and consultative activities in support of Community Planning in CC&G		1,500.00	April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation Improvement (Increase by 10%) • Number / range of engagement / partnership-based activities undertaken • Evaluation of effectiveness of engagement activities. 		
	To further develop engagement opportunities with young people of CC&G through a 'Youth Voice' initiative.		1,000.00	April 2023 to March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number / range of engagement activities undertaken • Evaluation of effectiveness of 		

					engagement activities.		
	Link to Corporate Aims and Objectives:						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesive Leadership • Local Economy • Improvement and Innovation • Healthy, Active and Engaged Communities Climate Change and Our Environment 						
	Link to Community Plan						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Thriving Economy • A Healthy Safe Community • A Sustainable Accessible Environment 						
	Link to Performance Improvement Plan						

Business Plan Objective 4

Develop and implement an information management strategy and framework for the Council (including an effective data protection regime and records management strategy and framework).

Work Stream	Actions	Outcome(s)	Budget £	Timescale	KPI's	Progress	RAG Status
Information Governance	Update Council's information governance policies and procedures taking into account ICO issued guidance and relevant case law.	Compliance with a range of access to information legislation.	To be identified	April 2023 to March 2024	Number of logged requests responded to within 20 working days to increase from 85% to 90%		
Additional resources required to effectively implement the recommendations of the independent report on record keeping and record management within Council.	Consolidate the information within Information Governance's repository. Review and update the Staff Portal as regards information law policies.	A records management strategy which supports the priorities and statutory obligations of Council.					
	Develop a guidance bank for all staff in relation to the requirements of information legislation.						
	Prioritise monitoring of retention and disposal in line with statutory requirements.						
	Review and develop Council's Publication Scheme.						
	Continued involvement in the operation of the Information Security and Management Group.						

	Maintain effective day to day management of information to access requests.						
	Issue regular bulletins to all staff providing an update on developments on information law and its impact on the work of Council.						
	Facilitate annual training for all staff in relation to Council's legal obligations under information law. Identify training requirements for Council staff regarding information governance and records management policies and procedures – to include the development of relevant training programmes.		Training budget held by OD/HR				
	Develop the Senior Information Risk Owner's Annual Report				•		
Work Stream	Link to Corporate Aims and Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement and Innovation 						
	Link to Community Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Thriving Economy • A Healthy Safe Community • A Sustainable Accessible Environment 						
	Link to Performance Improvement Plan						

Business Plan Objective 5

Support the priorities and statutory obligations of Council by developing and maintaining relevant strategies, policies, procedures and systems.

Work Stream	Actions	Outcome(s)	Budget £	Timescale	KPI's	Progress	RAG Status
Policy Development	Assist with an annual review of the Council's Corporate Strategy.	Have a strategic direction in place for Council.	0	June 2023			
	Review and amend Council Constitution on an annual basis (or as required).	Council achieves relevant statutory obligations.	0	April 2023 to March 2024			
	Review the log of Council policies and develop a resource to provide easy access to policies for staff.	A policy resource is available to staff.	0	April 2023 to Sept 2024			
	<p>Link to Corporate Aims and Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesive Leadership • Improvement and Innovation 						
	<p>Link to Community Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Thriving Economy • A Healthy Safe Community • A Sustainable Accessible Environment 						
	<p>Link to Performance Improvement Plan</p>						