

# Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

## Performance Improvement Plan

2017-18



Comhairle Ceantair  
an Iúir, Mhúrn  
agus an Dúin  
**Newry, Mourne  
and Down**  
District Council

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Foreword	3
Introduction and Context	4
Performance Improvement Objectives 2017-18	4
Identifying our Performance Improvement Objectives 2017-18	5
Community Planning Outcomes	6
Corporate Priorities	6
Consultation and Engagement	7
Business Planning and Performance Management Framework	8
Equality Screening	10
Achieving Continuous Improvement	10
Governance Arrangements	11
How to Propose New Performance Improvement Objectives	12
<b>Performance Improvement Objective 1</b>	13
Encourage healthy lifestyles through increased participation in leisure, sport and recreational activities	
<b>Performance Improvement Objective 2</b>	15
Improve economic growth by creating new business starts, supporting the growth of existing businesses and promoting Newry, Mourne and Down as a premier tourist destination	
<b>Performance Improvement Objective 3</b>	18
Deliver urban and rural regeneration initiatives that will create a District where people want to live, work and invest in	
<b>Performance Improvement Objective 4</b>	21
Create a cleaner, greener, more attractive District	
<b>Performance Improvement Objective 5</b>	24
Encourage and empower local communities to participate in Council engagement structures	
Alignment with the Aspects of Improvement	27
Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards	28

## Foreword

A local council is a unique organisation which provides a broad range of services and deals with complex and challenging issues. Having a clear vision and direction is essential to address the issues which matter most to local people.

Moving into its third year of operation, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has come a long way since the merger of the two Councils in 2015, the transfer of new responsibilities from central government and the incorporation of Ballyward from the former Banbridge District Council. The reform of local government has presented an opportunity to do things differently and to do things better, and we remain focused on maximising efficiency whilst improving the quality of services we provide.

Modernisation, budget constraints, austerity, demographic change, rising customer expectations and the impact of Brexit are just some of the challenges facing our organisation, our District and our communities. Despite the unprecedented level of change, we are more committed than ever to transforming the way we work, encouraging innovation and empowering employees to achieve the corporate vision of 'leading and serving a District that is prosperous, healthy and sustainable'. Ultimately, our success depends on how well we address the emerging and evolving needs and aspirations of the communities we serve.

The Performance Improvement Plan 2017-18 sets out the ambition we have for our District and the improvements local communities and key stakeholders can expect to see over the coming year. Our performance improvement objectives seek to address the issues which matter most to local communities, and deliver positive change across a number of key areas including health and well-being, tourism, economic development, regeneration, environment and community cohesion.

With a strong track record for innovation and partnership working, I am confident that the Council will continue to deliver real outcomes and improve the quality of life for all our local communities. As we move from transition to transformation, this year promises to be full of challenge, change and opportunity.



**Liam Hannaway**  
Chief Executive



**Cllr Roisin Mulgrew**  
Chairperson of the Council

## Introduction and Context

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 sets out a General Duty of Improvement for local government, whereby all District Councils must put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions.

We are required to set improvement objectives for the services we provide and to have in place arrangements to achieve these objectives. Our performance improvement objectives must be published in the annual Performance Improvement Plan, and demonstrate clear links with the Community Plan and Corporate Plan.

The Council recognises 'improvement' to mean activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life for ratepayers and local communities. The Performance Improvement Plan sets out what the Council will do during 2017-18 to address the issues which matter most to local communities, outlining what we want to improve, how our performance will be measured and what positive outcomes stakeholders can expect as a result of our improvement activity.

## Our Performance Improvement Objectives 2017-18

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has identified five performance improvement objectives for 2017-18, all of which are clearly linked to the Community Plan and Corporate Plan.

- 1. Encourage healthy lifestyles through increased participation in leisure, sport and recreational activities**
- 2. Improve economic growth by creating new business starts, supporting the growth of existing businesses and promoting Newry, Mourne and Down as a premier tourist destination**
- 3. Deliver urban and rural regeneration initiatives that will create a District where people want to live, work and invest in**
- 4. Create a cleaner, greener, more attractive District**
- 5. Encourage and empower local communities to participate in Council engagement structures**

## Identifying our Performance Improvement Objectives

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's performance improvement objectives 2017-18 have been developed in close liaison with Elected Members and staff across the organisation. Each objective is clearly aligned to our community planning outcomes and corporate priorities, as well as other regional and local plans. These plans have been developed using a robust and reliable evidence base, as well as extensive consultation and engagement feedback from key stakeholders. They influence and guide the overall direction of travel for the organisation.

- Draft Programme for Government Framework
- Newry, Mourne and Down Community Plan 2017-2030
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan 2015-2019
- Thematic plans and strategies, including the Tourism Strategy, Economic Regeneration and Investment Strategy, Play Strategy, Sports Facility Strategy and District Electoral Area Action Plans
- Annual Directorate Business Plans

The Council has also taken into consideration performance information from the following sources:

- The Northern Ireland Audit Office Audit and Assessment Report 2016-17 and the 'proposals for improvement'
- Statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management

In accordance with the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, each performance improvement objective seeks to bring about improvement in at least one of the following aspects:

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

The performance improvement objectives 2017-18 were subject to scrutiny and challenge by Elected Members and have significant potential to improve the quality of life for local communities. They will be delivered within existing resources and will contribute to achieving our community planning outcomes and corporate priorities.

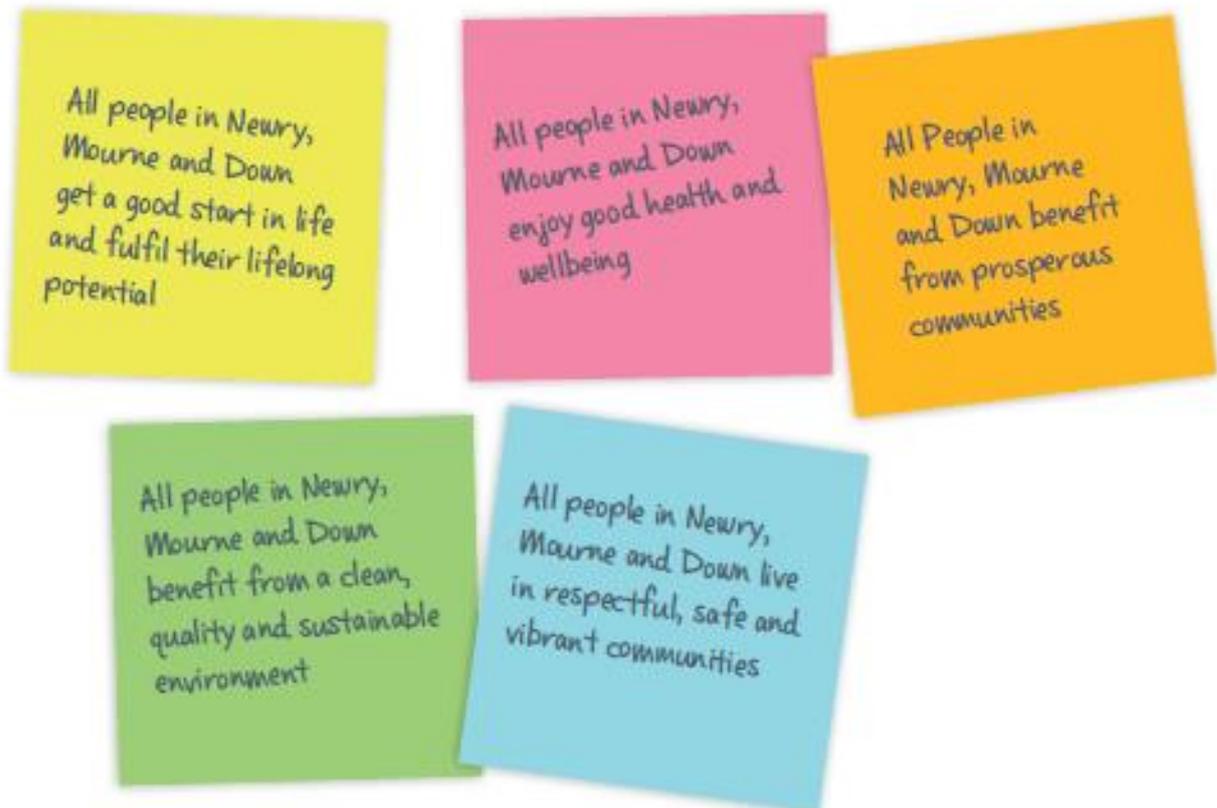
## Community Planning Outcomes

The Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down provides a framework for collaborative working to deliver positive change for our communities. It sets out the following long term overarching vision and five positive outcomes for the District:

**'Newry, Mourne and Down is a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs'.**

### Our Outcomes

These are the positive outcomes we all wish to see in our community.



## Council Priorities

The Corporate Plan 2015-19 sets out the Council's long term vision for the District. It ties together a number of plans and strategies that will enable us to deliver the following mission and eight priorities. The Corporate Plan will contribute to achieving the overarching vision and outcomes within the Community Plan.

## 'Lead and serve a District that is prosperous, healthy and sustainable'

By 2019, we will have:

<b>1</b> Become one of the premier tourism destinations on the island of Ireland.	<b>2</b> Attracted investment and supported the creation of new jobs.	<b>3</b> Supported improved health and wellbeing outcomes.	<b>4</b> Protected our natural and built environment.
<b>5</b> Led the regeneration of our urban and rural areas.	<b>6</b> Advocated on your behalf specifically in relation to those issues which really matter to you.	<b>7</b> Empowered and improved the capacity of our communities.	<b>8</b> Transformed and modernised the Council, providing accessible as well as value for money services.

### Consultation and Engagement

The Council is committed to listening to local people and taking on board their views. We carried out an extensive consultation and engagement process, inviting key stakeholders, including Elected Members, residents, local businesses and community planning partners to put forward their views on the proposed performance improvement objectives 2017-18.

The consultation and engagement process was made up of the following elements:

- Electronic documentation and survey on the Council's website and social media channels
- Hard copies of the documentation and survey at the Council's public receptions in Monaghan Row (Newry), Downshire Civic Centre (Downpatrick) and the Ethnic Minority Support Centre (Town Hall, Newry)
- Email distribution to statutory and community planning partners, Stakeholder Forum, Well-Being Action Partnership, Newry, Mourne and Down Intercultural Forum, Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships and Equality Scheme consultees
- Public notices in local newspapers

- Engagement with the seven District Electoral Area Fora, which are made up of 41 Elected Members and 44 independent members representing the voluntary, business and community sectors
- Engagement with Section 75 groups, including the Newry and Mourne Youth Council and Older Person's Forum

A total of 53 completed surveys were received, in addition to the engagement with 115 stakeholders through the 7 District Electoral Area Fora, Youth Council and Older Person's Forum. The consultation and engagement revealed widespread support for the proposed performance improvement objectives 2017-18, with almost all respondents agreeing with each of the five objectives.

Whilst the consultation and engagement activity did not result in any amendments to the performance improvement objectives 2017-18, we have taken on board the views of stakeholders by making a number of amendments to the 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success' which underpin each performance improvement objective. A summary of the key amendments is outlined below:

- Inclusion of 'supporting actions' around outdoor leisure provision, social enterprises, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Action Plans, street cleanliness, community centres and the Planning Service
- Inclusion of 'measures of success' around refuse collection, environmental improvement and revitalisation schemes, Planning Service and residents feeling safe in their homes

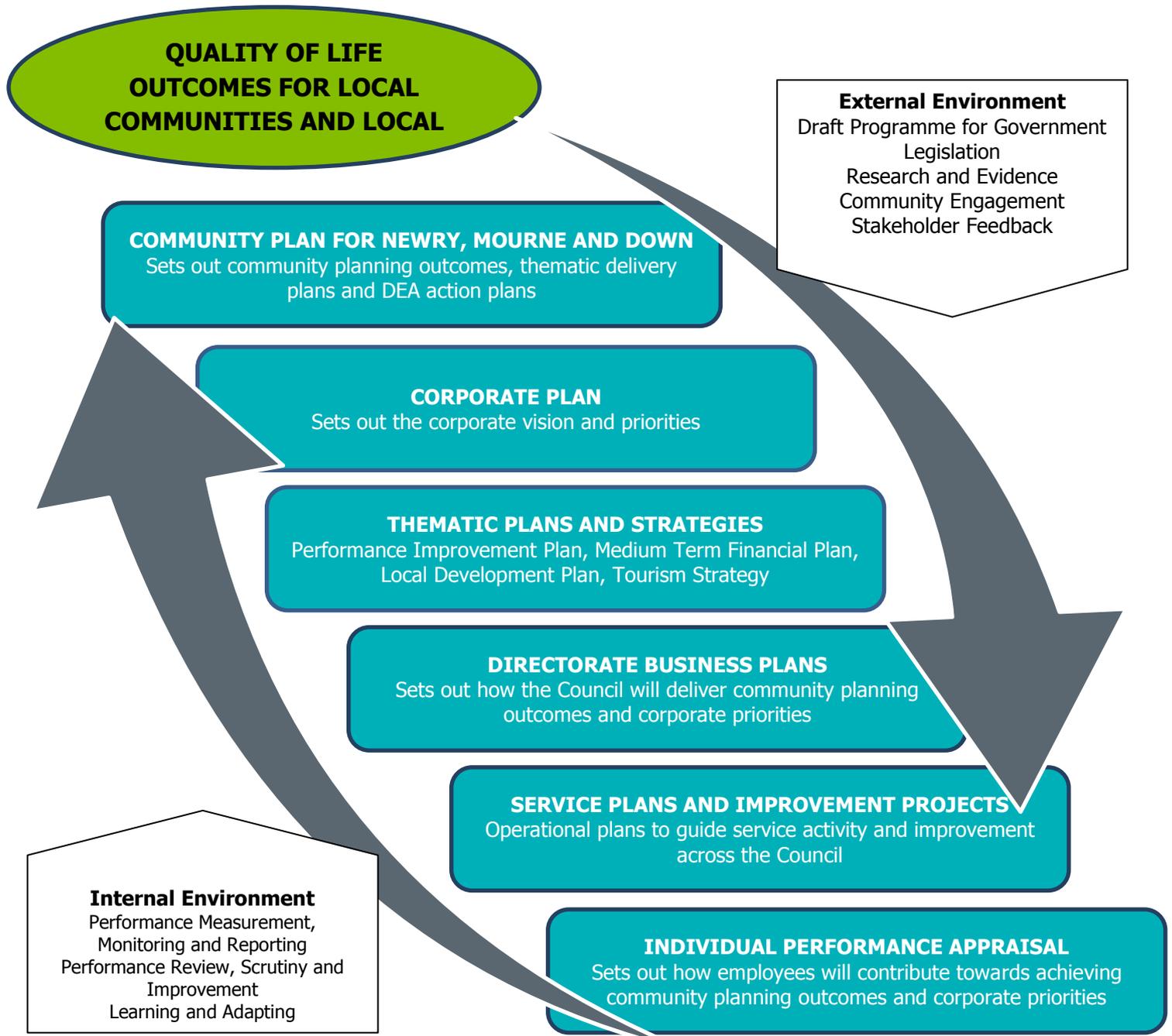
As part of the consultation and engagement, the Council also sought the views of stakeholders on the future areas for improvement. The survey results indicate that the areas which most need improving are Planning and Parks and Open Spaces and the areas which least need improving are Registration and Building Control and Licensing.

This information will be used to inform our performance improvement objectives in future years.

## **Business Planning and Performance Management Framework**

Our Business Planning and Performance Management Framework drives and provides assurance that we are delivering our corporate vision, priorities and performance improvement objectives. The Community Plan and Corporate Plan sit within a hierarchy of plans that inform our overall direction of travel and guide all activity within the Council. Our corporate priorities are cascaded across the organisation through our thematic plans and strategies, Directorate Business Plans and Service Plans. The Council is also committed to developing and embedding Individual Performance Appraisals which will demonstrate how all employees contribute to the delivery of community planning outcomes and corporate priorities.

Through the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, we will manage performance and ensure that the necessary steps are taken to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions, so that we can improve the quality of life for all our local communities.



## Equality Screening

In accordance with the Section 75 requirements of The Northern Ireland Act (1998), whereby the Council must carry out its functions having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard for the desirability to promote good relations, our performance improvement objectives were subject to an equality screening. The outcome of the equality screening process determined that the performance improvement objectives 2017-18 are not subject to an equality impact assessment.

## Achieving Continuous Improvement

Transforming and improving how we deliver services and how we are organised as a Council is a key priority within our Corporate Plan. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to developing a 'can do' culture, where managing performance and achieving improvement is everyone's responsibility, and an essential component of 'the way we work'. In pursuing our corporate vision and priorities, we have adopted five core values which are fundamental to everything we do.

<b>We will be:</b>	<b>What this means:</b>
Citizen focused	We will actively encourage citizen and community engagement, as well as be a listening and responsive Council
Accountable	We will make decisions based on an objective assessment of need and operate in a transparent way as well as openly reporting on our performance
Collaborative	We will actively encourage and pursue working in partnership at all levels to deliver for our District
Sustainable	We will take into account the social, economic and environmental impacts of our decisions on current and future generations
Fair	We will proactively target actions at those which are marginalised in our community

The Performance Improvement Plan 2017-18 underpins our overall approach to effective performance management. It will support the Council in identifying more efficient and effective ways of working to facilitate the achievement of community planning outcomes and corporate priorities. Planned improvements in the day to day delivery of services are outlined in our Directorate Business Plans.

The Council is also required to assess how performance compares with other Councils. We are working with the Association of Public Service Excellence to benchmark our performance against the performance of Councils across Northern

Ireland and other jurisdictions, and this information will be used to identify and address future areas for improvement.

## Governance Arrangements

Reviewing our performance and reporting progress to Elected Members and other key stakeholders is very important to us, as it facilitates transparency, accountability and improvement in everything we do. The governance arrangements to develop, monitor, report and review our progress in implementing the Performance Improvement Plan 2017-18 are outlined below:



By 30 September 2017, the Council will publish a retrospective assessment of performance. This assessment will provide an overview of how we have performed during 2016-17, against our performance improvement objectives, statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management, as well as any other improvements we have made. The annual performance assessment will be published on the Council's website.

The arrangements the Council has put in place to secure continuous improvement are subject to an annual audit and assessment by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The outcome of the performance audit is expected in October 2017. Subject to the General Duty of Improvement being met, the Northern Ireland Audit Office will issue a Letter of Assurance to both the Council and Department for Communities.

## How to Propose New Performance Improvement Objectives

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council welcomes your ongoing feedback on the performance improvement objectives 2017-18, as well as any suggestions you may have on we can improve our services in the future. We can be contacted in the following ways:

**In writing:** Kate Bingham  
Head of Performance and Improvement  
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
Co Down  
BT35 8DJ

**Telephone:** 0300 013 2233

**Email:** [kate.bingham@nmandd.org](mailto:kate.bingham@nmandd.org)

## Performance Improvement Objective 1

### Encourage healthy lifestyles through increased participation in leisure, sport and recreational activities

**Senior Responsible Officer: Michael Lipsett – Director, Active and Healthy Communities**

#### **Why does this matter**

Good health is one of the most valued aspects of our lives. It influences many other dimensions of well-being, such as employment, income, social connections, participation in community life and educational attainment. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has a key role to play in helping local communities to live long and healthy lives. We are committed to collaborating with partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors to address health inequalities and encourage residents to make healthy and informed lifestyle choices.

The demographic profile of our community not only has an impact on the services the Council provides, but the way these services will be delivered in the future. With the population of the District projected to grow by 8% by 2022, including a 33% increase in residents aged 65 years and above, the overall health and wellbeing needs of local communities are set to change and evolve. Whilst the majority of residents are currently in good health, with no long term health problems, over a third of those aged 65 years and above have a long term health problem or disability which limits their day to day activities a lot.

Newry, Mourne and Down also ranks third highest of the 11 Councils in terms of overall deprivation. Eleven neighbourhoods fall within the 20% most deprived in Northern Ireland, and are more likely to experience health inequalities in terms of life expectancy, cancer rates, adult and childhood obesity rates, mental health and drug and alcohol related conditions. Ongoing engagement with local communities has also highlighted a range of health and wellbeing issues around obesity, mental health and isolation. These issues serve to underpin the direct correlation between health, physical activity, diet and nutrition, which influence the health, wellbeing and quality of life of all our local communities.

In recognition of the evolving needs of our diverse, growing and ageing population, the Council has prioritised the provision of high quality, accessible leisure, sport and recreational facilities across the District. This was reinforced by the feedback from the consultation and engagement on the performance improvement objectives 2017-18, which revealed that parks and open spaces and leisure and recreation are amongst the priority areas for improvement for the Council. Through the Play Strategy and Sports Facility Strategy, the Council is also continuing to put in place the infrastructure to improve the overall health and wellbeing of local

communities by encouraging healthy lifestyles through increased participation in leisure, sport and recreational activity.

### Supporting actions

- Provide and operate high quality indoor leisure facilities through the implementation of the Indoor Leisure Business Plan:
  - Complete Newry Leisure Centre by Summer 2017
  - Complete Downpatrick Leisure Centre by Spring 2018
  - Improve the customer experience at indoor leisure centres through marketing, branding, mobile technology and targeted physical activity programmes
- Carry out a review of outdoor leisure provision across the District
- Provide and improve fixed and non fixed play opportunities for children and young people through the implementation of year one of the Play Strategy
- Engage more children and young people in community play initiatives across the District
- Co-ordinate and launch a multi-stakeholder Activity, Promotion and Development Plan, which maps out the provision of physical activity across the District, suitable for all ages and abilities

### Measures of success

- 4% increase in the number participants using all indoor leisure facilities by March 2018, reaching a 29% increase by 2020-21
- 5-6% year on year increase in the number of participants using Newry Leisure Centre
- 9% increase in the number of participants using Downpatrick Leisure Centre by 2018-19, reaching a 72% increase by 2019-20
- Level of user satisfaction with selected indoor leisure facilities
- Increase in the number of children and young people engaged in Community Play initiatives

### Outcomes for local communities and stakeholders

- Improved and accessible provision of indoor and outdoor sport, leisure and recreational facilities and activities
- Increase in the number of residents making healthy lifestyle choices by using leisure and recreational facilities
- Improved customer satisfaction with indoor leisure facilities
- Improved levels of health and wellbeing for local communities

### Corporate Plan Priority

Supported improved health and wellbeing outcomes

<b>Community Plan Outcome</b>	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing
<b>Programme for Government Outcome</b>	We enjoy long, healthy, active lives
<b>Alignment with 7 statutory aspects of improvement</b>	Strategic effectiveness / Service quality / Service availability / Fairness / Innovation / Efficiency / Sustainability

## Performance Improvement Objective 2

### Improve economic growth by creating new business starts, supporting the growth of existing businesses and promoting Newry, Mourne and Down as a premier tourist destination

**Senior Responsible Officer: Marie Ward - Director, Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism**

#### Why this matters

A thriving economy is central to the quality of life in Newry, Mourne and Down. Jobs, earnings and wealth provide people with an opportunity to fulfil their ambitions, develop new skills and enjoy better levels of health and wellbeing. Located on the economic corridor between Belfast and Dublin, and within the Belfast Metropolitan Catchment Area, our District has a real opportunity to compete, by driving growth in the existing business base, increasing productivity and attracting new businesses. As we continue to recover from the challenges of the recent recession, the local economy has become increasingly vibrant. 7 of the top 100 performing businesses in Northern Ireland are located in Newry, Mourne and Down, alongside the 7,500 VAT registered small and medium sized enterprises, the majority of which fall within the agriculture, distribution and construction sectors. The District also has the third largest farming community in Northern Ireland, with 3,765 farms and a labour workforce of 6,845. The Council continues to support many local businesses, recognising the central role they play in contributing to the future prosperity of the District.

Whilst 72% of people in Newry, Mourne and Down are economically active, which falls above the Northern Ireland average of 68%, the median gross annual salary is £20,000 which falls below the regional average of £21,345. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises that investment in the local economy will continue to have a positive impact on the wellbeing of local communities and has put in place the building blocks to capitalise on economic strengths and create a climate for innovation, competitiveness and investment. Through the Regional Start Initiative, the Council accelerated local economic development by

supporting 232 new businesses starts and promoting 261 new jobs in 2015-16, followed by 172 new businesses starts and 192 new jobs in 2016-17. This growth will continue as the inward investment secured through NI Business Start Up and Rural Development Programmes will make a significant contribution to stimulating economic growth and creating more employment opportunities for all.

Tourism is also a critical economic driver in Newry, Mourne and Down, diversifying the local economy, ensuring the viability of small businesses and supporting almost 5,000 jobs. As a popular destination for domestic tourists, the District is rich with tourism assets, scenic beauty and cultural heritage. In 2014, there were 1.5million visits to visitor attractions, with Murlough Nature Reserve being the most popular destination. In 2016, the Council's four flagship festivals, Footsteps in the Forest, Festival of Flight, Wake the Giant and Skiffie World Festival generated £8million for the local economy, and over 91% of the 128,000 visitors rated them as 'good' or 'extremely good'. However, whilst tourism was worth £47.7million to the local economy in 2015, visitor spend in Newry, Mourne and Down has declined by 12%, from £55.3million, in 2014. Strengthening tourism is a high priority for the Council and the local community, reinforced by the consultation and engagement feedback on the performance improvement objectives 2017-18 which revealed that economic development and tourism is a priority area for improvement. The recently adopted Tourism Strategy seeks to promote Newry, Mourne and Down as a premier, year-round mountain and maritime destination, recognised for its EPIC experiences in outdoor adventure, its rich tapestry of cultural heritage, myths and stories, as well as its authentic local life.

### Supporting actions

- Through the NI Business Start Up Programme, support the promotion of new jobs across the District
- Support and develop the growth of the existing business base and social economy by delivering a programme of activity to increase turnover, secure new contracts and create new employment opportunities
- Through the Rural Business Investment Scheme, invest £570k during 2017-18 to support the establishment and growth of small and micro businesses, and the creation new jobs in rural areas
- Implement the following key projects within the Tourism Strategy:
  - Prepare and submit a revised application to the UK National Commission for UNESCO for Global Geopark status for the Mourne and Ring of Gullion by 2019
  - Continue to develop the concept of the Great Eastern Greenway through the delivery of phase 2 of the Carlingford Lough Greenway by June 2020, including the completion of the greenway between the Weir and Victoria Lough by December 2017
- Develop two Destination Experience Development Plans to identify and create 'epic' moments by 2018, for:

- Mourne and Ring of Gullion
- The Mourne Coast (to include Downpatrick and its linkages with the coast and Lecale through the life and heritage of St Patrick, and other relevant historical accounts)
- Organise and promote 5 flagship festivals across the District:
  - Footsteps in the Forest (Slieve Gullion)
  - Skiffies World Festival (Strangford Lough)
  - Wake the Giant Festival (Warrenpoint)
  - Festival of Flight (Newcastle)
  - City of Merchants Festival (Newry)

### Measures of Success

- 245 business plan applications approved, 166 New Business Starts and 155 new jobs promoted through business start up activity in 2017-18
- 8 new social enterprise start ups, 12 new jobs created and 30 new volunteers recruited
- 40 community groups and organisations provided with business planning, start-up and business development support
- 55 new micro and small rural businesses created by March 2020
- 30 micro and small businesses in rural areas supported by March 2020
- 147 new jobs created in rural areas by March 2020
- Overall growth rate of 6% per annum in overnight expenditure in Newry, Mourne and Down
- Number of visitors to flagship festivals in 2017
- Average spend per group at flagship festivals in 2017
- Level of visitor satisfaction with flagship festivals in 2017

### Outcomes for local communities and stakeholders

- The local economy benefits from an increase in business start ups, the growth of local businesses and support for social enterprises
- The rural economy benefits from significant inward investment and the creation and growth of new businesses and jobs
- Local communities, businesses and social enterprises benefit from improved access to job, investment, training and mentoring opportunities
- Newry, Mourne and Down becomes a more economically active and prosperous District

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an improved level of tourism and an increase in the number of tourists to the District</li> <li>• The Carlingford Lough Greenway creates a world class, cross border green travel route which improves the local living environment and provides communities and visitors with increased opportunities for leisure and recreational activities</li> <li>• Newry, Mourne and Down is recognised as a premier domestic and international tourist destination</li> </ul>	
<b>Corporate Plan Priorities</b>	<p>Attracted investment and supported the creation of new jobs</p> <p>Become one of the premier tourist destinations on the island of Ireland</p>
<b>Community Plan Outcome</b>	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities
<b>Programme for Government Outcomes</b>	<p>We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy</p> <p>We are an innovative and creative society, where people can fulfil their potential</p> <p>We have more people working in better jobs</p> <p>We are a confident, welcoming, outward looking society</p> <p>We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest</p>
<b>Alignment with 7 statutory aspects of improvement</b>	Strategic effectiveness / Service quality / Service availability / Innovation

### Performance Improvement Objective 3

<b>Deliver urban and rural regeneration initiatives that will create a District where people want to live, work and invest in</b>
<b>Senior Responsible Officer: Marie Ward - Director, Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism</b>
<p><b>Why this matters</b></p> <p>Newry, Mourne and Down is a predominantly rural District with a number of urban settlements around Newry, Downpatrick, Ballynahinch, Kilkeel, Warrenpoint, Crossmaglen and Newcastle. The heritage and landscape of our District is unique and diverse, and protecting the natural and built environment is a key priority for the Council and its citizens, as it creates a sense of place and plays an important role in improving the health and wellbeing of all.</p>

The Council's ambition is for Newry, Mourne and Down to be a vibrant, attractive and better place to live. We will renew our towns and villages, transforming them into places where people want to live, work and visit. As a 'place shaper', the Council has a key role to play in driving forward ambitious plans for regeneration. Significant investment in town centres and villages has delivered new and improved facilities for all those who live, work and visit the area. This investment is set to increase, as the masterplans for Newry City, Ballynahinch, Downpatrick and the South East Coast gain momentum. The Council has attracted inward investment of over £4million to deliver three public realm schemes, as well as the heritage led Warrenpoint Municipal Park and Forkhill Greenspace projects, all of which will result in tangible improvements for local communities and local areas. Through the Rural Development Programme, the Mourne, Gullion and Lecale Partnership has also been awarded £11million, out of the £70million budget for Northern Ireland, to focus on growing rural businesses, facilitating village renewal and improving the rural broadband infrastructure. This significant investment will improve and transform the quality of life for rural communities by 2020.

Road, transport, communications (broadband and mobile) and infrastructure connectivity underpin the development of an area, and are instrumental in supporting access to services and employment, the diversification and expansion of the local economy and tackling social isolation. Whilst the Council has identified a number of projects to improve road, transport and infrastructure connections, access to broadband and mobile networks remain key issues for many rural businesses and communities. The Council will continue to advocate on behalf of local communities to address the challenge of improving digital accessibility, so that rural communities can participate fully in all aspects of civic, community and business life.

### Supporting actions

- Restore the physical and cultural heritage of Warrenpoint Municipal Park by:
  - Completing the physical re-development of the park by May 2018
  - Obtaining the Green Flag award for environmental sustainability by October 2018
- Implement the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Action Plans for the Ring of Gullion and Strangford and Lecale
- Invest in high quality environmental improvement and revitalisation schemes:
  - Commence the delivery of the Irish Street, Downpatrick environmental improvement scheme, including the provision of increased parking, upgraded street lighting and improved landscape
  - Commence the delivery of the Newry revitalisation scheme, including the Cathedral Corridor shop front scheme, shop local campaign, Newry BID and the purple flag award
  - Commence the delivery of the Warrenpoint revitalisation scheme, including the shop front scheme and shop local campaign
- Complete the Forkhill Greenspace Project, including the creation of a village pathway by May 2017

- Progress the implementation of the Rural Development Programme, including the development and update of 42 Village Plans by March 2018 to identify physical and environmental improvement projects across the District
- Work in partnership with the relevant Departments to enhance broadband provision across the District

### Measures of success

- 34% increase in the number of visitors to Warrenpoint Municipal Park, reaching 27,900 per annum by September 2019
- 6% improvement in visitor satisfaction with Warrenpoint Municipal park, reaching 74% by September 2019
- 9% increase in the number of people who believe Warrenpoint Municipal park enhances their quality of life, reaching 40.5% by September 2019
- Increased footfall, improved business/visitor perception and reduced/sustained vacant properties by 2019-20, following the completion of the Newry, Warrenpoint and Downpatrick Public Realm Schemes

### Outcomes for local communities and stakeholders

- Warrenpoint Municipal Park and the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty enhance the quality of life in the local and surrounding areas
- Enhanced built and natural environment in urban and rural areas, with improved appearance and sense of place
- Urban and rural regeneration projects improve local areas and the quality of life for local communities
- The Rural Development Programme has a positive impact on rural communities and the rural economy
- Regeneration and renewal of selected villages across the District
- Improved rural digital connectivity across the District

### Corporate Plan Priorities

Led the regeneration of our urban and rural areas  
 Become one of the premier tourist destinations on the island of Ireland  
 Attracted investment and supported the creation of new jobs  
 Protected our natural and built environment  
 Advocated on your behalf specifically in relation to those issues which really matter to you

### Community Plan Outcomes

All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities  
 All people in Newry, Mourne and Down get a good start in life and fulfil their lifelong potential

### Programme for Government Outcomes

We are an innovative and creative society, where people can fulfil their potential  
 We are a confident, welcoming, outward looking society

	<p>We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure</p> <p>We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment</p> <p>We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest</p>
<b>Alignment with 7 statutory aspects of improvement</b>	Strategic effectiveness / Service quality / Service availability / Fairness / Sustainability / Innovation

## Performance Improvement Objective 4

### Create a cleaner, greener, more attractive District

**Senior Responsible Officer: Canice O'Rourke – Director, Regulatory and Technical Services**

#### Why does this matter

The environment is one of the three strategic pillars which underpin the process of community planning. Living in a clean, green, quality environment has a direct impact on the general well being of those who live, work and visit an area, and ongoing engagement consistently highlights that littering, dog fouling, fly tipping and pollution remain key issues for local communities. Street cleansing has also been identified as a priority area for improvement in the recent consultation and engagement on the performance improvement objectives 2017-18. The Council has a key role to play in working with local communities to protect the local environment and ensure that streets, parks and open spaces are kept clean and tidy, so that Newry, Mourne and Down is a District we can all be proud of.

Managing municipal waste is also a key responsibility for local government. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is working in partnership with other local authorities, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, the Strategic Investment Board and Arc 21 to consider and agree a way forward for Northern Ireland to assist in reducing the amount of waste going to landfill and increasing the rate of recycling. Since the merger of the legacy Newry and Mourne and Down District Councils in 2015, there has been a significant reduction in the amount of waste which is landfilled, largely due to the closure of the Aughnagunn and Drumnakelly Landfill Sites and the new contract with Re-Gen Waste, which sends previously landfilled waste to a Dirty Material Recovery Facility. In order to meet the 2020 recycling target of 50%, the Council is introducing a range of schemes to extend the collection of dry recyclables and food waste, whilst rolling out educational campaigns to promote a cleaner, greener and more attractive District.

Providing an efficient and effective Planning Service is also a key priority for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, as well as the top priority for improvement identified through the consultation and engagement on the performance improvement objectives 2017-18. Following the transfer of the Planning function from central government in 2015, the Council inherited a backlog and large number of live applications, which coupled with an insufficient number of staff transferring from central government, led to an independent review of the Planning Service in early 2016. The recommendations from this review were unanimously adopted by the Council and have focused on tackling the backlog, streamlining processes, the role of the Planning Committee, capacity building and culture change.

### Supporting actions

- Increase the recycling rate in 2017-18 by:
  - Introducing blue bin collections for commercial properties in the legacy Down area
  - Standardising how glass is collected across the Newry, Mourne and Down District
  - Opening the Downpatrick Household Waste Recycling Centre by Spring 2018
  - Delivering a domestic food waste service across the District by extending brown bin collections and rolling out a District wide educational campaign
  - Undertaking 'targeted awareness raising' to promote the importance of recycling in all areas, particularly those with low recycling rates
  - Reviewing and identifying the optimum routes for domestic and commercial refuse collection to provide a more equitable service across the District, deliver efficiencies and improve customer satisfaction
- Improve the quality and cleanliness of the local environment by:
  - Developing and implementing a Litter Strategy for the District
  - Undertaking targeted awareness raising to communicate the detrimental impact of littering, dog fouling, fly tipping, graffiti and fly posting in areas with high environmental crime
  - Promoting public participation in Clean Up Campaigns and initiatives such as 'Down Your Street'
  - Developing a web based scheme for the public to report environmental issues, including littering, graffiti and fly tipping
  - Developing an in-house street cleanliness monitoring system for the District
  - Reviewing and identifying the optimum routes for street cleansing to provide a more equitable service across the District, deliver efficiencies and improve customer satisfaction
- Improve the performance of the Council's Planning Service by:

- Reducing the backlog of historic planning applications
- Improving the processing times of planning applications

### Measures of Success

- 44% of household waste collected by the Council is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse)
- Reduction in the amount of biodegradable municipal waste that is landfilled to <12,000 tonnes
- Amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings
- Reduction in black bin waste and increase in mixed dry recyclables and brown bin waste
- Reduction in general waste arisings at Civic Amenity Sites
- Percentage of bins collected on their scheduled day
- Level of street cleanliness across the District
- Percentage of planning enforcement cases are progressed within 39 weeks
- Percentage of major planning applications that are processed within an average of 30 weeks
- Percentage of local planning applications that are processed within an average of 15 weeks

### Outcomes for local communities and stakeholders

- The Council meets landfill and recycling targets
- Efficient and effective recycling, composting, bin collection and cleansing services
- Local communities benefit from living in a cleaner, greener, quality environment
- Improved civic and community pride in the District
- The Council provides a more efficient and effective Planning Service

### Corporate Plan Priority

Protected our natural and built environment  
Transformed and modernised the Council, providing accessible as well as value for money services

### Community Plan Outcome

All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment

### Programme for Government Outcomes

We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment  
We have high quality public services

### Alignment with 7 statutory aspects of improvement

Strategic effectiveness / Service quality / Service availability /

## Performance Improvement Objective 5

### Encourage and empower local communities to participate in Council engagement structures

**Senior Responsible Officer: Michael Lipsett – Director, Active and Healthy Communities**

#### **Why does this matter**

Social connections and interactions are fundamental drivers for improving the physical, mental and emotional well-being of local people. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to investing in communities, building their capacity and empowering them to participate in shaping and designing the policies and services which have an impact on their quality of life. Through our Community Engagement Strategy, we are putting local people at the heart of everything we do, encouraging meaningful two way communication and enabling key stakeholders to influence the development and delivery of community planning outcomes around health and wellbeing, economic development, environment and community cohesion.

The Council has established a range of engagement structures to encourage and empower local communities to participate in shaping their future and their area. Through the seven DEA Fora across the District, the Council is consulting, involving, listening and responding to communities, whilst supporting the implementation of the Community Plan at a local level. Made up of Elected Members and representatives from the community, voluntary and business sectors, over the past year, the DEA Fora have held 20 public meetings, engaged almost 1,500 people on key issues, such as community safety, health and accessing external funding, whilst assisting a broad range of community groups in meeting their objectives.

The Council also recognises the significant role which the voluntary and community sector plays in connecting communities, facilitating a sense of belonging to the area, building trust and tolerance towards others and investing in the capacity of local people. In November 2016, 6,399 volunteers from across the District were registered with Volunteer Now, and the Council continues to support many of these groups through its financial assistance scheme. In 2016-17, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council awarded over £651k to 259 community based projects, enabling voluntary groups to deliver a broad range of initiatives, including summer schemes, Christmas illuminations and capital projects. The Council is committed to encouraging and empowering local communities to have a voice in shaping their future and their District.

### Supporting actions

- Develop a corporate Consultation and Engagement Framework to improve the way the Council listens to and takes on board the views of local communities by September 2017
- Further develop the level of engagement and participation in the following structures in 2017-18:
  - Policing and Community Safety Partnership
  - Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships
  - DEA Fora
  - Peace IV Partnership
- Reduce the risk of being burgled and address the fear of crime by promoting the Neighbourhood Watch, 'Good Morning, Good Neighbour' and 'Home Secure' Schemes
- Through Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's financial assistance scheme, allocate £1.3million to support local community and voluntary groups in delivering projects across key areas including festivals, sports development and community engagement
- Engage 50 local community groups in progressing the 'Audit of Effectiveness' for community centres and developing proposals for improvement

### Measures of success

- Number of meetings, events and capacity building programmes, including attendance levels and participation evaluation
- The effectiveness of Council run community engagement structures in facilitating stakeholder participation
- Increase in the number of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes
- Number of beneficiaries of the 'Good Morning, Good Neighbour' and 'Home Secure' schemes and the percentage who feel safer in their homes
- Number and percentage of financial assistance projects funded and successfully delivered

### Outcomes for local communities and stakeholders

- More informed decision-making, policy development and service provision, based on the input of local communities and stakeholders
- Local communities and stakeholders are actively engaged in supporting the work of the Council and its partners
- Decrease in the number of people reporting to live in fear and a reduction in the incidents of burglary
- Community groups receive financial support towards meeting their objectives and delivering projects across a range of

<p>themes, including community safety, good relations, community engagement, sports, events, Christmas illuminations and capital projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More efficient, effective and accessible community centres</li> <li>• Newry Mourne and Down becomes a more inclusive, cohesive and vibrant District, with confident and empowered communities</li> </ul>	
<b>Corporate Plan Priority</b>	Empowered and improved the capacity of our communities
<b>Community Plan Outcome</b>	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down live in respectful, safe and vibrant communities
<b>Programme for Government Outcomes</b>	<p>We have a more equal society</p> <p>We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other</p> <p>We are a shared society that respects diversity</p>
<b>Alignment with 7 statutory aspects of improvement</b>	Strategic effectiveness / Service quality / Service availability / Fairness / Innovation

## Alignment with the Seven Aspects of Improvement

The table below provides an overview of how Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Performance Improvement Objectives 2017-18 are aligned with the seven specified aspects of improvement, as defined in Section 86 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

Performance Improvement Objective	Seven Aspects of Improvement						
	Strategic Effectiveness	Service Quality	Service Availability	Fairness	Sustainability	Efficiency	Innovation
<b>Encourage healthy lifestyles through increased participation in leisure, sport and recreational activities</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Improve economic growth by creating new business starts, supporting the growth of existing businesses and promoting Newry, Mourne and Down as a premier tourist destination</b>	✓	✓	✓				✓
<b>Deliver urban and rural regeneration initiatives that will create a District where people want to live, work and invest in</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Create a cleaner, greener, more attractive District</b>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
<b>Encourage and empower local communities to participate in Council engagement structures</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓

## Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards

Section 89 of our improvement duty requires the Council to publish the results of the performance indicators and standards that are set by central government around economic development, planning and waste management. The seven statutory performance indicators and accompanying standards, as outlined in the Local Government Performance Indicators and Standards Order (2015), are set out below:

Ref	Statutory Performance Indicator	Annual Standard (Target)
<b>Economic Development</b>		
ED1	<p><b>The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity</b></p> <p>(Business start-up activity means the delivery of completed client-led business plans under the Northern Ireland Business Start-Up Programme, led by the Department for Economy)</p>	<b>&gt;155</b>
<b>Planning</b>		
P1	<p><b>The average processing time of major planning applications</b></p> <p>(An application in the category of major development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015(a))</p>	<b>&lt;30 weeks</b>
P2	<p><b>The average processing time of local planning applications</b></p> <p>(Local applications means an application in the category of local development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and any other applications for approval or consent under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (or any orders of regulations made under that Act))</p>	<b>&lt;15 weeks</b>
P3	<p><b>The percentage of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks</b></p> <p>(Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control under Part 5 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (or under any orders or regulations made under that Act))</p>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Waste Management</b>		
W1	<p><b>The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse)</b></p> <p>(Household waste is defined in Article 2 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997(a) and</p>	<p><b>50% by 2020</b></p> <p>As per NILAS (Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme) target</p>

	the Controlled Waste and Duty of Care Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013)	
W2	<p><b>The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled</b></p> <p>(Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste is as defined in Section 21 of the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003)</p>	<p><b>&lt;12,000 tonnes</b></p> <p>As per NILAS (Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme) target</p>
W3	<p><b>The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings</b></p> <p>(Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings is the total amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste which has been collected by a District Council)</p>	<p><b>85,500 tonnes</b></p> <p>As per NILAS (Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme) target</p>