

Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27



Comhairle Ceantair
**an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin**

**Newry, Mourne
and Down**

District Council

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Foreword

Welcome to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27. After engaging and listening to our residents and communities we have retained our core themes for the year ahead. However, we have refined the wording of our economic development and climate change objectives to make them more succinct, meaningful, and better reflect the evolving work taking place across these areas. We have also introduced several new measures and actions designed to strengthen delivery and ensure our priorities continue to benefit both our people and our place.

As we continue the revitalisation of our district, it is important to recognise the progress that has been made. Over the past year, the Council remained focused on delivering essential services and advancing our performance improvement objectives.

Our residents and visitors continued to prioritise their health and wellbeing, with our leisure centres recording over 930,000 paid attendances and nearly 30,000 people participating in targeted health programmes. We responded to every community clean-up request received and continued to take action

against environmental crime.

Through our economic development initiatives, we provided support to 227 local businesses and social enterprises, contributing to the creation of 254 local jobs. We also made progress in addressing our sustainability and climate change through the establishment of our carbon footprint baseline.

While these achievements are encouraging, we recognise that there is still more to be done to ensure Newry, Mourne and Down remains a great place to live, work, visit and invest in. This year's performance improvement objectives will continue to focus on the issues that matter most to our communities: enhancing the quality of our leisure facilities and services, supporting the growth of the local economy and pathways to employment, improving the cleanliness of our district and promoting recycling, reducing our contribution to climate change, and strengthening the performance of our Planning Service.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with our communities, partners and stakeholders to deliver high-quality, efficient and effective services. Together, we will continue striving to improve quality of life for all and to build a district that everyone can take pride in.

An Cathaoirleach
Chairperson TBC



An
Príomhfheidhmeannach
Chief Executive
Marie Ward

Introduction

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. The Council is required to set annual improvement objectives for the services it provides and to have in place arrangements to achieve these objectives. The Council recognises 'improvement' to mean activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities.

The performance improvement objectives do not describe every improvement the Council plans to make during 2026-27. Alternatively, they provide an overview of how the Council will address the issues which matter most to local communities. The Performance Improvement Plan outlines the Council's objectives for improvement, how performance will be measured and what positive outcomes stakeholders can expect as a result of improvement activity. It represents the Council's commitment to achieving continuous improvement in the delivery of key services.

Performance Improvement Objectives 2026-27

- 1. We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services**
- 2. We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses, job creation and pathways to employment**
- 3. We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents**
- 4. We will reduce our contribution to climate change by cutting carbon emissions and improving the efficiency of our fleet and buildings**
- 5. We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme**

These objectives have been developed within the context of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. They are:

✓	Linked to the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and Directorate Business Plans
✓	Based on a robust and reliable evidence base, including performance trends
✓	Aligned to the seven strategic aspects of improvement
✓	Legitimate, clear, robust, deliverable and demonstrable

Our District, Our Organisation, Our Performance



District

Population: 183, 115
 Households: 68,397
 7 District Electoral Areas
 41 Elected Members
 1,000+ employees
 88% of residents are satisfied with the Council



Community

Life expectancy:
 Male: 79.0 years /
 Female: 82.9 years

Age Profile: Based on NISRA Mid-Year Estimates.
 0-15 years: 21.7%
 65+ years: 18%

87% of residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

100% of residents feel safe during the day, 78% of residents feel safe after dark

55 Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

£14.27m awarded through the Financial Assistance Scheme since 2015



Tourism

In 2024:
 Numbers of overnight stays 443,776
 Level of visitor spend - £73,277,005
 Three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 6 'green flag' parks and 3 'blue flag' beaches



Health and Wellbeing

82% of residents feel they are in very good or good health

83% of residents are physically active at least once a week for 30mins

73.5% of customers are satisfied with the Council's six leisure facilities

Over 930,000 paid attendances recorded across our 6 leisure centres during 2025-26

£225,000 of financial assistance funding allocated to sports clubs across the District in 2025-26



Economy

Employment rate: 78.2%

9,525 VAT Registered Businesses

23.1% of the population aged 16 years and over have no qualifications

238.2 new jobs promoted through business start-up activity

215 existing business supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions



Environment

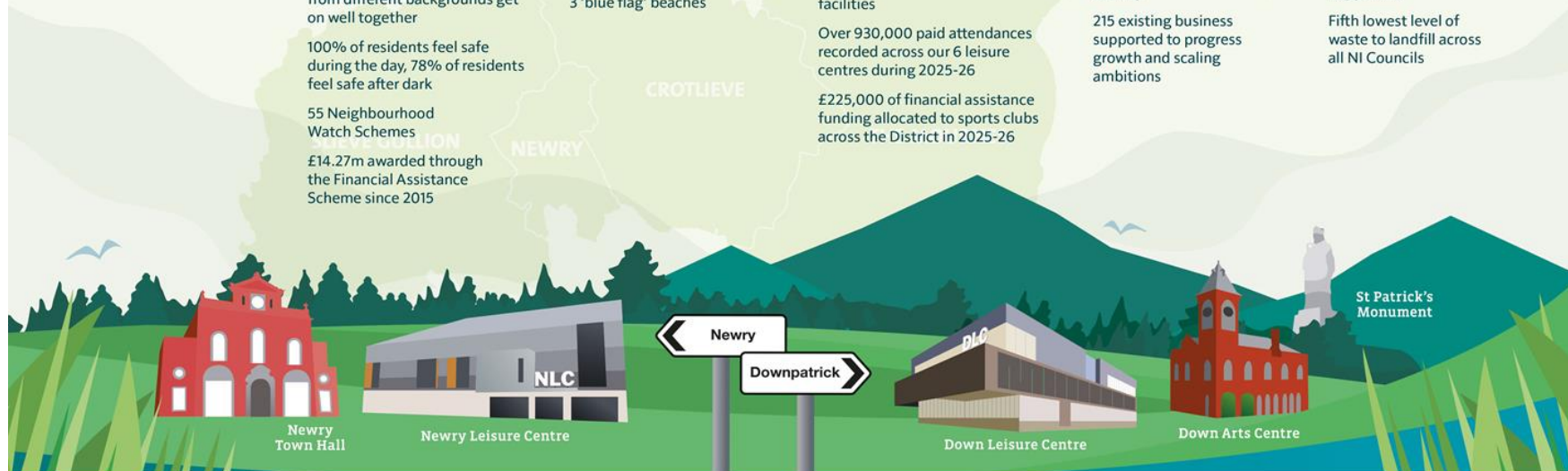
Recycling is important to 91% of residents

Top perceived problem for residents: Dog mess and fouling









Recycling rate: 49.3%























100% of Community Clean Up Requests Supported

Fifth lowest level of waste to landfill across all NI Councils



Performance Improvement Objective 1

We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services	
Why this matters	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the top priorities for improving your local area was 'Improving people's health and wellbeing (and reducing health inequalities). • 17% of our residents are not active for a single day each week. • The third most important health and wellbeing opportunity you would like to see more of was 'physical activity opportunities such as leisure centres, gyms and sports facilities'. • Between 2018 and 2022 there has been an increase in the number of residents satisfied with the leisure centres across the District. • 62% of respondents to our 2026-27 survey agreed with this objective. <p>We know that keeping fit and active can help improve a person's health and wellbeing both physically and mentally and the provision of leisure facilities is key to achieving this. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council plays a key role in helping local communities to live long and healthy lives. The Council remains committed to promoting physical, mental and emotional well-being and encouraging residents to make healthy and informed lifestyle choices and as part of this we need to always be striving to improve our leisure facilities and offerings.</p>
Looking Back: What we did in 2025-26	  <p>934,517 paid attendances across the 6 leisure facilities</p>
	  <p>28,399 people participating in targeted health programmes</p>
	  <p>11,192 memberships across the indoor leisure facilities</p>
	 <p>£225,000 in capital funding allocated to sports clubs across the District</p>
	 <p>7 play parks upgraded across the District</p>
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2026-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain the number of paid attendances at indoor leisure facilities. • Continue to deliver a range of targeted, sustainable health programmes to encourage participation in physical activity. • Progress the leisure projects agreed within the Capital Programme. • Provide funding through financial assistance for capital projects for sports clubs. • Upgrade a number of play parks across the District. • Continue to monitor customer satisfaction. • Record usage of Donard Park Multisport Hub.



















	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work towards achieving disability accreditation across identified tier 1 sites. 					
How we will measure success	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	2025-26 Actual	Status Trend	2026-27 Target
Number of paid attendances recorded at:	698,864	768,842	737,439	934,517 (Target: 757,500)	 	898,000
Newry Leisure Centre	307,153	331,546	244,929	497,295 (Target: 335,000)	 	450,000
Down Leisure Centre	246,978	259,473	273,783	268,839 (Target: 275,000)	 	270,000
Kilkeel Leisure Centre	69,797	63,811	74,988	21,208* (Target: 15,000)	 	21,000
St. Colmans Sports Complex	54,024	58,491	68,662	67,376 (Target: 68,700)	 	60,000
Newcastle Centre & Tropicana Outdoor Swimming Complex	25,517	27,765	39,128	29,649 (Target: 27,800)	 	27,800
Ballymote Sports and Wellbeing Centre	15,365	27,756	35,949	50,150 (Target: 36,000)	 	40,000
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes	9,309	10,805	20,421	28,399 (Target: 22,000)	 	16,500
Number of attendances recorded at Donard Park Multisport Hub	New measure				-	30,000
Value of Financial Assistance funding allocated to sports clubs	New measure			£225,000 (Target: £225,000)		£225,000
Number of leisure centre memberships	9,534	9,923	10,050	11,192 (Target: 10,100)	 	9,500**
Number of capital leisure projects progressed	New measure	3	4	4 (Target:2)	 	7
Number of Play parks upgraded	New Measure			7 (Target:2)		2
What you will see by March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 898,000 paid attendances at our six leisure centres by the end of 2026-27. 16,500 people participating in targeted health programmes across the District. 9,500 leisure centre memberships recorded. 2 play parks upgraded. 7 new build and/or upgraded capital leisure projects progressed including Kilkeel Leisure Centre, Newry City Park, Newcastle Centre, Rowallane Multisport hub, Crotlieve Multisport hub, Newry Multisport hub and Newcastle rock pool. 					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial assistance allocated for sports clubs to the value of £225,000 for capital projects. Disability accreditation achieved in an identified tier 1 site. 30,000 recorded visits to Donard Park Multisport hub. 			
Alignment				
Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District 			
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing 			
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cut health waiting times 			
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service quality	Service Availability	Fairness
Responsible Officer	Director: Active and Healthy Communities			

*Substantial decrease due to closure of KLC during 2025-26

** Decrease in Target due to 6 month closure of KLC

Performance Improvement Objective 2

We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses, job creation and pathways to employment													
Why this matters	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Improving skills, employability and job prospects' was your top priority for improving the local area in the 2022 residents survey. • 'Supporting local businesses, attracting investment and jobs' is in your top three priorities for improvement. • Investment to grow the economy, create jobs and attract tourists is the most important form of investment. • 63% of respondents to our 2026-27 survey agreed with this objective. <p>Continuing to support and grow the economy of Newry, Mourne and Down remains a key priority for the Council. Council continues to support the growth of both new business start-ups and the growth of existing businesses through the collaborative delivery of the Go Succeed Programme. 'Go Succeed' is Northern Ireland's go-to source for free expert business advice focusing on the three pillars of starting, growing and scaling your business or business idea.</p> <p>The NMD Labour Market partnership (LMP) is vital for delivery against skills and employability, addressing economic inactivity, and supporting the up-skilling and re-skilling of residents in line with the demand for skills. The LMP has delivered a range of employment academies, careers fairs and jobs fairs, working closely with key stakeholders across the private and public sector.</p> <p>Delivery against the Belfast Regional City Deal investment areas continues, with ambitions for job creation and the stimulation of private sector investment across the district.</p> <p>Council is leading on the implementation of a DfE "Regional Balance Fund" establishing a Local Economic Partnership which will develop an action plan and deliver £4.5 million of investment over a 3-year period, which will drive the creation of good jobs, productivity growth, sustainability and decarbonisation.</p>												
Looking Back: What we did in 2025-26	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>188 new enterprises created as a result of support and 238.2 new jobs promoted through business start-up activity</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>12 new social enterprise start-ups supported, and 16 new social enterprise jobs created</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Over 4,700 participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Delivered a range of Make it Local campaigns to support "Giant Adventures"</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		188 new enterprises created as a result of support and 238.2 new jobs promoted through business start-up activity				12 new social enterprise start-ups supported, and 16 new social enterprise jobs created				Over 4,700 participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity		Delivered a range of Make it Local campaigns to support "Giant Adventures"
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Looking Forward:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme. 												

<p>What we will do in 2026-27</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the establishment of new businesses through the 'Go Succeed' Programme. • Support the growth of existing businesses and creation of new jobs through the 'Go Succeed' Programme. • Directly support participants on employment pathway initiatives. • Invest in employability and skills through the implementation of the LMP Action Plan. • Invest in the creation of good jobs, productivity growth, decarbonisation and regional balance through the implementation of a Local Economic Partnership action plan. 					
<p>How we will measure success</p>	<p>2022-23 Actual</p>	<p>2023-24 Actual</p>	<p>2024-25 Actual</p>	<p>2025-26 Actual</p>	<p>Status Trend</p>	<p>2026-27 Target</p>
<p>Number of social enterprise start-ups supported</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>12 (Target: 12)</p>	<p>😊 ▶</p>	<p>12</p>
<p>Number of social enterprise jobs created</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>16 (Target: 12)</p>	<p>😊 ▶</p>	<p>12</p>
<p>Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity</p>	<p>New measure</p>		<p>839</p>	<p>4,719* (Target: 712)</p>	<p>😊 ▲</p>	<p>712</p>
<p>Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises</p>	<p>361</p>	<p>150</p>	<p>334</p>	<p>397* (Target: 289)</p>	<p>😊 ▲</p>	<p>279***</p>
<p>Number of jobs promoted via business start-up activity</p>	<p>155</p>	<p>90</p>	<p>206</p>	<p>238.2* (Target: 173)</p>	<p>😊 ▲</p>	<p>173**</p>
<p>Number of new enterprises created as a result of support</p>	<p>195</p>	<p>90</p>	<p>175</p>	<p>188* (Target: 119)</p>	<p>😊 ▲</p>	<p>119</p>
<p>Number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions</p>	<p>220</p>	<p>351</p>	<p>221</p>	<p>215* (Target: 220)</p>	<p>😐 ▶</p>	<p>188***</p>
<p>Number of participants directly supported on employment pathway initiatives</p>	<p>New measure</p>				<p>-</p>	<p>250</p>
<p>What you will see by March 2027</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 279 business plans created for Start-Up businesses and employer enterprises. • Over 700 participants engaged across all Go Succeed activity. • Support provided to 188 existing businesses to progress growth and scaling ambitions. • 173 new jobs promoted via business start-up activity. • 12 social enterprise start-ups supported, and 12 social enterprise jobs created. • 250 directly supported participants on employment pathway initiatives. • Continued support for new and established local businesses. • Continued support for the growth of new employment opportunities. • Continued support to grow a labour market that is economically active and prosperous. 					
<p>Alignment</p>						
<p>Corporate Plan 2024-27</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the continued growth and development of our local economy 					






















Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities 			
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy 			
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service quality	Service availability	Innovation
Responsible Officer	Director: Economy, Regeneration and Tourism			














*The 2025/26 figures are in draft, to be finalised following monitoring and verification of data by Go Succeed lead BCC

**Updated 'Go Succeed' programme target for the number of jobs promoted in Newry Mourne and Down: 173. An amendment to the standard set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 is awaiting legislative passage and approval. Methodology for calculating based on business and enterprise action plans * 0.6

*** Targets have been revised downwards as the funding package for 'Go Succeed' has been reduced for 2026-27.

Performance Improvement Objective 3

We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents														
Why this matters	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog mess and dog fouling and rubbish or litter lying around are your top two perceived problems in your local area. • 6% of the residents surveyed were dissatisfied with the cleansing service provided by the Council. • 91% of residents said recycling is important to them, an increase of 5% on the 2018 residents survey figure. • 63% of respondents to our 2026-27 survey agreed with this objective. <p>Issues around street cleanliness continue to escalate largely as a result of the increased number of illicit dumping, littering and dog fouling incidents reported to the Council.</p> <p>To improve the overall cleanliness of the District, the Council is currently reviewing cleansing operations to design a more effective model of service provision. The Council also remains committed to collaborating with partner organisations and local communities to promote responsible dog ownership, address issues around littering and illicit dumping and generate local pride in having a cleaner, greener District for everyone to enjoy.</p>													
Looking Back: What we did in 2025-26	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Issued 35 fixed penalty notices, 32 of which were paid</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Supported 100% of community clean-up requests</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>10 environmental projects funded through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' Scheme with a total of £14,822 awarded to local groups</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td rowspan="2">Slight increase in the average rate of recycling, to 49.3%, but below the set target.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Issued 35 fixed penalty notices, 32 of which were paid				Supported 100% of community clean-up requests		10 environmental projects funded through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' Scheme with a total of £14,822 awarded to local groups		Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out		Slight increase in the average rate of recycling, to 49.3%, but below the set target.	
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	Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out													
	Slight increase in the average rate of recycling, to 49.3%, but below the set target.													
														
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2026-27	<p>Address issues around recycling, littering, illicit dumping and dog fouling by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and implementing the Enforcement Improvement Plan. • Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity and social media campaigns. • Encouraging residents to bring properly sorted surplus recyclable waste to our Household Recycling Centres. • Supporting local community clean ups. • Continued implementation of a Paint Re-Use Scheme at a further 2 Household Recycling Centres. • Implementing a new system to determine levels of street cleanliness and identify emerging issues and hotspots. • Embedding the new online reporting tool for dog fouling. 													
















	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to implement the rollout out of compactable street litter bins. <p>Work in partnership with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the 'Live Here Love Here' campaigns. Encourage community groups to 'Adopt a Spot'. Highlight the impact of littering on the marine environment. 					
How we will measure success	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	2025-26 Actual	Status Trend	2026-27 Target
Number of fixed penalty notices issued	110	25	31	35 (Target: 100)	 	100
Number of fixed penalty notices paid	91	19	26	32 (Target: 80)	 	80
Percentage of fixed penalty notices issued that are paid	New measure			91% (Target: 80%)		80%
Percentage of community clean up requests supported	New measure		100%	100% (Target: 90%)		100%
Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	10	9	15	10		No target
The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling	49.6%	50.1%	48.7%	49.3% (Q1-Q3)	 	70% by 2030 (55% by 2025)
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	2,319t	932t	429t	380t (Q1-Q3)	 	<20,954 tonnes (2019-20)
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	82,842t	84,636t	85,383	66,395t (Q1-Q3)	 	85,500 tonnes * * (2019-20 target)
What you will see by March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of fixed penalty notices issued and paid. Responsible dog ownership and reduced levels of dog fouling, littering and illicit dumping. Improved opportunities to report dog fouling and identify hotspots for enforcement patrols. Reduction in the disposal of paint from our Household Recycling Centre sites. Opportunities to engage in community clean ups. Increased awareness of environmental messaging including recycling, dog fouling and littering. Decrease in overflowing bins and reduction of street bin collections. A cleaner, greener District, with improved civic and community pride. 					
Alignment						

Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future 			
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment 			
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment 			
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service availability	Innovation	Sustainability
Responsible Officer	Director: Sustainability and Environment			

*The Q1-Q3 2025-26 data for the statutory waste management performance indicators remains provisional and will be finalised when the year-end data is validated and published by DAERA. The trend is based on a comparative analysis with the same period last year to ensure effective comparability.













**The 2019-20 NI Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) target has been included as the Council awaits more up to date targets from DAERA.













Performance Improvement Objective 4

We will reduce our contribution to climate change by cutting carbon emissions and improving the efficiency of our fleet and buildings.											
Why this matters	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing waste, reducing climate change, investing in renewable energy etc. was important to you. • Green technology skills were the second most important training support needed to improve the growth of resident employability. • 57% of respondents to our 2026-27 survey agreed with this objective. <p>Climate change is arguably the most serious threat we face today to our way of life. Climate change is the long-term shift in average weather patterns across the world. Since the mid-1800s, humans have contributed to the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the air mainly through burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas. This causes global temperatures to rise, resulting in long-term changes. In October 2019 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council declared a 'Climate Emergency'.</p> <p>Newry, Mourne and Down District Council are developing a Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy. This process is led by a Cross-Departmental Officer Working Group who are reviewing all our operations and considering our impacts on climate change.</p> <p>The Strategy will include positive action to reduce our impacts on climate change (Mitigation) and increase our resilience to deal with its impacts (Adaptation).</p>										
Looking Back: What we did in 2025-26	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Established the baseline for the Council's carbon footprint</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Established the baseline for the Council's renewable energy generation and overall energy consumption</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Progressed the action plan contained within the Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2024-30)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>78% of Council fleet younger than 8 years</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Planted 2,800 trees across the District</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Established the baseline for the Council's carbon footprint		Established the baseline for the Council's renewable energy generation and overall energy consumption		Progressed the action plan contained within the Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2024-30)		78% of Council fleet younger than 8 years		Planted 2,800 trees across the District
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	Established the baseline for the Council's renewable energy generation and overall energy consumption										
	Progressed the action plan contained within the Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2024-30)										
	78% of Council fleet younger than 8 years										
	Planted 2,800 trees across the District										
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2026-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish and launch Sustainability and Climate Change strategy. • Publish the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Plan. • Support the continued implementation of new Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points. • Undertake the annual assessment of the Council's carbon footprint and renewable energy output. • Continue to implement the Council's fleet replacement programme. • Procure new electric vehicles for Council fleet. • Begin the transition of Council vehicles to HVO. 										

How we will measure success	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	2025-26 Actual	Status Trend	2026-27 Target
Reduction in carbon footprint of Council estate	To be established			5,246 tCO2e	-	50% reduction by 2040
- Electricity	New measure			4,584,089 kWh	-	
- Mains Gas	New measure			4,996,994 kWh	-	
- Heating Oil (Kerosene)	New measure			12,449,723 litres	-	
- Fleet Use (Diesel)	New measure			837,901 litres	-	
- Fleet Use (Unleaded Petrol)	New measure			4,995 litres	-	
- HVO Use	New measure			-	-	
Increase in Renewable energy generation	To be established			154,684 kWh	-	5% increase
Percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years	New measure		79%	78% (Target: 85%)	😊 ⚠️	75%
Number of electric vehicles within the Council fleet	New measure		1	1 (Target: 10)	😞 ⚠️	16
Number of Council supported EV charging points	New measure		20	0 (Target: 18)	😞	12
What you will see by March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's Climate Change and Sustainable Development strategy launched and published. • Council's Climate Change Adaptation Plan published. • Annual assessments of the Council's carbon footprint and renewable energy output completed and reported. • Reduction in Council's carbon footprint. • Increase in Council's renewable energy generation. • Continues implementation of Council's fleet replacement programme. • Reduction in vehicle emissions from Council fleet through transition to HVO. • New electric vehicles operating within Council fleet. • New EV charging points installed across the District. 					
Alignment						
Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future • Deliver sustainable services 					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment 					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment 					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Efficiency	Innovation	Sustainability		
Responsible Officer	Director: Sustainability and Environment					

Performance Improvement Objective 5

We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme									
Why this matters	<p>Delivering a more efficient and effective Planning Service for customers is a key priority for improvement for the Council. Planning plays a significant role in promoting sustainable development, regeneration, economic prosperity, investment and job creation for present and future generations of our District. 59% of respondents to our 2026-27 survey also agreed with this objective.</p> <p>The new portal, which launched in December 2022, allowing customers to submit applications online and track live planning applications, is now fully operational and amendments and changes remain ongoing as per agreed structures.</p> <p>Work continues on the Planning Improvement Programme and following discussions with SOLACE and DFI, the programme has been reviewed for 2025-26 and a new work programme is in place.</p> <p>Staff retention and recruitment remain challenging, however as of January 2026 all vacant posts have been filled. Additionally, as part of the Performance Improvement Programme two Higher Level Apprenticeship officers commenced employment in January 2026. Performance against the statutory targets remains a challenge and continues to be reviewed by SMT and SPR Committees.</p>								
Looking Back: What we did between April-December 2025	<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>64.7% of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks which is below the regional average of 75.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Average processing time of 46.0 weeks for local planning applications, which is above the regional average of 19.6 weeks</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Average processing time of 58.8 weeks for major planning applications, which is above the regional average of 38.6 weeks</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Received 869 local planning applications, which is the second highest number of applications received behind Belfast City Council</td> </tr> </table>		64.7% of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks which is below the regional average of 75.2%		Average processing time of 46.0 weeks for local planning applications, which is above the regional average of 19.6 weeks		Average processing time of 58.8 weeks for major planning applications, which is above the regional average of 38.6 weeks		Received 869 local planning applications, which is the second highest number of applications received behind Belfast City Council
	64.7% of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks which is below the regional average of 75.2%								
	Average processing time of 46.0 weeks for local planning applications, which is above the regional average of 19.6 weeks								
	Average processing time of 58.8 weeks for major planning applications, which is above the regional average of 38.6 weeks								
	Received 869 local planning applications, which is the second highest number of applications received behind Belfast City Council								
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2026-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases which have been in the system for over 12 months. • Improve the average processing time for validating application forms through the introduction of the validation checklist. • Ongoing work with agents and architects to improve the standard of planning applications submitted. • Support employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries.' • Review and consult on representations made during the consultation period after the launch of the Draft Plan Strategy. • Explore the development of a training programme for staff and members in collaboration with the Department of Infrastructure (DfI) as part of the Council's performance improvement programme for planning. • Review and agree Council's Enforcement Strategy. 								

How we will measure success	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	Q1-Q3* 2025-26	Status Trend	2026-27 Target
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	21.6	33.7	45.2	46.0 (Target: 15 weeks)	 	<15 weeks
Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)	89	154.8	29.6	58.8 (Target: 30 weeks)	 	<30 weeks
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks	58.6%	60.0%	47.6%	64.7% (Target: 70%)	 	70%
Average processing time for validating application forms	New measure					6 weeks
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	228	352	408	561 (Target: 170)	 	170
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less	934	1,154	1,118	981 (Target: 870)	 	870
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more	503	599	574	648 (Target: 580)	 	580
What you will see by March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more efficient and effective planning service. • Improved processing times for local and major planning applications. • Improved processing times for planning enforcement cases. • Reduction in the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases in the system. • Validation checklist introduced and processing time for validating planning applications improved. • An empowered and motivated workforce. • Increased confidence in the Planning system. • Sustainable development and regeneration of the District. • A review of representations made during the consultation period for the Draft Plan Strategy. • A training course developed for Council staff and members in collaboration with DfI. • Council's enforcement strategy reviewed and agreed. 					
Alignment						
Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver sustainable services 					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities 					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing • Reform and Transformation of Public Services 					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service availability	Service quality	Efficiency		
Responsible Officer	Director: Economy, Regeneration and Tourism					

*Annual planning figures will be validated by the Department for Infrastructure and published through the Annual Report 2025-26.

Strategic Alignment

Performance Improvement Objective	Corporate Objective(s)	Community Planning Outcome(s)	Duty of Improvement
We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services	Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing	Strategic effectiveness Service quality Service availability Fairness
We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses, job creation and pathways to employment	Support the continued growth and development of our local economy	All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	Strategic effectiveness Service quality Service availability Innovation
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future	All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment	Strategic effectiveness Service availability Innovation Sustainability
We will reduce our contribution to climate change by cutting carbon emissions and by improving the efficiency of our fleet and buildings	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future	All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment	Strategic Effectiveness Efficiency Innovation Sustainability
We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	Deliver sustainable services	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	Strategic effectiveness Service availability Service quality Efficiency

Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards

Section 89 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 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 standards, as outlined in the Local Government Performance Indicators and Standards Order (2015), are set out below:

Ref	Statutory Performance Indicator	Annual Standard
Economic Development		
ED1	The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity	>155 173* (updated target)
Planning		
P1	The average processing time of major planning applications	<30 weeks
P2	The average processing time of local planning applications	<15 weeks
P3	The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks	70%
Waste Management		
W1	The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse)	70% by 2030 Interim: 55% by 2025
W2	The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	<20,954** tonnes (2019-20 target)
W3	The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	85,500 tonnes**

*Updated 'Go Succeed' programme target for the number of jobs promoted in Newry Mourne and Down: 173. An amendment to the standard set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 is awaiting legislative passage and approval.

** These targets are 2019-20 NI Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) target which have not yet been updated.

The Council has put in place the following arrangements to monitor progress against the standards set for the statutory performance and indicators:

- Inclusion within the Performance Improvement Plan, with progress being monitored on a bi-annual basis by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.
- Inclusion within Directorate Business Plans, with progress being monitored on a bi-annual basis by the relevant Council Committee.
- Data submissions to Government Departments, with reports being issued to monitor the performance of each Council, outlining regional trends and comparisons.

Self-Imposed Performance Indicators

The Council has identified the following self-imposed performance indicators to measure progress in delivering the Corporate Plan 2024 - 27.

Draft Corporate Objective	Draft Measure of Success
Support the continued growth and development of our local economy	Number of jobs created and businesses supported through Council programmes
	Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity
	Amount of investment secured and distributed by Council
Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district	Number of people participating in targeted health programmes
	Number of attendances at Council indoor leisure facilities
	Number of users of community trails
Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future	Level of street cleanliness across the District (Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Street Cleanliness Index)
	Level of compliance with Sustainable Development Duty
	Percentage of waste recycled
	Percentage of EV charging points
Support regenerative tourism opportunities which promote our culture, heritage and environment	Level of visitor spend
	Number of overnight stays
	Level of visitor satisfaction
	Number of visitors to Council's Arts Centres and Museums
Empowering communities to play an active part in civic life	Percentage of residents who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together
	Percentage of residents who agree the Council consults with, and listens to the views of local people
	Percentage of residents who feel they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area
	Number of financial assistance projects funded.
	Number of people accessing the Ethnic Minority Support Office services
Develop and revitalise our district	Number of BRCD projects delivered.
	Number of small settlement schemes delivered.
	Number of new/upgraded public conveniences.
Deliver sustainable services	Level of citizen satisfaction.
	Compliance with the Duty of Improvement.

	Number of users registered to Council corporate social media channels.
	Number of visits to Council's corporate website.
Represent the voice of the District with our partners	Compliance with the Duty of Community Planning
	Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
	Number of training events provided to elected members

The Council has put in place the following arrangements to monitor progress against the self-imposed performance indicators:

- Inclusion within the Performance Improvement Plan, with progress being monitored by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee through the annual Assessment of Performance.
- Some performance indicators are included within Directorate Business Plans, with progress being monitored on a bi-annual basis by the relevant Council Committee.

These performance indicators are aligned to community planning outcomes. This will ensure the Council continues to address the needs and aspirations of local communities and deliver sustainable outcomes for all, now and in the future.

Identifying the Performance Improvement Objectives 2026-27

Three of the five performance improvement objectives 2026-27 have been carried forward from 2025-26 as they remain relevant and meaningful. We have however, refined the wording of our economic development and climate change objectives to make them more succinct, meaningful, and better reflect the evolving work taking place across these areas. A number of changes and additions have been made to the actions and measures that support all the objectives. They have been developed, reviewed and updated in close liaison with Elected Members, Senior Management Team, Corporate Management Team and employees across the organisation. Each objective is underpinned by a suite of 'supporting actions', 'measures of success' and outcomes for stakeholders. They are clearly aligned to the Community Plan and Corporate Plan 2024-27, as well as other regional and local plans, particularly the Council's Business Plans which have been developed by each Directorate. These plans influence and guide the overall direction of travel for the organisation.

- Programme for Government 2024-2027
- Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down 2017-2030, Priority Action Areas and District Electoral Area (DEA) Action Plans
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan 2024-27
- Thematic plans and strategies, including the IT Strategy and Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy
- Annual Directorate Business Plans 2026-27

The Council has also taken into consideration performance information from the following sources to support the development of the performance improvement objectives:

- The Northern Ireland Audit Office Audit and Assessment Reports and 'proposals for improvement', which are currently being progressed
- The Assessment of Performance 2024-25, including progress against performance improvement objectives, measures of success within the Corporate Plan 2024-27 and statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management.

The reasons for objectives being carried forward and/or amended are detailed in the table below:

PIO's -2025-26	PIO's 2026-27	Progress / Rationale	Status Proposed
<p>PIO 1: We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services</p>	<p>PIO 1: We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services</p>	<p>During 2025-26 progress was made against a number of key actions under this objective including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of paid attendances at some of Council's 6 main leisure centres. • Increase in the number of people participating in targeted health programmes. • Increase in the number of leisure centre memberships <p>However, there is still improvements to be made, and the 2022 residents survey ranked 'Improving people's health and wellbeing (and reducing health inequalities) as a high priority for improving the local area.</p>	<p>Retain This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2026-27.</p>
<p>PIO 2: We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation</p>	<p>PIO 2: We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses, job creation and pathways to employment</p>	<p>During 2025-26 progress was made against a number of key actions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises. • Number of jobs promoted via business start-up activity. • Number of new enterprises created as a result of support <p>However, there is still improvements to be made and there is a focus on pathways to employment going forward. The 2022 residents survey ranked 'improving skills, employability, and job prospects' and 'supporting local businesses, attracting investment and jobs' as the 1st and 3rd highest priorities for improving the local area.</p>	<p>Amend This performance improvement objective to be amended for 2026-27.</p>

<p>PIO 3: We will improve the cleanliness of our district by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling incidents</p>	<p>PIO 3: We will improve the cleanliness of our district by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling incidents</p>	<p>During 2025-26 progress was made against some key actions under this objective including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity campaigns and dog licences • Promoting the 'Live Here, Love Here' campaign through the funding of 10 environmental projects. <p>However, improvement is still needed in a number of areas including increasing the Council's recycling rate and decreasing the level of municipal waste arising.</p> <p>The 2022 residents survey ranked 'dog mess and fouling' and rubbish or littering lying around' as the top two perceived problems in their local areas by residents.</p>	<p>Retain This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2026-27.</p>
<p>PIO 4: We will improve our sustainability by reducing our impacts in relation to climate change</p>	<p>PIO 4: We will reduce our contribution to climate change by cutting carbon emissions and improving the efficiency of our fleet and buildings</p>	<p>During 2025-26 progress was made against a number of key actions and measures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing the carbon footprint of the Council Estate and • Establishing the Energy Consumption baseline for the Council <p>Now that these have been established however, work will commence on ways to reduce these and work towards the Council's net zero obligations.</p>	<p>Amend This performance improvement objective to be amended for 2026-27.</p>

Feedback from the consultation also highlighted the need for the objective to be more measurable and achievable, hence the amendment to the objective.

PIO 5:

We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme.

PIO 5:

We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme

During 2025-26 progress continued to be made against a number of key actions including:

- Working with agents and architects to improve the standard of planning applications submitted.
- Supported employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries'.
- Increase in the percentage of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks.

Retain

This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2026-27

However, much improvement is still required as the statutory standards for the average processing times of major and local planning applications and enforcement cases is still not being met.

Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down

The Community Plan has been developed and agreed by the Community Planning Partnership Board. Entitled 'Living Well Together', the Community Plan provides a framework for collaborative working to deliver positive change for our communities, and sets out the following long term overarching vision 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'.

The Community Plan sets out the following five positive outcomes:

Our Outcomes

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



Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan 2024-27

The Corporate Plan 2024-27 sets out the following mission statement and eight strategic objectives:

Council Mission Statement

'To deliver sustainable services and empower our communities through transparent governance and collaboration.'

Council Strategic Objectives

 <p>Support the continued growth and development of our local economy</p>	 <p>Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district</p>
 <p>Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future</p>	 <p>Support regenerative tourism opportunities which promote our culture, heritage and environment</p>
 <p>Empowering communities to play an active part in civic life</p>	 <p>Develop and revitalise our district</p>
 <p>Deliver sustainable services</p>	 <p>Represent the voice of the district with our partners</p>

Alignment with the Strategic Aspects of Improvement

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 table below outlines how Newry, Mourne and Down District Council’s performance improvement objectives 2026-27 are aligned with the seven specified aspects of improvement:

Performance Improvement Objective	Seven Aspects of Improvement						
	Strategic Effectiveness	Service Quality	Service Availability	Fairness	Sustainability	Efficiency	Innovation
We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services	✓	✓	✓	✓			
We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses, job creation and pathways to employment	✓	✓	✓				✓
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and reducing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling	✓		✓		✓		✓
We will reduce our contribution to climate change by cutting carbon emissions and improving the efficiency of our fleet and buildings	✓				✓	✓	✓
We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	✓	✓	✓			✓	

The Council has also assessed the performance improvement objectives against the following criteria, and considers them to be:

- Legitimate
- Clear
- Robust
- Deliverable
- Demonstrable

Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment

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, the Performance Improvement Plan has been subject to an equality screening. The outcome of the equality screening process determined that the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27 is not subject to an equality impact assessment, with no mitigating measures required.

In accordance with the Rural Needs Act Northern Ireland (2016), the Council has given due regard to rural needs by carrying out a Rural Needs Impact Assessment of the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27.

Consultation and Engagement

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

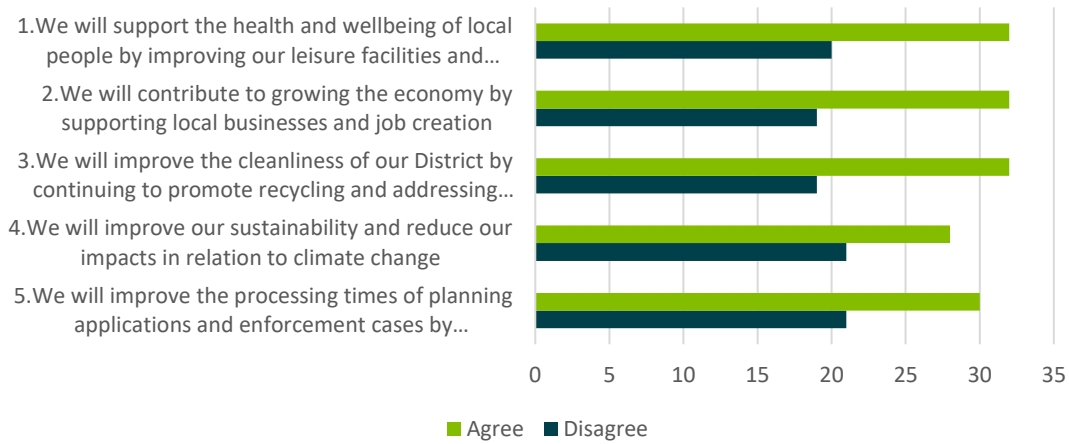
The Council website was host to the consultation and engagement process. Under the consultations section of the website, an electronic survey in relation to the draft performance improvement objectives 2026-27 was published and promoted. The consultation and engagement process was promoted further through the Council’s social media channels and circulated to key internal and external stakeholders.

The overall consultation and engagement process resulted in 54 completed surveys and engagement with 68 stakeholders through the Crotlieve DEA Forum, Downpatrick DEA Forum, Mourne DEA Forum, Slieve Croob DEA Forum and Rowallane DEA Forum as well as Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice and Age Friendly Alliance. These responses have been supplemented by the input of 764 respondents to the Residents Survey in 2022.

Electronic documentation, survey on the draft performance improvement objectives 2026-27 on the consultation section of the Council website	Survey: 54 responses
Engagement with the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 75 groups, including Age Friendly Alliance and Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice 	32 consultees
Engagement with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 DEAs across the District 	36 members
Residents Survey (September 2022)	764 respondents

The consultation responses revealed support for the proposed performance improvement objectives, with the majority of respondents agreeing with each of the five objectives.

Agreement on Performance Improvement Objectives 2026-27



The areas for improvement and issues raised through the overall consultation and engagement processes are clearly aligned to the five performance improvement objectives 2026-27, and will be addressed through the Performance Improvement Plan, and as part of the Council’s business planning process.

Achieving Continuous Improvement

Transforming and improving how the Council delivers services is a key objective within the 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. In pursuing the corporate vision and objectives, the Council has identified the following five core values:

What this means:	
Respect	We will demonstrate respect for all people in our attitudes, behaviours and working relationships.
Transparency	We will be transparent in how we make decisions.
Excellence	We will take pride in our work and be passionate about the standards we strive to achieve.
Integrity	We want the people of our district to trust us to do the right thing.
Accountability	We will be accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. We will be accountable for how we plan and use resources sustainably.

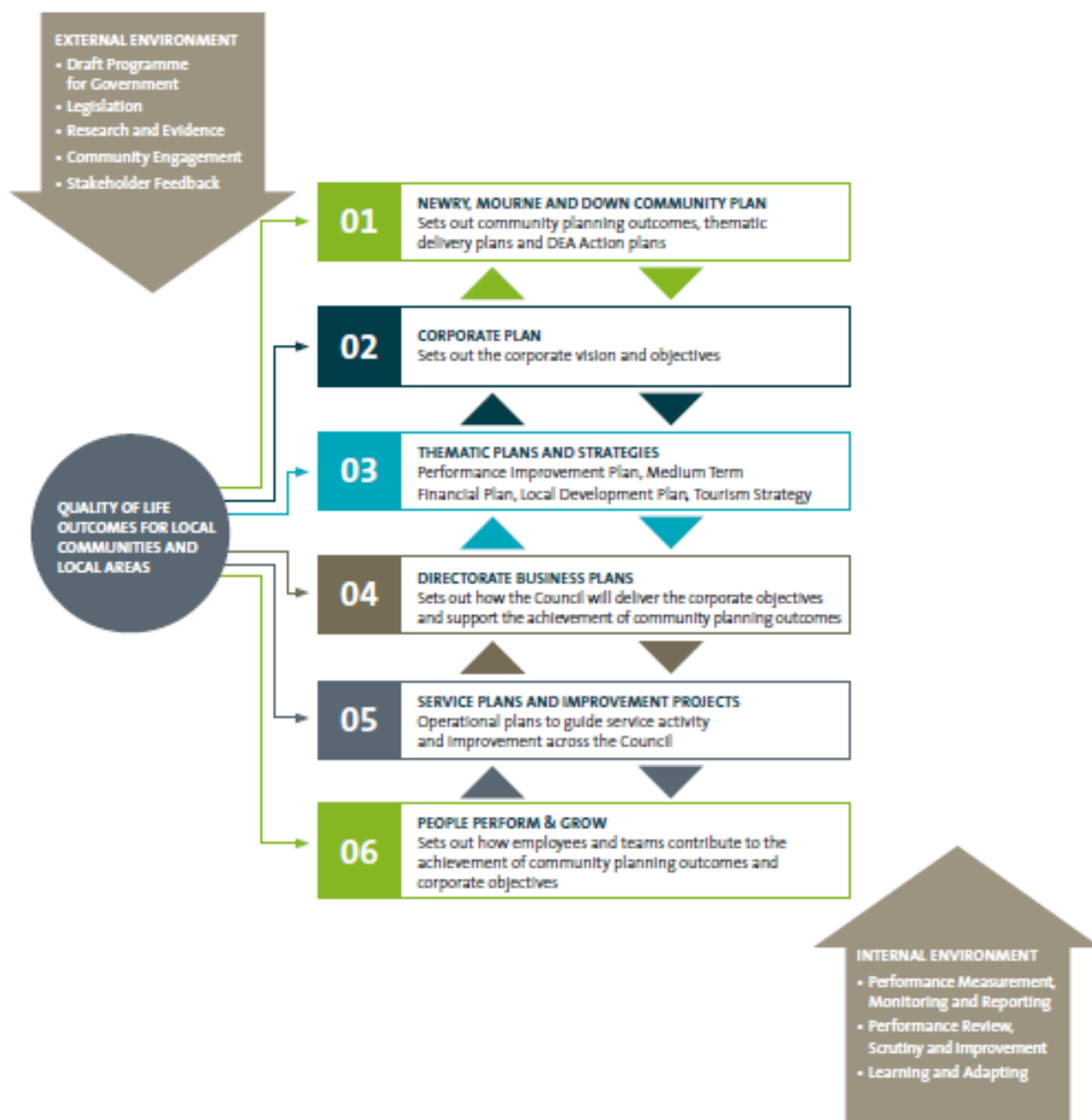
The Council has put in place a number of frameworks and systems to drive forward continuous improvement and facilitate a performance improvement culture. These include the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, Policy Development Framework, Equality Scheme, Governance Framework and Risk Management Policy.

The Council also assesses how performance compares with other Councils. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is working with the Association of Public Service Excellence to benchmark performance against the performance of Councils across Northern Ireland and other jurisdictions. This information is being used to collate a robust and reliable evidence base, to help identify and address future areas for improvement.

The Performance Improvement Plan underpins the Council's overall approach to effective performance management. It supports the Council in identifying more efficient and effective ways of working to facilitate the achievement of community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and Directorate objectives, which together support the continued implementation of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework.

Business Planning and Performance Management Framework

The Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework drives and provides assurance that community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and performance improvement objectives are being delivered, with the primary goal of making life better for our citizens.



The Community Plan and Corporate Plan sit within a hierarchy of plans that informs the Council's overall direction of travel and guides all activity within the organisation. Community planning outcomes and corporate objectives are cascaded across the organisation through thematic plans and strategies and Directorate Business Plans. Performance indicators continue to be developed at all levels across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, in order to ensure performance is measured, monitored and evaluated on a continuous basis.

During 2026-27, the Council will continue to progress and mainstream the development, implementation and review of Service Plans and roll out of Individual Performance (People Perform Grow), both of which seek to demonstrate the 'line of sight' between the work of employees and how they contribute to the achievement of community planning outcomes and corporate objectives.

Through the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, the Council will manage performance at all levels across the organisation, in order to ensure the necessary steps are taken to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions. Each level of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework is, and will be, accompanied by a relevant set of performance measures to monitor and assess the Council's progress in improving the quality of life for local communities.

The table below provides a description of the various plans and strategies that form part of the Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework.

Community Plan	The Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down sets out the long-term vision for improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the District. Developed in collaboration with partners across the statutory, business and voluntary sectors, the Community Plan is underpinned by Priority Actions Areas and seven DEA Action Plans, which seek to deliver the five community planning outcomes at a local level. Progress in implementing the Community Plan is reviewed on a biennial basis.
Corporate Plan	The Corporate Plan 2024-27 sets out the proposed vision, values and strategic objectives for the Council. Each strategic objective is underpinned by 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success'. Progress in delivering the Corporate Plan is reported annually through the Assessment of Performance.
Thematic Plans and Strategies	The Council has put in place a number of Thematic Plans and Strategies to support the implementation of the Community Plan and Corporate Plan, including the Performance Improvement Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan and Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy. These plans provide the strategic context for multiple programmes of work across the organisation.
Directorate Business Plans	Business Plans are developed annually to demonstrate how Directorates contribute to the achievement of community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and performance improvement objectives. Directorate Business Plans include suites of key performance measures to

	measure progress and drive continuous improvement, with performance being monitored and reviewed bi-annually by the relevant Committee.
Service Plans and Improvement Projects	Service Plans and Improvement Projects are operational and set out the direction for service areas across the Council. They outline how each service contributes to the delivery of community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and performance improvement objectives, include key performance measures and provide a mechanism to manage performance consistently across the organisation.
People Perform Grow	The Council recognises the significant role employees play in contributing to the achievement of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Thematic Plans and Strategies, Directorate Business Plans and Service Plans. People Perform Grow demonstrates the link between the work of employees and how they contribute to the achievement of key plans and strategies, as well as the outcomes experienced by local communities.

The Business Planning and Performance Management Framework is complemented by the integrated cycle of activity outlined in the diagram below.

Governance Arrangements

Reviewing performance and reporting progress to Elected Members and other key stakeholders is very important, as it facilitates transparency, accountability and improvement in everything the Council does. The governance arrangements to develop, monitor, report and review the Council's progress in implementing the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27 are outlined below:



The Council must publish an Assessment of Performance by 30 September 2026 which will provide an overview of how the Council has performed during 2025-26. The Assessment of Performance will be published on the Council's website and is supplemented by the Mid-Year Progress Report for the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27.

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. 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 2026-27, as well as any suggestions you may have on how services can be improved in the future.

The Council can be contacted in the following ways:

In writing:

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: performance@nmandd.org



**Ag freastal ar an Dún
agus Ard Mhacha Theas
Serving Down
and South Armagh**

0330 137 4000 (Council)
council@nmandd.org
www.newrymournedown.org

**Oifig an Iúir
Newry Office**
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry BT35 8DJ

**Oifig Dhún Pádraig
Downpatrick Office**
Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road
Downpatrick BT30 6GQ