

July 25th, 2025

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Thursday, 31st July 2025 at 3:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre.**

Committee Membership 2025-26

Ms Brona Slevin **Independent Chairperson**

Councillor C Bowsie

Councillor L Devlin

Councillor M Gibbons

Councillor O Hanlon

Councillor T Howie

Councillor C King

Councillor A Mathers

Councillor K Murphy

Councillor S O'Hare

Councillor G Sharvin

Agenda

Performance

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet of Audit Committee held 8 and 25 May 2025

For Approval

 *Audit Committee Action Sheet 2025_05_23.pdf*

Page 1

4.0 Audit Committee Annual Report 2024/25

For Information

 *Audit Committee Annual Report.pdf*

Page 6

 *Chairpersons Annual Report 2024-25.pdf*

Page 9

Corporate Services - (OPEN SESSION)

5.0 Corporate Risk Register – including the AHC Directorate Risk Register

For Approval

 *Corporate Risk Register 31 July 2025.pdf*

Page 18

 *Appendix 1 - CRR Overview - July 2025.pdf*

Page 21

 *Appendix 2 - CRR - July 2025.pdf*

Page 22

 *Appendix 3 - AHC DRR Overview - July 2025.pdf*

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 *Appendix 4 - AHC DRR - July 2025.pdf*

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Performance

6.0 Performance Improvement Plan 2025/26

For Information

 *Audit Committee Cover Report PIP 2025-26.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 - Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.pdf*

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Corporate Services - (OPEN SESSION)

7.0 Prompt Payments

For Information

Appendix 1 - Prompt Payments Report Q1 - 202526.pdf

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8.0 NMMDC Assurance Framework and Code of Governance

For Approval

Appendix 1 - Assurance Framework and Annual Governance Statement.pdf

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Appendix 1 - Assurance Framework and Code of Governance 202425.pdf

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Corporate Services (CLOSED SESSION)

9.0 2023/24 Unaudited Accounts and Annual Governance Statement

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding the information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Appendix 1 - Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts 202425.pdf

Not included

Appendix 1 - Unaudited Signed Statement of Accounts 202425.pdf

Not included

Appendix 2 - Ig-10-2025-covering-letter.pdf

Not included

10.0 Update on Audit Recommendations – to include risk profile

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding the information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Appendix 1 - Follow up of Audit Recs.pdf

Not included

 Appendix 1 - Legacy Recs.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 2 - HS Advisory.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 3 - 2021-22 IA Recs new.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 4 - 2022-23 IA Recs.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 5 - 2023-24 Recs.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 6 - 2023-24 RTCWG NIAO.pdf	Not included

11.0 Direct Award Contracts

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding the information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 Audit Committee Cover Report 31. 07. 2025 -DACs AC Q1 2025 26 .pdf	Not included
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12.0 Procurement Action Plans

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding the information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 Report to AC July 2025 PAP_final.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 1 - Sustainability PAP.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 2 - Environment PAP.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 3 - Corporate Services PAP .pdf	Not included
 Appendix 4 - Active & Healthy Communities PAP .pdf	Not included
 Appendix 5 - Economy, Regeneration & Tourism PAP.pdf	Not included

13.0 Update on Fraud and Whistleblowing

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act

(Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding the information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 **13 - Fraud and Raising Concerns update.pdf**

Not included

Corporate Services (CLOSED SESSION)

14.0 Planning Update

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding the information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 **14 - Planning Department Update June 25.pdf**

Not included

15.0 Annual Assessment of Chairpersons Performance

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding the information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 **Chairpersons Performance 2024-25.pdf**

Not included

 **Appendix 1 - Chairpersons Performance.pdf**

Not included

Internal Audit (CLOSED SESSION)

16.0 Sumer NI Summary Report

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding the information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

copy report to follow

17.0 Internal Audit Plan 2025/26

For Approval

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding the information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this

item of business.

copy report to follow

18.0 Information Governance Audit Report

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding the information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 **202526 NMDDC Information Governance - Final report.pdf**

Not included

AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETINGActions arising from Audit Committee Meeting – 19 September 2024

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead officer	Action taken / progress to date	Remove from action sheet Y/N
AC/071/2024	Action sheet of Audit Committee from 31/07/2024	It was agreed that any training opportunities for Members be considered and tabled at a future committee meeting	J Kelly	Training to be organised in autumn following membership change at the AGM.	N

Actions arising from Audit Committee Meeting – 8 May 2025

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead officer	Action taken / progress to date	Remove from action sheet Y/N
AC/029/2025	Action sheet of meeting held 20/02/2025	It was agreed to note the action sheet	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/030/2025	To agree date and start times for 2025/26	It was agreed to approve the dates and start times for Audit Committee meetings fir 2028/26 subject to amendment	J Kelly	Approved	Y
AC/031/2025	Audit Committee Terms of Reference & Timetable	it was agreed to approve the Audit Committee Terms of Reference and to note the timetable for the year ahead.	G Byrne	Approved	Y
AC/032/2025	Audit Committee Self Assessment – New Guide	it was agreed to note the Audit Committee Self-Assessment – New Guide.	J Kelly	Noted	Y

		Committee (date to be confirmed) following SMT reconsideration of the risks associated with the MMGP.			
AC/037/2025	Prompt Payment Statistics	it was agreed to note the Quarter 4 Prompt Payment Statistics 2024/25	G Byrne	Noted	Y
AC/038/2025	Update on Audit Recommendations	it was agreed to note the progress in implementing both internal and external audit recommendations.	G Byrne	Noted	Y
AC/039/2025	Direct Award Contracts	it was agreed to note Quarter 4 AND Financial Year End of 31 March 2025 update in relation to Direct Award Contracts.	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/040/2025	Procurement Action Plans	it was agreed to note the update and progress in relation to the Directorate Procurement Action Plans.	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/041/2025	Update on Fraud and Raising Concerns	it was agreed to note the following: •The update in relation to Fraud and Raising Concerns cases detailed at Appendix 1 of the Officers Report •The progress on actions arising from the NIAO Internal Fraud Risk Self-Assessment •The update in relation to the National Fraud Initiative	G Byrne	Noted	Y
AC/042/2025	Audit Strategy	it was agreed to note the contents of the Audit Strategy for 2024/25	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/043/2025	Internal Audit Extension	it was agreed to approve the first one-year extension period to allow work to commence on the third year of the four-year Internal Audit Plan.	G Byrne	Agreed	Y
AC/044/2025	Sumer NI Summary Report	it was agreed to note the Sumer NI Summary Report	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/045/2025	Internal Audit Plan 2025/26	it was agreed to approve the Internal Audit Plan 2025/26	J Kelly	Approved	Y

AC/046/2025	Fuel Management Report	it was agreed to note the Fuel Management Report	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/047/2025	Performance Data and Validations	it was agreed to note the Performance Data and Validations Report	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/048/2025	Labour Market Partnerships	it was agreed to note the Labour Market Partnerships Report	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/049/2025	Sumer NI Internal Audit Charter	it was agreed to approve the Sumer NI Internal Audit Charter	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/050/2025	Circular LG12/2025 – Consolidated Councillor Allowances	it was agreed to note the Consolidated Councillor Allowances Circular	J Kelly	Noted	Y

Actions arising from Special Audit Committee Meeting – 23 May 2025

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead officer	Action taken / progress to date	Remove from action sheet Y/N
AC/053/2025	Risk Register	it was agreed to approve the updates to the Corporate Risk Register highlighted within the summary at Appendix 1. The Full Corporate Risk Register can be evidenced at Appendix 2.	J Kelly	Approved	Y
AC/054/2025	Audit Committee Self Assessment 2024/25	it was agreed to approve contents of the Report.	B Slevin	Approved	Y
AC/055/2025	Internal Audit	it was agreed to approve the Internal Audit Reports, to include the following: •Annual Assurance Report	J Kelly	Approved	Y

		•Follow Up Report •Refuse Collection Overtime Report •Newry BD Final Report				
AC/056/2025	Progress on Internal Audit Reports	it was agreed to note the update and progress in relation to addressing audit recommendations	G Byrne	Noted		Y
AC/057/2025	LGA Recommendations	It was agreed to note the recommendations from the LGA and the update from Council Officers	G Byrne	Noted		Y

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	31 July 2025
Subject:	Audit Committee Annual Report 2024-25
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Brona Slevin Independent Chair of Audit Committee
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Brona Slevin Independent Chair of Audit Committee

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	☒	For noting only	☐
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Members are asked to consider and approve the contents of this report prior to Reporting to Council.

1.0	Purpose and Background The Annual Report summarises the key activities and highlights any key issues arising throughout the year. This Report will inform the Governance Statement contained within the Council’s Annual Accounts.
2	Key Issues The Annual Report of the Newry Mourne and Down Audit Committee for 2024-25 is attached.
3.0	Recommendations Members are asked to consider and approve the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2024-25. The approved Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2024-25 to be reported to Council.
4.0	Resource implications None.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i>

	It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations	☒
5.2	Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened	☐
	The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation	☐
5.3	Proposal initiating consultation Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves	☐
	Consultation period will be 12 weeks	☐
	Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided)	☐
	Rationale:	
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)	
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed	☐
7.0	Appendices	
	Appendix 1 – Audit Committee Annual Report for 2024-25	
8.0	Background Documents	

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Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Audit Committee
Annual Report for 2024/2025

1. Overview

1.1 This Annual Report provides an overview of the Audit Committee activities for the Financial Year 2024/25 and demonstrates how the Committee has met its key responsibilities.

1.2 The Audit Committee met on 5 occasions during the year; on 31 July 2024, 19 September 2024, 20 February 2025, 08 May 2025 and a Special Audit Committee on the 23 May 2025. A programme of work had been agreed by the Audit Committee and was allocated over the schedule of meetings during the year.

1.3 The role of the Audit Committee is to support the Chief Executive (Accounting Officer) and Council by reviewing the comprehensiveness and reliability of assurances on governance, risk management, the control environment and the integrity of the financial statements.

2. Attendance

2.1 Members' attendance at committee meetings were as follows:

	ATTENDANCE NARRATIVE – AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETINGS (July 2024 – June 2025)						
COUNCILLOR NAME	AUDIT COMMITTEE 31 July 2024		AUDIT COMMITTEE 19 September 2024	AUDIT COMMITTEE 20 February 2025	AUDIT COMMITTEE 08 May 2025	SPECIAL AUDIT COMMITTEE 23 May 2025	TOTAL Meetings Attended
Indp Chair Ms B Slevin	√		√	√	√	√	5/5
Cllr C Bowsie	√		N/A	√	√	√	4/4
Cllr A Mathers	√		√	√	√	√	5/5
Cllr L Devlin	√			√	√		3/5
Cllr T Howie (nee Kelly)	√				√	√	3/5
Cllr K Murphy	√				√	√	3/5
Cllr O Hanlon			√	√	√		3/5
Cllr C King	√		√	√	N/A	N/A	3/3
Cllr S O’ Hare	√		√	√	√	√	5/5
Cllr G Sharvin	√		√	√	√	√	5/5
Cllr J Tinnelly							0/5

2.2 Ms Brona Slevin was appointed as an Independent Member of the Audit Committee in March 2019 and in accordance with the Committee’s terms of reference took up the role of Chairperson in July 2019. The appointment was extended to July 2024. Ms Brona Slevin was reappointed to the position of Chair of the Audit Committee after a recruitment process, in July 2024.

2.3 The Audit Committee meetings requires the attendance of the Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services and the Internal Auditors. The Assistant Director of Finance and Performance and NIAO representatives also usually attend and the Senior Management Team and other Senior Officers attend by invitation.

3. Performance Evaluation

3.1 In accordance with best practice, the Audit Committee self-assessed its performance. This year the NIAO Good Practice Guide 'Effective Audit and Risk Assurance Committee' was used after being published in March 2025. This is a very comprehensive checklist which was issued to Members for comments. Based on this document the Audit Committee has been found to be operating effectively for 2024/25.

The results were presented to the meeting on 23 May 2025. The Committee agreed the following actions/recommendations to build further effectiveness:

- (a) As in prior years political parties to be asked to give consideration to appointing Elected Members for a term greater than one year where possible which will enable knowledge and skills to be built up in this area. Generally, there is little change in the Audit Committee make up which shows the Council is committed to keeping the experience and knowledge of Members on the Audit Committee.
- (b) training for all Members on the Audit Committee to be progressed.
- (c) Officers continue to strive to ensure Internal Audit reports are completed and reported on a timely basis to the Audit Committee.
- (d) Officers continue to strive to ensure that all papers are provided on a timely basis to Democratic Services so that papers are issued in compliance with standing orders so that Members have sufficient time to review them

Members will see from consideration of the NIAO checklist that the following requires further work which would add to the effectiveness of the Committee:

- (e) The Audit Committee to understand how cyber and digital risks impact on the Council
- (f) An assessment of Climate Change/Net Zero to be presented to the Audit Committee

- (g) The Audit Committee should have oversight of how controls are evaluated so it can understand how effectively fraud and error risks are being addressed
- (h) The Audit Committee should consider ways in which to obtain feedback from the executive and other key stakeholders eg Internal and External Audit in order to strengthen the effectiveness of the Audit Committee
- (i) For Audit Committee members unfamiliar with the operations of the public sector, special focus should be given to this as part of their induction, focusing in particular on regularity (using of funds in the way intended)

3.2 An appraisal of the Chairperson's performance was also completed on 24 July 2025 by the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services with Councillor Sharvin and Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed that the Chairperson carried out their role effectively, encouraging full and open discussion at all Audit Committee meetings.

4. Terms of Reference

4.1 A review of the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference was undertaken and approved by Council on 5 March 2019 as part of the review of the terms of references of all Committees of Council. The Audit Committee noted the approved Terms of Reference at its meeting on 15 April 2019. The Audit Committee's Terms of Reference was again approved at the Audit Committee Meeting in July 2020, in April 2021, April 2022, April 2023 and May 2024 and 8 May 2025.

5. 2023/24 Financial Statements and External Audit

5.1 The Council's Audited Financial Statements for 2023/24 including the Annual Governance Statement were reviewed by the Audit Committee on 19 September 2024. The Committee also reviewed the draft Report to Those Charged With Governance.

5.2 The Audit Committee was pleased to note that the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) had certified the financial Statements with an unqualified audit Opinion and the Audit Committee approved the Accounts for signing.

5.3 The Audit Committee noted the contents of the final Report To Those Charged With Governance with management responses and the Annual Audit Letter at its meeting on 20 February 2025.

6. Risk Management

6.1 The Committee welcomed the continued good progress made by Officers on Risk Management and the structure put in place to ensure ownership and management of risk at all levels of the organisation.

6.2 The Council has a Corporate Risk Register which identifies the key corporate level risks faced, and to be managed. Each corporate risk is linked to specific priorities set out by the Council in its Corporate Plan. The Corporate Risk Register and mitigating actions are scrutinised at each Audit Committee meeting. Risk management is also a standing agenda item at monthly meetings of the SMT.

6.3 There were 12 corporate risks on the Corporate Risk Register at 23 May 2025 and the corporate risks with the highest residual scores (shown in brackets) were as follows:

- CR. 01 Failure to deliver the capital investment programme for the District (20)
- CR.02 Non-compliance with legislative requirements, including Procurement Act 2023 (20)
- CR. 03 Failure to effectively manage waste (20)
- CR. 04 Failure to provide robust and timely planning decisions (20)
- CR.05 Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements (16)
- CR. 07 Failure to implement an economic development programme to regenerate the District (16)
- CR. 08 Failure to manage sickness absence resulting in delays and an inability to deliver Council services (20)
- CR. 09 Risk to the long term financial stability of Council in relation to the delivery of Council Services (20)
- CR. 10 Failure to effectively plan for and manage a cyber security attack (20)
- CR. 11 Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery (15)
- CR. 12 Insufficient staff resources to deliver Council services in an effective and efficient manner (16)

7. Internal Audit

7.1 Sumer NI (previously ASM Limited) were reappointed.

7.2 From the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25, 9 Internal Audit Reports were reported to the Audit Committee during the year, 5 of which received a satisfactory assurance rating. Four service areas, received a limited assurance rating. These included the following :

- a) Off street car parking
- b) User access management
- c) Fuel management
- d) Newry BID

7.3 All of the Internal Audit assurance work as detailed in the final Internal Audit Plan 2024/25, as approved by the Audit Committee, was completed. This included 2 Advisory Reports as follows:

- a) Flood grant verification review
- b) Review of Refuse Collection Services - overtime

7.4 Sumer NI, the Council's Internal Auditors, raised significant control issues in their Annual Report dated 19 May 2025. Sumer NI stated that the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards ("PSIAS") requires that they bring to the Council's attention those significant control issues which may be relevant to the preparation of the Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025. On this basis, they highlighted

- a) the limited assurance provided in the review of Off Street Car Parking
- b) the limited assurance provided in the review of User Access Management
- c) the limited assurance provided in the review of Fuel Management
- d) the limited assurance provided in the review of the Newry BID
- e) the limited progress in fully implementing internal audit recommendations

Internal Audit Annual Assurance Opinion

7.7 The Committee reviewed the Annual Internal Audit Assurance Report for 2024/25 at its meeting on 23 May 2025 and noted the Auditor's overall opinion of Limited assurance. In their opinion, and specifically in relation to the significant issues and assurances reviews, during the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, there was an inadequate and ineffective system of governance, risk management and controls in place leading to this limited assurance in relation to the effective and efficient achievement of the Council's objectives.

7.8 The Audit Committee expressed their concern with the overall opinion of Limited Assurance. The Committee requested regular progress updates on the actions taken to address the significant issues referred to the Internal Audit Annual Assurance Report.

Follow up Review of Internal Audit Recommendations

7.9 The Committee also reviewed on 23 May 2025 a follow up report from Internal Audit on the Implementation of Prior Year Internal Audit Recommendations for 2023/24. The review identified that, out of the 63 accepted recommendations, 24 (38%) recommendations were fully implemented, 30 (40%) recommendations were partially implemented, 9 (14%) recommendations were not implemented.

7.10 The Assistant Director of Finance and Performance also reported during the year the progress on the implementation of the Internal Audit Recommendations in the years prior to 2023/24. This included an update on the risk facing the Council when these recommendations were not implemented on a timely basis which enabled the Audit Committee to have a fuller understanding of the implications of these recommendations not being in place.

7.11 The Audit Committee is committed to ensuring the prior year Internal Audit recommendations are completed and reported to the Audit Committee at each meeting.

Tender for Internal Audit Services

7.12 Newry Mourne and Down District Council procured the services of SUMER NI (previously known as ASM) as its Internal Audit Services provider from 01 April 2023. The contract was for two years with the options of two one-year extensions. The Audit Committee agreed to approve the first one year extension period which will be utilised to work on the third year of the four year Internal Audit Plan, i.e.,2025/26.

Approval of Internal Audit Plan 2025/26 and Internal Audit Strategy

7.13 The Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26 was brought to the Audit Committee Meeting on 08 May 2025 for approval.

7.14 The Internal Audit Plan will then be kept under review throughout the year and will be considered against any emerging risks identified as part of the Council's wider risk management processes. Any future proposed changes will be brought to the Audit Committee for consideration.

8. External Audit Strategy

8.1 The NIAO presented their Annual Audit Strategy for the Year Ending 31 March 2025 to the Audit Committee on 08 May 2025.

8.2 The Audit certification deadline for certifying local government bodies' accounts is 30 September 2025 and to ensure compliance a meeting has been scheduled for September 2025 to review and approve the audited accounts so they can be signed by the deadline.

9. Performance Improvement Arrangements

9.1 Every year the LGA is required to report on whether each Council has discharged its duties in relation to improvement planning, the publication of improvement information and the extent to which each Council has acted in accordance with the Department's Guidance.

9.2 The LGA proposed an unqualified audit and assessment opinion, with no statutory recommendations being made. An Audit and Assessment certificate of compliance has been received.

9.3 The LGA has certified that the Council has discharged its duties in connection with improvement planning and the publication of improvement information in accordance with section 92 of the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities guidance sufficiently.

9.4 The LGA stated that in their opinion the Council has demonstrated a track record of ongoing improvement and that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Act during 2024/25.

9.5 Strengthening existing performance management arrangements and embedding a culture of performance and improvement has gained momentum within Newry Mourne and Down District Council. It is vital that performance is used as a key driver to identify improvements and facilitate the delivery of effective, efficient and value for money services.

10. Acknowledgments

10.1 As Chair of the Audit Committee, I wish to extend my thanks to the Members for their support during the year and to the political parties for ensuring continuity of membership on the Committee from year to year. On behalf of the Audit Committee, I wish also to thank officers, the Internal and External Auditors for their hard work, also their open engagement with the Committee, thereby allowing it to meet its responsibilities.

Brona Slevin
Independent Chairperson
31 July 2025

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	31 July 2025
Subject:	Corporate Risk Register
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Josephine Kelly – Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director of Finance & Performance

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-			
For decision		X	For noting only
1.0	Purpose and Background		
1.1	The Corporate Risk Register was reviewed and updated by SMT on 22 July 2025. Quarter 4 Assurance Statements for 2024/25 have been used to inform and update the content of the Corporate Risk Register. Where relevant, Officers have also provided updates in relation to specific controls and action plans.		
2.0	Key issues		
2.1	Corporate Risk Register The Council has identified 12 corporate risks, 7 of which are red, 4 of which are amber and 1 of which is a yellow level risk. No new risks have been added to the Risk Register. <u>Appendix 1</u> provides an overview of each risk, risk owner(s), gross and residual risk scores, as well as a summary of changes and updates which have been made to the Corporate Risk Register since May 2025. Several actions have been updated to ensure the Corporate Risk Register is a live document and can be used as a Management tool for decision making. The Corporate Risk Register has been updated with the Council’s new objectives from the Corporate Plan 2024-27. The updated Corporate Risk Register is attached at <u>Appendix 2</u> .		
2.2	Other Risk factors which were considered No other factors were considered for the Corporate Risk Register		
2.3	Directorate Risk Register – Active Healthy Communities (AHC) The Risk Reporting section of the Risk Strategy states that Directorate Risk Registers will be presented to the Audit Committee on a rotational basis. The Risk Register summary for the AHC Directorate is attached at <u>Appendix 3</u> . The Risk Register was reviewed and updated with the Assistant Directors and Director of AHC on 5 July 2025.		
2.3	Within the AHC Directorate Risk Register, 6 risks have been identified. All 6 risks have an amber residual risk rating. These risks cover a range of service areas and functions.		

	The AHC Risk Register will be updated on a quarterly by the Directorate Management Team and considered by the Audit Committee annually.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	<i>Proposal initiating consultation</i> Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐ <i>Rationale:</i> Consultation not required.
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☐
7.0	Appendices

	Appendix 1: Summary Sheet – Corporate Risk Register – July 2025 Appendix 2: Corporate Risk Register – July 2025 Appendix 3: Summary Sheet – AHC Directorate Risk Register – July 2025 Appendix 4: AHC Directorate Risk Register – July 2025
8.0	Background Documents
	None

NMDOC Corporate Risk Register Cover Sheet - July 2025

May-25 Jul-25

Risk	Description	Risk Owner(s)	Gross Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	Revised Residual Risk Score	Comments
CR01	Failure to deliver the capital investment programme for the District	SMT Carlaín Boyd	26	20	20	Residual risk score remains unchanged. Action updated in relation to Council continuing to engage with DfE and BODD partners to consider next steps and exploring the opportunity to have a project within Kibronney Forest Park.
CR02	Non-compliance with legislative requirements, including the Procurement Act 2023	Josephine Kelly Sinead Murphy	25	20	20	Risk score remains unchanged. Actions have been updated and training in relation to the Procurement Act 2023 has now been completed.
CR03	Failure to effectively manage waste	Sinead Murphy	25	20	20	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
CR04	Failure to provide robust and timely planning decisions	Conor Mallon	25	20	20	Residual risk score remains unchanged. Potential root causes have been updated and a further update on the possibility of a Higher Level Apprenticeship Scheme being development in consultation with the Department and other Councils. 2024/25 statistics have also been included.
CR05	Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements	Marie Ward Josephine Kelly	30	16	16	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR06	Failure to adequately react to a major incident which would minimise any negative consequences/impact	SMT Sinead Traynor	25	8	8	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR07	Failure to implement an economic development programme to regenerate the district	Marie Ward Conor Mallon	30	16	16	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR08	Failure to manage sickness absence resulting in delays and an inability to deliver Council services.	Senior Management Team	25	20	20	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated. Work has commenced on delivery a H&WB survey, including stress risk assessment in 2025. There has been a decrease in days lost due to sickness in 2024/25 when compared with 2023/24.
CR09	Risk to the long term financial stability of Council in relation to the delivery of Council Services	Senior Management Team, Gerard Byrne	25	20	20	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated. Two new actions in relation to the establishment of a Reserves Policy for Council and also the development of a business case for a new finance solution.
CR10	Failure to effectively plan for and manage a cyber security attack.	Josephine Kelly Gavin Ringland	26	20	20	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated. Risk also considered at the IT Programme Group in July 2025.
CR11	Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery	Senior Management Team	25	15	15	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR12	Insufficient staff resources to deliver Council services in an effective and efficient manner	Marie Ward Josephine Kelly	30	16	16	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated. New action in relation to the possibility of a HIA scheme for planners going forward.

Key Controls Identified

1. Asset Management Strategy in Place to identify surplus assets

1. Capital Projects Procedure - June 2024

1. Monthly review of spend against budget

1. Outline and then Strategic Businesses cases for all significant projects

1. Pre-Qualification Questionnaire criteria strengthened for Suppliers

1. Professionally qualified and experienced staff

2 Project risk register in place for major projects

2. Capital Plan annually approved at Council

2. Funding Agreements and Contracts for Funding when applicable

2. Large projects are project managed by external consultants who report to the Estates Team.

2. Monthly site progress meetings which are minuted

2. Multi Year Capital Plan

2. Project and Programme Boards for significant capital projects

2. Strategic Finance Working Group scrutinises each Capital Project

3. Gateway Reviews

3. Internal Audit of Project Governance received SA 2022/23.

Action Plans

Action Plans	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
BRCD funding going forward	On the 13 September 2024 the UK government announced that it was pausing funding of City Deals in Northern Ireland. On the 16 September 2024, The Secretary of State confirmed that following communication with HM Treasury nothing has changed on the status of the Belfast Region City Deal, which was signed back in December 2021.	In Progress	Senior Management Team	7/31/2025	The Belfast Region City Deal was signed in December 2021 and unlocks £1 billion of transformative co-investment. OBCs for NMD projects have been approved by BRCD Board and relevant Government Departments. Contracts for funding and funding agreements have been progressed. Progress ongoing on project delivery, based on stage of development of each. The estimates for MRPI/Loan payments over the life of our capital Programme as part of the 2025/26 Rate Process is now complete. Finance Team to meet with Capital Team Project Managers early in Q2 2025/26 to get an updated on projected Capital Spend versus budget for 2025/26. Council will continue to engage with DfE and BRCD partners to consider next steps and are exploring the opportunity to have a project within Killybeggs Forest Park.
Capital Plan Cash Flow forecasting	Ongoing forecasting dependent on progress in capital projects	In Progress	Gerard Byrne	8/31/2025	The guidance notes and templates have been released by Central Government. The Procurement Policy has been been updated and SIB have been engaged to provide Procurement Advice. The Council will be moving to E-TendersNI. Procurement Act Training has been completed in May & June 2025. Additional resource has been sought to assist the team as well as additional capacity to assist with tender specification advice in S&E and AHC.
Mourne Mountain Gateway Project	Following the announcement of the National Trust on 1 May 2025, refusing the lease at Thomas Quarry - urgent meetings have taken place with Council, DfE, TNI and BRCD partners. The Procurement Act 2023 became law on Monday 24 February 2025. Has a significant impact on capital projects, when the projects span old and new regulations/laws.	In Progress	Senior Management Team	8/31/2025	
Procurement Act 2023		In Progress	Josephine Kelly	9/30/2026	

Risk CR. 02 - Non-compliance with legislative requirements, including the Procurement Act 2023

Risk	Probability					Consequence	Risk Categories	Risk Description	Potential Root Cause
	5	4	3	2	1				
								Business operational/reputational Impact on individuals (staff or public) Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)	
								Failure to have the necessary policies and procedures in place with staff adequately trained to ensure legislative compliance. This includes complying with Procurement legislation, health and safety / fire risk assessments / Asbestos and Legionella best practice and statutory requirements.	
								Council not having adequate insurance cover.	
								Failure to understand and meet legal requirements in relation to Health and Safety, Information Management, Rural Needs, Disability, Section 75, Performance and Improvement and Safeguarding	
								Lack of resources and inadequate training provision.	
								Staff not complying with Council's procurement policy.	
								Procurement Act 2023 became law on 24 February 2025	
								Property and vehicle schedules not being up to date.	
								Absence of effective operational procedures and policies.	
								Fire Risk Assessments at Council buildings not being undertaken and actions not being implemented and managed.	
								Unforeseen events and public negligence/lack of responsibility.	
								FRA / Legionella / Asbestos etc (are not being reviewed due to front line services being provided).	
								Non-compliance leading to prosecution	
								Personal liability / Corporate Manslaughter	
								Risk of a fatality at a Council site	
								Reputational damage	
								Reduced trust and public confidence	
								Increased number of complaints and queries	
								Increased insurance premiums	
								Loss of income	
								Josephine Kelly; Sinead Murphy	
								Red 25	Last Review 7/22/2025
								Red 20	Next Review 9/9/2025
								Yellow 8	Risk Appetite Risk Averse

Objectives

7. Deliver sustainable services

Key Controls Identified

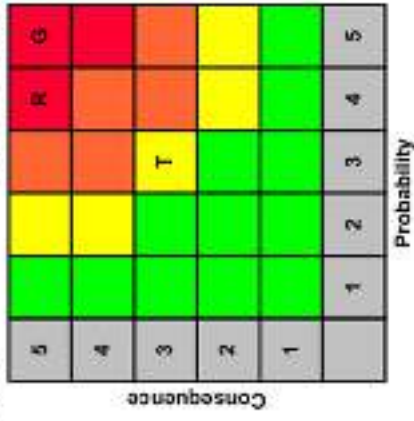
1. Asbestos and Legionella Policies and Management Plans in place
1. Dedicated skilled teams in place for:
 - Health and Safety, HR, Legal and Procurement
1. Health and Safety Committees in place and ongoing programme of training in place
1. Policies and procedures in place - La H&S Policy, Procurement Policy, Access to Information, Capital Projects etc
1. Procurement training rolled out to all relevant staff
2. Compliance Reporting to SMT and H&S Committees
2. Procurement a standing agenda item at Councils Audit Committee
3. Internal Audit 2023-24 - compliance checking - facilities review(considering fire risk, asbestos and Legionella)
3. Internal Audit for Community Centres scheduled for 2025-26
3. Internal Audit for Information governance scheduled for 2025-26
3. Internal Audit proposed for Feb 2024-25 on Procurement
3. Internal Audits Completed and Scheduled going forward annually.

Action Plans

Action Plans	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Actions from Fire Risk Assessment Audits	The actions from the Fire Risk Assessments which have been completed need to be actioned as soon as possible for all Council properties by the Facilities Management and Maintenance Department.	In Progress	Conor Sage	9/30/2025	The current level of risk regarding fire risks in our buildings is considered Low. The Fire Policy was approved and effective since 12th March 2020 and is now overdue for review, this will be presented at CMT/SMT in Q2 25/26. The associated Fire Safety Management Plan requires progressing. The priority is to seek agreement on a Fire Safety Management Plan which will guide future control of this risk. The Council has appointed a Council wide Contractor/s to undertake annual inspections of fire alarms and firefighting equipment. Fire alarms inspections are likely to highlight a programme of work to upgrade some systems. A Supplier has now been appointed for a new Fire alarm maintenance contract. Fire Risk assessment programme is in place, Facility Managers are responsible for updating the risk control plans and adding any required remedial works requests to the FM Portal. The Council's Building Maintenance team continue to address remedial work as required. An external review has been undertaken and an independent Report from provided to Council. There has been an initial meeting of Directors of Corporate Services, Sustainability and Environment and Active Healthy Communities.
Advisory Internal Audit Review - Health and Safety	Implement the 30 recommendations arising from the internal audit review of Health and Safety	In Progress	Josephine Kelly Sinead Murphy	9/1/2025	

Asbestos Policy and Management Plans	Implementation of Asbestos Policies and Management Plans	In Progress	Conor Sage	7/31/2025	The current level of risk for asbestos, is considered medium. Asbestos Management Policy is now due for review and will be presented to CMT/SMT in Q2 25/26. RFQ has been completed for a 1-Year contract to deliver asbestos management surveys. Programme commenced in Q1 25/26 and is nearing completion. E-learning is regularly promoted throughout the Organisation and will continue through the year. The number of mandatory e-learning training courses has been increased to 12% employee. The overall compliance rate was 62% as at 31 December 2024 a significant improvement in comparison with previous years. Action plan now in place to implement recommendations
E-Learning Training	E-Learning training to be promoted throughout the organisation as take up is low - this is particularly relevant to mandatory training sessions.	In Progress	Marina Hughes	7/31/2025	
Internal Audit - Compliance checking – facilities review (considering fire risk, asbestos and legionella checking)	Implement recommendations outlined in the limited assurance internal audit which was finalised in May 2024	In Progress	Conor Sage Senior Management Team	7/31/2025	
Internal Audit - Contract management	Implement recommendations from the limit assurance Internal Audit which was finalised in May 2024	In Progress	Caolain Boyd Senior Management Team	7/31/2025	Procurement Policy has been updated in line with the new legislation. Directors bring procurement actions plans to the Audit Committee Quarterly. STAs also reported to Audit Committee quarterly. The current level of risk for legionella is considered Medium.
Legionella Policy and Management Plan	Implementation of Legionella Policies and Management Plans	In Progress	Conor Sage	9/30/2025	A new contract for Water Hygiene services has been awarded. Water monitoring programme is in place in accordance with L8/HSG 274. A prioritised programme of risk assessments is underway. Legionella Policy has been updated and approved at Council. The Legionella Management Plan has been updated and approved at CMT/SMT. Business Case for a mechanical works contractor was approved at SE committee in December 2024 to address legionella risk assessment remedial works. Expression of interest has been issued through a framework and Tender Documents have been issued. Procurement Policy has been updated and social value has been included. The supporting procedures are being updated and staff training has been completed.
Social Procurement Policy	Council to consider bringing in a social procurement policy following the guidance issued by the Minister of Finance in June 2021.	In Progress	Caolain Boyd Josephine Kelly	9/30/2025	

Risk CR. 03 - Failure to effectively manage waste



Risk Categories	Buildings / Engineering / Environment Quality of Service Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)
Risk Description	Failure to effectively manage waste
Potential Root Cause	Industrial dispute lodged by the Trade Unions Insufficient resources (particularly availability of HGV drivers) Market forces enable commercial operators to increase prices (MDR) Failure to plan effectively for the future (including financial planning) Historic contract arrangements which may not be providing the Council with VFM Future changes to waste management arrangements Structure of new contracts to process & dispose of our waste to reflect changes in legislation Operation of the ARC21 Corporate Body going forward
Consequence	Failure to meet recycling Targets Reputational Issues Lower levels of customer satisfaction Impact on service delivery and lost productivity

Risk Owners	Sinead Murphy
Gross/Inherent Risk	Red 25
Residual Risk	Red 20
Target Risk Level	Yellow 9
Last Review	7/22/2025
Next Review	8/9/2025
Risk Appetite	Risk Cautious

Objectives

- 2. Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district
- 7. Deliver sustainable services

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Contingency Plans in place
- 1. Long term Waste Strategic Plan in place
- 1. Partnership working with key stakeholders
- 3. Internal Audit carried out for Fleet Management in February 2025
- 3. Internal Audit Scheduled for Waste Management contracts for 2025-26
- 3. Internal Audit carried out for Fleet and Asset Management in February 2025

Action Plans

Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
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arc21 Waste Management Group	Following the May 2022 refusal to grant arc21 planning permission for their residual waste project and the requirement to recycle 70% by 2030 as per the Climate Change Bill and the Circular Economy package coupled with governance and internal issues within arc21 the long term viability of the group is under consideration. arc21 continue with the appeal process against the refused planning application. SOLACE have engaged SIB to undertake a review of waste management arrangements across the 11 Councils to consider future collaboration in contract management, changing legislation and emerging policies.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy	9/30/2025	Arc21 are carrying out their own strategic review. NM&D have had an opportunity to input. Consideration needs to be given as to how the Council would participate in any successor body to arc21. Awaiting conclusion of SOLACE review on future collaboration of NI Councils on waste management.
Internal Waste Management Planning	Council waste management planning is driven by a number of internal and external factors including the introduction of legislation such as the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, Extended Producer Responsibility, Deposit Return Scheme and Common Collection Systems.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Sinead Trainor	9/30/2025	Ongoing but action remains. There have been delays to the publication of the response to the DAERA consultation 'Rethinking Resources' and to the introduction of Deposit Return Scheme. It is anticipated that DAERA will publish the consultation response in Q2 2025/26. Council have been informed of the indicative payments to be received in the 2025/26 for the packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) legislation and are considering best way forward to achieve required efficiency and effectiveness.
Operators Licence	Internal Audit carried out a review of the progress in implementing TRU and FTA recommendations in October 2019. A further review took place during November/December 2020 which has provisionally highlighted that limited progress has been made in implementing a number of recommendations from the 2019 audit.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage	7/31/2025	A consolidated action plan in relation to compliance to the Council's Operators Licence (OL) was presented to SE Committee in November 2022. A further update on compliance was provided in June 2023 showing good progress towards full implementation of actions and ongoing compliance. Staffing issues are being addressed and the Head of Cleansing has been seconded as interim Head of Fleet. Further operators license COTC holders trained and named on the OL. A further follow up Audit by RHA for 2023/24 also demonstrated positive progress and the Transport Regulation Unit is being regularly informed of progress. KPIs for compliance targets are reported to Operator Licence Working Group on a monthly basis. In November 2024 a further audit was completed by RHA. Updated will be provided against the recommendations in due course. Councils Operators Licence was renewed in February 2025 by TRU.
Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR)	pEPR funding is intended to pay for the costs Local Authorities incur in managing packaging waste but this funding is not ring fenced.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy	12/1/2025	A report will be brought to Committee setting out proposals for waste transformation projects in 2025/26 and going forward.

Waste Management Plan	The Waste Management Plan is organised by ARC 21. The Council is required to feed into and approve ARC 21s Waste Management Plan.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy	8/31/2025	A initial review of the arc21 Waste Management Plan (which includes NMDDC) has been completed by WRAP on behalf of DAERA/NIEA. Technical expertise (RPS) has been procured to produce an Addendum for the Plan as part of the six yearly review. arc21 WMP is currently out for public consultation. DAERA are yet to consult on a draft Waste Management Strategy for NI which was due by the end of 2023; the publication of which would better inform the Councils Waste Management Plans. The Waste Management Strategy has been delayed.
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Risk CR. 04 - Failure to provide robust and timely planning decisions

Risk	Consequence					Probability
	5	4	3	2	1	
Risk Categories						
Risk Description						
Potential Root Cause						
Consequence						
Risk Owners						
Gross/Inherent Risk						
Residual Risk						
Target Risk Level						
Business operational/reputational Financial Quality of Service Failure to provide robust and timely planning decisions Difficulties with recruitment and retention of staff Planning Legislation not being followed High Volume of planning applications combined with many which are of poor quality Delays in responses from statutory consultees Litigation and financial costs Reputational issues Lower levels of customer satisfaction Impact on service delivery and lost productivity Financial implications resulting in budget constraints Failure to achieve the statutory standards around local / major planning applications and enforcement cases						
Conor Mallon; Jonathan McGilly						
Last Review 7/22/2025						
Next Review 9/9/2025						
Risk Appetite Risk Open						

Objectives

- 3. Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future
- 6. Develop and revitalise our district

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Action plan in place to reduce backlog
- 1. Ongoing training for officers and members
- 2. Dedicated Planning Committee in operation
- 2. Local Development Plan developed and timetable agreed
- 2. Quarterly report to Committee on progress against action plan
- 2. Scheme of Delegation in place to facilitate timely planning decisions
- 2. Validation check list agreed at Feb 25 Planning Committee, to be implemented following consultation and engagement ap
- 3. Internal Audit on Management of Planning Applications scheduled for 2025-26
- 3. An advisory audit on Planning - Review of Overturned Decisions was carried out in May 2024

Action Plans

Action Plans	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Backlog cases	Implement action plan to reduce backlog in line with timeframe set	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	8/31/2025	During 2024-25, Council received 1,141 local planning applications which is the third highest across Northern Ireland. The processing time for local planning applications increased from 33.7 weeks in 2023-24 to 45.2 weeks in 2024-25 which is above the regional average of 19.0 weeks and exceeds the statutory standard of <15 weeks. During 2024-25, Council received fourteen major planning applications, six more applications than what was received in 2023-24. The processing time for major planning applications decreased from 154.8 weeks in 2023-24 to 29.6 weeks in 2024-25 which was the highest decrease in processing times recorded across all 11 Councils. It is below the regional average of 39.8 weeks and is within the statutory standard of <30 weeks. In 2024-25 there were 263 enforcement cases opened, representing an increase of 5.2% compared to the 250 cases opened in 2023-24. Audit is now complete and presented to Audit Committee. Action Plan agreed with Planning Committee in July and currently being implemented. Training for Members was held in July 2024 and Programme of training currently being developed. Revised work plan to be tabled at May Planning Committee and training for members to take place in June/July 2025 after Council AGM. This will be for new members and refresher training for existing members Council are liaising with the Department about the possibility of a graduate recruitment Programme going forward. Recruitment for Senior Officers will be rerun in May 2025 after an unsuccessful trial in March 2025. Further recruitment plans are programmed with HR to establish reserve list for all other post as these have now been exhausted. Further work has commenced with the Department and other Councils in relation to the establishment of the High Level Apprenticeship scheme for planning.
Internal Review of overturn decisions	Council will undertake a review/audit of overturn decisions - this is based on the NIAO Public Accounts Committee report on Planning decisions across Councils in NI	In Progress	Conor Mallon Jonathan McGilly	7/31/2025	
Recruitment Drive For Planners	Council want to ensure that there is an adequate number of planner going forward and to ensure there is a career path available for students.	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	8/31/2025	
Regional Planning Review	The Public Accounts Committee issued a regional report on Planning in Northern Ireland on 24 March 2022.	In Progress	Conor Mallon	7/31/2025	Performance improvement plan has been developed covering key areas of Planning. This was agreed between DfI and Councils and has involved engagement with PAC. This work is managed by Head of Planning group and is reported on to SOLACE and wider partnership groups involving DfI, PAC and Solace. This work remains ongoing and following recent discussions SOLACE has requested additional actions be added to the work plan including more engagement with PAC etc, this has been agreed by DfI and work has commenced to review and revise PIP objectives in line with recent engagement with DfI and SOLACE.

Risk CR. 05 - Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements

Risk	Consequence					Probability
	5	4	3	2	1	
Risk Categories	Business operational/reputational Financial Impact on individuals (staff or public) Quality of Service					
Risk Description	Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements					
Potential Root Cause	Difficulty recruiting key positions in Council. Corporate efficiency projects and other improvement activities are not currently joined-up with wider transformational activity The Council is currently unable to track the realisation of benefits (financial or non-financial) arising from investment in new IT systems (i.e. Legend) A lack of corporate capacity currently exists to support transformational activity The overall affordability of the Councils long term plans considering: Cost of Living Crisis / inflation / pay demands. Legacy HR systems are not providing management with timely and detailed information					
Consequence	Not promoting a single corporate identity The budget situation will continue to get worse (salaries and wages) therefore not providing VFM Our ability to provide citizens / customers with the services they require will be significantly constrained We will potentially lag behind other Councils & other public sector organisations					
Risk Owners	Josephine Kelly; Marie Ward					
Gross/Inherent Risk	Red 20					Last Review 7/22/2025
Residual Risk	Amber 16					Next Review 9/9/2025
Target Risk Level	Yellow 9					Risk Appetite Risk Hungry

Objectives

- 7. Deliver sustainable services

Key Controls Identified

- 1. PFF now complete
- 2. IT Project Group in place and meets regularly
- 2. IT Strategy in place
- 3. Internal Audit carried out in 2024-25 on User Access Management

Action Plans					
	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Digital Strategy	Digital Strategy action plan is being developed.	In Progress	Veronica Keegan	8/31/2025	The Digital Strategy has been approved by Council. A Priority Plan of new digital transformation projects is being developed with further workshops with SMT / CMT in Q2 2025/26.
New HR System	New Self Service Human Resource Management system to be procured	In Progress	Marina Hughes Josephine Kelly Carol McClean	8/31/2025	The Business Case for the procurement of new systems has been reviewed following changes to the eLearning system and OH provider changes. The business case has been considered and approved by ITPG. Specifications are currently being developed prior to procurement.
Service Reviews	Service Reviews are currently being completed across Directorate in line with paper which was approved at SP&R	In Progress	Senior Management Team	7/31/2025	A draft action plan / timetable of service reviews has been provided to the Trade Unions as part of the agreement to the current dispute. Work is progressing. Service areas and HR continue to work together to ensure resources are appropriately directed to undertake the work required for Service/Structure Reviews.

Action Plans

Action Plans	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Documenting Business Continuity Plans Northern Ireland Emergency Planning Structures Risk Assessments	BCPs to be documented for each Service Area Officers will continue to attend and contribute to the NI Emergency Planning Structures. A review of all Council Risk Assessments currently in place and a review of all Officers who have been trained in IOSH	In Progress In Progress In Progress	Sinead Trainor Senior Management Team Sinead Trainor	9/30/2025 4/1/2026 12/1/2025	Revision of all Departmental BCP's is continuing into 2025/26 Council continued to be represented at NIEPS were any upcoming incidents are discussed. Information is currently being collated through Councils Corporate Management Team. IOSH training and risk assessment workshops have now completed by staff across the organisation. Departments are now reviewing and implementing risk assessments. Corporate compliance dashboard to be developed to give SMT assurance on status of H&S compliance. A new cross border scenario planning event is being coordinated via SEPG. The scenario is scheduled for SMT and CMT for Q2 2025.
Scenario Planning	A new scenario planning event to take place	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	7/31/2025	

Risk CR. 07 - Failure to implement an economic development programme to regenerate the district and attract inward investment

Risk	Consequence					Probability		
	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3
	Risk Categories					Risk Description		
	Potential Root Cause					Impact of the City Deal		
						Impact on individuals (staff or public) Quality of Service		
						Failure to implement an economic development programme to regenerate the district and attract inward investment		
						Failure to engage stakeholders (public and private sector) Inflationary pressures and higher interest rates. FFNI/DFFF - NMDDC is lead Council with operations team - increased risk		
						National Trust no longer granting a lease at Thomas Quarry The weakness in sterling driving inflation expectations higher Issues around the Windsor Framework including: -Loss of EU funding -Disruption of food and medical supplies -Changes in regulations, border controls, cross border trade and movement of goods and people -Uncertainty amongst the business community in relation to food standards, trading standards and exports -Lack of employees with the required expertise and experience, eg Environmental Health Officers		
						Lack of investment in the District and lower levels of economic activity Lack of confidence from the private sector Some services, which were funded externally, not being delivered Lack of leadership and direction from the NI Executive and UK Government Inadequate levels of service provision		
						Conor Mallon, Marie Ward		
						Red 20		
						Amber 18		
						Yellow 9		
						Last Review 7/22/2025		
						Next Review 9/9/2025		
						Risk Appetite Risk Hungry		

Objectives

- 1. Support the continued growth and development of our local economy
- 4. Support regenerative tourism opportunities which promote our culture, heritage and environment
- 6. Develop and revitalise our district
- 7. Deliver sustainable services

Key Controls Identified

- 1. FFNI Digital Transformation Projects underway
- 1. Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2020-25 in place
- 2. Establishment of Local Economic Partnership including public and private sector stakeholders
- 2. Engagement with other Councils, other Departments, NILGA and the Private Sector through the Chamber of Commerce
- 3. Internal Audit on Economic Development and Inward Investment scheduled for 2025-26
- 3. Internal Audit on Review of Labour Market Partnership completed in Feb 2024 - Assurance Rating Satisfactory
- 3. Internal Audits Completed and Scheduled going forward - including the Enhanced Flood Support Scheme grant

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
City Deals	Actively engage in Belfast Region City Deal	In Progress	Conor Mallon Marie Ward	8/31/2025	The Belfast Region City Deal was signed in December 2021 and unlocks £1 billion of transformative co-investment. OBCs for NMD projects have been approved by BRCD Board and relevant Government Departments. Contracts for funding and funding agreements have been progressed. Progress ongoing on project delivery, based on stage of development of each of project. With the announcement of the National Trust on 1 May 2025 in relation to the National Trust not granting a lease at Thomas Quay - urgent meetings have taken place with BRCD, Government Officials and other stakeholders. Council will continue to engage and are exploring the opportunity to have a project within Kilbroney Forest Park.

Full Fibre Network NI (FFNI)	Delivery of Digital Infrastructure and Digital Related projects under the FFNI Consortium / NMDDC	In Progress	Conor Mallon Amanda Smyth	7/31/2025	Digital Transformation Flexible Fund: FFNI Operations team responsible for centralised implementation and delivery of this programme across all Council areas. Total value of funding £7.5m from the Complementary fund and DAERA (£1.1M). NMDDC is the lead Council for this project under FFNI. Invest NI is the Investment Decision Maker. March 2025 - 4/7 funding calls were completed.
					BRCD Digital Pillar projects including proposed Regional Innovation Hub for NMDDC. Approval to progress OCB, to be completed by Sept 25.
					Mobile Action Plan: FFNI appointed by Solace as lead for all Councils Digital Champions. FFNI operations lead and project officer currently appointed as Digital Champion and Coordinator in respect of the Mobile Action Plan.
					LFFNI RGC - Ongoing benefits realisation and management information tracking of DCMS funded fibre installed across 887 public sector sites in Northern Ireland. Data is required to be monitored for 5 years as per DCSM grant agreement. IT Department are currently engaging 3rd parties to put the fibre into use.
Provide Flood Recovery Support to Local businesses in impacted areas of the District	Administering funding provided by UK Treasury for Businesses impacted by flooding in November 2023	In Progress	Conor Mallon Amanda Smyth	8/31/2025	Following the floods across the District, Council hosted LPS workshops for businesses online to provide information on rate relief. Council organised 3 business information clinics (Newry, Downpatrick and Furrybridge). 114 were paid out. See position as at 30 June 2025: - Enhanced Flood Scheme - 105 applications. 87 LoOs issued - at Value £4,716,055.71 - Hardship Scheme - 59 Applications. 49 LoOs issued - at Value £162,000
Support local businesses	The Council is also providing support, advice and guidance to local businesses as they anticipate and manage the changes associated with Brexit.	In Progress	Amanda Smyth	7/31/2025	NMDDC is a delivery partner for Go Succeed, the NI business support programme offering mentoring support to businesses in specialised areas, i.e. Brexit / Windsor framework. Council is also recognising the opportunity as positioning the district from an investment perspective as having unfettered access to both UK and EU markets. Required checks are being completed at Warrentpoint Port on an on-going basis by trained and authorised staff. Regular meetings are attended with relevant partners, DAERA, Dftra, FSA, Border force, Seatruck, Warrentpoint Port, to continue to share learning and work through operational issues as they arise, including the implementation of the Windsor Framework. Funding is continuing to be provided through the FSA. Council have recently submitted a 25/26 funding bid to the FSA for the provision of this service.
Warrentpoint Port	To ensure efficient delivery of statutory required of food import checks on relevant Agri-Food goods entering Northern Ireland at Warrentpoint port	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Sinead Trainor	7/31/2025	

Action Plans

Action Plan Description		Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Health and Wellbeing Initiatives	Annual schedule of Health and Wellbeing Initiatives events & Stress Audit planned	In Progress	Josephine Kelly Sinead Murphy	7/31/2025	The Health and Wellbeing Working Group (HWWG) have delivered a number of H & WB events throughout the year, which coincide with an annual calendar of events, including Nil Alcohol Awareness Week, Men's Health Week, Staff Volunteer day and issue Newsletters to promote H & WB among staff. A schedule of events for 2025/26 is under development. The HWWG will also deliver a H&WB survey, including stress risk assessment in 2025 which will support the development of an action plan going forward. Work has commenced on this and engagement with the HSE NI.
Return to Work interviews	The completion rate of RTW is very low presently.	In Progress	Marina Hughes	7/31/2025	There has been a significant improvement in the level of outstanding RTW meetings. HR will continue to provide management responsibility. SMT & CMT ensure compliance in their areas of responsibility. The attendance management audit (December 2023) provided satisfactory assurance. Agreed actions have progressed and will continue into 25/26. The outstanding RTW meeting report has been updated and the RTW meetings process for long term absence is under review and mandatory training is being developed for managers.
Training	All Managers must complete Managing Attendance training on the Councils e-learning platform	In Progress	Marina Hughes	7/31/2025	The attendance management audit (December 2023) provided satisfactory assurance. Actions relating to mandatory attendance management training and refresher training was agreed. HR will work with Skilgate to establish robust processes which contribute to reduction in sickness absence durations. Phase 2 roll out will include mandatory manager training. It is anticipated that the system will be capability will be available from Q1 2025/26. In the interim line managers are still be referred to the attendance management module on Skilgate and HR are providing one to one support for line managers. Further line management guidance will be circulated shortly.

Risk CR. 09 - Risk to the long term financial stability of Council in relation to the delivery of Council Services

Consequence						Probability
5				R	G	
4						
3			T			
2						
1						
	1	2	3	4	5	

Risk Categories	Business operational/reputational Financial Quality of Service Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)
Risk Description	Risk to the long term financial stability of Council in relation to the delivery of Council Services
Potential Root Cause	Pay Pressures - Regional and Local National Insurance Employer Contributions rise is a recurring cost from 1 April 2025 Central Government Funding Cuts - Animal Welfare / Communities etc Erosion of Rate Support Grant since LG reform Inflation and higher interest rates and utility costs Central Government Budget not known prior to striking the rate Capital Programme affordability and availability of funding Risk to Council Rates Income and volatility of our ratebase Impact of potential changes as to how rates are calculated (Uniform Business Rate Review) Impact of the Windsor Framework going forward
Consequence	Council income reducing Going concern issues Large Increase in District Rate going forward - negative publicity Council Reserves reducing to inadequate levels Social impact - economic inequality and increased risk factor for poor mental health
Risk Owners	Gerard Byrne, Senior Management Team
Gross/Inherent Risk	Red 25
Residual Risk	Red 20
Target Risk Level	Yellow 9
	Last Review 7/22/2025
	Next Review 9/9/2025
	Risk Appetite Risk Open

- Objectives**
- 1. Support the continued growth and development of our local economy
 - 2. Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district
 - 3. Develop and revitalise our district
 - 4. Deliver sustainable services
 - 5. Represent the voice of the district with our partners

Key Controls Identified

1. Monthly Management Accounts completed by Finance
1. Quarterly Management Accounts to Committee - AD Variance Analysis
2. Engagement with ALGFO and FWG ongoing quarterly
2. Quarterly Budget meetings in place with Directorate Teams
2. Service and Business plans now in place
2. Treasury Management expert contracted by all 11 Councils
3. Internal Audit completed in 2023-24 on Management accounts processes given a satisfactory assurance rating
3. Internal Audits Completed and Scheduled going forward
3. Statutory Financial Audit by NI Audit Office

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
New Finance Solution	Council to procure an up to date finance solution which will better aid decision making and reporting going forward.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne	9/30/2025	Initial project mandate approved by ITPG on the 22 July 2025. Full Business Case to be developed and present to ITPG, before going to SP&R for approval.
Rates Support Grant	Director of Corporate Services to write to the Minister of Communities about the reduction of the Rates Support Grant	In Progress	Josephine Kelly	8/31/2025	Independent review of the Rates Support Grant is nearing completion and report is due in 2025. As per action from SP&R, Council wrote to the Minister for Communities on the 12 September 2024 to express concern in relation to the RSG reduction and the impact for Council and Ratepayers. A Reserves Policy will be brought to the August SP&R Committee for approval. The document will determine Council's policy in relation maintaining its financial reserves and funds to allow proper financial planning and ensure adequate financial resilience.
Reserves Policy	A reserves policy to be drafted and approved by Council.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne	8/31/2025	While we closely monitor market conditions, we are meeting with our Treasury Advisors in relation to our current Banking and Money Market arrangements. Further Meetings will take place as they year progresses.
Treasury Advice - Banking	All 11 Councils receive weekly updated from our Treasury Management Expert in relation to banking and lending.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne	9/30/2025	CEO attends Solace who have direct engagement with the Permanent Secretaries Group. AD of Finance & performance attends the Council wide Finance Working Group (FWG) and Association of Local Government Finance Officers (ALGFO). Partnership Panel also meet with Ministers as required.
Working Groups	Multiple Officer groups discussing these financial concerns on a regular basis.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne Senior Management Team	9/30/2025	Management also meet with our Treasury Advisors on a regular basis to get an overview of the economic situation on a global scale - i.e. interest rates / borrowing etc Officers will continue to attend and input into the above groups.

Risk CR. 10 - Failure to effectively plan for and manage a Cyber Security Attack

Risk	Consequence					Probability	Risk Categories	Risk Description	Potential Root Cause	Consequence
	5	4	3	2	1					
								Business operational/reputational Impact on individuals (staff or public) Quality of Service		
								Risk of a cyber security event causing significant operational, financial and reputational damage to the Council		
								Cyber attack		
								Lack of specialist/dedicated in-house resource		
								Lack of staff compliance with IT training		
								Accidental breach of security		
								Breach of people, process, physical or technical controls		
								Failure to respond to and recover from a cyber incident within, or impacting upon, Council		
								Lack of skills and competences		
								System vulnerabilities		
								Supply chain breach		
								Threat to availability, integrity and confidentiality of Council information and systems		
								Failure to deliver Council services (including statutory and regulatory services)		
								Financial loss		
								Reputational damage		
								Extended period to recover services to Business as Usual (BAU)		
								Destruction of systems and data		
								Theft of data for criminal use		
								Political impact		
								Environmental impact		
								Veronica Keegan; Josephine Kelly; Gavin Ringland		
								Last Review		7/22/2025
								Red 25		
								Next Review		9/9/2025
								Red 20		
								Risk Appetite		Risk Averse
								Yellow 9		
								Gross/Inherent Risk		
								Residual Risk		
								Target Risk Level		

Objectives

- 7. Deliver sustainable services

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Agile working policy now in operation from 12 September 2022
- 1. Back up arrangements
 - 1. Business Continuity Scenario Planning
 - 1. Participation in threat intelligence networks
 - 1. Penetration testing and vulnerability scanning
 - 1. Phishing simulation and learning exercises
 - 1. Technical security controls and arrangements
- 2. Engagement with Cyber bodies
- 2. National Cyber Security training
- 3. Internal Audit carried out in 2024-25 on User Access Management with a Limited Assurance Rating

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Business Continuity Plans	BCP plans to be updated to reflect the cyber risk	In Progress	Gavin Ringland Sinead Trainor	7/31/2025	CMT to ensure that BCPs for each service area are in existence, regularly reviewed and tested where possible/appropriate
Cyber Incident Response/Disaster Recovery	Establish and test cyber incident response and disaster recovery capabilities and implement SOC/SIEM/XDR Service	In Progress	Gavin Ringland	7/31/2025	Worst Case Scenario (WCS) testing was undertaken in November 2024. Testing was successfully completed within an isolated bubble exceeding Recovery Time (RTO) and Recovery Point (RPO) objectives. The Disaster Recovery run book has been finalised and accepted into operation. An overarching Cyber Incident Responses plan will be formalised through the SOC/SIEM/XDR service that will be implemented during Q3 2025/26.
Training / Development Plans	Training to increase User Resilience	In Progress	Gavin Ringland	7/31/2025	In person training was delivered to all staff during 2023. On-going eLearning and testing campaigns are mandatory for all digital users with compliance reports issued to Line Managers and Corporate Management Team.
Upgrade Virtual Servers	Upgrade the Operating Systems, database engines and on-premise applications to latest supported and stable versions	In Progress	Gavin Ringland	7/31/2025	Supplier engagement and planning has commenced to migrate most of the server infrastructure underpinning the finance systems to modern Operating Systems and Database Engines. Some of said infrastructure will be decommissioned as new solutions are implemented utilising Software As A Service model. Work continues on the consolidation of data repositories to support an upgrade of the file servers.

Risk CR. 11 - Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery

Risk	Consequence					Probability				
	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5
Risk Categories	Business operational/reputational Impact on individuals (staff or public) Quality of Service					Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery				
Risk Description	In common with many sectors and employers across the UK, industrial unrest has become increasingly likely					Unresolved Legacy employment issues Current economic climate				
Potential Root Cause	Creation of uncertainty and instability Negative impact on service delivery and lost productivity Negative PR for the Council					Management & HR time lost to IR issues which impacts on operational and strategic matters being progressed Financial implications for Council where meeting the TU demands results in increased salary costs				
Consequence	Senior Management Team					Red 25				
Risk Owners	Red 25					Amber 15				
Gross/Inherent Risk	Yellow 10					Risk Appetite				
Residual Risk	7/22/2025					8/9/2025				
Target Risk Level	Risk Averse									

Objectives

- 2. Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district
- 7. Deliver sustainable services

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Detailed budgeting process in operation
- 1. Qualified HR, IT & Finance professionals in place
- 2. Agreement was reached between MS and JTUS on 28 February 2024
- 2. External Facilitator engaged
- 2. LRA Conciliation Process

Action Plans

Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Rebuilding the Industrial Relations (IR) Framework Agreement is in place between Management and the Joint Trade Unions, to work with an external facilitator, to rebuild the IR Framework and processes in NMDOC	In Progress	Josephine Kelly	7/31/2025	Agreement was reached between MS and JTUS on 28 February 2024. Work is at an advanced stage in relation to the Industrial Relations Framework and between MS and JTUS and an agreed Workplan will be finalised in due course.

Risk CR. 12 - Insufficient staff resources to deliver Council services in an effective and efficient manner

Risk	Consequence					Probability				
	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5
Risk Categories										
Risk Description										
Potential Root Cause										
Consequence										
Risk Owners										
Gross/Inherent Risk										
Residual Risk										
Target Risk Level										
Insufficient staff resources to deliver Council services in an effective and efficient manner										
There has been a difficulty in recruiting key positions in across Council. Another issue has been the retention of staff across all Directorates.										
Pay scales in private sector Competitive Job Market Candidates less likely to apply for temporary positions Labour Market Trends - decrease in unemployment and economic inactivity rate, Increase in employment rate and cross border mobility										
Our ability to provide citizens / customers with the services they require will be significantly constrained We will potentially lag behind other Councils & other public sector organisations Increased costs due to employing agency staff / consultants etc										
Josephine Kelly; Marie Ward										
Red 20										
Amber 18										
Amber 12										
Last Review 7/22/2025										
Next Review 9/9/2025										
Risk Appetite Risk Cautious										

Objectives

- 7. Deliver sustainable services

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Agency Framework in place
- 1. Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection
- 1. Qualified HR professionals in place
- 2. SMT review of recruitment schedule

Action Plans

Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Alternative methods of recruitment	In Progress	Marina Hughes	7/31/2025	This includes the Regional Approach in relation to the Talent Management Strategy which is overseen by the LG Staff Commission. NMDDC represented on and contributing to LGSC Regional Talent Management Group. Directors and Assistant Director posts as part of PFF has been filed, with one temporary Assistant Director position which will be progressed in 25/26. It should be noted that there are still challenges across the Directorates on a number of posts at different levels. Permission has been sought from the Local Government Staff Commission to deviate from the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, which includes a less formal approach to recruitment for manual posts and extension to the duration of reservice lists for recruitment campaigns. Engagement ongoing
Higher Level Apprenticeship Scheme - Planners Service Reviews	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly Senior Management Team	9/30/2025 7/31/2025	A draft action plan / timetable of service reviews has been provided to the Trade Unions as part of the agreement to the current dispute. Work is progressing, including the 'Cleansing Review', Indoor Leisure Multi Skilled Leisure Attendants and Planning staff changing from NICS to NMDDC terms and conditions. Service areas and HR continue to work together to ensure resources are appropriately directed to undertake the work required for Service/Structure Reviews.

NMDDC AHC Risk Register Cover Sheet - July 2025

Risk	Description	Risk Owner(s)	Gross Risk Score	Sep-24		Jul-25		Comments
				Revised Risk Score	Revised Risk Score	Revised Risk Score	Revised Risk Score	
AHC01	Failure to comply with relevant statutory and legislative requirements in AHC Council facilities	Andy Patterson Alison Robb Connor Hughes	25	15	15	15	15	Risk score remains unchanged. Actions have been updated.
AHC02	Fraud, theft and mismanagement of money, property and assets	Andy Patterson Alison Robb Conor Haughey	20	12	12	12	12	Risk score remains unchanged. Actions have been updated.
AHC03	Failure to enforce and comply with legislative requirements and statutory functions	Andy Patterson Alison Robb Conor Haughey	25	16	16	16	16	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
AHC04	Reduction in funding and/or income has an impact on service delivery	Andy Patterson Alison Robb Conor Haughey	20	16	16	16	16	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
AHC05	Failure to safeguard children/adults from the risk of harm including failing to comply with our statutory responsibilities	Andy Patterson Gary Scott	25	12	12	12	12	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
AHC06	Reduced participation in Community Engagement Programmes may have a negative impact on community cohesion across the District.	Andy Patterson Alison Robb	20	12	12	12	12	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.

Active and Healthy Communities Directorate

Risk 01. Failure to comply with relevant statutory and legislative requirements in AHC Council facilities

Risk	Consequence					Probability			Risk Rating			Risk Owners			Risk Mitigation		
	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5		Risk Owners	Gross/Inherent Risk	Residual Risk	Target Risk Level		
												Risk Description					
												Risk Categories					
												Potential Root Cause					
												Business operational/reputational impact on individuals (staff or public) Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)					
												This can include community centres / outstations / leisure centres (including swimming pools) / pitch facilities					
												Inadequate safety arrangements and non compliance with statutory requirements - eg fire, legionella and asbestos					
												Lone working					
												Lack of training / failure to follow operating procedures					
												Confrontation with public / threat of violence / aggression					
												Lack of supervision					
												Lack of awareness of policy and procedures					
												Lack of awareness/knowledge of this environment					
												Vehicle accident					
												Unforeseen event, eg, drowning					
												Impact of death/injury on those involved and employees					
												Reputational damage for the Council					
												Negative PR					
												Services not being delivered if Council facilities are closed for a period of time					
												Non compliance with statutory requirements / legislation and potential financial penalty					
												Potential litigation					
												Conor Haughey; Andy Patterson; Alison Robb					
												Gross/Inherent Risk		Last Review		5/7/2025	
												Residual Risk		Next Review		8/8/2025	
												Target Risk Level		Risk Appetite		Risk Averse	

Objectives

- 1. Promote increased levels of activity and develop targeted programmes to support improved health and wellbeing outcome
- 3. Create a strong base to engage, empower and build the capacity of local communities, ensuring their views inform the w

Key Controls Identified

- Accident Reporting Procedures in place
- Appropriate clothing for certain sites
- Assurance Statements
- Business Continuity Procedures
- Compliance Scorecards in place for all leisure facilities
- Corporate Health and Safety Policy and dedicated unit within the Council
- COSH-H
- Departmental Health and Safety Working Groups
- Facility Checklists
- Incident book maintained
- Leisure safe audits for independent reviews of facilities
- Licence and Insurance details kept for casual and essential vehicle users
- Lone working arrangements / Remote Working Policy
- NOPs/EAP's/PSOP/PTOP
- PPE
- Risk assessments of Council facilities
- SSOW
- Training for all employees

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Health and safety training	Continued delivery of the rolling programme for employees and volunteers at local community centres.	In Progress	Alison Robb	8/31/2025	The programme continues to be delivered, offering a range of courses including fire warden, first aid and defibrillator training. During 2024-25 Risk Assessments for all Community Facilities were reviewed and updated.
Roll out Leisure Safe accreditation across all leisure centres	Leisure Safe accreditation is in place at Newry Leisure Centre.	In Progress	Conor Haughey	8/31/2025	Two year cycle for Leisure Safe accreditation which were completed at Newry, Down, Newcastle, Killeel and Ballymore during 2022-23. Leisure Safe accreditation will conclude when compliance issues are resolved by S&E.
Statutory Compliance	Ensuring facilities compliance	In Progress	Conor Haughey Alison Robb	8/31/2025	Representing community and leisure services on corporate facilities management steering group to manage current risks within leisure and community facilities

Risk 02. Fraud, theft and mismanagement of money, property and assets

Risk	Consequence					Probability
	5	4	3	2	1	
Risk Categories	Business operational/reputational Financial Impact on individuals (staff or public)					
Risk Description	Fraud, theft and mismanagement of money including grant income and expenditure, property and assets					
Potential Root Cause	Poor governance Poor security/IT systems Failure to effectively implement internal audit recommendations Insufficient monitoring and spot checks Lack of training and understanding of Fraud and Whistleblowing Policies Corporate culture Non reconciliation of assets and inventory Major changes in organisational development increasing fraud risk No inventory of assets in leisure and community centres					
Consequence	Financial impact Reputational risk					

Risk Owners	Conor Haughey; Andy Patterson; Alison Robb		
Gross/Inherent Risk	Red 20	Last Review	5/7/2025
Residual Risk	Amber 12	Next Review	8/8/2025
Target Risk Level	Green 6	Risk Appetite	Risk Averse

Objectives

- 1. Promote increased levels of activity and develop targeted programmes to support improved health and wellbeing outcome

Key Controls Identified

- Corporate Procurement Policy in place
- Expansion of online payment methods to limit the amount of cash handling at Council facilities
- Fraud and Whistleblowing Policy in place
- Governance arrangements in place including the Audit Committee and independent internal audit function
- Leisure Services Cash Handling and Booking Management procedures in place

Action Plans					
Action Plan	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Develop a centre based asset register for community facilities Develop centre/service based asset register for sport and leisure Introduce management checks and controls on financial governance	Asset Register will include an inventory of all assets within community facilities	In Progress	Alison Robb	9/30/2025	Asset register is in place and is reviewed annually.
	Asset Register will include an inventory of all assets within each leisure facility	In Progress	Conor Haughey	9/30/2025	Asset register is in place and is reviewed annually
	System of spot checks to ensure appropriate controls are in place and adhered to in relation to financial management and governance.	In Progress	Conor Haughey Andy Patterson Alison Robb	8/31/2025	Financial controls and checks are in place across all leisure centres. Requirements are in place for Community Associations, through SLAs and FMAs, in relation to legal and financial controls, record keeping and rights of inspection of accounts for Council. Subject to internal approvals and budgets
Online booking system	Currently being considered as part of the communities facility strategy.	In Progress	Alison Robb	8/31/2025	

Risk 03. Failure to enforce and comply with legislative requirements and statutory functions

Risk	Consequence					Probability				
	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5
Risk Categories	Business operational/reputational Quality of Service Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)					G				
Risk Description	Failure to enforce and comply with legislative requirements and statutory functions					R				
Potential Root Cause	Lack of training Inadequate funding and resources to provide the required level of service Non-compliance with legislation leading to prosecution					T				
Consequence	Financial penalty Reputational damage Poor service being provided									
Risk Owners	Conor Haughey; Andy Patterson; Alison Robb									
Gross/Inherent Risk	Red 25					Last Review 5/7/2025				
Residual Risk	Amber 16					Next Review 8/8/2025				
Target Risk Level	Green 6					Risk Appetite Risk Averse				

Objectives

- 1. Promote increased levels of activity and develop targeted programmes to support improved health and wellbeing outcome

Key Controls Identified

- Continuous review of policies and procedures.
- Council oversight and independent audits
- Ongoing submission of quarterly returns to external organisations
- Performance management arrangements in place

Action Plans

Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Statutory compliance	In Progress	Alison Robb	8/31/2025	Contributing to the Council's Corporate Facilities Management Steering Group and Corporate Health and Safety Joint Forum to ensure ongoing compliance, Continue to commission relevant independent audits and reviewing systems procedures and policies and comply with relevant actions.

Risk 04. Reduction in funding and/or income has an impact on service delivery

Risk	Probability				
	1	2	3	4	5
5				G	
4				R	
3			T		
2					
1					

Consequence

Risk Categories

Risk Description
Potential Root Cause

Financial
Impact on individuals (staff or public)
Quality of Service
Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)

Loss or reduction in funding or income has an impact on service delivery within Community Development and Leisure Services.

Financial outbacks from outside organisations
Market forces/Government policy
Lack of compliance with third party requirements and failure to achieve targets within Letters of Offer
Financial Assistance Scheme and ongoing compliance with Financial Assistance Policy
Stakeholders do not participate in the range of programmes being delivered
Reduced funding for the Good Relations Programme 2024-25
Inadequate approach to develop income generation opportunities
Unplanned closure of leisure facilities over a longer duration due to unforeseen maintenance issues.

Consequence

Financial impact on the Council
Reduced funding for specific positions and services may result in key programmes not being delivered
Potential negative impact on the health and wellbeing of citizens and stakeholders
Impact on staff morale
Participants will not have opportunity to engage in physical activity and community-based programmes
Negative Publicity

Risk Owners

Conor Haughey; Andy Patterson; Alison Robb

Gross/Inherent Risk

Red 20

Last Review

5/7/2025

Residual Risk

Amber 16

Next Review

8/8/2025

Target Risk Level

Yellow 9

Risk Appetite

Risk Cautious

Objectives

Key Controls Identified

Annual targets agreed with funders and quarterly monitoring arrangements in place

Fixed term and temporary contracts

Funding in place for key projects and programmes.

Income opportunities maximised

Key plans and policies in place, eg Good Relations Action Plan, DEA Action Plans.

Ongoing liaison and partnership working with funders

Ongoing programme of renewals and repairs in high-use leisure facilities

Ongoing promotion of sport and community facilities and programmes

Project governance arrangements and Risk Registers for key projects in place

Review maintenance schedules of high-use leisure facilities

Action Plans		Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Identify alternative future funding arrangements and ways of working		Identify alternative and additional future funding arrangements and ways of working	In Progress	Alison Robb	8/31/2025	The Council continues to work with partners to identify and consider a range of funding streams. Work will take place during 2024/25 to have a suite of projects in the pipeline and application ready should relevant funding streams become available.
Leisure Centre Maintenance		Continue to implement ongoing renewals, repairs / maintenance programme in leisure facilities.	In Progress	Conor Haughey	8/31/2025	Refurbishment of Killeel Leisure Centre scheduled to commence in 2025.
Review customer pricing arrangements at leisure and community facilities		Review customer pricing arrangements at leisure and community facilities to sustain customer loyalty and attract new customers.	In Progress	Conor Haughey Alison Robb	8/31/2025	An annual review of community & leisure scales of charges takes place alongside the rate setting process of Council

Risk **05. Failure to safeguard children/adults from the risk of harm including failing to comply with our statutory responsibilities**

Consequence	Probability				
	1	2	3	4	5
5					G
4			R		
3					
2					
1					

Risk Categories	Business operational/reputational Impact on individuals (staff or public) Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)
Risk Description	The Council has statutory and moral responsibilities to fulfil its obligations regarding safeguarding children, adults at risk and staff from harm.
Potential Root Cause	Failure to comply with Safeguarding Policy Lack of staff expertise Policy not communicated properly Nature and Scope of Council Services / facilities giving abusers opportunity Failure to administer statutory/legal safeguarding obligations
Consequence	Failure to protect children and adults at risk (including personal injuries / death) Reputational damage Litigation Disciplinary Physical damage to property
Risk Owners	Conor Haughey; Andy Patterson; Gary Scott
Gross/Inherent Risk	Red 25 Last Review 5/7/2025
Residual Risk	Amber 12 Next Review 8/8/2025
Target Risk Level	Yellow 8 Risk Appetite Risk Averse

Objectives
Continue to mitigate existing and emerging safeguarding risks, for both Council and Citizens

Key Controls Identified

1. Access NI checks for staff (regulated positions) and contractors as appropriate
10. Council Designated Safeguarding Officers in place together with Council Safeguarding Coordinator.
11. CCTV installed in relevant community and Leisure facilities
12. Safeguarding compliance embedded into procurement processes for contracted services
13. Safeguarding compliance embedded into procurement for contracted services and facility hire arrangements
14. . Dedicated Safeguarding Folder on Council staff R Drive providing support and signposting
15. Leisurewatch training provided to relevant leisure and community staff
16. Referral process with PSNI and social services regarding information sharing
17. Customer Exclusion Policy to prevent inappropriate behaviours by customers
18. Safeguarding Awareness and support leaflets for staff and customers and signage regarding photography displayed prom
2. Safeguarding Coordinator completes spots checks on Council schemes
3. Domestic Abuse Policy and Sexual Violence Policy for the workplace approved and available online
4. Registration booklet established for registering children/young people on all council activities/schemes.
4. Safe Place locations to support staff/communities for advice in relation to Domestic Abuse
6. Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures approved and available online.
7. Safeguarding Training
8. Internal and External' working groups and direct information sharing referral mechanisms with PSNI and Social Services
9. Leisure Watch system and accreditation in place in Leisure and Community Facilities

Action Plans

Financial Assistance, Facility Hire and Event Documentation Risk Assessment and Safeguarding	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
	To review all financial assistance, facility hire and event documentation to ensure consistency in application Continue to assess risk in context of safeguarding across leisure facilities and programmes	In Progress	Conor Haughey Gary Scott	8/31/2025	work ongoing
		In Progress	Conor Haughey Gary Scott	8/31/2025	Over the past two years, the Council has focused on undertaking risk assessments across all leisure facilities. Actions - relevant actions to be updated and where relevant incorporated as a control where appropriate marked as complete Overall risk - Due to the fact Council is a public facing body and all services have interaction with the public, risk cannot be removed entirely, therefore by default are unable to fully control the risk, when considered against mitigation measures the target likelihood is unlikely. As an organisation numerous measures are in place and being developed to mitigate against that risk such as policies, designated safeguarding officers and training which also allows the threshold of major impact rather than catastrophic.
Safeguarding e-Learning module	Safeguarding eLearning module for newly procured system (skillgate) for staff on to be reviewed and implemented	In Progress	Conor Haughey Gary Scott	8/31/2025	in progress

Risk **06. Reduced participation in Community Engagement Programmes may have a negative impact on community cohesion across the District.**

Consequence	Probability				
	1	2	3	4	5
5					
4					
3					
2					
1					

Risk Categories	Financial Impact on individuals (staff or public) Quality of Service Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)
Risk Description	Reduced participation in Community Engagement Programmes may have a negative impact on community cohesion across the District.
Potential Root Cause	Stakeholders do not participate effectively in community planning structures Partners across the community, voluntary, statutory and business sectors have limited opportunities to influence key decisions and programmes of work at a local level Lack of awareness and understanding of programmes

Consequence	Reduced funding in future years for key programmes of work that build capacity at a local level Reduced income across community facilities Failure to provide efficient and effective public services to meet the needs and aspirations of local communities Lack of social inclusion and community cohesion at a local level Hard to reach and vulnerable groups become increasingly marginalised and isolated within society Potential social unrest
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Risk Owners	Alison Robb
Gross/inherent Risk	Red 20
Residual Risk	Amber 12
Target Risk Level	Yellow 9
Last Review	5/7/2025
Next Review	8/8/2025
Risk Appetite	Risk Open

Objectives

Key Controls Identified

- Community Planning Partnership and Community Plan in place
- Key programmes of work in place around Neighbourhood Renewal, PCSP Action Plan, Good Relations and Financial Assistance.
- Ongoing promotion of programmes through the Council's website and social media platforms
- Seven DEA Forums operational and DEA Action Plans being delivered

Action Plans

Action Plans	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Continue to engage BME communities through the Ethnic Minority Support Centre	The EMSC provides ongoing support, in multiple languages, on issues such as EU Registration, housing and education. The centre is based in Newry and Downpatrick.	In Progress	Alison Robb	8/31/2025	The centre records approximately 3,000 visits per annum. Support is provided to individuals from established minority ethnic communities and to newcomers, including Ukrainian refugees and asylum seekers accommodated in the district. A newcomers guide was developed in 2024/25.
Deliver DEA Action Plans, Neighbourhood Renewal Plans and PCSP and Good Relations Action Plans.	Engage stakeholders through established Forums and Partnerships to facilitate the delivery of key plans and strategies at a local level.	In Progress	Alison Robb	8/31/2025	The implementation of key plans and strategies is ongoing. The Council is also working with the Department for Communities to review the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme which will be replaced by a new programme entitled 'People and Place'. A Newcastle RCRG has been established and one is being developed in Camlough with DEA support. The DEA Team continues to review its response to emergency situations to assist local communities.
Facilitate the Community Co-ordination Hub	Continue to facilitate the Community Co-ordination Hub, which is aligned to existing community planning structures	In Progress	Alison Robb	8/31/2025	CCH established as mechanism to support covid response and focus has moved to developing and strengthening the SSF and CPP to deliver on the Community Plan
Review the existing community planning structures.	Review the existing community planning structures.	In Progress	Alison Robb	8/31/2025	Community Planning Structures will be reviewed as part of the development of a Community Development Strategy during 2025/26. Team have been looking at models of best practice across various jurisdictions.

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	31 July 2025
Subject:	Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director: Finance and Performance
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Catherine Hughes – Head of Performance and Improvement (Acting)

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-	
For decision	For noting only ☒
1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	The purpose of this report is to recommend the final version of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26. This plan is supported by the Consultation and Engagement Report 2025-26 and Delivery Plans which have been developed for each Performance Improvement Objective 2025-26. The Performance Improvement Plan was approved by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee on 12 June 2025 and published on the Council’s website before 30 June 2025, in order to meet the statutory timescale.
1.2	Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 sets out a General Duty of Improvement for local government, whereby all District Councils are required to put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. Each financial year, Councils are required to set performance improvement objectives for the services they provide. The guidance states that performance improvement is more than quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or in the internal effectiveness of an organisation. Improvement should focus on activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for communities.
1.3	The Performance Improvement Plan is a key strategic document which drives all improvement activity across the organisation. It features within the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and is directly aligned to the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and Directorate Business Plans.
2.0	Key issues
2.1	In accordance with statutory requirements, the Council is required to publish the Performance Improvement Plan by 30 June 2025. The Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 is attached at Appendix 1, and includes the following information: • Performance improvement objectives 2025-26 • Statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management • Self imposed performance indicators, as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2024-27
	Public Consultation and Engagement 2025-26

2.2	The development of the performance improvement objectives 2025-26 is based on a robust and reliable evidence base which includes: 764 responses to the Residents Survey (September 2022) This was supplemented by an eight week public consultation and engagement process around the proposed performance improvement objectives 2025-26, which took place between 14 March – 09 May 2025 and consisted of the following elements: 33 responses to the survey on the draft performance improvement objectives, published on the consultation section of the Council's website - Engagement with 60 stakeholders through the Newry DEA Forum, Downpatrick DEA Forum, Rowallane DEA Forum, Slieve Croob DEA Forum, Cedar Foundation and Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice Overall, the feedback from the consultation and engagement process revealed that the majority of respondents support the proposed performance improvement objectives, as outlined in Appendix 2.
	Objective Delivery Plans 2025-26
2.4	Delivery plans for each performance improvement objective have been developed, as outlined in Appendix 3. They seek to demonstrate how the Council will manage the effective delivery of each objective, in terms of resources, risk management and governance arrangements. These plans are a 'work in progress' and will be reviewed and updated on a continuous basis to support the delivery of each performance improvement objective.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To note: The Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 (including the five performance improvement objectives), Consultation and Engagement Report 2025-26 and Objective Delivery Plans 2025-26.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	There are no financial resource implications within this report.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> Yes ☒ No ☐

	If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☒ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	Proposal initiating consultation Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☒ <i>Rationale:</i> At the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meeting in March 2025, it was agreed to implement an eight week consultation and engagement process, in order to meet the then statutory deadline of 30 June 2025 for publishing the Performance Improvement Plan.
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☒ No ☐ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☒
7.0	Appendices • Appendix 1 – Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 • Appendix 2 – Consultation and Engagement Report 2025-26 • Appendix 3 – Objective Delivery Plans 2025-26
8.0	Background Documents Performance Improvement Plans 2019-20, 2020-21, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26



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

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Foreword

enterprises and helped to create 222 local jobs. We also reduced the average processing time of major planning applications within the District.

However, whilst much has been achieved, there is still more to do to make Newry, Mourne and Down a great place to live, work, visit and invest in. Through this year's performance improvement objectives, we will continue to focus on what matters most to you - improving the quality of our leisure facilities and services, contributing to the growth of the local economy, improving the cleanliness of our District and promoting recycling, improving our sustainability by reducing our impacts in relation to climate change and improving the performance of our Planning Service.

We remain committed to working closely with communities and partners to deliver high quality, efficient and effective services and will continue to work hard to improve the quality of life for all local communities and build a District we can all be proud of.



An Cathaoirleach
Chairperson
Councillor Philip Campbell

Welcome to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26. Having listened to our communities, we are retaining all our objectives for this year with a number of new measures and actions to support them which we feel will benefit both our people and place. As we focus on the continued revitalisation of our district we can look back and be proud of our achievements.

The Council worked determinedly to deliver services and implement the performance improvement objectives, particularly in the face of serious adverse issues including Storm Eowyn which caused damage and destruction across our District, particularly in our Forest Parks.

Our residents and visitors continued to embrace their health and wellbeing with nearly 740,000 paid attendances at our leisure centres and over 20,000 participating across our targeted health programmes. We supported 100% of all community clean up requests and issued fixed penalty notices to address environmental crime in the district.

Through our economic development programmes, we supported 233 local businesses and social



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 2025-26. 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 2025-26

- 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 and job creation**
- 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 improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change**
- 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



Performance Improvement Objective 1

We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services

Why this matters	You told us that: • 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, however residents did comment on issues such as the need for modernisation and improving cleanliness • 65% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey agreed with this objective 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.	
Looking Back: What we did in 2024-25		737,439 paid attendances across the 6 leisure facilities
		Recorded 196,333 visits across a total of 10 community trails.
		10,050 memberships across the indoor leisure facilities
		Progress is continuing on key Capital projects with support from Council's Estates and Capital Projects Team.
		20,421 people participating in targeted health programmes
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2025-26	• 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. • Work towards Leisure-Safe Accreditation for all indoor leisure facilities • Implement a 'Mystery Visitor' programme for Indoor Leisure	

How we will measure success	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	Status Trend	2025-26 Target
Number of paid attendances recorded at:		698,864	768,842	737,439	 	757,500
Newry Leisure Centre	183,224	307,153	331,546	244,929		335,000
Down Leisure Centre	177,496	246,978	259,473	273,783		275,000
Kilkeel Leisure Centre	66,987	69,797	63,811	74,988		15,000
St. Colmans Sports Complex	36,717	54,024	58,491	68,662		68,700
Newcastle Centre & Tropicana Outdoor Swimming Complex	33,801	25,517	27,765	39,128		27,800
Ballymote Sports and Wellbeing Centre	10,309	15,365	27,756	35,949		36,000
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes	322*	9,309	10,805	20,421		22,000
Value of Financial Assistance funding allocated to sports clubs	New measure				-	£225,000
Number of leisure centre memberships		9,534	9,923	10,050	 	10,100
Number of capital leisure projects progressed	New measure		3	4		2
Number of Play parks upgraded	New Measure				-	2
What you will see by March 2026	• 757,500 paid attendances at our six leisure centres by the end of 2025-26 • Increase in the number of people participating in targeted health programmes to 22,000. • Increase the number of memberships being taken out to 10,100. • 2 play parks upgraded • 2 new build and/or upgraded capital leisure projects progressed. • Works to be commenced on Kilkeel centre upgrade. • Planning permission and contract tender agreed for Jennings park upgrade • Financial assistance allocated for sports clubs to the value of £225,000 for capital projects. • Leisure-Safe Accreditation being worked towards for all indoor leisure facilities. • 'Mystery Visitor' Programme implemented and baseline established					
Alignment						
Corporate Plan 2024-27	• Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District.					
Community Plan	• All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing					
Programme for Government	• Cut health waiting times					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service quality		Service Availability	Fairness	
Responsible Officer	Director: Active and Healthy Communities					

Performance Improvement Objective 2

We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation

Why this matters	You told us that: • ‘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 • 69% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey agreed with this objective 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. 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. 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. 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, that will drive the creation of good jobs, productivity growth, sustainability and decarbonisation.	
Looking Back: What we did in 2024-25		175 new enterprises created as a result of support and 206 new jobs promoted through business start-up activity
		12 new social enterprise start-ups supported, and 16 new social enterprise jobs created
		221 businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions
		Delivered several Make it Local campaigns throughout the District and wider region. Make it Local is an initiative that is designed to encourage people within the district to shop locally and support local businesses. Artisan markets held in Downpatrick, Newcastle and Warrenpoint continue supporting the local artisan and craft micro businesses of the District.
Looking Forward:	• Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme	

What we will do in 2025-26	- 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 - 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					
How we will measure success	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	Status Trend	2025-26 Target
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	12	12	12	12	 	12
Number of social enterprise jobs created	13	12	14	16	 	12
Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity	New measure			839		712
Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	358	361	150	334	 	289
Number of jobs promoted via business start-up activity	215	155	90	206	 	173
Number of new enterprises created as a result of support	215	195	90	175	 	119
Number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions	373	220	351	221	 	220
What you will see by March 2026	289 business plans created for Start-Up businesses and employer enterprises - Over 700 participants engaged across all Go Succeed activity - Support provided to 220 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 - 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					
Alignment						
Corporate Plan 2024-27	Support the continued growth and development of our local economy					
Community Plan	All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities					
Programme for Government	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					

*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

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	You told us that: • 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. • 75% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey agreed with this objective 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. 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.	
Looking Back: What we did in 2024-25		Issued 31 fixed penalty notices, 26 of which were paid
		
		Supported 100% of community clean-up requests
		15 environmental projects funded through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' Scheme with a total of £30,469.40 awarded to local groups
		Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2025-26		Maintained the rate of recycling, at 50.1%
	Address issues around recycling, littering, illicit dumping and dog fouling by: • Continuing to implement 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 • Exploring options to determine levels of street cleanliness and identify emerging issues and hotspots • Rollout an environmental awareness campaign displayed on Council fleet highlighting simple messages on recycling, littering and dog fouling Work in partnership with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful to: • 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	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	Status Trend	2025-26 Target
Number of fixed penalty notices issued	118	110	25	31	 	100
Number of fixed penalty notices paid	100	91	19	26	 	80
Percentage of issued fixed penalty notices that are paid	New measure				-	80%
Percentage of community clean up requests supported	New measure			100%		90%
Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	18	10	9	15		No target
The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling	49.1%	49.6%	50.1%	50.1% (Q1-Q3)	 	70% by 2030 (55% by 2025)
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	2,685t	2,319t	932t	366t (Q1-Q3)	 	<20,954 tonnes (2019-20)
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	87,336t	82,842t	84,636t	65,048t (Q1-Q3)		No target
What you will see by March 2026	- 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 littering, dog fouling and illicit dumping - Reduction in the disposal of paint from our Household Recycling Centre sites - Opportunities to engage in community clean ups - Increased awareness of environmental messaging on issues including recycling, dog fouling and littering - A cleaner, greener District, with improved civic and community pride - Street cleanliness inspection systems identified for use within Council					
Alignment						
Corporate Plan 2024-27	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future					
Community Plan	All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment					
Programme for Government	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 2024-25 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 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 improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change.

Why this matters	You told us that: • 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. • 91% of residents said recycling is important to them, an increase of 5% on the 2018 residents survey figure. • 59% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey agreed with this objective Our climate is changing, and we need to prepare. Greenhouse gas emissions cause the Earth’s atmosphere to hold more radiation from the sun which increases the overall temperature of the planet. This change in temperature is altering our climate and causing one of the greatest threats of our time. In October 2019 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council declared a ‘Climate Emergency’. NMDDC is acutely aware of how intrinsic sustainability and care of our district is to its future. Within our new Council structure, a Sustainability Department has been created. This is led by a dedicated Assistant Director with responsibility for issues such as Energy, Council Fleet, Facilities Maintenance and Biodiversity. Environmental sustainability has become a key objective in the development of our capital projects, providing economic growth for the region in an inclusive and sustainable way. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council aims to embed the ethos of sustainability throughout its operations and to provide leadership for the community. The Council also forms part of the Local Government Climate Action Network which is helping to deliver the NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme. This network will enable us to collaborate with other Councils and relevant statutory partners to develop a strategic approach for climate action.	
Looking Back: What we did in 2024-25		79% of Council fleet younger than 8 years old
		2024-24 fleet replacement programme completed
		Progressed the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy
		Biodiversity Strategy 2024-30 approved and launched
		Continued the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2025-26	Address issues around climate change and sustainability by: • Completing the draft Sustainability and Climate Change strategy ready for consultation, review, approval and then publication. • Publishing the Council’s Climate Change Adaptation Plan • Implementing the newly published biodiversity strategy 2024-30 • Complete and implement the Council’s Tree Strategy	

	- Supporting the continued implementation of new Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points - Undertaking a baseline assessment of the Council's carbon footprint and renewable energy output - Review the Council's active travel master plan alongside colleagues in the ERT Department - Continue to implement Council's fleet replacement programme - Preparing the Climate Change Mitigation Report in accordance with The Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024					
How we will measure success	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	Status Trend	2025-26 Target
Carbon footprint of Council estate	To be established				-	-
Renewable energy generation	To be established				-	-
Energy Consumption baseline	To be established				-	-
Percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years	New measure		75%	79%	 	85%
Number of vehicles within the Council fleet that have an alternative fuel source	New measure		1	1		10
Number of trees planted on Council managed estate	New measure		2,800	257		2,800
Number of Council supported EV charging points	New measure		20	0		18
What you will see by March 2026	- Publication of the Council's Climate Change and Sustainable Development strategy and Climate Change Adaptation Plan - Implementation of the new Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2024-2030) - Publication of Council's Tree Strategy 2,800 new trees planted across the District - Carbon baseline established for Council estate - Renewable energy baseline established for Council estate - Energy consumption baseline established for Council estate - Increase in the percentage of younger, less polluting vehicles within the Council fleet - A reviewed Active Travel Master plan - New electric vehicles operating within Council fleet - Publication of the Climate Change Mitigation Report in accordance with The Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024					
Alignment						
Corporate Plan 2024-27	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future					
Community Plan	All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment					
Programme for Government	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	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. 72% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey also agreed with this objective. 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. Work continues on the Planning Improvement Programme and following discussions with SOLACE and DFI, the programme will be reviewed and updated during 2025-26 to be more reflective of the challenges currently facing planning across NI. Staff retention and recruitment remains challenging with vacancies remaining in the planning team across all functions as per agreed structures. Recruitment remains ongoing. This has had, and continues to have, a significant impact on targets and performance. This remains a priority for Council and Senior Management with ongoing review and monitoring. The Council has not yet achieved the statutory standards for 2024-25 but remain committed to delivering further improvements and providing a high-quality service to all customers.	
Looking Back: What we did between April-December 2024		45.1% of live enforcement cases in the system longer than 2 years, which is below the regional average of 70.3%
		Average processing time of 45.2 weeks for local planning applications, which is above the regional average of 19.2 weeks
		Average processing time of 34.6 weeks for major planning applications, which is better than the regional average of 39.7 weeks
		Received 878 local planning applications, which is the third highest across Northern Ireland
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2025-26	• Reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases which have been in the system for over 12 months. • 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.' • Launch the Draft plan Strategy by Q2 2025-26	

How we will measure success		2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Q1-Q3 Actual	Status Trend	2025-26 Target
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)		18.3	21.6	33.7	45.2	 	<15 weeks
Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)		49.8	89	154.8	34.6	 	<30 weeks
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks		46.9%	58.6%	60.0%	45.1%	 	70%
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more		187	228	352	437	 	170
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less		825	934	1,154	1,092	 	870
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more		486	503	599	593	 	580
What you will see by March 2026	• 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 • An empowered and motivated workforce • Increased confidence in the Planning system • Sustainable development and regeneration of the District • Commencement of public representation on the Draft Plan Strategy						
Alignment							
Corporate Plan 2024-27	• Deliver sustainable services						
Community Plan	• All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities						
Programme for Government	• 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						

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 and job creation	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 improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change	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.

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.

Represent the voice of the District with our partners	Number of users registered to Council corporate social media channels.
	Number of visits to Council's corporate website.
	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 2025-26

All the five performance improvement objectives 2025-26 have been carried forward from 2024-25, as they remain relevant and meaningful. A number of changes and additions have been made however, to the actions and measures that support these 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 2025-26

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 - 2024-25	PIO's 2025-26	Progress / Rationale	Status Proposed
PIO 1: We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services	PIO 1: We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services	During 2024-25 progress was made against a number of key actions under this objective including: • 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 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.	Retain This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2025-26.
PIO 2: We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation	PIO 2: We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation	During 2024-25 progress was made against a number of key actions including: • 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 However there is still improvements to be made, and 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.	Retain This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2025-26.

PIO 3: We will improve the cleanliness of our district by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling incidents	PIO 3: We will improve the cleanliness of our district by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling incidents	During 2024-25 progress was made against some key actions under this objective including: • Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity campaigns and dog licences • Promoting the 'Live Here, Love Here' campaign through the funding of 15 environmental projects. 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. 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.	Retain This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2025-26.
PIO 4: We will improve our sustainability by reducing our impacts in relation to climate change	PIO 4: We will improve our sustainability by reducing our impacts in relation to climate change	During 2024-25 some progress was made against a number of key actions and measures including: • Progressing the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy • Completing the 2024-25 fleet replacement programme However, more improvement is still needed. The number of Council vehicles with an alternative fuel source needs to increase and a number of baselines need to be established in relation to the Council's carbon footprint and energy consumption.	Retain This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2025-26.

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 2024-25 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'. • Decrease in the average processing time of major planning applications	Retain This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2025-26
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

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

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 2025-26 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 and job creation	✓	✓	✓				✓
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and reducing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling	✓		✓		✓		✓
We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change	✓				✓	✓	✓
We will improve the average processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the recommendations from the Planning Service Review	✓	✓	✓			✓	

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 2025-26 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 2025-26.

Consultation and Engagement

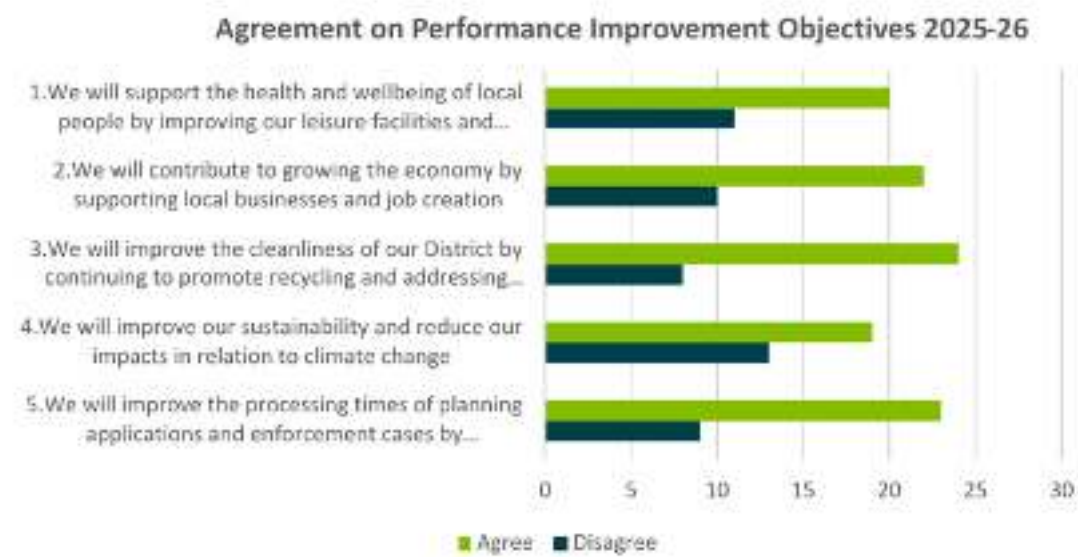
The Council is committed to listening to local people and taking on board their views. Since 2017, the Council has carried out extensive consultation and engagement, inviting key stakeholders, including Elected Members, residents, local businesses and community planning partners to put forward their 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 2025-26 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 33 completed surveys and engagement with 60 stakeholders through the Newry DEA Forum, Downpatrick DEA Forum, Slieve Croob DEA Forum and Rowallane DEA Forum, Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice and the Cedar Foundation. 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 2025-26 on the consultation section of the Council website	Survey: 33 responses
Engagement with the: Section 75 groups, including the Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice and the Cedar Foundation	23 consultees
Engagement with : 4 DEA’s across the District	37 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.



The areas for improvement and issues raised through the overall consultation and engagement processes are clearly aligned to the five performance improvement objectives 2025-26, 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 draft 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.

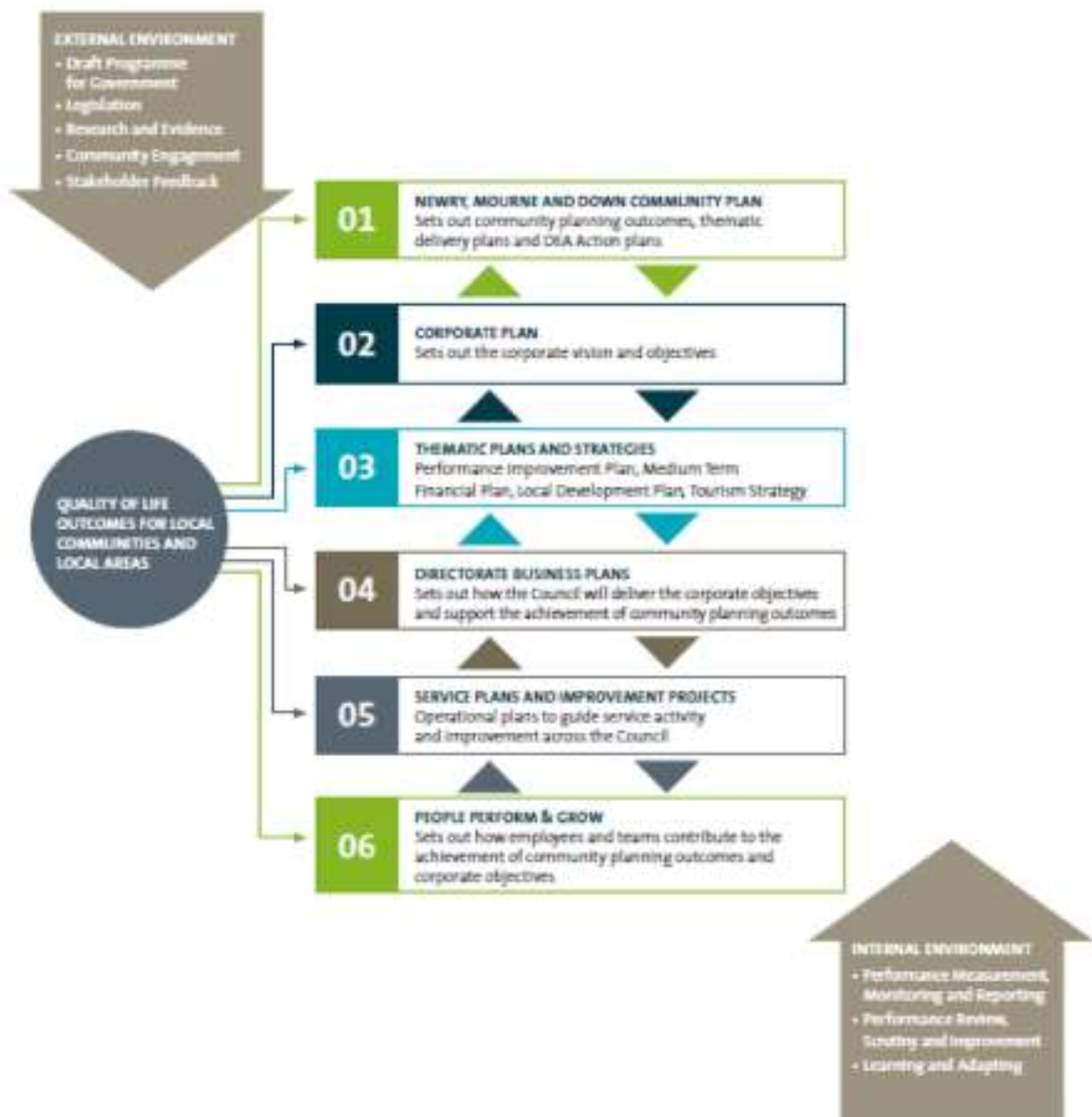
The Council has put in place a number of frameworks and systems to drive forward continuous improvement and facilitate a performance improvement culture. These include the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, Policy Development Framework, Equality Scheme, Governance Framework and Risk 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 2025-26, 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 2025-26 are outlined below:



The Council must publish an Assessment of Performance by 30 September 2025 which will provide an overview of how the Council has performed during 2024-25. 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 2025-26.

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 2025-26, 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: Catherine Hughes
Head of Performance and Improvement (Acting)
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry
Co Down
BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0300 013 2233

Email: performance@nmandd.org

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agus Ard Mhacha Theas
Serving Down
and South Armagh

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

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Consultation and Engagement Report on the Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26



Introduction

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 sets out a General Duty of Improvement, whereby all District Councils must put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions and set performance improvement objectives for each financial year. Each Council also has a statutory duty to consult key stakeholders on the proposed performance improvement objectives.

The five draft performance improvement objectives were considered and approved by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in March 2025. This was followed by an extensive consultation and engagement process which encouraged key stakeholders, including residents, Elected Members and partner organisations to have their say on the proposed performance improvement objectives.

This report provides an overview of the consultation and engagement methodology and an analysis of the responses which were received.

Consultation and Engagement Activity

Between 14 March – 09 May 2025, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council carried out an eight week consultation and engagement process with key stakeholders on the draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26, with pre-engagement consultation also carried out through the following mechanisms:

- Electronic survey and documentation on the consultations section of the Council website, which was promoted through the Council's social media channels
- Public Notices in local newspapers
- Engagement with the following stakeholders:
 - Newry DEA
 - Slieve Croob DEA
 - Downpatrick DEA
 - Rowallane DEA
 - Newry and Mourne and Down Youth Voice
 - Cedar Foundation

This process was further supplemented by the consultation and engagement which was carried out to support the development of the Corporate Plan 2024-27.

- Residents Survey (September 2022)
- Consultation and engagement on the Corporate Plan 2024-27 (March – May 2024)
- Consultation and engagement on the draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-25

Analysis Methodology

A total of 33 surveys were received in response to the consultation and engagement on the Council’s draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the draft performance improvement objectives and if they had any comments to make regarding each objective. Respondents were also asked to put forward their suggested priorities for future improvement.

In carrying out the quantitative and qualitative consultation and engagement, a structured process was used to capture responses around each of the five draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26. This was supplemented by an engagement process with 60 key stakeholders, as outlined below:

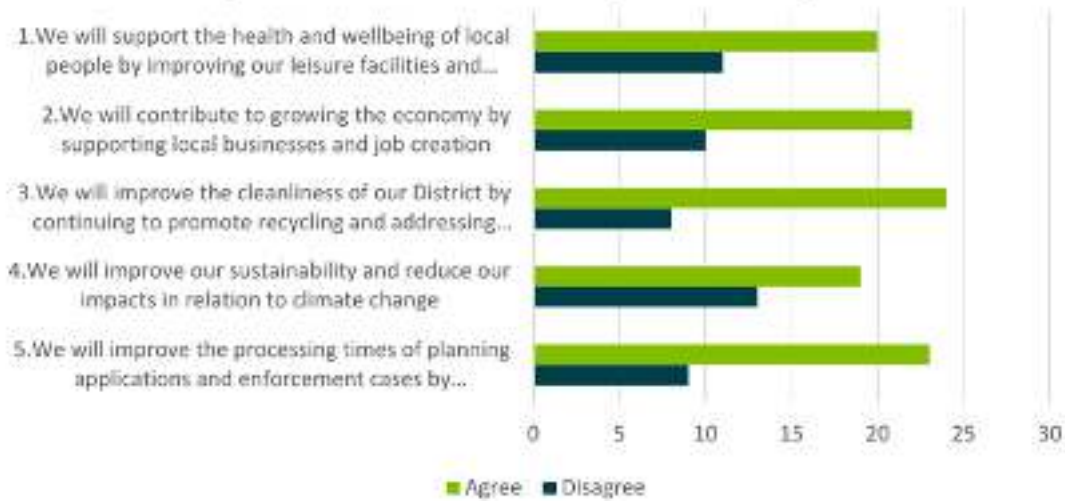
Consultation and Engagement	Details
Newry DEA Forum	11 participants – 01 May 2025
Downpatrick DEA Forum	12 participants – 08 April 2025
Rowallane DEA Forum	8 participants – 24 April 2025
Slieve Croob DEA Forum	6 participants – 29 April 2025
Newry and Mourne and Down Youth Voice	14 participants – 06 May 2025
Cedar Foundation User Forum	9 participants – 08 April 2025
Residents Survey (September 2022)	764 residents aged 16+ with quotas applied for age, gender, social class and District Electoral Area

Consultation and Engagement Findings

Analysis of Findings

Responses to the draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26 have been received from residents, elected members, local community organisations, statutory organisations and others including those that work in and visit the district. There has been a positive response to the five proposed performance improvement objectives, with the majority of respondents agreeing with each objective.

Agreement on Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26



Residents Survey (2022)

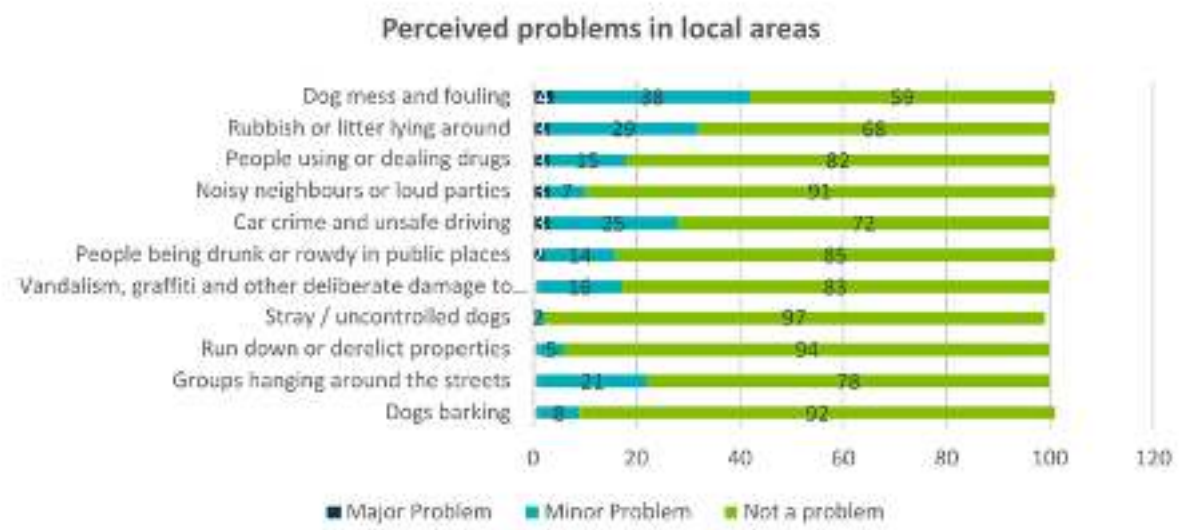
These findings are further endorsed by the results of the Residents Survey which indicate that the performance improvement objectives broadly address the top improvements identified to make somewhere a good place to live.

- The local economy, health and wellbeing, housing, infrastructure, public transport, protecting the environment, climate change and managing waste are amongst the top priorities for improvement.
- Supporting communities, educational provision, accessible leisure centres, accessible arts centres/theatres and museums and opportunities for volunteering are amongst the lesser priorities for improvement.

Top priorities for improving the local area



These findings are further reinforced by the fact that residents identify dog mess and littering as the top perceived problems in the local area.



You Said, We Did - Overview of Consultation Feedback

Performance Improvement Objectives

An analysis of the consultation and engagement findings indicates that the issues raised will be addressed through the proposed 2025-26 performance improvement objectives, 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success', or as part of the Council's business planning process. An overview of the amendments and revisions that have been made to the performance improvement objectives, throughout the consultation and engagement process are highlighted below.

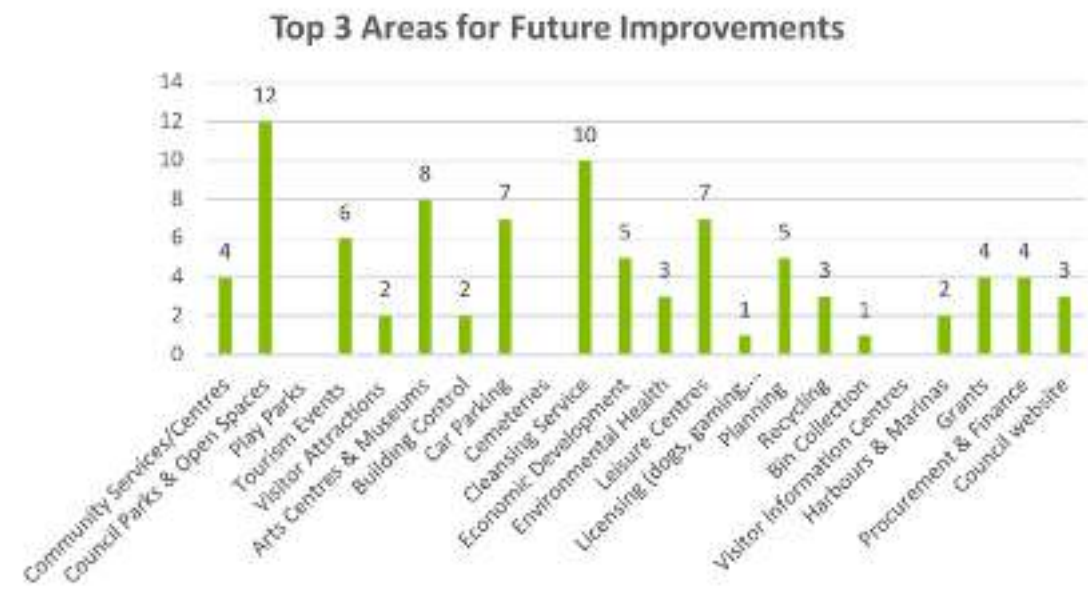
	You Said	We Listened	We Did
We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services			Included a new measure on 'Value of Financial Assistance funding allocated to sports clubs' Included a new measure on 'The number of play parks upgraded'

	The CEDAR user forum which were consulted on the draft performance objectives raised a number of queries in relation to leisure activities for those with a disability. A suggestion was made by members of the CEDAR user forum to be 'mystery shoppers' in the Council's leisure facilities		Council's Leisure Services have organised to meet directly with the user forum to look at addressing where possible the issues they raised. Council are keen to use the forum members as 'mystery shoppers' for the leisure centres and have included it as a new action that they aim to implement in 2025-26
We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation			Targets for economic development programmes have been revised to reflect the current environment
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents			Figures for fixed penalty notices issued and paid have been revised to better reflect resourcing issues within the section. New recycling target of 70% by 2030 and the inteim target of 55% by 2025 has been included as per the Recycling – Climate Change Act

			(Northern Ireland) 2022
	'Household recycling opening hours need extended back to pre covid levels'		Council intend to design and launch a baseline customer satisfaction survey of the Household Recycling centre users in 2025-26
We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change	'Sustainable Transportation: Further investment in public transport, active travel infrastructure, and electric vehicle incentives would support both local mobility and the reduction of emissions across the District.'		Council have included a new action under the sustainability and climate change objective with regards to reviewing with our colleagues in the economy, regeneration and tourism department Council's active travel masterplan.
We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme			

Suggested Areas for Improvement

As part of the survey, and similar to previous years, respondents were asked to put forward their suggested areas for improvement. 'Council parks and open spaces', 'Visitor Attractions', 'Tourism Events' and 'Leisure Centres' are the top priorities for improvement in 2025-26.



Next Steps

Based on the feedback obtained through the consultation and engagement process, as well as the ongoing developmental work around each performance improvement objective 2025-26, there has been some amendments to the 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success', as outlined in the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.

The Consultation and Engagement report will be published on the Council's website by 30 June 2025, alongside the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26. It will also be circulated to key stakeholders to support the business planning process.

A summary of the consultation and engagement feedback is provided below.

Summary of Consultation and Engagement Feedback

Performance Improvement Objective 1

- Not enough dedicated sessions, classes or activities for people with a disability
- Clear and visible information on pricing and memberships needed on website
- More focus on outdoor leisure for improving health and wellbeing
- Not enough leisure facilities in Newcastle
- More leisure services in rural areas.
- More advertising needed about the teen gym as not enough known about it.
- More monitoring and maintenance of leisure facilities.

Performance Improvement Objective 2

- Rates too high and main streets are empty
- Towns need to develop more multi-use buildings where a number of different smaller businesses can operate and share rates
- More work and engagement with exhibitors to ensure the careers fair is a more useful and engaging session for students.
- More permanent jobs for younger people needed.
- More focus on supporting rural businesses.
- Gondola project not needed.

Performance Improvement Objective 3

- Issue with fly posting around Newry.
- Getting community clean up equipment needs to be easier so more communities can avail of it
- Issues with littering especially vapes
- Dog fouling a major issue and needs to be improved
- More staff needed to enforce littering, dog fouling and fly tipping
- More bins needed across the District for general waste as well as recycling and dog poo.
- More education needed on recycling and on separation of rubbish into correct bins
- Household Recycling Centres to be opened longer
- Better reporting processes for report incidents of dog fouling, littering and fly tipping.
- More cleansing needed especially in key tourist areas

Performance Improvement Objective 4

- A lot of damage to the trees from the storm and a loss of trees from disease in Slieve Gullion park, needs to be addressed
- opportunity to link with the EA and the various youth groups to assist in the planting of trees across the district.
- More biodiversity friendly practices across the Council area.
- More awareness raising and education on climate change and sustainability.
- Council buildings need to be more energy efficient.
- Gondola project too environmentally damaging.

Performance Improvement Objective 5

- Planning takes too long to get approved
- More staffing needed to achieve targets
- Prioritise planning applications using a fast track system
- More transparency needed in planning
-

Other comments

- More public engagement needed
- More transparency, openness and accountability
- Mourne Gateway project not needed or wanted
- Public monthly reports needed
- No paid parking for town centre

Other improvements

- Fast track system for planning
- Access to grants to be easier
- Dog Exercise Areas
- Focus on Geopark and AONB's
- Progress on Rights of Ways needed
-

Objective Delivery Plans 2025-26

Delivery Plans have been developed to demonstrate the arrangements which have been put in place to support the effective implementation of each performance improvement objective. They provide an overview of:

- Responsible Officers
- Alignment with the Community Plan and Draft Corporate Plan
- Governance arrangements for the Performance Improvement Plan
- Meeting the seven legislative criteria
- 'Supporting actions' and 'measures of success'
- Links to existing plans and strategies
- Resources
- Governance arrangements

In recognition of the dynamic nature of the information included within the Objective Delivery Plans, they should be considered as a 'work in progress', subject to change to a continuous basis.

Performance Improvement Objective 1

We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services				
Responsible Officers	Director: Activity and Healthy Communities Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport			
Link to Community Plan	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing • Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee. • Annual Assessment of Performance to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.			
Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26				
Meeting the legislative criteria	Strategic Effectiveness: Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives. Achieving this objective will deliver real benefits and outcomes for local communities and other key stakeholders. Service Quality: The quality of services will continue to improve through the planned increase in the number and variety of classes being offered, as well as health promotions taking place. Service Availability: The continued progression and delivery of Council leisure projects will improve access to and availability of key leisure services and contribute towards the improvement of people's health and wellbeing. Fairness: Includes opportunities for people across Section 75 categories to access the Council's leisure centres.			
What we are going to do				
Supporting Action	Link to existing Plan/Strategy	Measures of Success	Resources	Governance Arrangements
Progress the leisure projects agreed within the capital programme	AHC Business Plan 2025-26 Capital Works Programme	The number of new build and/or upgraded capital projects progressed in 2025-26	Amount agreed under the capital plan.	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan 2025-26 Ongoing monitoring of projects within the Capital Plan
Sustain the number of paid attendances at indoor leisure facilities	AHC Business Plan 2025-26	Target set at 757,500 across the 6 leisure sites for 2025-26	Within the resources of the AHC Directorate	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan 2025-26 Assistant Director Healthy Living Head of Indoor Leisure

Continue to deliver a range of targeted, sustainable health programmes to encourage participation in physical activity.	AHC Business Plan 2025-26	Target of 22,000 people to be participating in targeted health programmes	In partnership with the Southern and South Eastern Health Trusts	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan 2025-26 Reporting back to Health Trusts	Assistant Director Healthy Living Head of Indoor Leisure Sports Development Officer
Provide funding through financial assistance for capital projects for sports clubs.	AHC Business Plan 2025-26 Healthy Living Service Plan	Target of £225,000 allocated to sports clubs across the District	Within the resources of the AHC Directorate	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan and Service Plan 2025-26 2025-26	Assistant Director Healthy Living Head of Programmes
Upgrade a number of play parks across the District	AHC Business 2025-26 Healthy Living Service Plan	Target of 2 play parks to be upgraded	Within the resources of the AHC Directorate	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan and Service Plan 2025-26 2025-26	Assistant Director: Healthy Living Head of Outdoor Leisure
Work towards Leisure-Safe Accreditation for all indoor leisure facilities	AHC Business Plan 2025-26 Healthy Living Service Plan	Leisure-Safe Accreditation achieved	Within the resources of the AHC Directorate	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan and Service Plan 2025-26	Assistant Director: Healthy Living Head of Indoor Leisure

Implement a 'Mystery Visitor' programme for Indoor Leisure	AHC Business Plan 2025-26 Healthy Living Service Plan	Programme implemented and baseline established	Within the resources of the AHC Directorate	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan and Service Plan 2025-26	Assistant Director: Healthy Living Head of Indoor Leisure
Risks			Risk Management		
Leisure facilities do not achieve the projected paid attendance levels			Actions to Mitigate Risks		
Targeted groups do not engage in physical activity programmes			Targeted promotional and publicity campaigns including online campaigns are being carried out. Programmes are managed, monitored and publicised effectively across the District.		
Capital Projects do not go ahead			Budgets have been set to include the leisure centre capital projects.		

Performance Improvement Objective 2

We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation				
Senior Responsible Officer	Director: Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Assistant Director: Economy, Growth and Tourism			
Link to Community Plan	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	Link to Corporate Plan 2024-27	Support the continued growth and development of our local economy	
Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26	- Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee. - Annual Assessment of Performance to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.			
Meeting the legislative criteria	Strategic Effectiveness: Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives, and will deliver tangible benefits to citizens, local businesses and social enterprises. Service Quality: The quality of services available to businesses and stakeholders will improve through the broad range of economic development programmes available. Service Availability: The continued roll-out of programmes to businesses, social enterprises and fishing dependent communities will improve access to and availability of key services, as well as the overall quality of life in the District. Innovation: Implicit within this objective are innovative, forward looking ways to promote / create new jobs and support businesses / social enterprises across the District.			
What we are going to do				
Supporting Action	Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy	Measures of Success	Resources	Governance Arrangements
Support the creation of new businesses, support existing businesses, and promote new jobs through the new 'Go Succeed' programme	Corporate Plan 2024-27	Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activities	NMD contribution: £167k	Monthly meetings of the regional Management Team
	Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2020-25	Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	Regional programme led by Belfast City Council	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan 2025-26
	ERT Business Plan 2025-26	Number of new jobs promoted through business start-up activity		
	EGT Service Plan 2025-26			Assistant Director: Economy, Growth and Tourism Head of Regeneration and Business Development

		Number of new enterprises created as a result of support Number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions Number of social enterprise start ups supported Number of social enterprise jobs created	Social Enterprise Programme: £51k Waiting on Letter of Offer for 2025-26	Quarterly meetings with Newry Enterprise Agency Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan 2025-26	Assistant Director: Economy, Growth and Tourism Head of Regeneration and Business Development Enterprise Development Officers Assistant Director: Economy, Growth and Tourism Head of Regeneration and Business Development
Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme					
Invest in employability and skills through the implementation of the LMP Action Plan.	ERT Business Plan 2025-26 EFT Service Plan 2025-26	Implementation of the LMP Action Plan			
Risk Management					
Risks		Actions and Controls to Mitigate Against Risks			
Failure to deliver the economic development programmes to support the economic recovery of the District		All programmes to be in place with robust management and governance arrangements.			
The impact of Brexit on delivering the various economic development programmes and achieving targets		Ongoing monitoring of key influences and economic development support adjusted to meet local demand.			
Lack of interest in and applications made to participate in programmes		Publicity campaigns delivered through online and social media platforms. Signposting service in place.			

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				
Senior Responsible Officer	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Directors: Environment / Sustainability			
Link to Community Plan	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	Link to Corporate Plan 2024-27	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future	
Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26	- Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee - Annual Assessment of Performance to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee			
Meeting the legislative criteria	Strategic Effectiveness: Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives and will deliver real benefits and outcomes to local citizens. Service Availability: The availability of key services will improve, through support for community led initiatives and access to funding through 'Live Here Love Here' campaigns. Innovation: The Council has introduced innovative ways to improve civic and community pride across the District, as evidenced through support for Community Clean ups, Enforcement Improvement Plan, continued engagement with Keep NI Beautiful and the development of mobile apps to report and record environmental crime, identify emerging issues and address 'hotspots' across the District. Sustainability: Initiatives to encourage public participation in key campaigns, promote responsible dog ownership and reduce levels of littering, fly tipping and dog fouling will empower residents and support the delivery of a more sustainable service and cleaner District in the future.			
What we are going to do				
Supporting Action	Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy	Measure of Success	Resources	Governance Arrangements
Address issues around littering, fly tipping and dog fouling by: Implementing the Enforcement Improvement Plan	Corporate Plan 2024-27	Number of fixed penalty notices issued (littering and dog fouling)	Within existing resources	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plan 2025-26
	Enforcement Action Plan Sustainability and Environment			
				Assistant Director: Environment Head of Waste Processing

Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity and social media campaigns Working with Louth County Council to raise awareness of the impact of fly tipping along the border area Encouraging residents to bring properly sorted surplus recyclable waste to our Household Recycling Centres	Directorate Business Plan 2025-26 Environment Service Plan 2025-26	Number of fixed penalty notices paid (littering and dog fouling) Percentage of issued fixed penalty notices that are paid The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	Ongoing assessments of the Dog Fouling Strategy and Enforcement Action Plan	Head of Waste Management
Continued implementation of a Paint Re-Use Scheme at a further 2 Household Recycling Centres	SE Directorate Business Plan 2025-26 Environment Service Plan 2025-26	Reduction in the disposal of paint from our Household Recycling Centre sites.	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business & Service Plan 2025-26	Assistant Director: Environment Head of Waste Processing
Support local community clean ups, Participate in the Keep NI Beautiful 'Live Here Love Here' campaign	Sustainability & Directorate Business Plan 2025-26	Percentage of community clean up requests supported	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business & Service Plan 2025-26	Assistant Director: Sustainability Head of Sustainability

Encourage community groups to 'Adopt a Spot'	Environment Service Plan 2025-26	Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects Number of community groups to 'Adopt a Spot'			
Exploring options to determine levels of street cleanliness and identify emerging issues and hotspots	SE Directorate Business Plan 2025-26 Environment Service Plan	Work commenced on researching companies that provide cleanliness inspection systems	Within existing resources	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business & Service Plan 2025-26	Assistant Director: Environment Head of Waste Processing
Highlight the impact of littering on the marine environment Rollout an environmental awareness campaign displayed on Council fleet highlighting simple messages on recycling, littering and dog fouling	SE Directorate Business Plan 2025-26 Environment Service Plan	Work commenced in relation to littering and the marine environment A number of bin lorries painted with environmental and recycling messages to carry out bin collections	Within existing resources	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business & Service Plan 2025-26	Assistant Director: Environment Head of Waste Processing
Risk Management					
Risks		Actions to Mitigate Against Risks			
Stakeholders do not get involved in community clean up's and 'Live Here Love Here' campaigns		All initiatives are promoted and publicised across the District, through social media, website, liaison with Council employees and word of mouth.			
Failure to improve the level of street cleanliness and reduce the level of littering, dog fouling and fly tipping		The Council has a number of initiatives in place to encourage civic pride in the local area, promote responsible dog ownership, report littering and use enforcement action. Council is now looking into other cleanliness monitoring systems due to lack of data from the LEAMS survey.			
Failure to achieve the statutory targets for waste management		Programmes are in place to increase the rate of recycling and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.			

Performance Improvement Objective 4

We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change				
Senior Responsible Officer	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Director: Sustainability			
Link to Community Plan	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment		Link to Corporate Plan 2024-27	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future
Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26	Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee			
Meeting the legislative criteria	Strategic Effectiveness: Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives and will deliver real benefits and outcomes to citizens. Efficiency: The procurement and availability of younger, less polluting cars as well as cars with alternative fuel sources will provide a more efficient and effective service to our customers as well as working towards protecting our environment. Innovation: Innovative mechanisms to allow more people access electric cars by providing more electric charging points will hopefully assist in the increase of cars with alternative fuel sources Sustainability: Implementing the Council's fleet replacement programme to ensure younger, less polluting cars as well as cars with alternative fuel sources are within our fleet which allows for the delivery of a more sustainable service across the District.			
What we are going to do				
Supporting Action	Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy	Measure of Success	Resources	Governance Arrangements
Continue the implementation of the Council's Fleet Replacement Program	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26	% of Council fleet younger than 8 years	Within existing resources	Annual and Bi-annual assessment of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26
	Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26	Number of cars in Council fleet with alternative fuel source		Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee
				Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Director: Sustainability

Publication of the following strategies and plans: - Climate change and sustainable development strategy - Climate Change Adaptation Plan	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26 Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26	All strategies and plans published	Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26 Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Director: Sustainability
Implementation of the newly published Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2028	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26 Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26	Actions and Objectives within the Strategy implemented within specified timelines	Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26 Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Director: Sustainability
Support the continued implementation of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26 Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26	Number of Council supported EV charging points	Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26 Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee	Assistant Director: Sustainability
Undertaking a baseline of the Council's carbon footprint	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26 Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26	Baseline established	Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26 Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Director: Sustainability

Undertake a baseline of the Council's energy consumption	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26 Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26	Baseline established	Within existing resources	Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Director: Sustainability
Establishing a baseline of current renewable energy generation by Council sites	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26 Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26	Baseline established	Within existing resources	Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan 2025-26	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Director: Sustainability
Completion of the Council's Tree Strategy for publication	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2025-26 Sustainability Service Plan 2025-26	Number of trees planted on Council managed estate	Working with external partners as well as within existing resources	Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26 Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee	Assistant Director: Sustainability
Risk Management					
Risks		Actions to Mitigate Against Risks			
Delivery issues with vehicles ordered		Getting approval for vehicles in time and ordering early to mitigate against time delays on delivery			
Trees not taking root and dying		Planting the whips and trees at the appropriate time for the best results and maintaining care throughout the planting process			
Too many plans and strategies to be complete and not getting done on time		Timetabling the process and adding additional resources when required.			
Carbon footprint and energy baselines not established		Having approval in place to procure services and researching service providers to ensure the work is able to be carried out within agreed timeframes			

Performance Improvement Objective 5

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

Senior Responsible Officer	Director: Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Assistant Director: Regeneration Chief Planner				
Link to Community Plan	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	Link to Corporate Plan 2024-27	Deliver sustainable services		
Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26	- Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee - Annual Assessment of Performance 2024-25 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee				
Meeting the legislative criteria	Strategic Effectiveness: Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives and will deliver real benefits to citizens. Service Quality: The implementation of the Planning Service Improvement Programme and the new planning portal has, and will continue to improve the quality of the service provided by reducing the processing times of applications. Service Availability: Improved availability of the Planning Service, focused on reducing processing times, will contribute to the sustainable development of Newry, Mourne and Down. Efficiency: The purpose of the Planning Service Improvement Programme is to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the service, by seeking to make better use of the resources available.				
What we are going to do					
Supporting Action	Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy	Measure of Success	Resources	Governance Arrangements Responsible Officers	
Reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases which have been in the system for over 12 months	ERT Business Plan 2025-26	Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	Within existing resources	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26	Assistant Director: Regeneration
	Regeneration Service Plan 2025-26	Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)			Chief Planner
Work with agents and architects to improve		Percentage of planning enforcement cases			

the standard of planning applications submitted		progressed within 39 weeks			
Support employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries'		Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more			
		Number of planning applications in the system for less than 12 months			
		Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more			
Launch the Draft Plan Strategy	ERT Business Plan 2025-26 Regeneration Service Plan 2025-26	Draft Plan Strategy launched	Within existing resources	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan & Service Plans 2025-26	Assistant Director: Regeneration
Risks		Risks Management		Actions to Mitigate the Risks	
Failure to meet the statutory performance standards for processing planning applications, enforcement cases.				The Planning Service Improvement Programme outlines the key areas for improvement, with progress being monitored and reported on a regular basis.	
The Council does not reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases in the system				The Planning Service Improvement Programme outlines the key areas for improvement, with progress being monitored and reported on a regular basis.	

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	31 July 2025
Subject:	Prompt Payment Statistics – Quarter 1 2025/26
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne: Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne: Assistant Director of Finance & Performance

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision

For noting only

X

1.0	Purpose and Background																					
1.1	'Prompt payment' is the payment of valid supplier invoices by public bodies, as set in government targets. This dataset contains the: • Total amount paid by each Northern Ireland council to suppliers • Total number of invoices • Number of invoices paid within 10 working days • Number of invoices paid within 30 calendar days • Number of invoices paid outside 30 calendar days Adherence to the policy is not mandatory for councils, but in a letter issued to council Chief Executives in October 2013, the Department of Environment's Local Government Policy Division said that: 'District councils are encouraged to pay suppliers as promptly as possible and to endeavour to meet the 10 day prompt payment commitment made by Northern Ireland Executive in response to the current economic position'.																					
2.0	Key issues																					
2.1	The table below provides a comparison of prompt payment statistics for the last five financial years. <table><tr><th>Financial Year</th><th>Within 30 days (T&C's)</th><th>Within 10 days</th></tr><tr><td>2019/20</td><td>90%</td><td>18%</td></tr><tr><td>2020/21</td><td>86%</td><td>11%</td></tr><tr><td>2021/22</td><td>89%</td><td>17%</td></tr><tr><td>2022/23</td><td>86%</td><td>43%</td></tr><tr><td>2023/24</td><td>95%</td><td>50%</td></tr><tr><td>2024/25</td><td>94%</td><td>46%</td></tr></table>	Financial Year	Within 30 days (T&C's)	Within 10 days	2019/20	90%	18%	2020/21	86%	11%	2021/22	89%	17%	2022/23	86%	43%	2023/24	95%	50%	2024/25	94%	46%
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2023/24	95%	50%																				
2024/25	94%	46%																				

2.2	Quarter 4 2024/25 - 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025 <table><tr><td></td><td>Paid within 10 days</td><td>Paid within 30 days</td><td>Paid outside payment period</td><td>Total invoices</td></tr><tr><td>Number of Invoices</td><td>1,391</td><td>3,392</td><td>267</td><td>3,659</td></tr><tr><td>Percentage</td><td>38%</td><td>93%</td><td>7%</td><td>100%</td></tr><tr><td>Value</td><td>£9,925,326</td><td>£18,274,780</td><td>£818,569</td><td>£19,093,349</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Average number of days to pay suppliers: 15.41</td><td colspan="2">Performance trend: </td></tr></table>		Paid within 10 days	Paid within 30 days	Paid outside payment period	Total invoices	Number of Invoices	1,391	3,392	267	3,659	Percentage	38%	93%	7%	100%	Value	£9,925,326	£18,274,780	£818,569	£19,093,349	Average number of days to pay suppliers: 15.41			Performance trend:	
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Average number of days to pay suppliers: 15.41			Performance trend:																							
2.3	Quarter 1 2025/26 - 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025 <table><tr><td></td><td>Paid within 10 days</td><td>Paid within 30 days</td><td>Paid outside payment period</td><td>Total invoices</td></tr><tr><td>Number of Invoices</td><td>865</td><td>4,382</td><td>492</td><td>4,874</td></tr><tr><td>Percentage</td><td>10%</td><td>90%</td><td>10%</td><td>100%</td></tr><tr><td>Value</td><td>£6,651,551</td><td>£21,339,639</td><td>£3,148,165</td><td>£24,487,804</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Average number of days to pay suppliers: 17.43</td><td colspan="2">Performance trend: </td></tr></table>		Paid within 10 days	Paid within 30 days	Paid outside payment period	Total invoices	Number of Invoices	865	4,382	492	4,874	Percentage	10%	90%	10%	100%	Value	£6,651,551	£21,339,639	£3,148,165	£24,487,804	Average number of days to pay suppliers: 17.43			Performance trend:	
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Average number of days to pay suppliers: 17.43			Performance trend:																							
3.0	Recommendations																									
31	To note: The Q1 2025/26 Prompt Payment statistics.																									
4.0	Resource implications																									
4.1	The Purchase to Pay Team provide statistics to the Department for Communities on a quarterly basis. The prompt payment statistics are also published on our website.																									
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)																									
5.1	General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒																									
5.2	Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following:																									

	The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	Proposal initiating consultation Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐ Rationale: Consultation not required.
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☐
7.0	Appendices
	None
8.0	Background Documents
	None

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	31 July 2025
Subject:	Assurance Framework and Code of Governance
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director of Finance & Performance

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-	
For decision	For noting only ☒
1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	The purpose of this paper is to explain to Members the key elements of the 'year-end' process and the 'assurance framework' that the Council developed to help ensure that the Council complies with statutory requirements and Members and senior officers can have effective, ongoing oversight of the Council's governance and assurance arrangements.
1.2	The Assurance Framework and Code of Governance at Appendix 1 are used to inform Council's Governance Statement within our Statement of Accounts.
2.0	Key issues
2.1	<u>Assurance Framework</u> The Council's Assurance Framework is summarised at Appendix 1 . It demonstrates how different sources of assurance and related key elements / control measures combine to enable the Council to monitor its governance arrangements and produce the evidence to support its Annual Governance Statement. The diagram shows how the Council's Audit Committee, the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee and Council provide oversight of these governance arrangements. Only minor amendments have made to the Assurance Framework including; • Equality Screening Outcome reports available through Council website • Planning for the Future restructure now implemented
2.2	<u>Annual Governance Statement 2024/25</u> The Council has a statutory responsibility to annually prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement as part of the Financial Statements. Many different processes inform the preparation of the Statement as can be seen from the Assurance Framework at Appendix 1 . The Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 is presented at item number 9. It will be incorporated into the unaudited statement of accounts and will be subject to review by the NIAO as part of their annual audit.
3.0	Recommendations

3.1	Members are asked to note the Council's Assurance Framework and the Code of Governance, illustrated and described at Appendix 1 .
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	There are no resource implications.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	<i>Proposal initiating consultation</i> Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐ <i>Rationale:</i> Consultation not required.
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒

	If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☐
7.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1 – NMDDC Assurance Framework (including Code of Governance)
8.0	Background Documents
	Agenda Number 9 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Assurance Framework



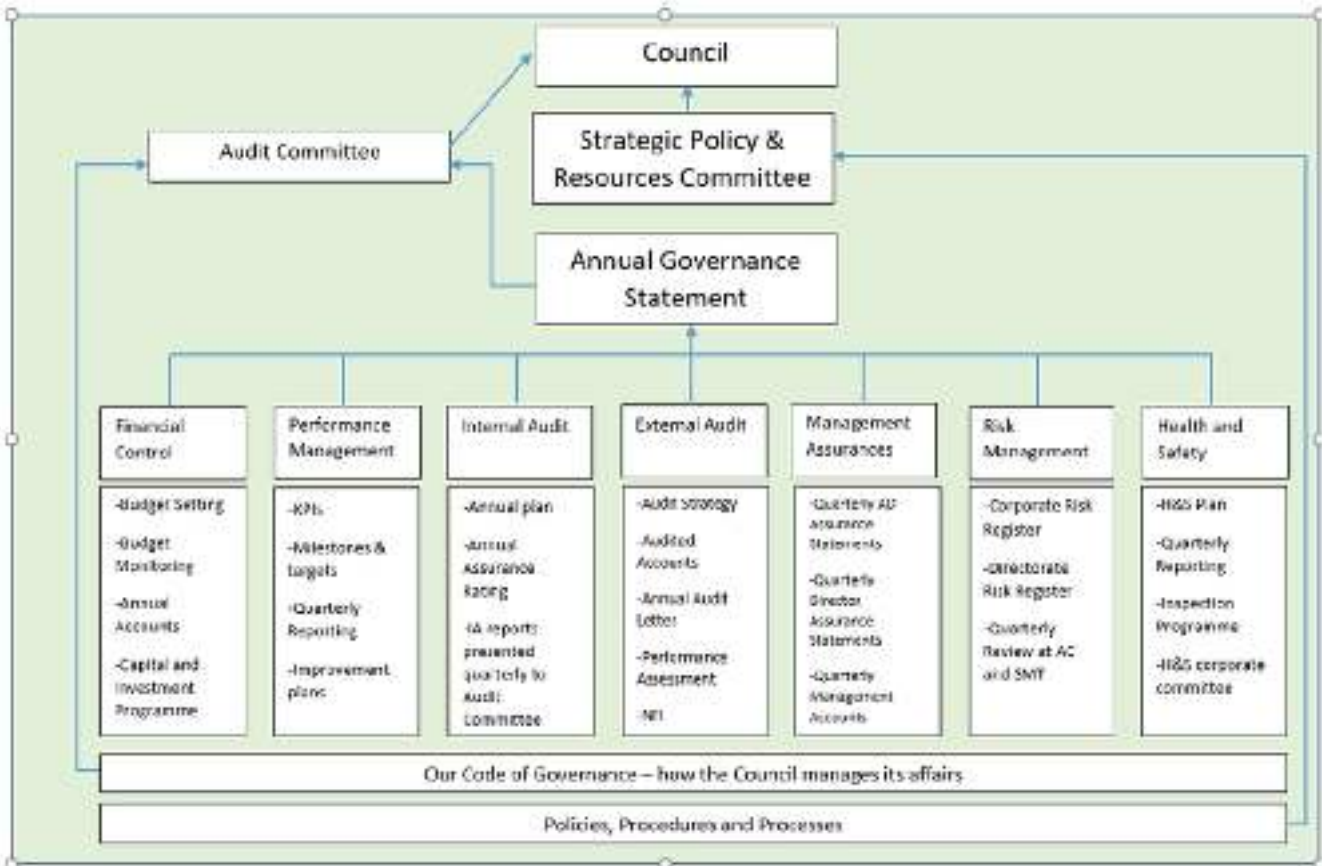
Effective Date: June 2019

Version 6.0

Policy Control

Policy Title	Assurance Framework
Departmental Ownership	Corporate Services
Document Owner	Josephine Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Officer Responsible	Gerard Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
Date of Approval	Audit Committee – 3 July 2019 Council – 5 August 2019
Date of Last update	June 2025
Updated by	Gerard Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
Date of next Review	June 2026
Location where document is held and referenced	Shared Drive and NMDDC Website

Key Components of the Council's Assurance Framework



Description of Key Elements the Council's Assurance Framework

The diagram shows how different sources of assurance and related key elements / control measures combine to enable the Council to monitor its governance arrangements and produce the information which enables the Council to prepare their Annual Governance Statement. The diagram also shows how the Council's Audit Committee, the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee (SP&R) and Council provide oversight of these governance arrangements. The key elements of the framework are described below.

Financial Control

A Financial Report for the year ended 31 March is prepared annually and submitted to the Department for Communities by 30 June. The report is then audited by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and published by 30 September each year (after approval by Committee). There is a budgetary control process including budget setting, budget monitoring and budget reporting. Senior Management Team (SMT), Corporate Management Team (CMT) and SP&R Committee challenge the process corporately when budgets are approved annually and performance is reported quarterly.

Standing Committees are also responsible for challenging and approving their annual budget and subsequently scrutinizing their budget performance at the end of each quarter in the following financial year.

Performance Management

The Council's performance management framework supports the implementation of the corporate and directorate plans through regular monitoring, reporting and review and, in future, will support monitoring / reporting on Community Planning outcomes. These plans set out what the Council

intends to deliver over the course of the year and through the performance framework regular performance reports are produced detailing progress against key milestones and targets.

These reports are considered by Directorate Management Teams and the CMT and actions for improvement are agreed. These arrangements are also designed to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties in relation to continuous improvement and our performance and related plans are subject to annual NIAO audit.

Internal Audit

Internal auditing is an independent and objective assurance designed to add value and improve Council's operations. The Council's Assistant Director of Finance and Performance, who liaises with the fully independent specialist Auditing Contractor who prepares an annual Strategy and Plan of work designed to ensure that:

- there is a robust system of internal audit of key Council activities and processes through a plan of work which affords suitable priority to the Council's objectives and risks
- there is a process of ensuring improvements to the Council's control environment, by providing management with advice, training and recommendations to improve risk management, governance and control arrangements, including the formal monitoring of the implementation of audit recommendations
- the specialist Auditing Contractor will be in a position to provide, at the end of each year, a professional, evidence-based opinion on the adequacy of the Council's risk management, control and governance arrangements which, in turn, will support the preparation of the Council's Annual Governance Statement
- the Council meets its legislative responsibilities for internal control, risk management and internal audit.

External Audit

Each year, the Local Government Auditor (LGA), the NIAO, completes an audit of the Council's accounts in accordance with legislation and the Local Government Code of Audit Practice issued by the Chief LGA. The LGA Annual Report sets out their opinion on the Council's financial statements and is included within the annual Financial Report.

The NIAO also examines annually whether the Council has proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources and that public money is properly accounted for and undertakes an annual audit and assessment of the Council's performance improvement arrangements. Their findings are summarised in an Annual Audit Letter, a Performance audit report and a Report to those Charged with Governance.

Assurances from Management & Governance Statement

Each quarter, Assistant Directors provide their Director with a Quarterly Assurance Statement. The Directors in turn then prepare a quarterly assurance statements for the Chief Executive. The Assurance Statements confirms:

- Their responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound risk management and internal control system which supports the achievement of the corporate and directorate objectives.
- Compliance with the risk review process and outlining progress to manage key risks and highlight any significant governance issues that should be considered by SMT for inclusion within the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

Assistant Directors provide analysis on all budget variance quarterly to both their Director and to Finance.

Risk Management

There is an agreed risk management strategy which sets out the processes the Council has put in place to manage risk. Risk registers and risk action plans are in place at corporate, directorate and

project level and are recorded on the corporate risk management system, GRACE Governance Solutions. There is reporting to CMT, SMT and the Audit Committee on risk management.

National Fraud Initiative (NFI)

NFI is a UK-wide counter-fraud exercise. In Northern Ireland, the exercise is undertaken by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG) under their statutory data matching powers set out in Article 4 of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. The C&AG works in collaboration with the Cabinet Office, Audit Scotland and Audit Wales, which undertake the NFI exercise in England, Scotland and Wales respectively. The NFI uses computerised techniques to compare information about individuals, held by different public bodies and on different financial systems, which might suggest the existence of fraud or error. It means that public bodies can take action if any fraud or error has taken place, and it allows auditors to assess the fraud prevention arrangements which those organisations have in place.

The Assistant Director of Finance and Performance coordinates this biannual exercise to ensure Council complies with its statutory duties and to ensure Council controls are effective to assist in preventing and detecting fraud and error.

Health and Safety (H&S)

The Council has a Corporate H&S Policy which is reviewed on an annual basis and incorporates the Organisation Structure and Arrangements to deliver on the Policy. The remit of the Corporate Health and Safety Joint Forum is to liaise between Senior Management, Assistant Directors, Safety Health & Emergency Planning (SHEP) Section and recognised Trade Union Representatives and any other subject matter experts deemed relevant.

The purpose of this forum is to discuss and review overarching health and safety issues and any unresolved matters escalated from the Departmental Operational Meetings (as appropriate). The Joint Forum meets on a quarterly basis and discuss issues as defined by the terms of reference for same. H&S reports and updates are provided by SHEP to all levels – operational, corporate and strategic to include information on performance against health and safety targets, accident statistics, policy changes, legislative changes and emerging health and safety issues.

The SHEP section facilitate the delivery of cross-cutting corporate H&S training as per agreed programme to include e-learning platforms.

Code of Governance

Underlying our Assurance Framework is our Code of Governance. The Council is committed to the principles of good governance and our Code of Governance is a public statement of that commitment. Our Code has been prepared in line with best practice and a summary is contained in the Annual Governance Statement, see appendix 1 for further detail.

Policies, procedures and processes

Policies, procedures and processes are designed to underpin day-to-day operations. All policies are controlled centrally by the Head of Corporate Policy.

Audit Committee

Its purpose is to provide an independent assurance on the adequacy of the Council's risk management framework and associated control environment.

Strategy Policy & Resources Committee (SP&R)

The SP&R Committee also oversees directly the financial management / stewardship of the Council.

Code of Governance

Introduction

Governance arrangements in the public sector are keenly observed and sometimes criticised. We need to ensure that we meet the highest standards and that our governance arrangements are not only sound but are seen to be sound.

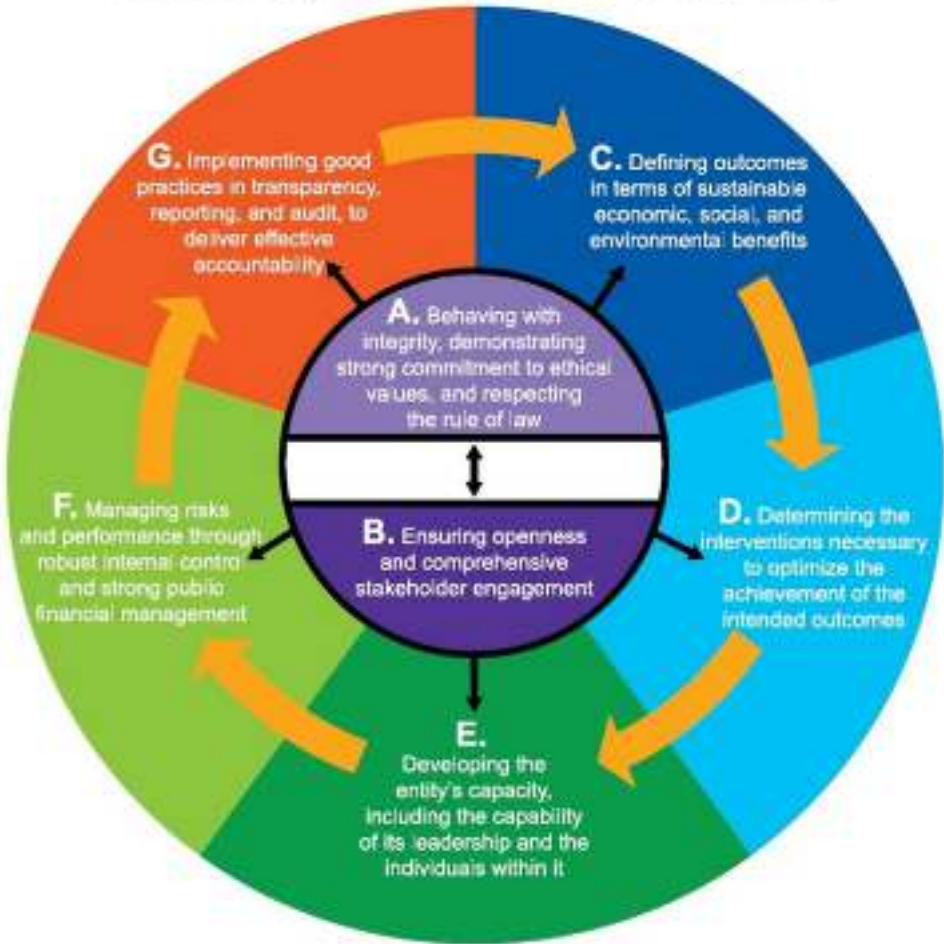
Governance is about how Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC) ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads its community.

The CIPFA Solace ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: A Framework’ was issued in April 2016 and represents best practice for developing and maintaining a local code of governance and applies to annual governance statements prepared for the 2018/19 financial year onwards.

NMDDC is committed to the principles of Good Governance and has developed this Code of Governance to demonstrate this commitment. This Code will be updated and approved by the Audit Committee on an annual basis.

The 7 Principles of Good Governance

Achieving the Intended Outcomes
While Acting in the Public Interest at all Times



A. Behaving with integrity

- Shared values communicated via community plan, corporate plan and key strategies
- Mandatory Code of Conduct for Councillors
- NI charter for Elected Member Development
- Staff Code of conduct
- Council Constitution including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation
- Council Anti-Fraud Policies and Fraud Response Plan
- Council participate in the National Fraud Initiative – Bi annual data matching exercise
- Council Raising Concerns Policy
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Declarations of interest
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Equality and Diversity Framework
- People Perform Grow (PPG) appraisal process for staff

B. Ensuring Openness

- Council and Committee meetings open to the public
- Council and Committee agendas and minutes displayed on the Council web site
- Consultation and engagement with staff and trade unions
- Annual financial report published on the Council's web site
- Access to Information Policy and Procedure
- Community Plan and Local Development Plan
- Corporate plan and performance improvement plan are subject to consultation before agreement
- Equality Screening Outcome reports available through Council website

C. Defining Outcomes

- Community Plan 'Living well together'
- Corporate and Directorate Plans
- Belfast Region City Deal Investment Plan
- Organisational Development
- Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy
- Performance Improvement Plans
- Local Development Plan
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Grant Funding Processes

D. Optimising the achievement of outcomes

- Corporate and Directorate plans
- Constitution
- Strategic financial management and reporting framework in place
- Risk Management Policy and Framework in place
- Adoption of the NMDDC Local Development Plan (LDP)
- Key partner in the Belfast Region City Deal
- Regular reports on progress of our performance improvement plan to SMT, SP&R and Audit Committee

E. Developing Capacity and Capability

- Organisational Development and Learning Development Policy
- Harmonisation of policies

- Development of a joint Employee Relations consultation and negotiating policy
- Elected Members Development Charter/Member Leadership Programme
- Appraisal Scheme in place for Chief Executive
- People Perform Grow (PPG) appraisal process for staff
- Health and Wellbeing working group
- Planning for the Future restructure now implemented

F. Finance, Performance and Risk Management

- Financial Regulations In place
- Risk Management Policy and Framework
- Quarterly Audit Committee
- Fully independent outsourced Internal Audit firm
- Annual Internal Audit Strategy and Plan
- Data Protection policy and procedures
- Director and Assistant Director quarterly Assurance reporting
- Independent Audit Committee Chairperson
- Annual Rate Setting Process
- Compliance with CIPFA Financial Management Code
- Treasury Management and Capital Strategy in place with quarterly reporting

G. Transparency, Reporting and Effective Accountability

- NMDDC website which is regularly updated
- Publication of key reports including Annual Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and Performance Improvement Report
- Committee support framework to approve papers prior to submission to Members
- Internal Audit annual assurance statement within the annual governance statement
- Internal Audit effectiveness annually reviewed against public sector internal audit standards, with an independent external review every five years
- Monitoring of all Internal and External Audit recommendations and quarterly updates to the Audit Committee.

Compliance with the Code

This Code of Governance is supported by Policies, Procedures and Systems that determine and control how the Council manages its affairs. **Appendix B** provides more detail, demonstrating how the Council currently complies with the Code.

Monitoring and Review

Our governance arrangements are reviewed annually to ensure that they are adequate and operating effectively in practice. The results of these reviews are reported to the Audit Committee and inform the preparation of our Annual Governance Statement which forms part of our published financial report.

Internal Audit will undertake reviews of the Councils governance arrangements to ensure they are adequate and operating effectively in practice.

Appendix B

Core Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law	
Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles
A.1 Behaving with integrity	➤ Mandatory Code of Conduct for Councillors – The NI code of Local Government Conduct for Members ➤ Code of conduct for NMDDC staff ➤ NI Charter for Elected Member Development ➤ Declarations of interest a standing agenda item for Council/Committee meetings ➤ Conflicts of Interest Policy ➤ Annual Mandatory declarations of Interest to be completed by staff who are deemed to be high risk. Voluntary declarations to be completed by other staff ➤ Council minutes include whether any declarations of interests have been made ➤ Fraud and Raising Concern policies in place ➤ Council participate in the National Fraud Initiative – Biannual data matching exercise ➤ Gifts and Hospitality Policy with each Department maintaining a register (Directors' Pas record all declarations) ➤ Members approve the: ▪ Constitution ▪ Standing Orders and Financial Regulations ▪ Codes of Conduct ➤ Members approval of the Community and Corporate Plans ➤ Scheme of Delegation ➤ Party Group Leaders Forum ➤ Members Training and Workshops ➤ Shared values communicated through the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and the Annual Performance Improvement Plan ➤ Open and transparent committee system and reporting ➤ People Perform Grow (PPG) appraisal process for staff
A.2 Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	➤ Mandatory Code of Conduct for Councillors ➤ Register maintained of Members' declarations of interest ➤ Register maintained of Officers' declarations of interest ➤ Ethical requirements of Professional Standards ➤ Standing Orders ➤ Register maintained of Members' declarations of interest ➤ Ongoing monitoring and reporting through Internal Audit and Risk Management processes ➤ Systems and processes for financial administration ➤ Partners and Contractors required to comply with relevant policies ➤ Policies in place which demonstrate our commitment to ethical values includes:

Core Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law		
Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles	
	▪ Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan ▪ Equality and Diversity Framework ▪ Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group ▪ Disability Action Plan ▪ Data Protection Policy ➤ Equality Screening process and Rural Needs Impact Assessments ➤ Letters of Offer issued with Grants ➤ Monitoring arrangements ➤ Procurement guidance and policy	
A.3 Respecting the rule of law	➤ Council Constitution ➤ Updated Financial Regulations ➤ Updated Standing Orders ➤ Register maintained of Members' declarations of interest ➤ Register maintained of Officer' declarations of interest ➤ Operating Protocol for Planning Committee ➤ Council Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan ➤ Council participate in the National Fraud Initiative – Biannual data matching exercise ➤ Council Raising Concern Policy ➤ Gifts and Hospitality Policy ➤ Qualified majority voting and Call-In process in operation in accordance with the Local Government Act 2014 ➤ External expert legal and other professional advice sought when necessary. ➤ Fraud and Raising Concern investigations undertaken ➤ HR Disciplinary processes.	

Core Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	
Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles
B1: Openness	➤ Council meetings are open to the public and members of the media ➤ Council's web site provides up-to-date information regarding: ▪ Council activities ▪ Policies ▪ Reports issued ➤ Use of Social Media ➤ Internal Communications issued via Chief Executives' briefs ➤ Consultation with stakeholders regarding the Community and Performance Improvement Plans ➤ Community Planning Process ➤ Corporate Complaints Procedure ➤ Customer Service Standards in Draft format – to be brought through Council Summer 2019. ➤ Council minutes are published on the website ➤ Standard pro forma for all Committee reports. ➤ Annual Performance Improvement Plan published on the web site. ➤ Categories for 'confidential business' for Committee ➤ Staff Consultations ➤ Access to Information Policy and Procedure
B2: Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders	➤ A co-ordinated and strategic approach to community engagement and involvement that enables partners to bring together their community engagement work and plans and connects Members, community and citizen engagement and partnership decision making ➤ Local Development Planning ➤ Strategic Stakeholder Forum ➤ Community Planning Process ➤ Monthly Community Planning team meetings ➤ Community planning partnership meets 3 times per year ➤ Community Plan Statutory Partners ➤ Place Shaping Agenda ➤ Ongoing engagement with Trade Unions

B3: Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively	➤ Community Plan developed following consultation with Statutory Partners, stakeholders and the public ➤ Local Development Plan ➤ Annual Performance Improvement Plan ➤ Corporate Plan Engagement ➤ Residents Survey undertaken every four years
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Core Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	
Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles
C1: Defining Outcomes	➤ 'Living well Together' the Districts Community Plan 2017-2030 ➤ The Corporate Plan will be driven by priorities set out in the 'Living Well Together' Community Plan ➤ Annual Performance Improvement Plan ➤ Corporate Planning Framework for the development of the 2024-2027 Corporate Plan ➤ Transformation programme being developed which will include detailed service reviews ➤ Treasury Management ➤ Multi year Capital Programme ➤ Prudential Financial Framework ➤ Local Development Plan ➤ Annual Directorate Business Plans ➤ Sports Facilities Strategy Document ➤ NMDDC Tourism Strategy ➤ Tourism Marketing Plan ➤ Tourism Experience Brochure ➤ Belfast Region City Deal Investment Plan ➤ Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy ➤ Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy ➤ Irish Language Strategy

C2: Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	➤ 'Living well Together' the Districts Community Plan 2017-2030 ➤ Annual Performance Improvement Plan ➤ Local Development Plan ➤ New Corporate Plan will be driven by priorities set out in the Community Plan ➤ Corporate Planning Framework for the development of the 2024-2027 Corporate Plan ➤ Local Development Plan – Preferred Options Papers ➤ Risk Management processes ➤ Corporate Policy & Equality Officer ➤ Established processes for governance, management and administration of grants ➤ Equality Impact Assessments ➤ Equality Screening completed for all policies
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Core Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievements of the intended outcomes/	
Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles
D1: Determining interventions	➤ Evidence and Research team support the Council in the development of a data and evidence based approach to support the creation of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Local Development Plan and key related strategies. ➤ Ongoing consultation and engagement with the public, stakeholders and the community and voluntary sectors. ➤ Ongoing consultation and engagement with the public and key stakeholders ➤ Professional advice sought when required ➤ Transformation programme being developed which will include detailed service reviews

D2: Planning interventions	➤ Planning processes encompassing Community, Corporate and Performance Improvement Plans ➤ Community Planning engagement framework completed through thematic groups via the DEA's ➤ Local Development Plan ➤ Strategic Planning Framework ➤ Directorate business plans ➤ Performance Improvement Plans including KPI's ➤ Risk Management processes ➤ Budgetary Control including a multiyear capital plan ➤ Monthly Management accounts ➤ Financial planning ➤ Estimates process including Efficiency Working Group ➤ Performance Indicators ➤ Transformation programme being developed which will include detailed service reviews ➤ Medium term financial planning ➤ Financial management of capital programme ➤ Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators
D3: Optimising achievement of intended outcomes	➤ Financial reporting ➤ Reporting to the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee ➤ Treasury Management ➤ Estimates Process ➤ Budgetary Reporting ➤ MRP Policy ➤ Estimates Process ➤ Council/Committee Reporting ➤ Community Plan ➤ Local Development Plan

Core Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	
Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles
E1: Developing the entity's capacity	➤ Organisational Development ➤ Transformation programme being developed which will include detailed service reviews ➤ Performance Improvement Plan ➤ Annual NIAO Improvement Audits and Assessments of Council ➤ Monitoring of the performance of the delivery of Council Improvement Objectives to ensure compliance with the performance improvement requirements of part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 ➤ Directors and Assistant Directors quarterly assurance statements ➤ Community Plan Statutory Partners ➤ Service Level Agreements
E2: Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals	➤ Group Party Leaders Meetings ➤ Induction Training and Learning and Development Programme for Members ➤ Member Development Charter ➤ Scheme of Delegation ➤ Audit Committee undertake an annual self-assessment exercise against CIPFA standards ➤ Planning Scheme of Delegation ➤ CE Job Description/Specification and Appraisal Scheme ➤ Terms and conditions of employment ➤ Capacity building around the Code of Conduct ➤ Performance Improvement consultation ➤ Consultation on major Council strategies ➤ Performance Improvement Plan ➤ Directorate business plans ➤ Project Plans ➤ Corporate Management Team Meetings ➤ Continuing Professional Development ➤ Corporate Health & Safety ➤ Occupational Health Service including Westfield Health ➤ All staff have access to leisure facilities ➤ A number of posts related to improving health and wellbeing in the district (i.e. Exercise referral coordinator, GP referral coordinator, Macmillan move more coordinator and Age friendly Coordinator)

Core Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong financial management		
Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles	
F1: Managing risk	➤ Risk Management Policy ➤ Risk Management software system ➤ SMT update Corporate Risk Register quarterly and present to audit Committee ➤ Directorate risk registers updated bi-annually ➤ Director and Assistant Director Quarterly Assurance Statements	
F2: Managing performance	➤ Annual NIAO Audit and Assessment Reports ➤ Annual Performance Improvement Plans ➤ Directorate business plans ➤ Agreed pro forma for Committee reports showing option appraisals and implications. ➤ Regular reporting of financial information to the SP&R committee ➤ Legal and professional advice obtained as necessary ➤ The SP&R and Audit Committee oversees and monitors performance management, processes, systems and related arrangements. ➤ The SP&R Committee oversees and monitors structures, governance arrangements and financial information. ➤ Performance Improvement updates ➤ Financial Management ➤ Risk Management processes and reporting ➤ Budgetary reporting ➤ Performance Management System	
F3: Robust internal control	➤ Directorate Business Plans ➤ Risk Management Policy and processes ➤ Risk registers in place and linked to objectives ➤ Assistant Director of Finance and Performance liaises with a fully independent internal audit firm ➤ Independent External Review of Internal Audit every 5 years. ➤ Internal Audit planning ➤ Risk based auditing ➤ Recommendation tracker to monitor all Internal Audit recommendations ➤ Council Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan ➤ Council Raising Concern Policy ➤ Council participate in the National Fraud Initiative – Biannual data matching exercise ➤ Gifts and Hospitality Policy ➤ Directors and Assistant Director Quarterly Assurance Statements ➤ Annual Governance Statement ➤ Audit Committee with an independent Chairperson	

Core Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong financial management		
Supporting Principles		
How we meet these principles		
F4: Managing data	➤ Data Protection Policy ➤ Data Protection training ➤ IT Transformation Project underway ➤ Access controls in place on Council network ➤ Secure physical access to Council buildings and IT server rooms	
F5: Strong public financial management	➤ Rates Estimates process ➤ Annual Budget setting process and Budgetary reporting systems ➤ Financial management detailed in Directorate Business Plans ➤ Prudential Framework ➤ Compliance with CIPFA's Code on a Prudential Framework for Local Authority Capital Finance and CIPFA's Treasury Management Code ➤ Transformation programme being developed which includes detailed service reviews ➤ All Committee reports include financial implications ➤ Financial Regulations	

Core Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability		
Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles	
G1: Implementing good practice in transparency	➤ Annual Financial Report published on the Council's website. ➤ The Financial Report and accounts are prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting the UK ➤ The Council web site provides the public with up to date information ➤ Standard Committee report template	
G2: Implementing good practices in reporting	➤ Annual Accounts published on the Council's web site ➤ Established timescale for submission and approval of annual accounts ➤ Performance Improvement – Annual Audit and Assessment Reports ➤ Publication of statutory performance indicators in line with the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 ➤ Annual Governance Statement reviewed by Chief Executive and published on Council's website ➤ Council Committees consider and approve reports which are ratified by full Council ➤ Review of Corporate Governance carried out by Internal Audit ➤ Service Level Agreements ➤ The Annual Accounts are prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK based on International Financial Reporting Standards and the Department of Communities Accounts Direction. ➤ Committee reports presented by Senior Officers	
G3: Assurance and effective accountability	➤ All NIAO recommendations are included on the recommendation tracker with updates reported to Audit Committee ➤ All NIAO (External Audit) reports presented to the Audit Committee ➤ Assistant Director of Finance and Performance who liaises with fully independent Internal Audit firm ➤ External audit completed by NIAO ➤ NIAO Proper Arrangements Audit ➤ Internal Audit annual review of effectiveness ➤ Community Planning Statutory Partners ➤ The Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 ➤ Service Level Agreements ➤ Contract Management ➤ Directorate Business Plans in place which contain key corporate actions, risk actions and performance indicators	