

September 24th, 2026

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Thursday, 24th September 2026 at 2:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre**.

Committee Membership 2026-27

Ms Brona Slevin **Independent Chairperson**

Councillor Callum Bowsie

Councillor Jim Brennan

Councillor Pete Byrne

Councillor Laura Devlin

Councillor Mark Gibbons

Councillor Oonagh Hanlon

Councillor Tierna Howie

Councillor Cathal King

Councillor Kate Murphy

Councillor Siobhan O'Hare

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet of Audit Committee Meeting held 30 July 2026

Attachment: Audit Committee Action Sheet 2026_07_30.pdf

Page 1

Performance (OPEN SESSION)

4.0 Annual Assessment of Performance 2025-26

Attachment: Audit Committee Cover Report Assessment of Performance 2025-26.pdf

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Attachment: Appendix 1 - Assessment of Performance 2025-26.pdf

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Attachment: Appendix 3 - Our Performance Looking Back Going Forward 2025-26 - Final.pdf

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Attachment: Appendix 2 - Addendum to the Assessment of Performance 2025-26 - Planning Statistics.pdf

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5.0 Planning Department Update

Attachment: Planning Department Update - Audit Committee Sept 2026.pdf

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Corporate Services (OPEN SESSION)

6.0 Corporate Risk Register, to include S&E Risk Register

Attachment: 8 - Corporate Risk Register 24 Sep 26.pdf

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Attachment: Appendix 1 - CRR Overview - Sept 2026.pdf

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Attachment: Appendix 2 - Corporate Risk Report - Audit Committee Sept 2026.pdf

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Attachment: Appendix 3 - SE Overview - Sep 2026.pdf

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Attachment: Appendix 4 - S & E Risk Report - Sept Audit Committee.pdf

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Corporate Services (CLOSED SESSION)

7.0 Direct Award Contracts

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 that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: Audit Committee Cover Report for Q2 for review Updated (002).pdf *Not included*

Attachment: Copy of Appendix 2 Active DACs as of 110926.pdf *Not included*

Attachment: Copy of Appendix 1 DACs processed in Q2 5k .pdf *Not included*

8.0 Procurement Action Plans

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 that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: Audit - PAP Cover Report - 2627 Q2.pdf *Not included*

Attachment: PAP - Sustainability.pdf *Not included*

Attachment: PAP - Environment.pdf *Not included*

Attachment: PAP - Corporate Services.pdf *Not included*

Attachment: PAP - ERT.pdf *Not included*

Attachment: PAP - Archive.pdf *Not included*

9.0 Update on Audit Recommendations

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 that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: 10 - Follow up of Audit Recommendations September 2026 FINAL.pdf *Not included*

Attachment: 10 - Appendix 1 - Legacy IA Recommendations Sept 26.pdf *Not included*

Attachment: 10 - Appendix 2 - 2021-22 IA Recommendations Sept 26.pdf *Not included*

Attachment: 10 - Appendix 3 - 2022-23 IA Recommendations Sept 26.pdf **Not included**

Attachment: 10 - Appendix 4 - 2023-24 IA Recommendations Sept 26.pdf **Not included**

Attachment: 10 - Appendix 5 - 2024-25 IA Recommendations Sept 26.pdf **Not included**

Attachment: 10 - Appendix 6 - EA Recommendations Sept 26.pdf **Not included**

10.0 Update on Fraud and Raising Concerns

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 that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: 11- Fraud and Raising Concerns update new.pdf **Not included**

Attachment: 11 - Appendix 1 - Fraud and Raising Concerns Register Sept 2025.pdf **Not included**

Internal Audit (CLOSED SESSION)

11.0 Sumer NI Summary Report

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 that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: NMDDC Summary report - September 2026 to Audit Committee for issue.pdf **Not included**

11.1 Mid-year Follow Up Report

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 that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: 2026.27 NMDDC Follow up review - Final Report.pdf **Not included**

11.2 PCSP Report

Attachment: 2026.27 NMDDC - PCSP - Final Report.pdf

Not included

NIAO (CLOSED SESSION)

12.0 Draft Report for Those Charged With Governance

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 that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Report to follow

Circulars

13.0 Department of Finance – Commercial Delivery Group. Major IT projects. Lessons learned report. July 2026

For Information

Attachment: CDG - Major IT Projects Lessons Learnt Report - FINAL - July 2026.pdf

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14.0 National Fraud Initiative in NI 2026-27: Instructions

For Information

Attachment: 14 August 2026 - National Fraud Initiative in NI 2026-27 -Instructions.pdf

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15.0 NIAO Self Appraisal Checklist NFI

For Information

Attachment: 14 August 2026 - NIAO Self appraisal checklist NFI.pdf

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16.0 NIAO Media Release - Local Government Auditors Report 2026

Attachment: 9 September 2026 - NI Audit Office Media Release - Local Government Auditor's Report 2026.pdf

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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	S Taggart	Training will take place in March/April – awaiting availability of trainer.	N

Actions arising from Audit Committee Meeting –7 May 2026

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead officer	Action taken / progress to date	Remove from action sheet Y/N
AC/030/2026	Corporate Risk Register – Corporate Services Directorate Risk Register also tabled	The following was agreed: Report to be brought to a future Audit Committee regarding timeline of responses to media enquiries.	M Ward	Ongoing	N

Actions arising from Audit Committee Meeting –30 July 2026

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead officer	Action taken / progress to date	Remove from action sheet Y/N
AC/047/2026	Action sheet of Audit Committee meeting of 07/05/26	It was agreed to note the Action Sheet for Audit Committee Meeting held 7 May 2026.	M Ward	Noted	Y
AC/048/2026	Audit Committee Annual Report	It was agreed to note the contents of the report.	B Slevin	Noted	Y
AC/049/2026	Performance Improvement Plan 26/27	It was agreed to note the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27 (including the five performance improvement objectives), Consultation and Engagement Report 2026-27 and Objective Delivery Plans 2026-27.	M Ward	Noted	Y
AC/050/2026	AHC Directorate Risk Register	It was agreed to note the revised AHC Directorate Risk Register summary at Appendix 1 and detailed AHC Directorate Risk Register at Appendix 2.	A Patterson	Noted	Y
AC/051/2026	Prompt Payment Statistics Quarter 1 2026/27	It was agreed to note the Quarter 1 2026/27 financial year prompt payment statistics.	K Hanna	Noted	Y
AC/052/2026	NMDDC Assurance Framework And Code Of Governance	It was agreed to note the Council's Assurance Framework and the Code of Governance as detailed at Appendix 1	M Ward	Noted	Y
AC/053/2026	Update of Members Interest	It was agreed to note the update on Members' Registers of Interest	S Taggart	Noted	Y

AC/054/2026	Draft Annual Governance Statement And Statement Of Accounts	The following was agreed: • To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 at Appendix 1 • To note the draft Statement of Accounts and Financial Statements at Appendix 1.	M Ward	Agreed	Y
AC/055/2026	Direct Award Contracts	It was agreed to note the following: • The 2026/27 Q1 update in relation to Direct Award Contracts. • The Direct Award Activity 2026/27 year in review (Q1) totals • The Active Direct Award Contracts as of 31/06/2026	C Boyd	Agreed	Y
AC/056/2026	Procurement Action Plans	It was agreed to note the Directorate Procurement Action Plans	C Mallon	Agreed	Y
AC/057/2026	Update on Fraud and Raising Concerns	It was agreed to note the following: • The update in relation to fraud and raising concerns cases as detailed at Appendix 1 • The progress on actions arising from the NIAO Internal Fraud Risk self-assessment	M Ward	Agreed	Y
AC/058/2026	Cyber Security & Digital Risks – Presentation	It was agreed to note the presentation.	G Ringland	Agreed	Y
AC/059/2026	An Assessment of Climate Change	It was agreed to note the contents of the report in relation to the assessment of climate change within the Council.	C Sage	Agreed	Y
AC/060/2026	Update On Concern Raised To Niao And Audit Committee Chair	It was agreed to note the letter of 18 June 2026 relating to the novation of Kilbroney Park Café to the party named in the report was taken by Council following legal advice and scrutiny to ensure monies owing to Council were recovered, services	E Kirk	Agreed	Y

		continued and sufficient protection was in place to terminate any agreement following non-payment and/or non-performance.			
AC/061/2026	SUMER NI Summary Report	It was agreed to note the Sumer NI Summary Report, including the Internal Audit Plan.	M Ward	Agreed	Y

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	24 September 2026
Subject:	Assessment of Performance 25/26
Reporting Officer and Job Title:	Catherine Hughes – Acting Head of Performance and Improvement
Contact Officer and Job Title:	Catherine Hughes – Acting Head of Performance and Improvement

Purpose of Report:

☐ For Noting

1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires District Councils to put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. Through the Act, the Council has a statutory requirement to produce and publish an Assessment of Performance before 30 September each year. The legislation states that the Assessment of Performance must outline the Council's progress in relation to the General Duty of Improvement, as well as planned improvements against the previous year's: • Performance improvement objectives • Statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management • Self imposed performance indicators The Assessment of Performance 2025-26 was considered and approved by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee on 13 August 2026 and ratified by Full Council on the 7 September 2026.
2.0	Key Issues
2.1	The Assessment of Performance 2025-26 is attached at Appendix 1 and therefore provides an overview of the: • Council's progress in meeting the General Duty of Improvement • Achieving the 'measures of success' within the Corporate Plan 2024-27 • Achieving the 'measures of success' within the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 • Meeting the statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management The publication of the finalised annual planning statistics 2025-26 from the Department of Infrastructure (DfI) were delayed until the end of August which meant the data reported in the document presented at SPR were in draft and unvalidated. Having been agreed by the Committee, the finalised results have been included in the report which has been published on the

	website and the Head of Performance and Improvement sent through an addendum to the Assessment of Performance detailing the summary of changes from what was reported, which was ratified by Full Council and is attached at Appendix 2. Where possible, performance has been tracked against set targets, trends over time and compared with other local authorities across Northern Ireland. It should however be noted that comparisons with previous years should be considered within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent impact on Council service provision. Progress has also been aligned to the outcomes within the Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down and reported accordingly throughout the Assessment of Performance.
2.2	Each year, the Council produces the user friendly, accessible document 'Our Performance Looking Back Going Forward', which summarises the retrospective Assessment of Performance and forward-looking Performance Improvement Plan. Similar to the full report, this document has been updated to reflect the finalised planning statistics. This document is attached at Appendix 3.
2.3	There is a statutory requirement to publish the Assessment of Performance 2025-26 on the Council's website by 30 September 2026. The Assessment of Performance will form a key part of the Performance Audit and Assessment which is carried out by the NIAO, and focuses on the following six themes, using a compliance based approach: • General duty to improve • Improvement objectives • Consultation on improvement duties • The Improvement Plan • Collection of information relating to performance • Use and publication of performance information Through the Performance Audit and Assessment, the NIAO will determine how effective and robust the Council's performance management arrangements are, as well as the Council's likelihood to comply with the duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in future years.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To note: • The Assessment of Performance 2025-26, including the summary document 'Our Performance Looking Back Going Forward' • The addendum to the Assessment of Performance detailing the summary of changes to the planning statistics.

4.0	Resource Implications
4.1	The cost of the design of the summary document 'Our Performance Looking Back Going Forward' in both Irish and English is £840.00 and is funded through the existing Performance and Improvement budget.
5.0	Due Regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations
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	Does the proposal relate to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision ☐ No ☐ If yes, please select one of the following: ☐ Choose an item. ☐
5.3	Proposal initiating consultation The consultation 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 Please select the consultation period: ☐ Choose an item. ☐ Rationale:
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs
6.1	Does the proposal relate to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service. ☐ No – The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs ☐
7.0	Appendices
7.1	Appendix 1: Assessment of Performance 2025-26 Appendix 2: Addendum to the Assessment of Performance 2025-26 – Planning Statistics Appendix 3: Our Performance Looking Back Going Forward

8.0	Background Documents
8.1	

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Assessment of Performance 2025-26



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Overall Assessment of Performance 2025-26

The Council remained steadfast in delivering high-quality services for everyone across the district. Residents and visitors alike continued to prioritise their health and wellbeing, with more than 930,000 paid visits to our leisure centres. Attendance at our cultural venues also improved, welcoming nearly 100,000 visits to our museums and arts centres.

We achieved 6 green flag and 3 blue flag accreditations for our beaches and parks, supported 100% of all community clean up requests and increased the number of issued fixed penalty notices to address environmental crime.

We continued to progress a number of key priorities, including the start of construction of the new Theatre and Conference Facility. Through the BRCD (Belfast City Region Deal) a number of skills and employability initiatives were carried out to meet the needs of the local community.

However, whilst much has been achieved, there is still more to do. We recognise where we need to improve and are committed to delivering further improvements. There was a slight decrease in the percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years, and no EV charging points were installed during 2025-26, however the Council did establish its carbon baseline emissions footprint. We will continue to focus on what matters most to you - improving the quality of our leisure facilities and services, contributing to growing the local economy, improving the cleanliness of our District and continuing to support recycling, reducing our impacts in relation to climate change by improving the efficiency of our fleet and buildings, and improving the performance of our Planning Service.

As we look forward to 2026-27, we will continue to bring more opportunities as our ambition remains for Newry, Mourne and Down to be one of the best places to live, work, invest in and visit.

Introduction

Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act 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. As part of the Act, District Councils are required to:

- Produce and publish an annual Performance Improvement Plan, setting out the performance improvement objectives, which should be aligned to the Community Plan. It should however be noted that, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Councils were not required to publish a Performance Improvement Plan 2020-21.
- Produce and publish an annual Assessment of Performance, outlining the 5 planned improvements that have been achieved, analysing year on year performance trends and comparisons with the performance of other Councils, where possible.

The Assessment of Performance 2025-26 provides an overview of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's progress in delivering the following:

General Duty of Improvement

As set out in the Local Government (NI) Act 2014

Performance Improvement Objectives

All five performance improvement objectives 2025-26 have been carried forward from 2024-25, as they remain relevant and meaningful, enabling the Council to use this Assessment of Performance to further establish a baseline and trends to monitor and report progress against the majority of the 'measures of success' which underpin the 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

Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards

As set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015:

- The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity
- The average processing time of major planning applications

- The average processing time of local planning applications
- The percentage of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks
- The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse)
- The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled
- The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings

Self-Imposed Performance Indicators

The Council has developed a baseline to monitor and report progress against the 'measures of success' which are set out in the Corporate Plan 2024-27.

Corporate Objective	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 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 forms of 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 that the Council consults with and listens to the views of local people
	Percentage of residents who feel they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area
	Number of financial assistance projects funded
	Number of people accessing the Ethnic Minority Support Office Services

Develop and revitalise our district	Number of BRCD projects delivered
	Number of small settlement schemes delivered
	Number of new/upgraded public conveniences
Deliver sustainable services	Level of citizen satisfaction
	Compliance with the Duty of Improvement
	Number of users registered to Council corporate social media channels
	Number of visits to Council's corporate website
Represent the voice of the district with our partners	Compliance with the duty of Community Planning
	Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
	Number of training events provided to elected members

Where possible, progress in delivering the 'measures of success' within the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 and Corporate Plan 2024-27 has been aligned to the Community Plan, in order to demonstrate how the Council is contributing to the achievement of community planning outcomes. The golden thread that exists between the Community Plan, Corporate Plan 2024-27 and Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 is highlighted further in Appendix 2.

All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing	
All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	
All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment	

Progress has been tracked against targets, trends over time, and where possible, compared with the performance of local authorities across Northern Ireland, using the legend below. It should however be noted that comparisons with previous years should be considered within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent impact on Council service provision. The Assessment of Performance is instrumental in helping the Council to review progress and identify the key objectives and areas of improvement in the year ahead.

Legend

Status		Trend	
	Target or objective achieved / on track to be achieved		Performance has improved since the previous year
	Target or objective substantially achieved / likely to be achieved / subject to delay		Performance is similar to the previous year*
	Target or objective not achieved / unlikely to be achieved		Performance has declined since the previous year

*Where appropriate, a 10% variance when compared to the previous year’s performance has been applied.

Our District, Our Organisation, Our Performance

Our District, Our Organisation, Our Performance



District

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



Community

Life expectancy:
Male: 79.0 years /
Female: 82.9 years
Age Profile: Based on NISRA Mid-Year Estimates.
0-15 years: 21.7%
65+ years: 18%
87% of residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together
100% of residents feel safe during the day, 78% of residents feel safe after dark
55 Neighbourhood Watch Schemes
£14.27m awarded through the Financial Assistance Scheme since 2015



Tourism

In 2025:
Numbers of overnight stays 427,157
Level of visitor spend - £60,817,412
Three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
6 'green flag' parks and 3 'blue flag' beaches



Health and Wellbeing

82% of residents feel they are in very good or good health
83% of residents are physically active at least once a week for 30mins
73.5% of customers are satisfied with the Council's six leisure facilities
Over 930,000 paid attendances recorded across our 6 leisure centres during 2025-26
£225,000 of financial assistance funding allocated to sports clubs across the District in 2025-26



Economy

Employment rate: 78.2%
9,525 VAT Registered Businesses
23.1% of the population aged 16 years and over have no qualifications
236 new jobs promoted through business start activity
215 existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions



Environment

Recycling is important to 91% of residents
Top perceived problem for residents: Dog mess and fouling
Recycling rate: 48.3%
100% of Community Clean up requests supported
Fifth lowest level of waste to landfill across all NI Councils



A snapshot of 2025-26

Performance Improvement Objective	Progress	Status Trend
 We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services	26.7% increase in paid attendances at Council leisure centres	😊 △
	39% increase in the number of people participating in targeted health programmes	😊 △
	£225,000 worth of financial assistance funding was allocated to sports clubs across the District	😊
	11.4% increase in the number of Council leisure centre memberships	😊 △
	4 capital leisure projects progressed	😊
	7 play parks upgraded across the District	😊
 We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation	236* new jobs promoted through business start activity	😊 △
	12 new social enterprise businesses supported, and 16 new social enterprise jobs created	😊 ▶
	188* new enterprises created as a result of support	😊 △
	215* existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions	😊 ▶
	4,719 participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity in 2025-26	😊 △
 We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling	35 fixed penalty notices issued and 32 paid	😞 △
	91% of all fixed penalty notices issued have been paid	😊
	100% of community clean up requests supported	😊
	Decrease in the rate of recycling, to 48.3%*	😊 ▶
	Increase in the amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	😊 ▼

and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	10 'Live Here, Love Here' environmental projects supported	▽
 We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change	1 vehicle within the Council fleet that has an alternative fuel source	☹
	0 Council supported EV charging points installed in 2025-26	☹
	78% of Council fleet younger than 8 years.	☹ ▷
	The Baseline Emissions Footprint for Newry Mourne and Down was established and is 5,246 tCO2e (Tonnes of CO2 equivalent).	😊
	2,800 trees planted on Council managed estate	😊 ▷
 We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	Based on the 2024-25 annual finalised results, which is the only one publicly available, The Council received the third highest number of planning applications across the 11 Councils.	😊
	The processing time for local planning applications increased from 45.2 weeks in 2024-25 to 60.2 weeks*** in 2025-26	☹ ▽
	The processing time for major planning applications increased from 29.6 weeks in 2024-25 to 100.3 weeks*** in 2025-26	☹ ▽
	The percentage of enforcement cases progressed within the statutory timescale decreased by 11.2% from 47.6% in 2024-25 to 36.4%*** in 2025-26	☹ ▽
	Based on the 2024-25 annual finalised results, which is the only one publicly available, the number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more increased from 352 by year end 2023-24 to 408 by year end 2024-25.	☹ ▽
	Based on the 2024-25 annual finalised results, which is the only one publicly available, the number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more decreased from 599 by year end 2023-24 to 574 by year end 2024-25.	☹ ▷

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

**The 2025-26 data in relation to the statutory performance indicators for waste management remains provisional, as the end of year validated data will not be published by DAERA until Q3 2026-27.

*** The 2025-26 data in relation to the statutory performance indicators for planning remains provisional and subject to change, as the end of year validated data will not be published by DfI until the end of August 2026-27.

General Duty of Improvement

The Council recognises improvement to mean activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities. During 2025-26, the Council continued to strengthen and embed the arrangements it has put in place to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions, in order to improve the quality of life for all local communities.

Following the Performance Audit and Assessment 2025-26, the Local Government Auditor concluded that:

Improvement planning and publication of improvement information

'As a result of my audit, I believe the Council has discharged its duties in connection with (1) improvement planning and (2) publication of improvement information in accordance with Section 92 of the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.'

Improvement assessment

'As a result of my assessment, I believe the Council has discharged its duties under Part 12 of the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.
In my opinion, the Council has demonstrated a track record of ongoing improvement and I believe that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Act during 2025-26.'

Arrangements to secure continuous improvement

The Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework drives and provides assurance that community planning outcomes, corporate priorities and performance improvement objectives are being delivered. By demonstrating the alignment that exists between the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan, Directorate Business Plans, Service Plans and Individual Performance, the framework provides a mechanism to manage performance at all levels of the organisation, and ensure the necessary steps are taken to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions.

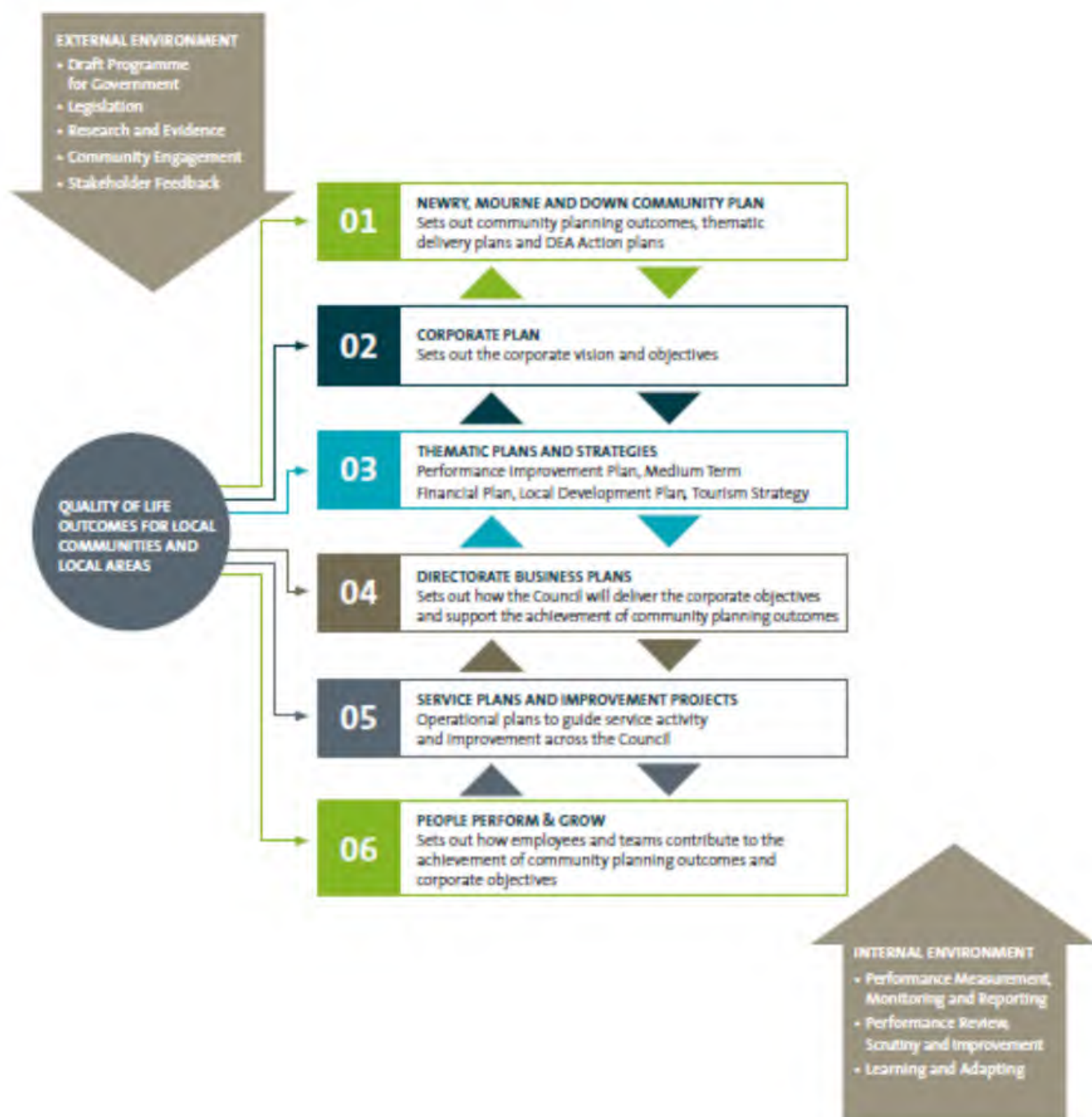
Over the past nine years, the Council has continued to implement and embed the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework:

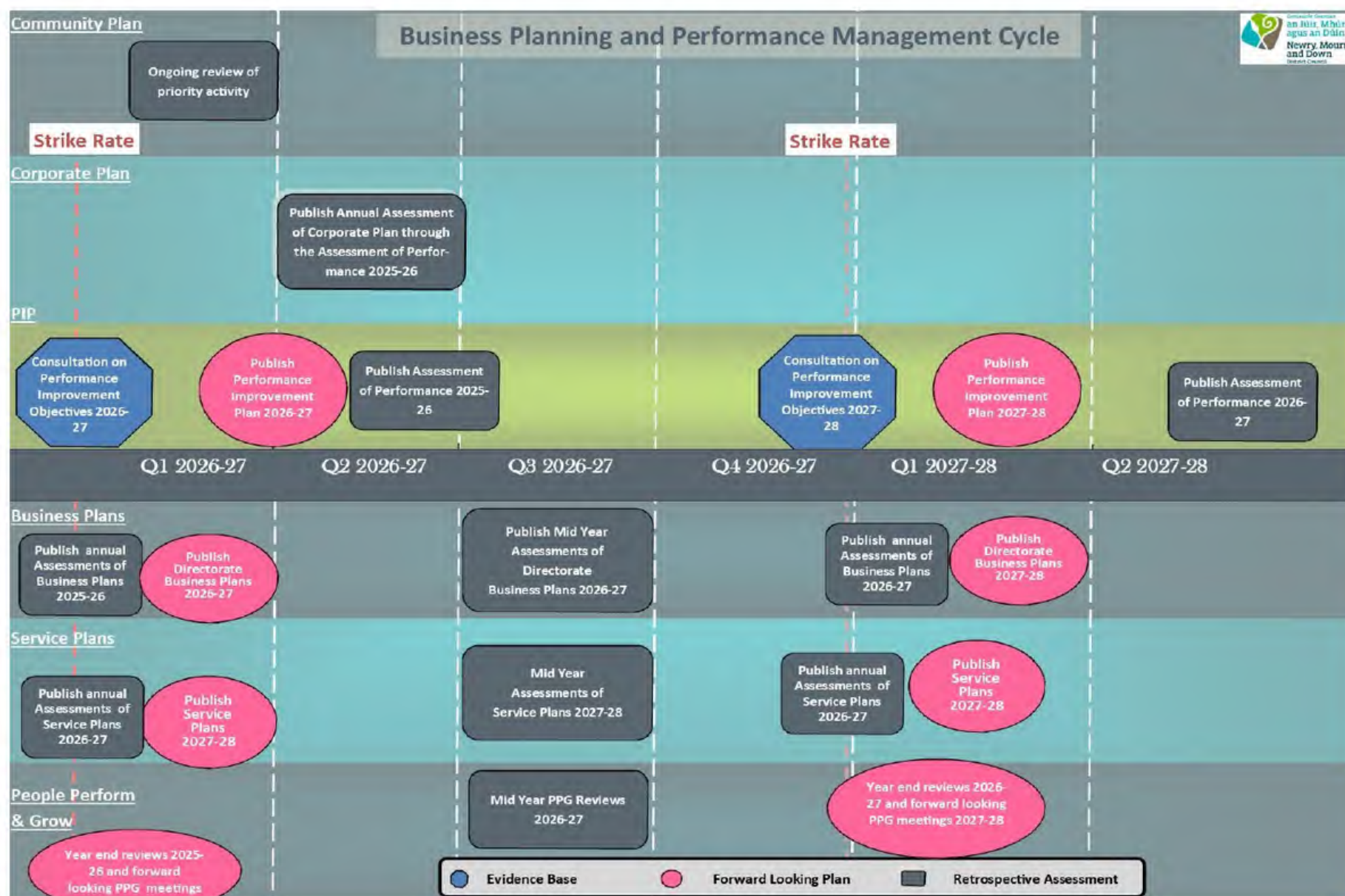
- The Council has developed and agreed integrated planning, monitoring and reporting cycles, which have been aligned to ensure everyone in the organisation is working towards shared objectives, with progress being monitored and reported on a regular basis. This integrated timeline of activity is outlined in the Business Planning and Performance Management Cycle.

- The governance arrangements at all levels of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework continue to strengthen and embed, with the delivery of the Performance Improvement Plan and Directorate Business Plans being monitored and reported to the Committees of Council and the Senior Management Team on a bi-annual and annual basis.
- The Chief Executive organised a business planning day with senior and corporate management tiers in 2025 - 26 to engage Directors and Assistant Directors in reviewing performance during 2025-26, setting direction in 2026-27 and communicating the objectives within the Corporate Plan.
- Similarly, all Directorates also organised business and service planning sessions to engage officers in reviewing performance during 2025-26, setting direction for 2026-27 and communicating the objectives within the Corporate Plan.
- All departments produced Service Plans in 2025-26, outlining core operational activity and improvement activity which will support the achievement of the objectives within the Corporate Plan and Directorate Business Plans.
- Individual Performance has been progressed through the 'People Perform Grow' initiative, which seeks to link and align the contribution of employees with strategic objectives. All employees have now had an opportunity to participate in People Perform Grow and performance management arrangements have been introduced to support and monitor the effective implementation and roll-out of People Perform Grow across the organisation. The effective implementation of People Perform Grow is monitored through the Corporate Performance Dashboard.
- Through the Corporate Performance Dashboard, progress continues to be monitored and reported against a suite of 18 key performance indicators on a quarterly basis to the Senior and Corporate Management Teams. The performance indicators are aligned to both the Corporate Plan and Corporate Risk Register.
- The Council continues to secure greater alignment across the business planning, performance and risk management arrangements, with the Corporate Risk Register now being directly aligned to the Corporate Plan 2024-27 and Directorate Risk Registers being aligned to Directorate Business Plans.
- The Performance Improvement Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to secure continuous improvement in the delivery of services, and the objectives seek to bring about improvement across the seven areas outlined in the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.
- The Council has also completed the second Residents Survey to identify and understand perceptions of the Council and the local area as a place to live. The findings from the survey build a robust and reliable evidence base to inform future Corporate Plans, PIP's and Directorate Business Plans ensuring the strategic direction of the organisation is focused on the needs and aspirations of residents. Development and delivery of a third residents survey is currently underway to be completed by year end 2026-27.

Further information on the Council's arrangements to secure continuous improvement and progress in implementing the 'proposals for improvement', which have been put forward by the Northern Ireland Audit Office, is outlined in Appendix 1.

Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and Cycle





Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26



Performance Improvement Objective 1

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

Linked to and Supporting:

- Community Planning Objective – All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Corporate Objective – Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District

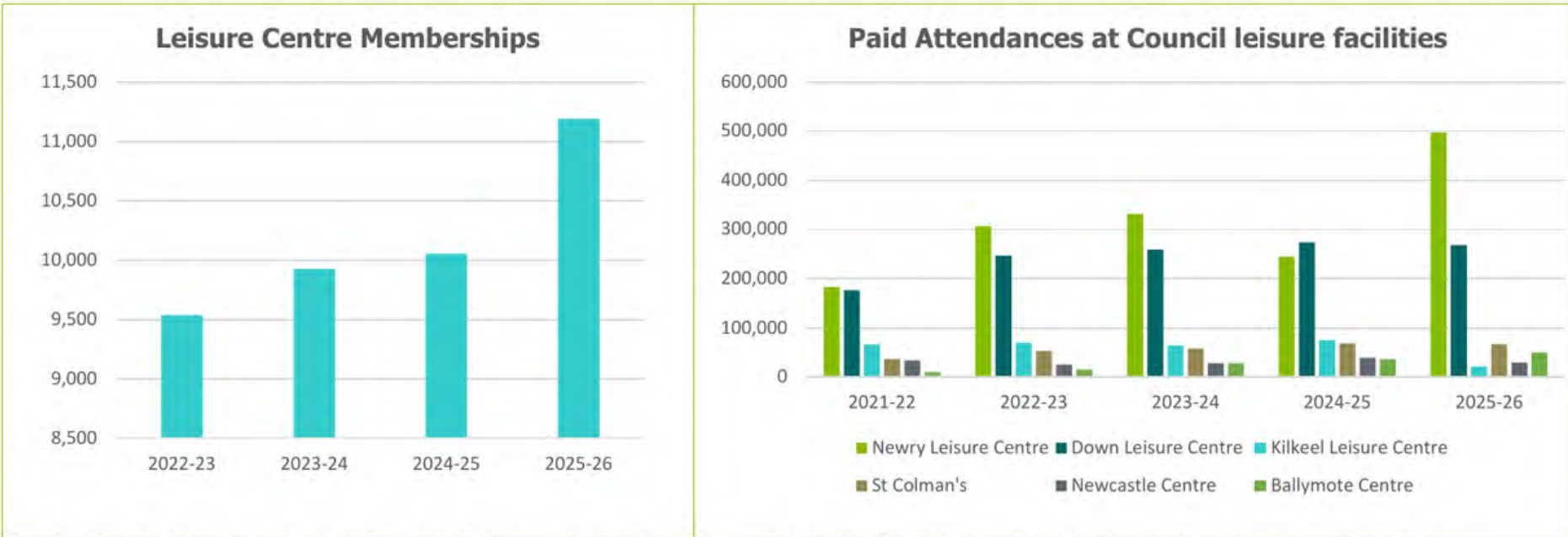
Key action	Status	Update
Leisure-Safe Accreditation being worked towards for all indoor leisure facilities	Target Progress	Sep 25 March 2026 Mar 26 Amber Amber Amber
	Notes:	1. management met with DS ni and have completed major works to date to meet standards with a new list compiled and works programmed in next 6 months 2. Progress ongoing
'Mystery Visitor' Programme implemented and baseline established	Target Progress	Sep 25 Mar 26 Mar 26 1 1 Amber
	Notes:	1. external provider appointed and a customer survey/questionnaire agreed and compiled to be carried out mid nov and mystery shopper complete end of nov 2. Programme to complete in July 2026

Works to be commenced on Kilkeel centre upgrade	Target Actual Sep 25 Yes Yes + 1 Mar 26 Yes Yes + 2
Notes:	1 Kilkeel Leisure Centre has now closed and works are in progress. 2 Works in progress and on track as per programme
Planning permission and contract tender agreed for Jennings park upgrade	Target Progress Sep 25 Green Green + 1 Mar 26 Amber Amber + 2
Notes:	1 Jennings Park work is now progressing. 2 Project progressing through the planning process.
Sustain the number of paid attendances at indoor leisure facilities	Target Actual Mar 26 Yes Yes + 1
Notes:	1 The number of paid attendances for 2025-26 exceeded those achieved during 2024-25
Continue to deliver a range of targeted, sustainable health programmes to encourage participation in physical activity	Target Actual Mar 26 Yes Yes + 1
Notes:	1 Council has supported and delivered targeted health and wellbeing programs including the Exercise Referral and Be Active for Life schemes, along with cancer-specific and inclusive one-to-one sessions for individuals with autism, to encourage participation in physical activity.

Measure of success	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-2025 Actual	2025-26 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory note
Number of paid attendances at:		698,864	768,842	737,439	934,517 (Target: 757,500)	 	A total of 934,517 paid attendances were recorded in 2025-26. This is 23% above the target set for 2025-26 of 757,500. An overall increase across all leisure facilities of 26.7% between 2024-25 and 2025-26 in the number of paid attendances was recorded. This is largely in part due to the full re-opening of the pool at Newry Leisure Centre in March 2025.
Newry Leisure Centre	183,224	306,802	331,546	244,929	497,295		

					(Target: 335,000)		Across the sites, increases in paid attendances were recorded for Newry Leisure Centre and Ballymote Sports and Wellbeing Centre of 103% and 40% respectively. Both Down Leisure Centre and St. Colmans Sports Complex experienced a slight decline in paid attendances of approximately 2% each, while the Newcastle Centre recorded a decrease in paid attendances of 24%. This decrease was in part due to poor summer 2025 weather which resulted in lower than expected attendances for the Newcastle Centre and Tropicana Outdoor Swimming Complex. Kilkeel Leisure Centre experienced a significant decrease between 2024-25 and 2025-26 of 72%, however this was expected as the site was closed for a complete refurbishment at the start of September 2025.
Down Leisure Centre	177,496	227,156	259,473	273,783	268,839 (Target: 275,000)		
Kilkeel Leisure Centre	66,987	69,797	63,811	74,988	21,208 (Target: 15,000)		
St. Colmans Sports Complex	36,717	54,024	58,491	68,662	67,376 (Target: 68,700)		
Newcastle Centre & Tropicana Outdoor Swimming Complex	33,801	25,517	27,765	39,128	29,649 (Target: 27,800)		
Ballymote Sports and Wellbeing Centre	10,309	15,365	27,756	35,949	50,150 (Target: 36,000)		
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes	322*	9,309	10,805	20,421	28,399 (Target: 22,000)		There has been an increase of 39% in the number of people participating in targeted health programmes increasing from 20,421 in 2024-25 to 28,399 in 2025-26 and exceeds the target set by over 29%.
Value of financial assistance funding	New measure				£225,000		During 2025-26, £225,000 worth of financial assistance funding was given out to successful sports clubs for minor capital funding works.

allocated to sports clubs					(Target: £225,000)		
Number of leisure centre memberships	New Measure	9,534	9,923	10,050	11,192 (Target: 10,100)		Between 2024-25 and 2025-26 the number of leisure centre memberships increased by 11.4% from 10,050 in 2024-25 to 11,192 whilst also exceeding the target set of 10,100 by 10.8%.
Number of capital leisure projects progressed	New Measure		5	4	4 (Target: 2)		During 2025-26, Council continued to progress the delivery of key capital projects, including Newry City Park (planning permission submitted and tender launched for a contractor award), Year 1&2 complete and year 3 commenced of the Play Strategy upgrades, and the refurbishment works at Kilkeel Leisure Centre are underway. The Newcastle Rock Pool and Newcastle Centre projects have secured approval to appoint design and ICT teams, ICT team appointed for Newcastle centre and the multi-Sports Hub project continues to advance.
Number of play parks upgraded	New Measure				7 (Target: 2)		Council has completed the initial five-year Play Strategy and delivered Year 1 of the current review, with Year 2 works now completed and year 3 works well underway. During 2025-26, 7 upgrades were carried out at: Derrybeg, Newry Ardross, Crossmaglen Rathview, Crossmaglen Whitecross Slievegullion Bishop Court, Downpatrick Bridge Street, Downpatrick Island Park, Mourne



*The 'Be Active for Life' programme, which forms part of this measure, was only getting established when Covid-19 occurred and therefore participation rates were restricted.



Performance Improvement Objective 2

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

Linked to
and
Supporting:

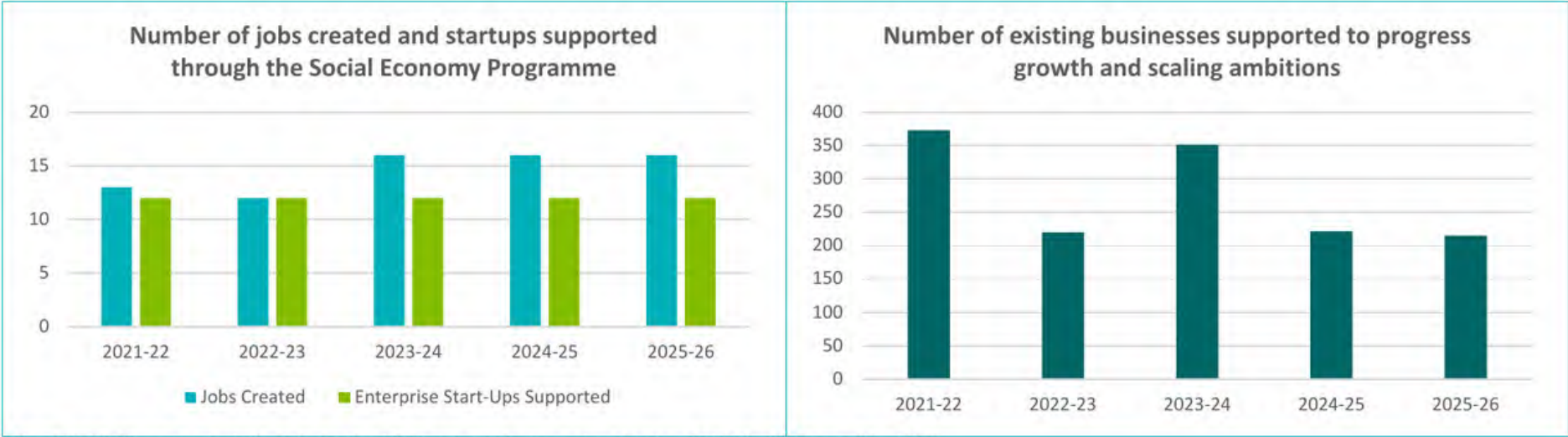
- Community Planning Outcome – All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities
- Corporate Objective – Support the continued growth and development of our local economy

Key action	Status	Update
Invest in employability and skills through the implementation of a Labour Market Partnership Action Plan	Target Progress	Sep 25 Mar 26 Green Green * 1 * 2
Notes: 1 LMP initiatives are underway. Progress to date includes: • Get Work Ready pre-employment programme launched with 27 participants enrolled. • HGV Employment Academy launched with 32 participants enrolled. • Employment Pathway Job Fair event on 19th June with 50 employers; 16 support organisations; and 388 attendees, over 450 jobs were on offer and 63% of attendees were aged 19-44. 2 Approval from DfC for additional funding of £142,626.36 • Labour Market Partnership meetings conducted x 4 • Get Work Ready pre-employment programme concluded with 67 participants completing of 68 enrolled • Enterprise Pathway Programme concluded with 40 completers of 41 enrolments • Employability Academies concluded with 40 completers of 70 enrolments • Three 'Place to Work' events held with 276 attendees • Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Masterclass held with 10 local employers • Disability Employment Programme delivered to 10 participants • Upskilling for Growth initiatives delivered to 113 participants • Employment Pathway events delivered to 2217 attendees • Apprenticeship events held with 973 attendees • Promotion of Employability and Skills Events delivered to 150 attendees • To date a total of 98 participants have gained employment as a result of participating in an NMD LMP initiative. Skills conference hosted with 150 people in attendance.		

Invest in the creation of good jobs, productivity growth, decarbonisation and regional balance through the implementation of a Local Economic Partnership Action Plan	Target Progress Sep 25 Green * 1 Mar 26 Green * 2
Notes:	1 LEP Established LEP Action plan agreed by Partnership - Sept 2025 LEP Action plan approved by Council - Oct 2025 LEP Action plan submitted to DfE for consideration - Oct 2025 2 LEP LoO received in November 2025 following Council approval of the action plan. Officer appointed in November. Manager in February 2026. LEP meetings hosted in November, January and March. 2 AI Workshops delivered, officers are progressing with procurement and UK Subsidy registration.
Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme	Target Actual Mar 26 Yes * 1
Notes:	1 The Council achieved all targets set through the Social Economy programme, supporting the creation of 12 new start-up businesses, 16 new jobs as well as 30 new volunteering roles created.

Measure of success	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	2025-26 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	12	12	12	12 (Target: 12)	12 (Target: 12)	 	Since 2017-18, the Council has consistently met and exceeded the targets set for the number of new social enterprise start-ups supported and jobs created. During 2025-26, the Council supported 12 new social enterprise start-ups, created 16 new social enterprise jobs, as well as 30 new volunteering roles.
Number of social enterprise jobs created	13	12	16	16 (Target: 12)	16 (Target: 12)	 	
Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity	New measure			839 (Target: 712)	4,719* (Target: 712)	 	There was a total of 4,719 participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity during 2025-26.
Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	358	361	151	332 (Target: 361)	393* (Target: 289)		The number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises increased by 18.4% compared to 2024-25, rising from 332 in 2024-25 to 393

							in 2025-26. The target set of 289 was also exceeded during this period by 36%.
Number of jobs promoted via business start-up activity	215	187	90 (Target: 155)	206 (Target: 170)	236* (Target: 173)	 	During 2025-26, Newry, Mourne and Down promoted 236 jobs through business start-up activity. This is an increase of 14.6% when compared to the 2024-25 figure of 206. This figure also exceeds the target set of 173 for 2025-26 by 36.4%. In 2025-26, Newry, Mourne and Down ranked 2/11 for the number of jobs promoted across NI, behind Belfast City Council. Newry, Mourne and Down also approved 393 business plans in 2024-25 placing the Council 2/11 across NI for business plan approvals again behind Belfast City Council.
Number of new enterprises created as a result of support	215	187	90	175 (Target: 195)	188* (Target: 119)	 	During 2025-26, 188 new enterprises were created as a result of support. This is an increase of 7.4% when compared to the 175 new enterprises supported during 2024-25. This figure also exceeds target set for 2025-26 of 119, by 58% in 2025-26.
Number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions	373	220	351	221 (Target: 220)	215* (Target: 220)	 	The number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions decreased slightly between 2024-25 and 2025-26 falling from 221 to 215 which represents a decrease of 2.7%. The target set for 2025-26 of 220 was marginally missed during this period, with the Council achieving 97.7% of the target.



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

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



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

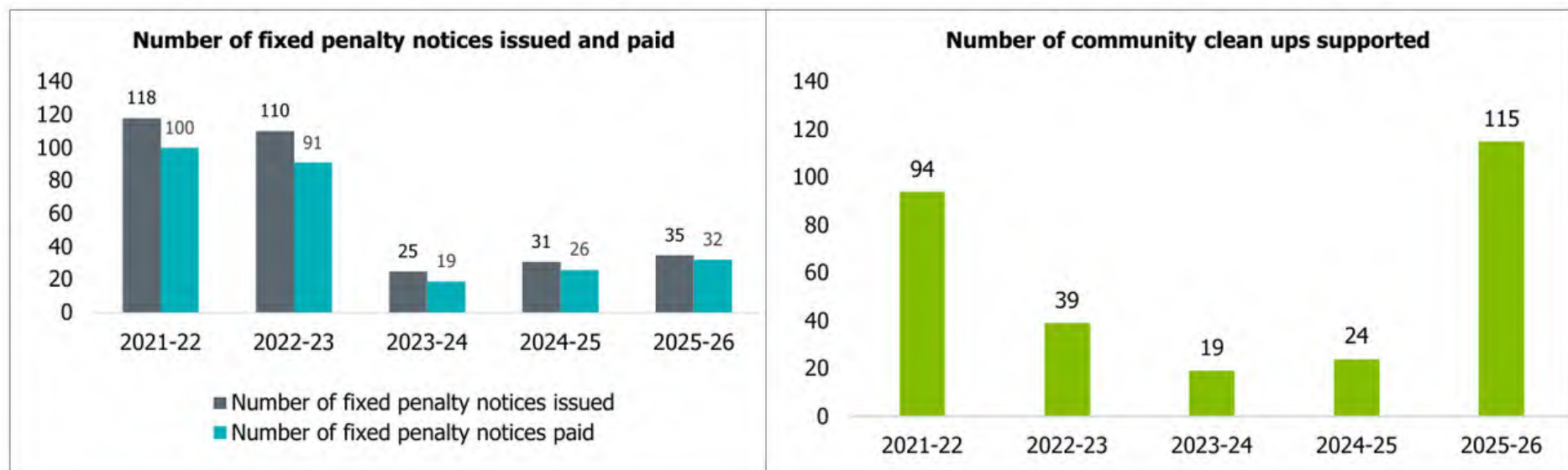
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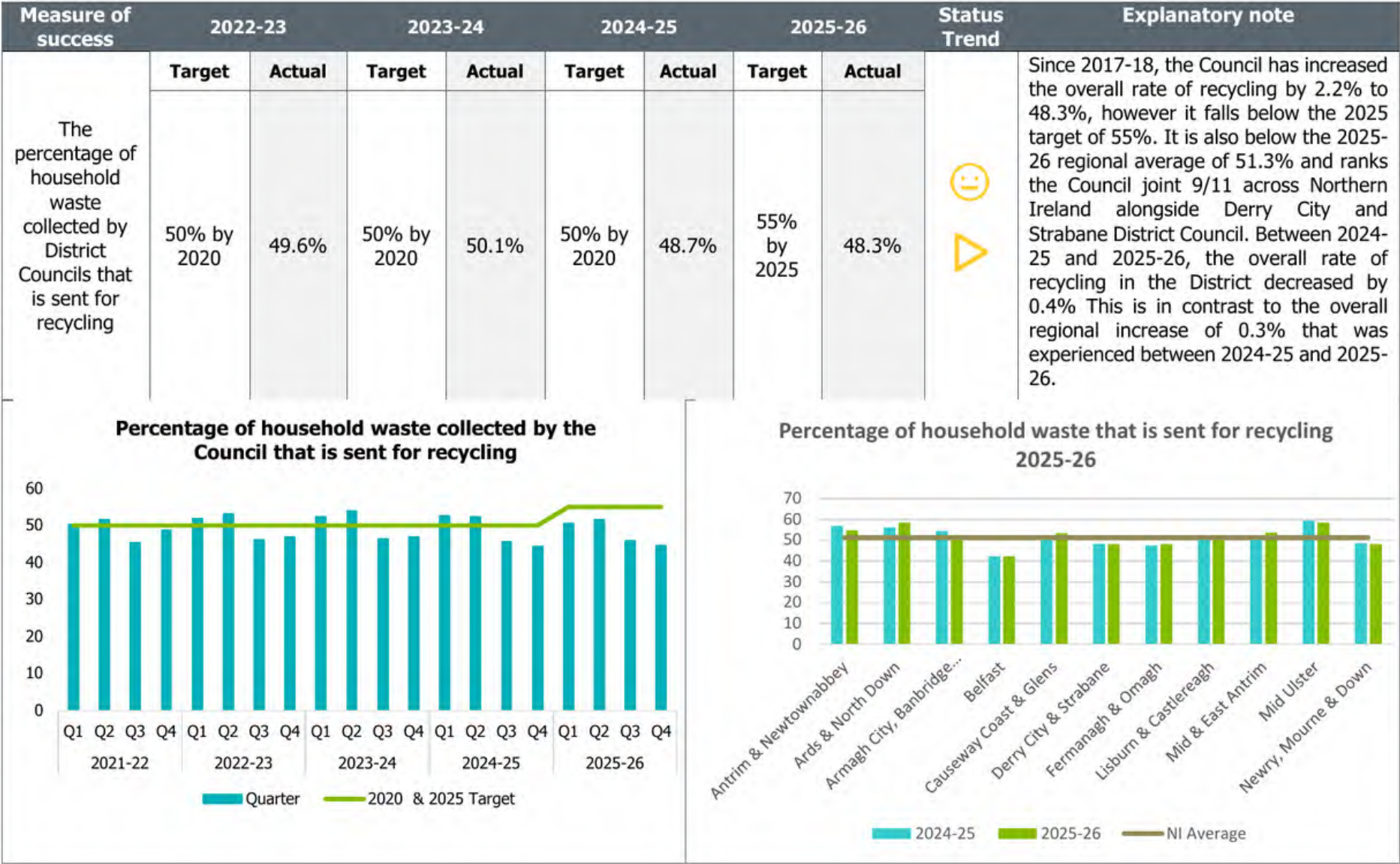
- Community Planning Outcome – All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment
- Corporate Objective – Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future

Key action	Status	Update
Rollout of environmental awareness campaign displayed on Council fleet highlighting simple messages on recycling, littering and dog fouling		Target Progress Sep 25 Green * 1 Mar 26 Green * 2
	Notes:	1 Complete. 2 The rollout of environmental awareness campaign displayed on Council fleet highlighting simple messages on recycling, littering and dog fouling was completed by 31.03.2025.
Exploring options to determine levels of street cleanliness and identify emerging issues and hotspots		Target Progress Sep 25 Green * 1 Mar 26 Green * 2
	Notes:	1 Introduction of LAMS app approved at ITPG, meeting with APSE for demonstration in November 25. 2 The Council is at the final stages of a cleansing review and part of this will be the implementation of the LAMS (Land Audit Management System) APP. It is a simple and effective performance measuring system that monitors street cleansing for a total street scene quality score.

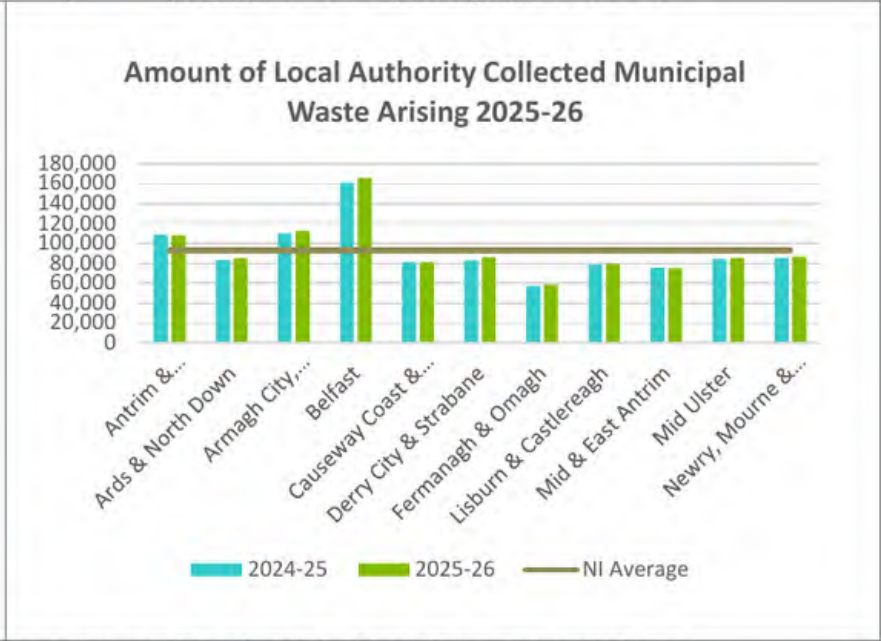
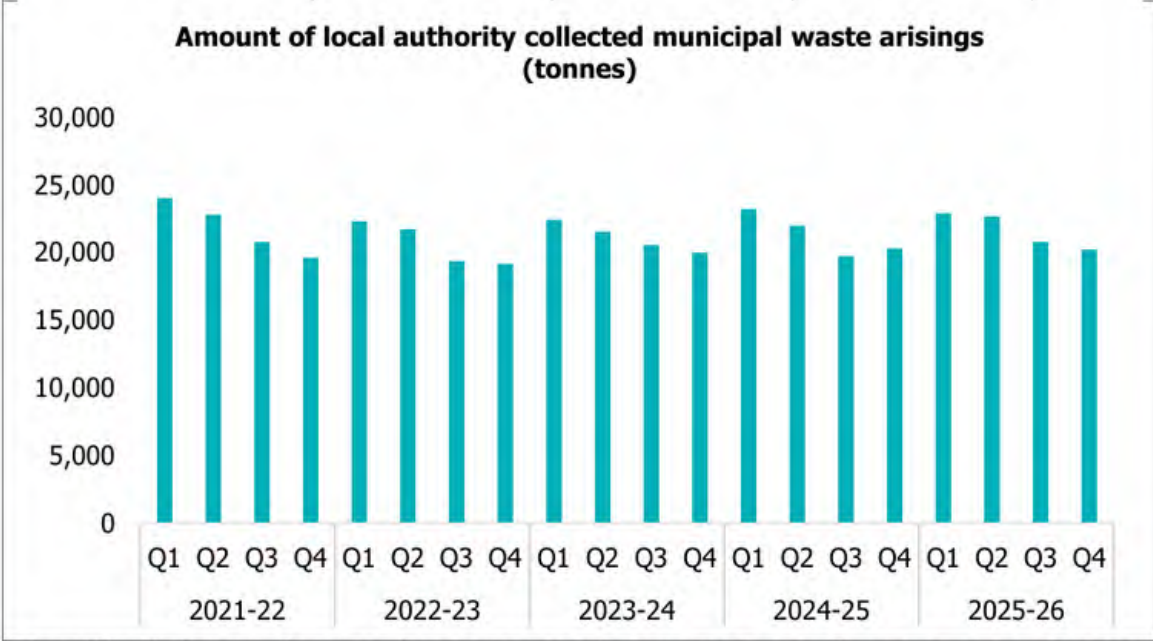
Continued implementation of a Paint Re-Use Scheme at a further 2 Household Recycling Centres	Target Progress	Sep 25 Red * 1	Mar 26 Red * 2
Notes: 1 Extension of scheme to two further HRCs to be initiated 2 No progress has been made on the roll out of the Paint Re-Use Scheme at a further 2 Household Recycling Centres within the District.			
Continuing to implement the Enforcement Improvement Plan	Target Progress	Sep 25 Red * 1	Mar 26 Green * 2
Notes: 1 Development and implementation of Enforcement Improvement Plan is linked with the successful recruitment to the post of Education and Enforcement Manager. Further recruitment exercise to take place in Q3. 2 This is ongoing and forms part of the recently launched three-year education and enforcement action plan activities.			
Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity and social media campaigns	Target Progress	Sep 25 Green * 1	Mar 26 Green * 2
Notes: 1 Responsible dog ownership promoted through publicity and social media campaigns. Online reporting form being developed to enable dog fouling incidents to be reported, resolved and mapped to target future action. 2 This is ongoing and forms part of the recently launched a three-year education and enforcement action plan activities.			
Encouraging residents to bring properly sorted surplus recyclable waste to our Household Recycling Centres	Target Progress	Sep 25 Green * 1	Mar 26 Green * 2
Notes: 1 Information provided on website to inform residents what they can bring to the HRC sites. HRC attendants actively encouraging residents attending sites to properly sort surplus waste. 2 This is ongoing and forms part of the recently launched a three-year education and enforcement action plan activities. Additionally, information is provided on the Council website to inform residents what they can bring to the HRC sites. HRC attendants actively encouraging residents attending sites to properly sort surplus waste.			

Measure of success	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	2025-26	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Number of fixed penalty notices issued	110	25	31 (Target: 120)	35 (Target:100)	 	Between 2024-25 and 2025-26 the number of illicit dumping incidents reported to Council increased by 4.6%, from 647 to 677 incidents, whilst the number of littering and dog fouling incidents reported also increased from 212 to 328 during this period, resulting in an increase of 54.7%.
Number of fixed penalty notices paid	91	19	26 (Target: 96)	32 (Target:80)	 	The number of fixed penalty notices issued increased by 12.9% in the past year, from 31 in 2024-25 to 35 in 2025-26. 32 of the fixed penalty notices issued were paid in 2025-26, an increase of 23% from the number paid last year. This accounts for 40% of the target set.
Percentage of fixed penalty notices issued that are paid	New Measure			91% (Target: 80%)		During 2025-26, 32 of the 35 fixed penalty notices (FPN) issues were paid. This equates to 91% of all issued FPN's being paid which exceeds the 80% target set.
Percentage of community clean ups supported	New measure		100% (Target: 90%)	100% (Target: 90%)		The Council actively supports clean ups which are carried out by local community groups and residents. Between 2018-19 and 2025-26, the Council supported 518 clean ups across the District, including 115 during 2025-26. The Council supported 100% of all community clean up requests during 2025-26.
Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	10	9	15	10		Since 2018-19, the Council has supported 145 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects, including ten during 2025-26. Successful projects used their funding for numerous projects involving recycling, planting flowers and installing picnic tables.





Measure of success	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Actual 2024-25	2025-26	Trend	Explanatory note
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	82,842t	84,636t	85,383t	86,635t (Target: 85,500t***)	 	Since 2017-18, the amount of local authority collected municipal waste arisings has increased by 6.3% to 86,635 tonnes, however it does fall below the 2025-26 regional average of 93,304 tonnes. Newry, Mourne and Down is currently ranked 8/11 across Northern Ireland. 2025-26 seen an increase in the amount of Local Authority Collected municipal waste collected, rising by 1.5% from 85,363t in 2024-25 to 86,635t in 2025-26.



*The 2025-26 data in relation to the statutory performance indicators for waste management remains provisional, as the end of year data is currently being validated by DAERA and will not be published until Q3 2026-27. There are slight variances between the quarterly figures and the rolling 12-month figures, as outlined in the DAERA reports.

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

***2019-20 Target.



Performance Improvement Objective 4

We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change

- Community Planning Outcome – All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment
- Corporate Objective – Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future

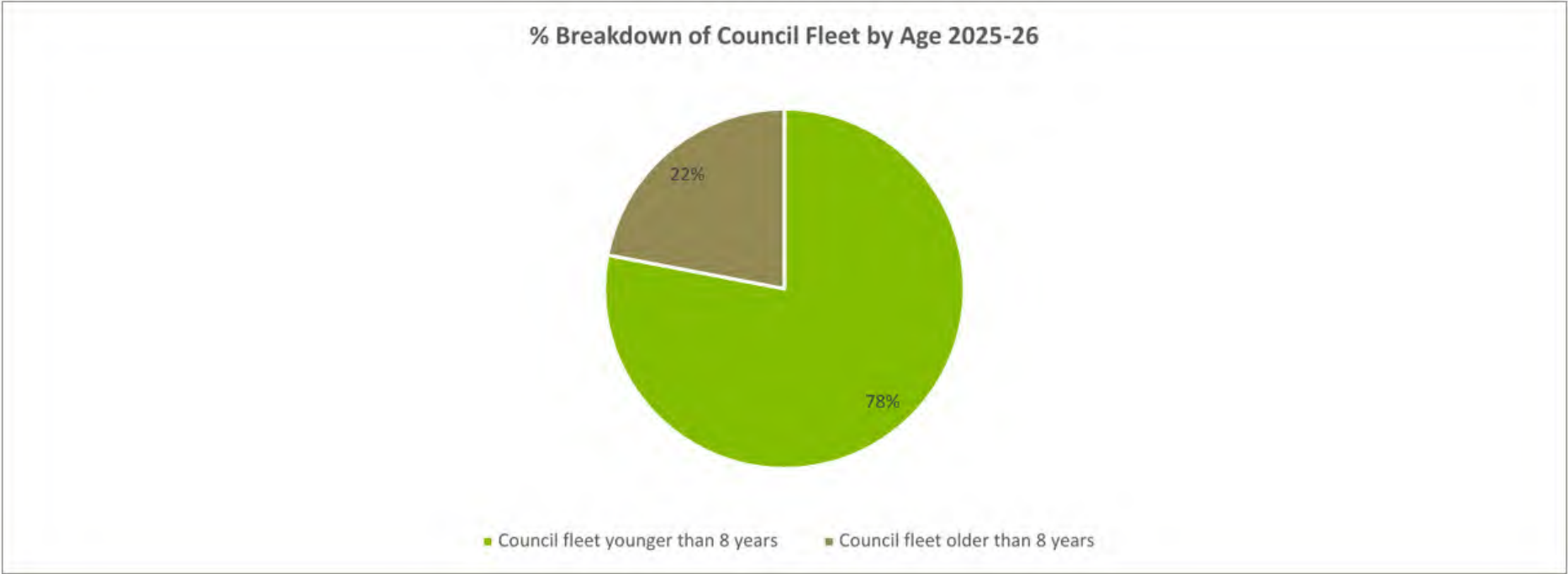
Linked to and Supporting:

Key action	Status	Update
Publication of the Council's Climate Change and Sustainable Development strategy	Target Progress	Sep 25 Mar 26 Green Amber 1 2
	Notes:	1 2 Completed the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy in draft which was presented to elected members at the SE Working group in September 2025. Approval to be sought at SE Committee in October 2025 for launch of public consultation. Strategy reviewed and rewritten and went to SMT Committee and public consultation and design is complete and final draft to go to S&E in May – launch in June.
Publication of the Council's Climate Change Adaption Plan	Target Progress	Sep 25 Mar 26 Green Amber 1 2
	Notes:	1 2 Work has commenced on the Climate Adaptation Report which is due to be submitted to DAERA by 31 March 2026. Draft climate adaptation plan has been developed

Complete and Implement the Council's Tree Strategy		Target Progress Sep 25 Green Mar 26 Green
	Notes:	- Ongoing - Council have now included trees under a theme within the Biodiversity Strategy, where actions will be updated as part of the Biodiversity Annual Action Plan.
Implementing the newly published Biodiversity Strategy 2024-30		Target Progress Sep 25 Green Mar 26 Green
	Notes:	- Progressed the action plan contained within the development of the Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2024-30) - Internally the Biodiversity Officer worked closely with other departments and teams across Council to improve how we manage our own green spaces for biodiversity through tree planting, changing our mowing regimes, wildflower planting and managing invasive species. Work also continued with local community groups to support their efforts and raise awareness among schools and the public of the importance of our environment. There have been several successful projects and actions benefitting biodiversity achieved in the past year including the Castlewellan HLF project, the Geopark and AONB projects, as well as the huge pots of funding successfully secured through PEACEPLUS for CMAP, Peat+ and Bloom and Branch (biodiversity PEACE funding for communities). A Review of the Biodiversity Action Plan was undertaken and presented to S&E Committee in March 2025.
Preparing the Climate Change Mitigation Report in accordance with The Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024		Target Progress Sep 25 Green Mar 26 Green
	Notes:	- Climate Mitigation report (which includes carbon baseline reporting) currently being finalised for submission to DAERA by 31 October 2025 - Report submitted to DAERA by 31/10/25
Continue to implement Council's fleet replacement programme		Target Progress Sep 25 Green Mar 26 Green
	Notes:	- Continued to implement the Fleet Replacement Programme. Fleet modernisation will deliver a significant reduction in CO2 emissions particularly with the procurement of 13 no. electric battery vehicles by the Council before the end of 2025-26. - Ongoing

Measure of success	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	2025-26	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Carbon footprint of Council estate	To be established			5,246 tCO ₂ e		The Baseline Emissions Footprint for Newry Mourne and Down is 5,246 tCO ₂ e (Tonnes of CO ₂ equivalent).
Renewable energy generation	To be established			154,684kWh		The Council has 21 Solar PV sites across the District. The Baseline figure for Generation of renewable energy is 154,684 kWh which is currently how much renewable electricity we produce from our solar systems.
Energy consumption baseline	To be established			- Electricity: 4,584,089 kWh - Mains Gas: 4,996,994 kWh - Heating Oil (Kerosene): 12,499,723 litres - Fleet Use (Diesel): 837,901 litres. - Fleet Use (Unleaded Petrol): 4,995 litres		The Baseline energy usage which was established using 2024-25 data is as follows: Electricity - 4,584,089 kWh Mains Gas - 4,996,992 kWh Heating Oil (Kerosene) - 449,723 litres Fleet Use (Diesel) - 837,901 litres Fleet Use (Unleaded Petrol) - 4,995 litres
Percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years	New measure	75%	79% (Target: 85%)	78% (Target: 85%)	 	In 2025-26, 153 of the Council's 197 vehicles were eight years or younger, representing 78% of the total. This represents a 1% decrease on the figure recorded in 2024-25 and is 7% below the target set by Council.
Number of vehicles within the Council	New measure	1 (Target: 10)	1 (Target: 10)	1 (Target: 10)		Currently, Council still only has one vehicle within its fleet that has an alternative fuel source. This car is used within the enforcement section and is due to be replaced with a new EV

fleet that have an alternative fuel source						vehicle. Approval has been granted for the replacement of a proportion of existing small and medium sized diesel vans with electric vehicles which are due to be delivered in Q2/Q3 2026-27. Plans are also progressing for the transition of all Council diesel vehicles to HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil).
Number of trees planted on Council managed estate	New measure	2,800	257 (Target: 2,800)	2,800 (Target: 2,800)		In 2025-26, 2,800 trees were planted across the Council managed estate achieving the target set for the year.
Number of Council supported EV charging points	New measure	20	0 (Target: 18)	0 (Target: 18)		Council currently supports 19 EV charging points across its estate. Another 18 were due to be installed as part of the ORCS (On street residential charge point scheme) during 2025-26, however due to delays this is now due to be completed in 2026-27. A further 12 EV charge points are currently in the process of being stalled at 3 Council facilities for Council fleet operations





Performance Improvement Objective 5

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

- Community Planning Outcome – All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities
- Corporate Objective – Deliver sustainable services

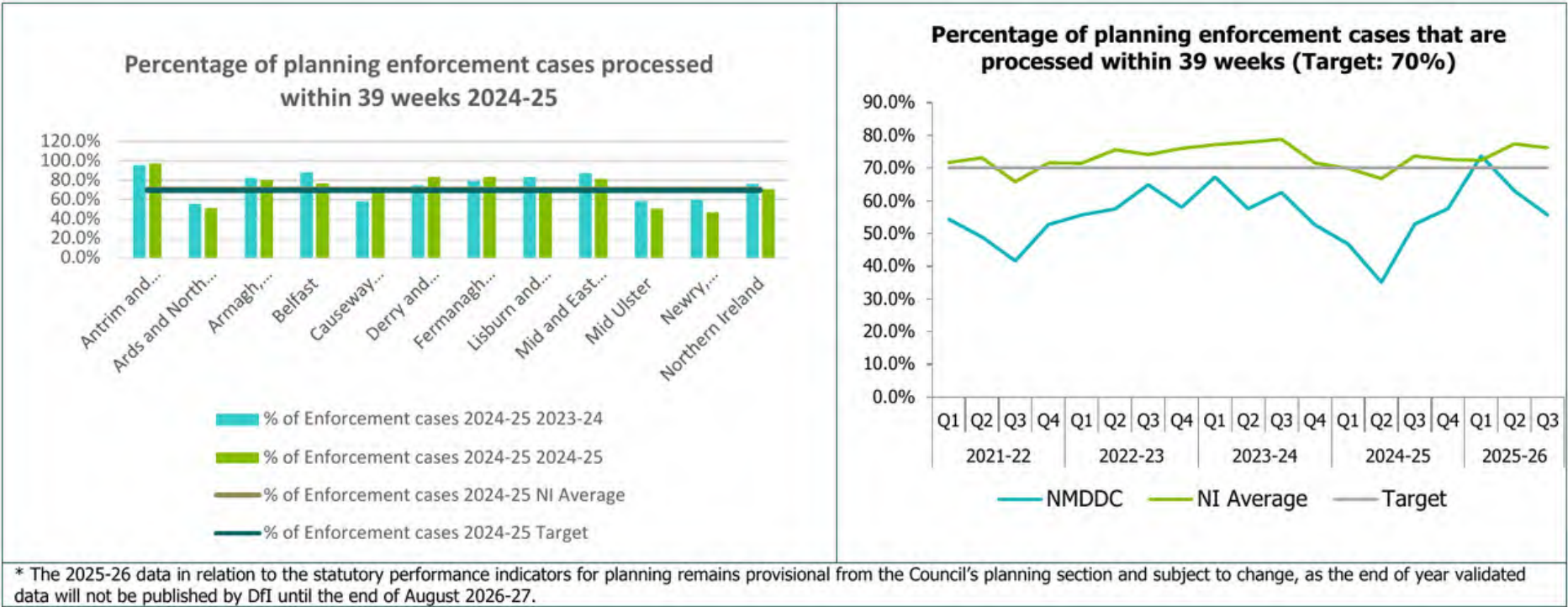
Linked to and Supporting:

Key action		Update		
Launch of the Council's Draft Plan Strategy		Target	Sep 25 June 2025	Mar 26
		Progress	Green	Green
		Notes:	1 Council's Draft Plan Strategy launched in June 2025 2 Representations made and reviewed and responses now out to consultation	

Ongoing work with agents and architects to improve the standard of planning application submissions	Target Progress	Sep 25 Green * 1	Mar 26 Green * 2
Notes: - Ongoing - This remains ongoing. Validation Check List (VCL) due to be launched in June 2026			
Support employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries'.	Target Progress	Sep 25 Green * 1	Mar 26 Green * 2
Notes: - Ongoing - Ongoing training on Validation Check List (VCL) planned for May 2026 for staff. Forward training plan for 2026-27 being developed.			

Measure of success	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	2025-26	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	21.6	33.7 (Target: <15 weeks)	45.2 (Target: <15 weeks)	60.2* (Target: <15 weeks)	 	During 2025-26, Newry, Mourne and Down received 1,078* local planning applications which represents a 5.5% decrease when compared to the 1,141 applications received in 2024-25. The processing time for local planning applications increased from 45.2 weeks in 2024-25 to 60.2* weeks in 2025-26, which is above the 2024-25 regional average of 19.0 weeks and exceeds the statutory standard of <15 weeks. Newry, Mourne and Down processed 2.6%* of local planning applications within the statutory standard for 2025-26, a decrease of 1.8% compared to 2024-25. Based on the 2024-25 annual finalised results, which is the only one publicly available, Newry, Mourne and Down is ranked 11/11 across Northern Ireland for processing local planning applications.
Average processing time of major planning	89.0	154.8	29.6	100.3*		During 2025-26, Newry, Mourne and Down received seven major planning applications, seven less applications than what was received during 2024-25. The processing time for major planning applications increased from 29.6 weeks in 2024-25 to

applications (weeks)		(Target: <30 weeks)	(Target: <30 weeks)	(Target: <30 weeks)		100.3 weeks in 2025-26. It is above the 2024-25 regional average of 39.6 weeks and is above the statutory standard of <30 weeks. 3.3% of major planning applications were processed within the statutory standard, a decrease of 50.5% compared to 2024-25. Based on the 2024-25 annual finalised results, which is the only one publicly available, Newry, Mourne and Down is ranked 5/11 across Northern Ireland for processing major planning applications.
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks	58.6%	60.0% (Target: 70%)	47.6% (Target: 70%)	36.4%* (Target: 70%)	 	Within Newry, Mourne and Down in 2025-26 there were 313* enforcement cases opened, representing an increase of 19% compared to the 263 cases opened in 2024-25. The percentage of enforcement cases progressed within the statutory timescale decreased by 11.2% from 47.6% in 2024-25 to 36.4% in 2025-26 and it remains below the statutory target of 70% and below the 2024-25 regional average of 70.7%. Based on the 2024-25 annual finalised results, which is the only one publicly available, Newry, Mourne and Down is ranked 11/11 across Northern Ireland for the percentage of enforcement cases progressed.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	228	352 (Target: 150)	408 (Target: 150)	Data not available (Target: 150)	-	The Department of Infrastructure (DfI) have not yet released their 2025-26 annual finalised planning statistics and therefore this information is currently not available. Once the finalised and validated report is published by the Department, this information will be updated in this report and published on the Council's website.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less	934	1,154 (Target: 700)	1,118 (Target: 700)	Data not available (Target: 700)	-	The Department of Infrastructure (DfI) have not yet released their 2025-26 annual finalised planning statistics and therefore this information is currently not available. Once the finalised and validated report is published by the Department, this information will be updated in this report and published on the Council's website.
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more	500	599 (Target: 450)	574 (Target: 450)	Data not available (Target: 450)	-	The Department of Infrastructure (DfI) have not yet released their 2025-26 annual finalised planning statistics and therefore this information is currently not available. Once the finalised and validated report is published by the Department, this information will be updated in this report and published on the Council's website.



Corporate Plan 2024-27: Self-imposed performance indicators

Corporate Objective

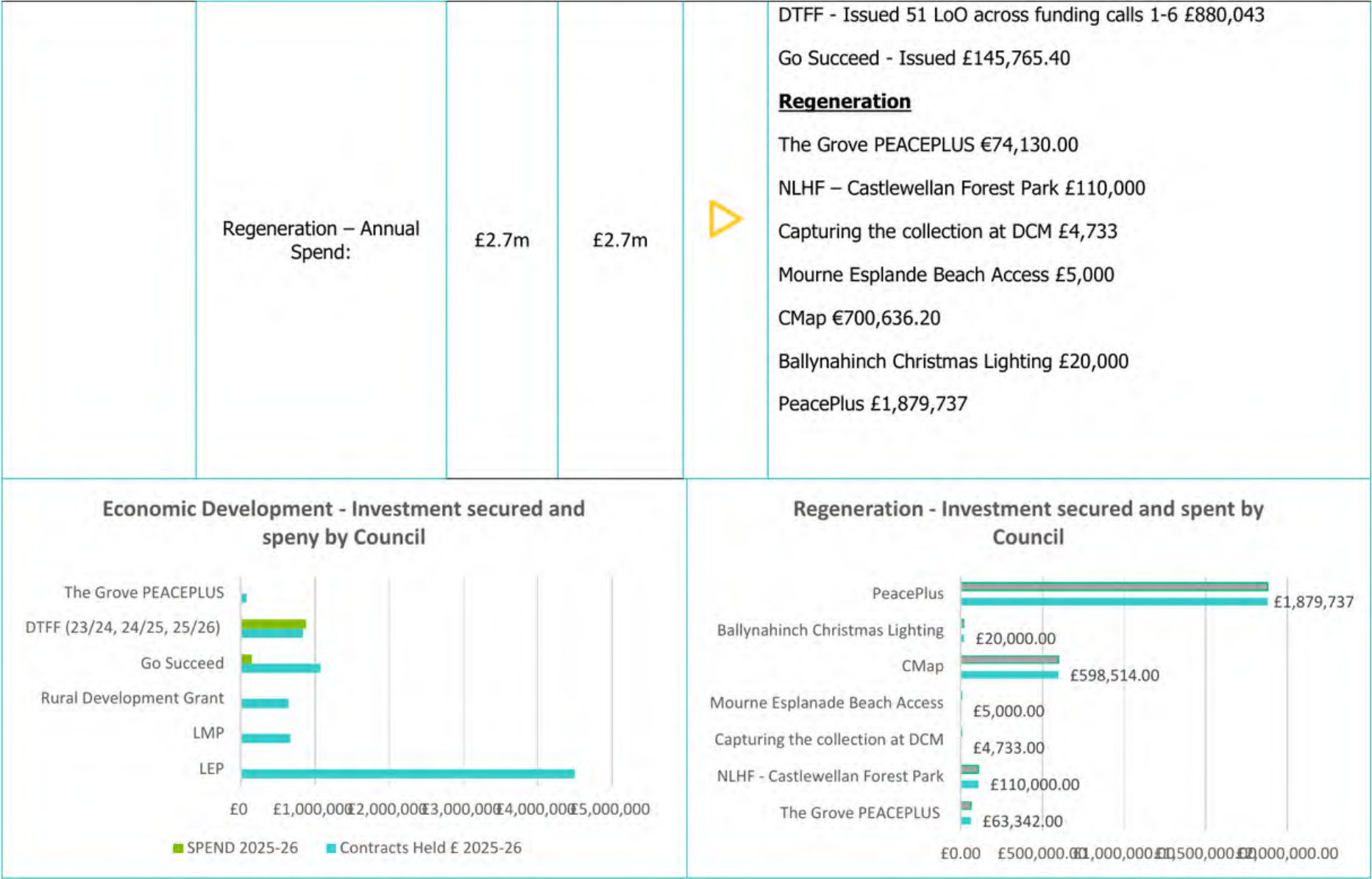
Support the continued growth and development of our local economy

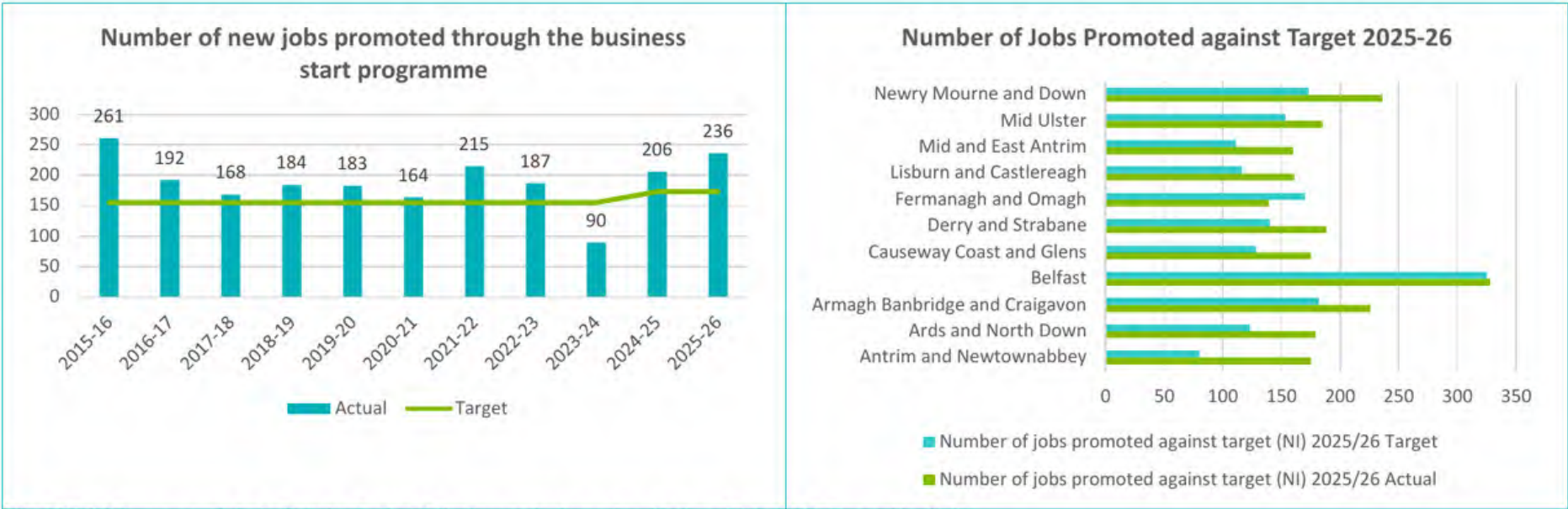
Key action		Update	
Principal Project: Belfast Region City Deal Projects including skills and innovation		Target Progress	Jun 26 Amber 1
		Notes:	1 Theatre & Conference Facility: Contractor appointed; pre-construction period completed June 2026; Construction underway summer 2026. Grade A Office Accommodation: Open for applications May - November 2026 Civic Hub; Progression remains subject to Judicial Review
Implement a programme of support that will increase growth and investment for new and established businesses and social enterprises across the district.		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green 1
		Notes:	1 Go Succeed is a business support initiative led by Northern Ireland's eleven local councils, the services provide expert advice and resources to entrepreneurs at Engage and Growth stages of their business journey. Go Succeed issued £145,765.40 of grants in 25/26. Council supports NMEA to deliver Innovate Accelerate and Social Enterprise start up support via NMD SE programme. Council supports Down Business Centre deliver a programme for Women Networking.

Through the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) partnership, and other programmes, implement a range of skills and employability initiatives that meets the needs of local economy	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green + 1
Notes: 1 The following is a range of LMP initiatives: Get Work Ready pre-employment programme concluded with 67 participants completing of 68 enrolled • Enterprise Pathway Programme concluded with 40 completers of 41 enrolments • Employability Academies concluded with 52 completers of 99 enrolments • Three 'Place to Work' events held with 291 attendees • Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Masterclass held with 10 local employers • Disability Employment Programme delivered to 10 participants • Upskilling for Growth initiatives delivered to 113 participants • Employment Pathway events delivered to 2217 attendees • Apprenticeship events held with 973 attendees • Promotion of Employability and Skills Events delivered to 257 attendees • To date a total of 118 participants have gained employment as a result of participating in an NMD LMP initiative. Skills conference hosted with 150 people in attendance.		
Support the growth of new and existing businesses through the delivery of innovative and digital focused initiatives.	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green + 1
Notes: 1 NMDDC is the lead Council on the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund, the programme is delivering digitally driven innovation which is a shared ambition across the NI City and Growth Deals. The Digital Transformation Flexible Fund has been developed to assist small and micro businesses and social enterprises to be active in digital transformation, supporting inclusive growth. DTFF has awarded funding to 36 applicants in the district to the value of £600,947.53 across funding calls 1-5.		

Through Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) and other cross-border linkages, maximise the district's location as a cross-border gateway to Great Britain, EU, Ireland and international markets	Target Progress Jun 26 Green ^ 1
Notes:	1 DBEC have created an Industry Advisory Panel which enables DBEC to listen directly to industry and understand industries point of view to what is required to ensure DBEC achieves our aim of becoming a leading economic corridor in Europe. The Industry Advisory Panel have three strategic priorities. 1. Enhancing DBEC placemaking and corridor branding. 2. Advocate for improved infrastructure, including enabling infrastructure, along DBEC. 3. Collaboration as a cross-cutting theme necessary to achieve all DBEC priorities. The Industry Advisory Panel meet quarterly, organised and facilitated by DBEC. DBEC have been successful with a Peace Plus application for funding, exploring cross-border skills and equivalence of qualifications in Ireland and Northern Ireland, including linking cross border apprenticeships. DBEC are a partner in the process which is led by Belfast Metropolitan College. DBEC continue to promote the region and have entered a contract with a communication provider who promotes DBEC and the activities of DBEC. Included in this is the production of a Communication Plan with a key aspect being the production and distribution of a quarterly DBEC newsletter.
Continued growth of our area's infrastructure through a responsive planning system	Target Progress Jun 26 Amber ^ 1
Notes:	1 Planning targets remain a challenge however the department still receives and processes the second highest number of applications across the 11 Planning Authorities. A number of initiatives are ongoing via the planning improvement programme to deal with challenges within the service and Council has recruited external providers to provide support and increased mentoring for staff. Work remains ongoing to work with developers and agents to improve the service and react to priority projects that address key corporate priorities namely Economic Development, Tourism and Health and Wellbeing.

Measure of Success	2024-25		2025-26		Status Trend	Explanatory Note
	Jobs created	Businesses supported	Jobs created	Businesses supported		
Number of jobs created and businesses supported through Council programmes	222	231	252*	317*	 	Through the new NI 'Go Succeed' programme and the Social Economy programme 252 jobs were created with 317 businesses supported. This represents an increase of 13.5% in relation to the number of jobs created and an increase of 37.2% in the number of business supported. During 2025-26, the Social Economy programme supported 12 social enterprises while 16 new social enterprise jobs were created. Go Succeed supported the creation of 307 Business Plans and 86 Enterprise Action plans which equates to 236 jobs promoted. 81 Foundation businesses, 215 Growth businesses, 2 Scaling businesses and 7 businesses supported via Innovate Accelerate were supported through the programme.
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity	173	206	173	236*	 	During 2025-26, Newry, Mourne and Down promoted 236 jobs through business start-up activity. This is an increase of 14.6% when compared to the 2024-25 figure of 206. This figure also exceeds the target set of 173 for 2025-26 by 36.4%. The Council recorded the second highest number of actual jobs promoted across all the Council areas, ranking it 2/11 across Northern Ireland behind Belfast City Council.
Amount of investment secured and distributed by the Council	Investment		2024-25	2025-26		
	Economic Development - Total Value of Funding Contracts Held:		£1.8m	£6.3m		Economic Development Investment - LEP £4.5m LMP £522,963.29 plus an additional £142,626.36 Rural Development Grants £641,178 Go Succeed £1,071,861.92
	Economic Development – Annual Spend:		£775,283	£1,025,808.40		
	Regeneration – Total Value of Funding Contracts Held:		£2.7m	£2.7		Grants issued -





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

Corporate Objective

Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district

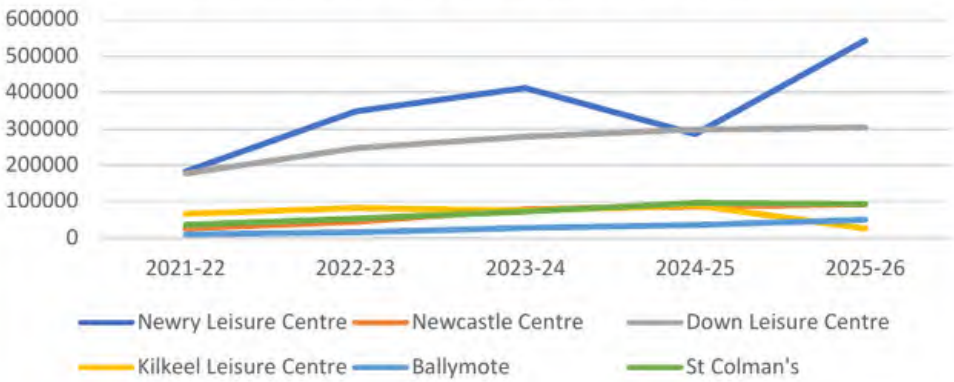
Key Action	Update
Principal Project: Progress Warrenpoint Health and Wellbeing Centre	Target Progress Jun 26 Green
Notes:	1 In progress - planning approval obtained
Continue to implement our Active Travel Masterplan	Target Progress Jun 26 Green
Notes:	1 The Carlingford Greenway was completed in 2025-26 and is now open. There are 5 greenways across the District currently being developed with several active travel shared walking/cycle paths in progress.
Continue to implement our Age Friendly Strategy 2021-2031	Target Progress Jun 26 Amber
Notes:	1 This work continues through the Age Friendly Co-ordinator and yearly action plans that align to PHA funding.
Continue to implement our Sports Facilities Strategy	Target Progress Mar 26 Green
Notes:	1 We continue to implement our Sports Facilities Strategy, noting that we are progressing through the facilities plan and carrying out works in each area as funding and budgets become available.

Continue to implement our Play Strategy	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green 1
Notes: 1 We continue to implement our Play Strategy (2024–2029), with all Year 1 and Year 2 actions completed and approximately 80% of Year 3 works now delivered.		
Continue to implement our Community Trails Development Plan	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green 1
Notes: 1 We continue to implement our Community Trails Development Plan, noting that the core trails are now complete and a prioritised list of potential future routes has been identified, subject to external funding opportunities.		
Carry out initiatives to tackle health inequalities across the district	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green 1
Notes: 1 We are carrying out initiatives to tackle health inequalities across the district, through continued delivery of a range of health programmes and low-intensity classes, currently exceeding our targets for the GP referral funded program while participation in our Be Active for Health program continues to grow.		

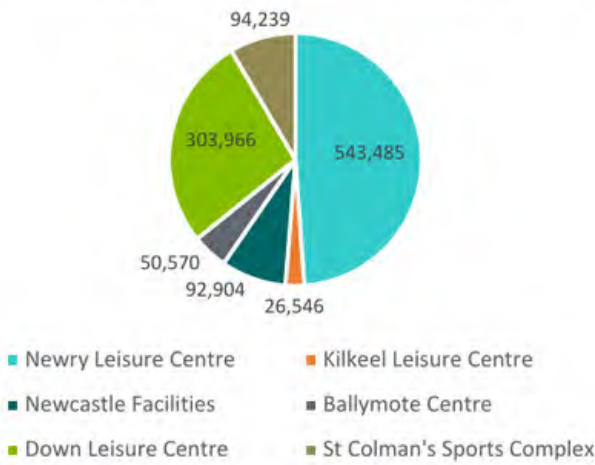
Establish an Open Spaces Strategy	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green > 9
Notes: 1 The LDP Open Space Strategy sets out the Council's approach to the protection, enhancement and management of open space in the district. The Council commissioned a review of existing open space as part of preparing the Plan Strategy. The review not only identifies existing facilities but highlights future needs in terms of the provision of quality open space, sport and outdoor recreational facilities in the council area. The review includes an audit of existing open space and provides a draft Open Space Strategy. The open space strategy forms part of the Draft Plan Strategy which was launched in June 2025 and was open for 12 weeks consultation period via on line submissions and district wide workshops. All views have been taken on board and counter representations have been consulted on also ahead of final strategy being submitted to DfI for independent examination.		
Delivery of projects within the PeacePlus Action Plan addressing wellbeing, social prescribing and opening of shared spaces.	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green > 9
Notes: 1 Tender documentation for social prescribing were issued and awarded. Work has commenced. PEACEPLUS projects for shared spaces capital projects are currently undergoing procurement and site work will commence at the end of June 2026		

Measure of Success	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25		2025-26		Status Trend	Explanatory note
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	 	There has been an increase of 39% in the number of people participating in targeted health programmes increasing from 20,421 in 2024-25 to 28,399 in 2025-26. This figure exceeds the target set for this measure by 29%. This figure includes all health programmes and Be Active camps.
	1,950	9,309	9,400	10,805	20,000	20,421	22,000	28,399		
Number of attendances at Council leisure facilities	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		There has been an increase of 23% in the number of attendances at Council Leisure facilities between 2024-25 and 2025-26. The figure increased from 903,717 in 2024-25 to 1,111,386 in 2025-26. This increase can be primarily attributed to the re-opening of Newry swimming pool in March 2025.
	-	803,517	-	954,912 (Paid Attendances: 768,842)	-	903,717 (Paid attendances: 737,439)		1,111,386 (Paid attendances (934,517))		
Number of users of community trails	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		The Council no longer records figures for community trails as this was part of the 4-year funding supporting evidence which has now concluded.
	120,000	225,795	225,000	263,364	265,000	196,333	-	-		

Attendances at Council Leisure Facilities



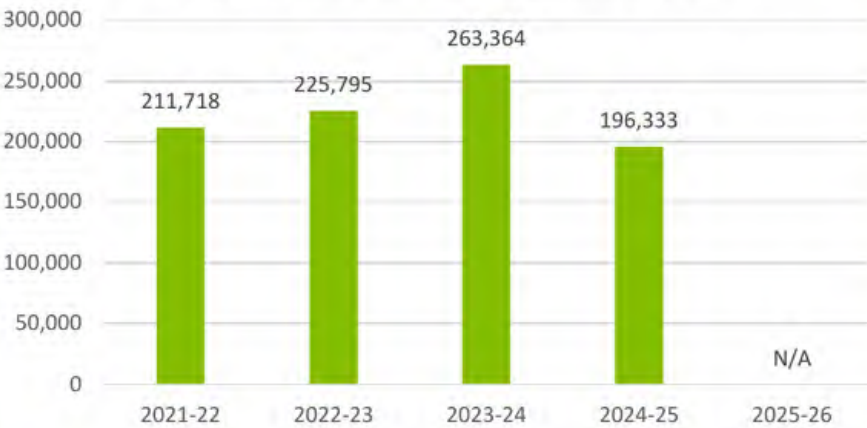
Leisure Centre attendances 2025-26



Targeted Health Programmes



Number of users of community trails



Corporate Objective

Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future

Key action		Update	
Principal Project: Progress the Local Development Plan Strategy		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Local Development plan Draft strategy was launched in June 2025 and a 12 week consultation was held with online feedback and a series of workshops. Representations were made and reviewed and counter representations then consulted on. The plan strategy will be submitted to DfI for Independent Examination by end of 2026 as per the timetable agreed by Council and submitted to DfI	
Develop and implement a Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Completed the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy in draft which was presented to elected members at the SE Working group in September 2025. Approval was sought at SE Committee in October 2025 for launch of public consultation. Strategy reviewed and rewritten and went to SMT Committee and public consultation and design is complete and final draft to go to S&E in August with a view to launch in September.	
Develop and implement a Local Climate Change Adaptation Plan		Target Progress	Jun 26 Amber
	Notes:	1 Work has commenced on the Climate Adaptation Report which was submitted to DAERA by 31 March 2026. Draft climate adaptation plan is currently being developed.	

Develop and implement a Biodiversity Strategy	Target Progress Jun 26 Green
Notes:	1 The Biodiversity strategy was published and launched in January 2025. Within Council the Biodiversity Officer worked closely with other departments and teams across Council to improve how we manage our own green spaces for biodiversity through tree planting, changing our mowing regimes, wildflower planting and managing invasive species. Work also continued with local community groups to support their efforts and raise awareness among schools and the public of the importance of our environment. There have been several successful projects and actions benefitting biodiversity achieved in the past year including the Castlewella Hill project, the Geopark and AONB projects, as well as the huge pots of funding successfully secured through PEACEPLUS for CMAP, Peat+ and Bloom and Branch (biodiversity PEACE funding for communities). A Review of the Biodiversity Action Plan was undertaken and presented to S&E Committee in March 2026.
Develop and implement a Tree Strategy	Target Progress Jun 26 Green
Notes:	1 Council has now included trees under a theme within the Biodiversity Strategy, where actions will be updated as part of the Biodiversity Annual Action Plan.
Undertake a baseline assessment of the Council's carbon footprint and set targets to reduce our carbon emissions.	Target Progress Jun 26 Green
Notes:	1 Baseline has been completed with the Climate Mitigation Report submitted to DAERA in October 2025 which included the baseline assessment of carbon emissions and associated targets for carbon reduction.
Support the implementation of new Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.	Target Progress Jun 26 Green
Notes:	1 Council currently supports 19 EV charging points across its estate. A further 18 points are due to be installed as part of the regional ORCS project. 12 EV charge points are currently in the process of being stalled at 3 Council facilities for Council fleet operations.

Keep under review the actions to address sustainability and the climate change emergency declared by Council.	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green ~ 1
	Notes:	1 Council has now completed the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy in draft which was presented to elected members at the Sustainability and Environment (SE) Working group in September 2025. Approval was then granted to launch a public consultation which took place for 12 weeks ending in March 2026. Following the public consultation the strategy has been reviewed and rewritten with a final draft to go to S&E in August with a view to launch in September.
Contribute to the delivery of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Action Plans and the Marine Protected Area Management Plans.	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green ~ 1
	Notes:	1 Significant progress has been made in delivering the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Action Plans and the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Management Plans through a wide range of conservation, access, habitat restoration, community engagement, education and partnership initiatives. Delivery has included biodiversity enhancement, invasive species control, path and access improvements, volunteer programmes, coastal and marine awareness activities, and collaborative projects with statutory agencies, local communities and environmental organisations. This work continues to protect and enhance the district's internationally and nationally important landscapes and seascapes, while supporting biodiversity recovery, sustainable access, climate resilience and community wellbeing in line with Council priorities.

Develop and implement a District Enforcement Action Plan for controlling environmental crime and reducing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents.	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green 1
	Notes:	1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has launched a three-year education and enforcement action plan to address key issues of fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling aimed at protecting the environment for future generations. A recommendation to implement the action plan was agreed at a meeting of the Council's Sustainability and Environment Committee on 17 June and was approved by the full Council in July 2026.
Develop and implement the Local Development Plan.	Target Progress	Jun 20 Green 1
	Notes:	1 LDP is developing as per agreed timetable and will be submitted to DfI by end of 2026 for IE
Implementation of Building Regulations and licensing obligations in partnership with our customers and stakeholders.	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green 1
	Notes:	1 This work remains ongoing as per agreed regulations which are reviewed and agreed by relevant departments with performance reported to Council bi annually

Measure of Success	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25		2025-26		Status Trend	Explanatory Note
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
Level of street cleanliness across the District (KNIB street cleanliness score)	-	Data unavailable	64	Data unavailable	64	Data unavailable	64	Data unavailable	-	The Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) Cleaner Neighbourhoods Report for 2024-25 was published in Q4 2024-25. While a new regional average of 73 has been provided for 2024-25, which is a decrease of 2% on the 2023-24 score of 75%, an individual Council LEAMS score has not been provided within the report. Contact has been made with KNIB asking if this information can be made available and we are currently awaiting a response. Council has however been exploring other options to determine levels of street cleanliness and have had a LAMS (Land Area Management System) app through APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) approved for use through the Council's IT Performance Group.
Percentage of waste recycled	50% by 2020	49.6%	50% by 2020	50.1%	70% by 2030 55% by 2025	48.7%	70% by 2030 55% by 2025	48.3%	 	Since 2017-18, the Council has increased the overall rate of recycling by 2.2% to 48.3%, however it falls below the 2025 target of 55%. It is also below the 2025-26 regional average of 51.3% and ranks the Council joint 9/11 across Northern Ireland alongside Derry City and Strabane District Council. Between 2024-25 and 2025-26, the overall rate of recycling in the District decreased by 0.4% This is in contrast to the overall regional increase of 0.3% that was experienced between 2024-25 and 2025-26.
Percentage of EV charging points	New measure						-	0%		Council currently supports 19 EV charging points across its estate. A further 18 points are due to be installed as part of the regional ORCS project during 2026-27. 12 EV charge points are currently in the process of being

					installed at 3 Council facilities for Council fleet operations.
Level of compliance with sustainable development duty		Council continues to make significant progress in addressing the impact of climate change locally. The Council’s Climate Change Strategy has been through public consultation with a target date for launch in September 2026. The Council is involved in several projects to increase the availability of EV charging points across the District, including the installation of 12 EV charging points for Council fleet at 3 Council facilities across the District. Council has also established its carbon emissions baseline and developed associated targets for carbon reduction. Council are also working towards a transition to zero emission vehicles for small and medium fleet with 16 vehicles ordered and due to be delivered in 2026/27.			

Corporate Objective

Support regenerative tourism opportunities which promote our culture, heritage and environment

Key Action		Update	
Principal Project: Newcastle tourism and recreation facilities		Target	Jun 26
		Progress	Green
	Notes:	1 Feasibility Study completed on active travel routes Concept proposal underway on active travel hub / park and ride facility Active Travel route being progressed for Tipperary Woods and Castle Park	
Deliver the Council's Tourism Strategy.		Target	Jun 26
		Progress	Green
	Notes:	1 Significant progress has been made in delivering the Tourism Strategy through the launch of the new destination brand, Mourne Gullion Strangford – Ireland's True Nature, alongside enhanced destination marketing, interpretation and signage improvements. Council continues to strengthen collaboration with tourism businesses and communities through the development of a Sustainable Tourism Network and the appointment of a dedicated facilitator approved. New tourism experiences have been introduced, including a Food and Drink Experience in Warrenpoint and a Mindfulness Experience within the Forest Parks. New events such as Restaurant Week Newcastle and The Garden Sessions at Slieve Gullion have further enhanced the district's tourism offering. Major investment continues across Council's Forest Parks and beaches, improving visitor infrastructure and accessibility. These initiatives are supporting sustainable tourism growth, strengthening the visitor economy and enhancing the district's profile as a leading tourism destination	

Develop the tourism proposition for the district and new visitor experiences with industry in line with Tourism Experience Brands	Target Progress	Jun 20 Green 1
Notes:	1 Significant progress has been made in raising the profile of the district through the launch of the new destination brand, Mourne Gullion Strangford – Ireland's True Nature, providing a unified identity for tourism promotion across the district. 4 new experiences have been delivered and 2 existing experiences reviewed.	
Continue to progress the Mourne Mountains Gateway Project as part of the BRCD investment programme, and other major tourism capital projects throughout the district.	Target Progress	Jun 20 Green 1
Notes:	1 Following decision by National Trust not to grant a lease, NMDDC working with key stakeholders to explore an alternative tourism proposition. Grade A Hotel Accommodation grant for £1 million was launched 19th September and 3 projects have been successful. Council approved the Outline Business Case for the Castlewellsan Treetop Walk Project, representing an investment of approximately £6.8 million by Council, alongside a proposed £5 million investment from EAK. Progress is continuing on lease and legal agreements, together with the development of ancillary infrastructure required to support the project. Complementary investment is also being delivered through the National Lottery Heritage Fund's and Council of circa £7million investment in Castlewellsan Forest Park, which has facilitated the reopening of the Annesley Arboretum and Walled Garden, while restoration works at the Grange Yard are nearing completion. Visitor improvement works have also been completed at Tyrella Beach Amenity Building, with the Mae Murray Accessible Beach facility now fully operational, improving accessibility and inclusivity for residents and visitors alike.	

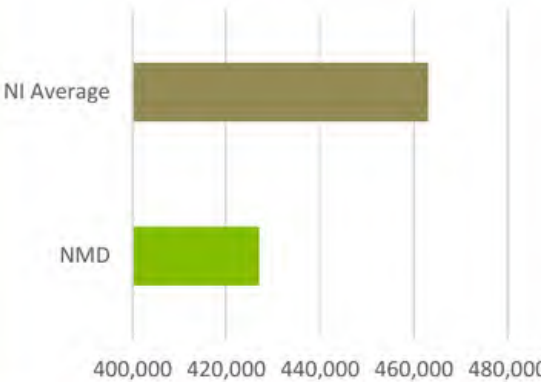
Implement the Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark Masterplan 2020–2023 and Business Plan 2021–2025.		Target Progress Jun 25 Green +1
Notes:		1 Significant progress has been made in implementing the Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark Strategy, Management Plan and Action Plan. Delivery has included a broad programme of biodiversity conservation, climate resilience initiatives, heritage interpretation, education and youth engagement, sustainable tourism development, volunteer programmes, research, and community participation activities across the district. This work continues to deliver against Council objectives by enhancing biodiversity, increasing community participation, strengthening partnerships and supporting sustainable economic growth through the UNESCO Global Geopark designation.
Continue to deliver the Council's Arts, Culture & Heritage Strategy to grow our audiences, increase engagement and enhance our Arts, Museums and Events' offering.		Target Progress Jun 25 Green +1
Notes:		1 Successful delivery of Giant Adventures and community events programme, schools engagement programme at the museums, and comprehensive Arts programme at Down Arts Centre.

Measure of Success	2018	2019	2023	2024	2025	Trend	Explanatory Note
Number of overnight stays	449,953	455,876	482,585	443,776	427,157	▶	There was a break in tourism statistics between 2020 and 2023 due to the unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. While 2023 data shows an increase in the number of overnight stays of 5.9% from 2019, NISRA has advised that the data wouldn't be directly comparable as there have been methodological changes in the surveys (including a change in source). Between 2024 and 2025 there was approximately a 3.7% decrease in the number of overnight stays recorded in Newry, Mourne and Down. Newry, Mourne and Down was one of 5 Council areas to experience a decrease during this period.

Level of visitor spend	£69,345,336	£67,983,191	£79,139,615	£73,277,005	£60,817,412	▽	There was a break in tourism statistics between 2020 and 2023 due to the unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. While 2023 data shows an increase in the level of visitor spend of 16.4% from 2019, NISRA has advised that the data wouldn't be directly comparable as there have been methodological changes in the surveys (including a change in source). Between 2024 and 2025 there was approximately a 17% decrease in the level of visitor spend recorded in the District. Newry, Mourne and Down was one of only 3 Councils to record a decrease in expenditure between 2024 and 2025.
Measure of Success	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Trend	Explanatory Note
Number of visitors to Council's Arts Centres and Museums	New measure			75,244	97,866	△	During 2025-26 there was a total of 97,866 visitors recorded across all Council's Arts Centres and Museums. This is an increase of 30% on the 75,244 visitors recorded in 2024-25. The breakdown of visitors across all the Council sites is as follows: Down Arts Centre: 28,096 Down County Museum: 14,378 Newry & Mourne Museum: 9,121 Newry Townhall: 32,099 Warrenpoint Townhall: 14,172

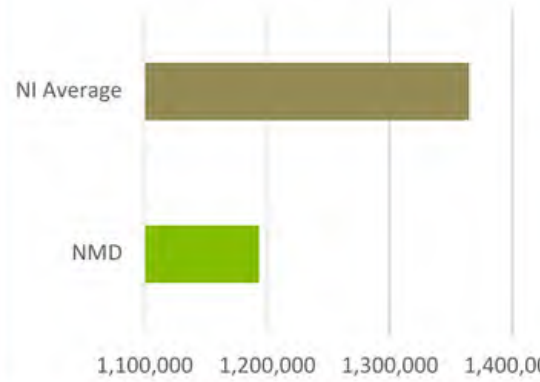
Measure of Success	2020	2021	2023	2024	2025	Trend	Explanatory Note
Level of visitor satisfaction		Satisfaction with Parks 83% (Baseline)	Satisfaction with Parks 76%	-	-	😞	A Visitor satisfaction survey was developed and deployed on the Council website in 2025 however but there was no response to the survey. To ensure this does not happen again the Council is re-launching the survey in Q2 2026/27, placing posters with QR codes at all relevant sites and issuing officers with mobile devices to complete face to face surveys. There was however feedback provided through the Council's Camp manager online booking system which received 400+ feedback messages on facilities and services associated with Forest Parks and over 90% feedback was 4 and 5 star rating.
		Satisfaction with Beaches 67% (Baseline)	Satisfaction with Beaches 52%		-		

Overnight Trips - 2025



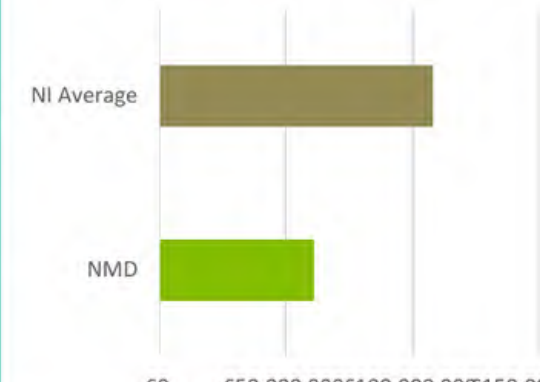
Category	Value
NI Average	~465,000
NMD	~430,000

Number of Nights - 2025



Category	Value
NI Average	~1,350,000
NMD	~1,180,000

Expenditure (£ Millions) - 2025



Category	Value
NI Average	~£100,000,000
NMD	~£75,000,000

Corporate Objective

Empowering communities to play an active part in civic life

Key action		Update	
Development and delivery of the District Electoral Area Action Plans		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green 1 1
Notes:		1 Programme delivery complete as per the 2025/26 DEA Action Plans	
Development and delivery of the Policing & Community Safety Partnership Action Plan		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green 1 1
Notes:		1 Programme delivery complete as per the 2025/26 PCSP Action Plan	
Development and delivery of the Good Relations Programme Action Plan		Target Progress	Jun 26 Programme delivery complete Green
Development and delivery of the Downpatrick and Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Areas Action Plan		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green 1 1
Notes:		1 Programme delivery complete as per the 2025/26 Downpatrick & Newry NR Action Plans	

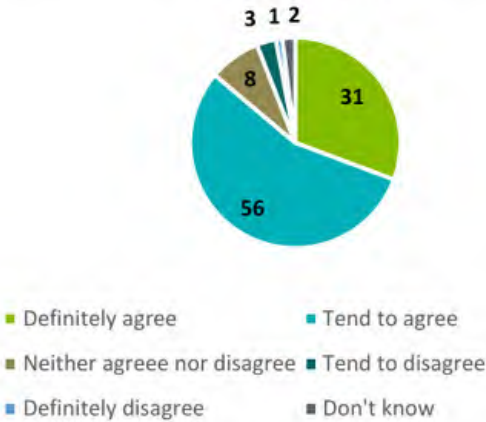
Development and delivery of the Social Inclusion Action Plan including the delivery of the Ethnic Minority Support Centre	Target Progress Jun 20 Green 1
Notes:	1 Social Inclusion Action Plan completed.
Development and delivery of the PeacePlus Action Plan	Target Progress Jun 26 Green 1
Notes:	1 The programme is on target for delivery with delays on capital expenditure accounted for and a plan in place to ensure timely delivery in line with the action plan.
Development and delivery of the Community Wealth Building Action Plan	Target Progress Jun 26 Green 1
Notes:	1 Community Wealth Building actions have been mainstreamed within Directorate Services Plans as a cross-cutting theme.

Implementation of the Community Plan		Target Progress Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Implementation of the Community Plan continued in 2025-26 including progressing the priorities within the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, delivery of Rural Housing Workshops, DEA based Participatory Budgeting events and the publication of the Community Planning Statement of Progress.
Development of a Community Facilities Strategy		Target Progress Jun 26 Amber
	Notes:	1 Community Facilities being considered as part of Community Development Strategy which is currently being drafted
Delivery of the Financial Assistance Programme		Target Progress Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 All calls were completed and claims finalised with the new site verification visits undertaken by budget holders

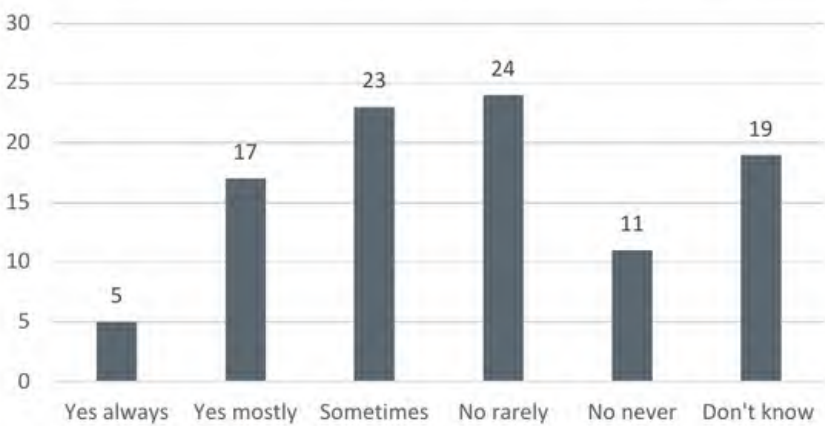
Measure of Success	2018 Actual	2022 Actual	Status	Explanatory Note
Percentage of residents who agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	72%	87%	△	In September 2018 and again in September 2022, the Council commissioned a Residents Survey to establish and track a robust and reliable evidence base in relation to resident perceptions about their local area, the performance of the Council and key priorities for improvement in the future. A representative sample of 764 residents were surveyed and revealed that: 87% agree that the area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, representing a significant increase on the 2018 figure of 72%.
Percentage of residents who agree that the Council consults with and listens to the views of local people	62%	65%	△	

Percentage of residents who feel that they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area	59%	45%		• 65% agree that the Council consults with and listens to the views of local people, which is an increase of 3% on the 2018 figure of 62%. The percentage of residents that disagree with this statement however has increased from 11% to 13% during the four-year period. • 45% feel that they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area. This represents a significant decrease from the 59% recorded in 2018. Feedback and comparative analysis from the two Residents Survey has been used to inform the development of future plans and strategies, including the Corporate Plan and Performance Improvement Plan.
Measure of Success	2024-25 Actual	2025-26 Actual	Status	Explanatory Note
Number of financial assistance projects funded	391 projects awarded funding	361		During 2025-26, The Council awarded £1.97 million in funding to 361 successful applications for financial assistance. This was done through 5 different funding calls run throughout the year. This represented a success rate of 61% from a total of 588 applications made throughout the year.
Number of people accessing the Ethnic Minority Support Office services	2343 (Target: 2000)	2212 (Target: 2000)	 	There were 2,212 contacts recorded through the Ethnic Minority Support Centre during 2025-26, exceeding the target set.

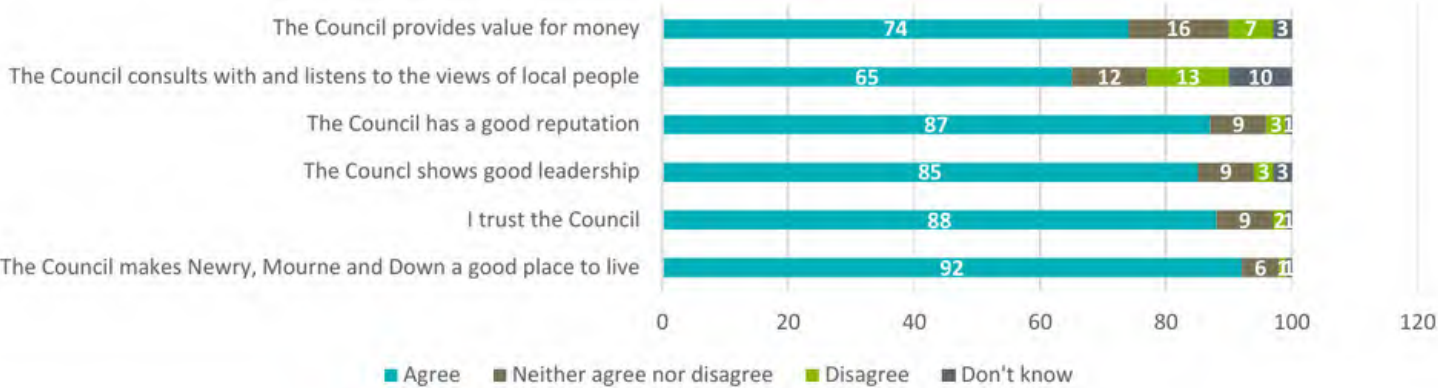
To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together? (%) (2022)



Do you feel you are able to have a say on things happening or how services are run in your local area? (%) (2022)



Thinking about Newry, Mourne and Down, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (2022)



Corporate Objective

Develop and revitalise our district

Key action		Update	
Principal Project: Newry City Centre Regeneration		Target Progress	Jun 26 Amber 1
Notes:		1 Full Business Case approved by DfC. Planning Approval in place. Civic Centre delayed following receipt of Pre Action Protocol Newry City Centre Regeneration Theatre/Conference Project- The theatre received planning permission 18 December 2024 and listed building consent August 2025. Woodvale Construction appointed, additional funding secured from Shared Island. Contractor due to mobilise in June 2026. Grade A Office Accommodation grant £3 Million Office accommodation grant was launched 19th September however with nil applications received. Development grant to reopen in 26/27. Hotel Accommodation grant £1 Million Office accommodation grant was launched 15th September with 4 applications submitted and now under assessment. Regional Innovation Hub MoU created and signed between Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Queens University Innovation Oversight Board as an academic partner on the Regional Innovation Hub project. Potential partnership opportunities being explored with Digital Catapult that could also support the operation of a regional innovation hub in Newry City	
Principal Project: Downpatrick Regeneration		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green 1
Notes:		1 PSNI/Irish Street marketing brief prepared. Outline Business Case with DfC's economist. Council has committed capital funding to the regeneration of Irish Street. DRWG meet monthly to progress projects identified in the Living High Streets action plan. Following the launch of the Urban Park in Dunleath, additional funding was secured from DfC for linkages to open up Dunleath to St. Patrick's Avenue. Following engagement with DfI there is no funding available for a traffic survey, alternative sources of funding are being investigated. Engagement with NI Water regarding purchase of lands to enable development of toilets in Market Street. Letter of Offer received for Church Street & DeCourcy Place Public Realm from DfC. Pre-contract works ongoing with utilities. Contractor appointed following procurement (McQuillan Contracts), task and finish meetings continue along with monthly meetings with key stakeholders.	

Implement a Small Settlement regeneration scheme in partnership with Government Departments.		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Small Settlements Scheme completed EI Schemes in Rostrevor, Castlewellsan, Saintfield and Bessbrook. 7 seven revitalisation schemes in the villages of Annalong, Dundrum, Hilltown, Killyleagh, Meigh, Newtownhamilton, Strangford and Killough. Several of these regeneration projects, including shop front and dereliction enhancement schemes, and Make it Local campaigns.	
Implement regeneration initiatives across urban centres and develop forward work programme for future regeneration initiatives.		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Quarterly meetings with DfC on urban centre development for Ballynahinch, Downpatrick, Kilkeel, Newry, Newcastle, and Warrenpoint. Kilkeel River Walk EI Scheme progressing through RIBA Stage 2.	
Progress the Belfast Region City Deal.		Target Progress	Jun 26 Amber
	Notes:	1 Theatre & Conference Facility. Contractor appointed, pre-construction period completed June 2026. Construction underway summer 2026. Grade A Office Accommodation: Open for applications May - November 2026 Civic Hub: Progression remains subject to Judicial Review	
Update existing masterplans and village plans in line with the emerging Local Development Plan.		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Officers undertake Master Plan reviews bi annually. Village plans were reviewed in October 2025 on projects complete, project relevance and suitability for Shaping Sustainable Places. Crossmaglen Improvement Plan complete in March 2026.	
Implement our Public Convenience Strategy		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Implementation of the public convenience strategy continues. 50% of the condition surveys have been completed. The outcome of these surveys will be used to prioritise which facilities will be refurbished or replaced through the Council's capital programme.	

Measure of success	2024-25	2025-26	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Number of BRCD projects delivered	Progress underway	2		Grade A Office Accommodation launched and open for applications. Theatre and Conference Facility commenced, with contractor appointed and commencement of construction Q2 2026/27
Number of small settlement schemes delivered	4 complete	11	△	Small Settlements Scheme completed EI Schemes in Rostrevor, Castlewellan, Saintfield and Bessbrook. 7 seven revitalisation schemes in the villages of Annalong, Dundrum, Hilltown, Killyleagh, Meigh, Newtownhamilton, Strangford and Killough
Number of new/upgraded public conveniences	4	0	▽	6 public conveniences have been refurbished/upgraded thus far however no new build or upgraded public conveniences were carried out in 2025-26. 50% of the condition surveys have now been completed and the outcome of these surveys will be used to prioritise which facilities will be refurbished or replaced through the Council's capital programme.

Corporate Objective

Deliver sustainable services

Key action		Update	
Principal Project: Organisational transformation and delivery of sustainable services		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green 71
Notes		1 Resources, funded from the Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (pEPR) payments scheme, have been approved to be utilised within the Sustainability and Environment Directorate (S&E) to support the Council in proactively improving the effectiveness and efficiency of its Waste Collection and Recycling Services, as required by the funding scheme. Introduction of a new HR system is progressing with final business case approved and work on system project implementation plan progressing. Procurement policy reviewed and updated and staff trained in implementation of the Procurement Act 2023.	
Develop a robust and reliable evidence base to inform decision making, policy development and service provision.		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green 71
Notes:		1 Council ran a number of public engagements including the draft performance improvement objectives and draft Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy. Community Planning indicator data has been updated and published as part of the Community Planning Statement of Progress 2026.	

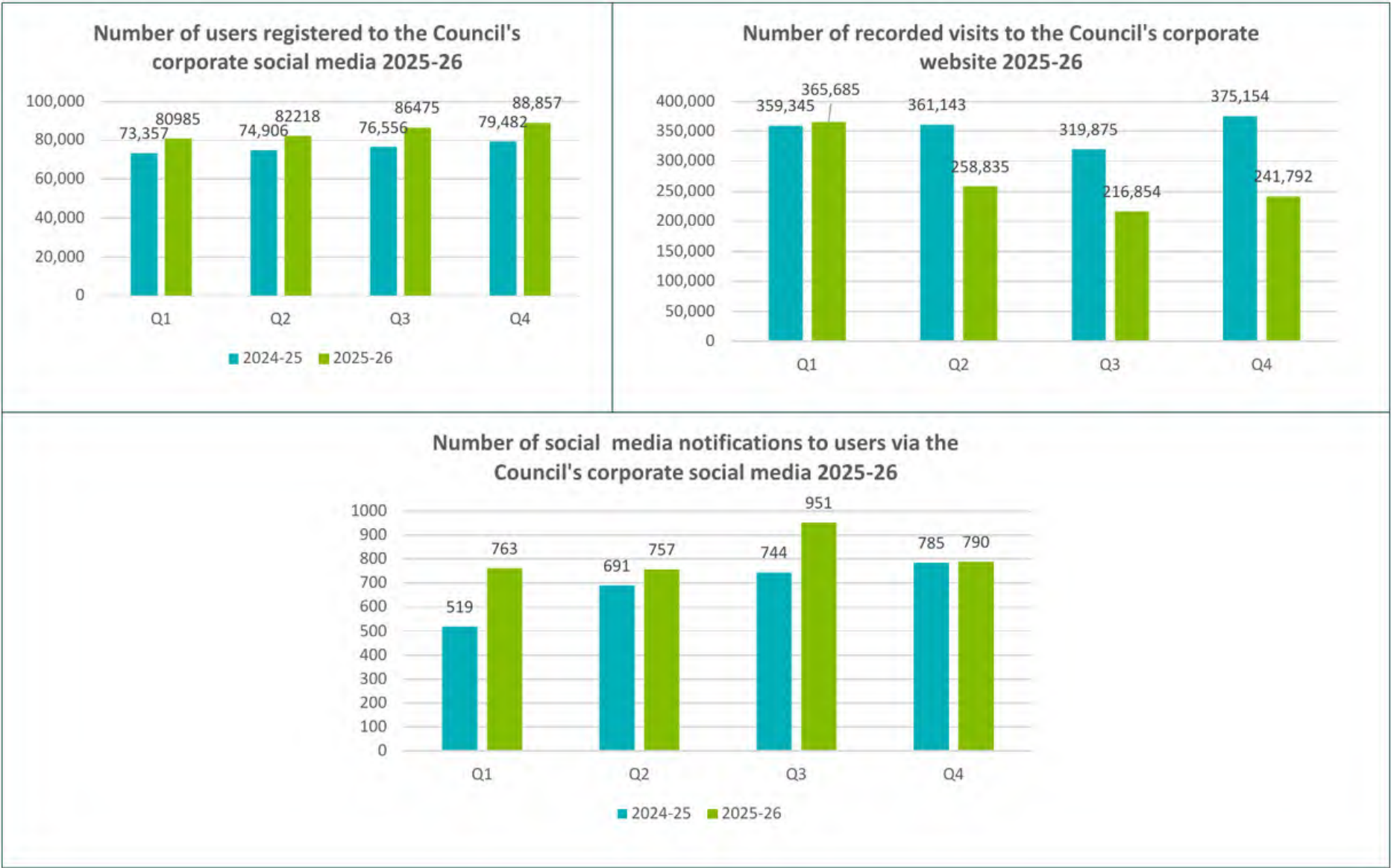
Effectively manage performance and align individual contribution with corporate objectives and better outcomes for all.	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
Notes.	1 The Council continues to mainstream and embed the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. During 2025-26, the performance officer presented two sessions on the framework and the significant contribution of employees in achieving the corporate objectives to staff taking part in ILM Levels 2 and 3. An SMT/CMT Business Planning Day was also organised in April 2025 which involved the development of new Directorate Business Plans and how they would contribute to the achievement of the overall corporate plan objectives and better outcomes for all. These were agreed by Committee in June along with the Assessment of the 2024-25 Directorate Business Plans and published on the Council's website. The Performance Improvement Plan was developed and published before the statutory deadline of 30 June 2025 and the Council's Assessment of Performance was formulated and published before the statutory deadline of 30 September 2025.	
Establish accurate data collection arrangements to inform actions related to sustainability and climate change.	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
Notes.	1 Assessment of the carbon baseline has been completed through the collection of Council's energy data. This will be carried out on an annual basis for benchmarking purposes. Further investigations are underway into the potential procurement of an energy management system.	

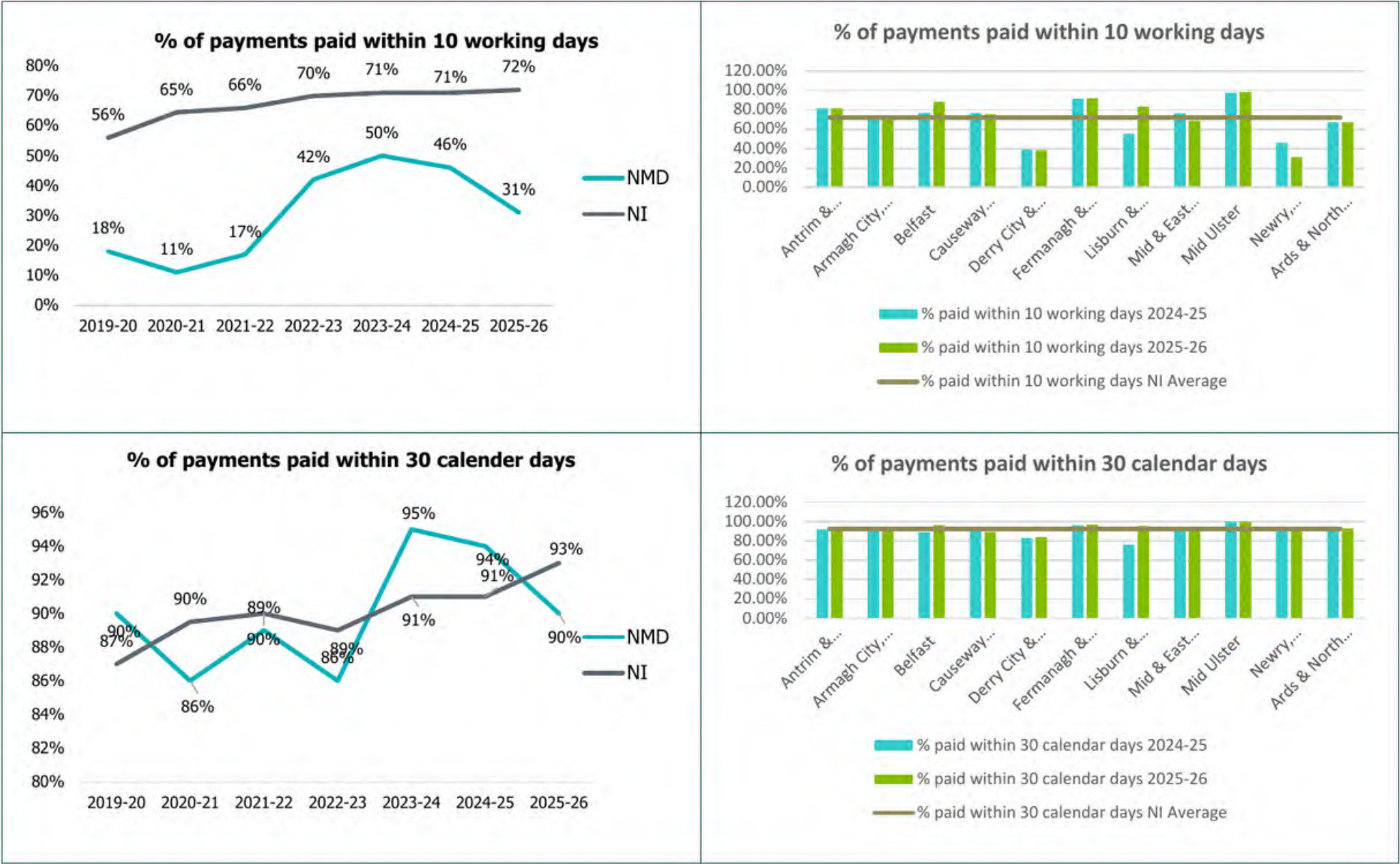
Implementation of People Perform Grow (PPG).	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 People Perform Grow introduced across all services, with comprehensive training and support provided to managers, employees and teams. 25/26 PPG initiatives included: • PPG chat refresher campaign launched with new updates to simplify the process and make it easier to focus on key areas. New updates included: o New PPG Form o New PPG Tracker o New PPG Hub with resources/videos to support the PPG process • PPG eLearning module promoted as mandatory for all employees, to date over 735 skillgate users have completed this module. • PPG Leaders Coaching Workshops promoted as mandatory for line managers, workshops are designed to support managers to have effective, structured and supportive PPG conversations, this is now part of the corporate training programme • L&D collaboration with Business Support Managers to promote and support completion of PPG conversations in each directorate.
Utilise our website and digital channels to enhance service delivery.	Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Expanded website and digital channel use to improve accessibility, information clarity and self-service supporting enhanced service delivery. Key achievements: • 1,083,166 visits to corporate website. • 340 significant content updates on the corporate website • Launch of new Council LinkedIn Channel • Delivery of fully accessible Council website achieving WCAG 2.2 AA compliance in January 2026 • 88,857 users registered to the Council's corporate social media, an increase of 11.8% by comparison with 2024-25 • 3,261 social media notifications issued during 2025-26, an increase of 19.1% compared with 2024-25.

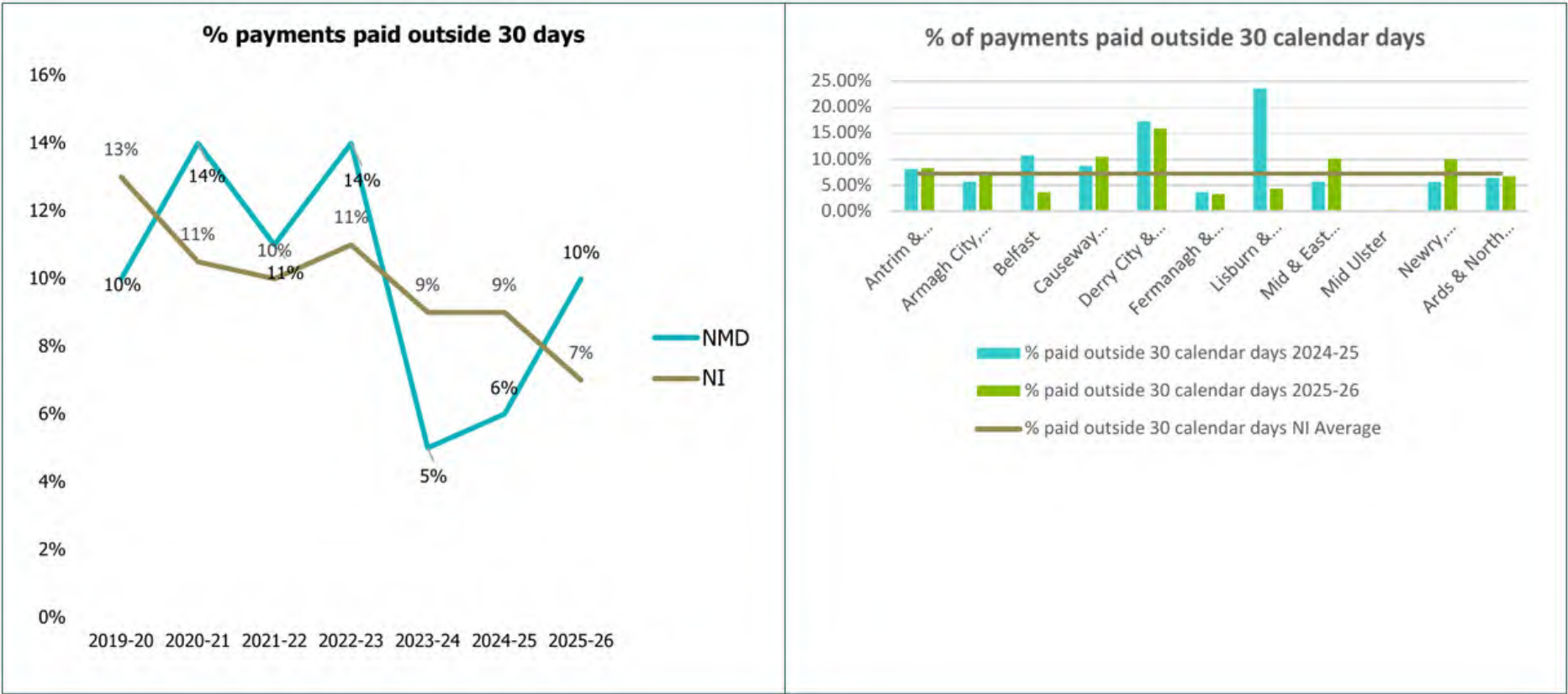
To embed a digital culture across the organisation.		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Demonstrated progress in embedding a digital-first culture through targeted staff engagement initiatives, structured training programmes, and increased adoption of digital tools to enable modern ways of working. • Established a Managed Security Operations Centre (SOC) to provide continuous monitoring, protection, and rapid response to emerging cyber threats and security incidents. • Successfully deployed Windows 11, alongside the replacement and modernisation of end-user computing devices. • Implemented a new endpoint security platform to enhance device-level protection and strengthen the overall security posture. • Achieved improved compliance with cybersecurity eLearning programmes, reinforcing organisational awareness and resilience. • Introduced a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) framework to support flexible and agile working practices. • Developed and implemented a comprehensive suite of IT policies and procedures to underpin governance and operational excellence. • Maintained zero downtime throughout the year, despite the execution of significant platform upgrades and technology changes.	
Implement our Equality Action Plan		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Ongoing implementation of actions during the period including preparation and submission of annual progress report to Equality Commission for Northern Ireland by 31 August 2025. Quarterly Policy Screening reports considered by Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee, forwarded to equality consultees and all screening reports made available online.	
Implement our Disability Action Plan		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Ongoing implementation of actions during the period which were recorded and reported in the annual progress report submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland by 31 August 2025.	
Implement our Irish Language Strategy		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Ongoing implementation of positive actions within the strategy. Six-monthly report on progress tabled at Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group meeting 3 March 2026.	

Measure of Success	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Level of citizen satisfaction		The 2022 Residents Survey revealed that: • 88% are satisfied with the Council overall, an increase of 1% on the 87% figure recorded in 2018. • 92% agree that the Council helps to make Newry, Mourne and Down a good place to live, an increase of 17% on the 75% recorded in 2018. • 88% trust the Council, an increase of 15% on the 73% recorded in 2018. • 74% believe the Council provides good value for money, which is above the GB average of 51% and is an increase of 13% on the 61% recorded in 2018.
Compliance with Duty of Improvement		The certificate of Compliance was received from the Local Government Auditor in relation to the Duty of Improvement 2025-26. The Council is currently progressing the implementation of the 'proposals for improvement' which were put forward by the NI Audit Office, to help improve the arrangements in place to secure continuous improvement and facilitate a performance improvement culture.
Number of users registered to Council corporate social media channels		By the end of 2025-26, there were 88,857 users registered to the Council's corporate social media. This is an increase of 11.8% on the 79,482 users registered by the end of 2024-25. Council issued 3,261 social media notifications during 2025-26 which is an increase of 19.1% from the 2,739 notifications sent in 2024-25.
Number of visits to Council's corporate website		During 2025-26, the Council recorded 1,083,166 visits to the corporate website. This represents a decrease of 23.5% when compared to the 1,415,517 visits recorded in 2024-25. It should be noted however that due to a new legal requirement under the Digital Marketing Act (DMA) adopted in late 2024, websites must now give users a clearer choice about whether they want to be tracked by cookies (which is how GA4 collects its data). Instead of automatically tracking visitors, users must now 'opt in' to allow cookies. Therefore, if people click "No" or ignore the cookie banner, their visits are not recorded in GA4 - even though they may still be using the site. Between June and August 2025, the Council reviewed and updated its Cookie Policy and introduced a more visible cookie pop-up that complies with the new law. This change went live in August 2025, so from that point onward, GA4 is reporting lower numbers, simply because fewer visitors are giving consent for tracking.

Level of absenteeism	▽	During 2025-26, Newry, Mourne and Down recorded an average of 24.93 days lost per full time equivalent employee. This is an increase of 3.43 days lost from the 21.5 days lost during 2024-25. Long term absence increased from 18.15 days in 2024-25 to 21.46 days per employee in 2025-26, while short term absence remained similar to last year at 3.47 days last per employee in 2025-26. 47% of the workforce had no recorded absence during 2025-26 which represents a decrease when compared to the 51% of employees with no recorded absence in 2024-25.	Absenteeism - Days lost per full time employee <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Short term (days)</th> <th>Long term (days)</th> <th>Total (days)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019-20</td> <td>4.12</td> <td>1.60</td> <td>5.72</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020-21</td> <td>2.37</td> <td>1.77</td> <td>4.14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-22</td> <td>5.04</td> <td>5.62</td> <td>10.66</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022-23</td> <td>5.02</td> <td>8.24</td> <td>13.26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023-24</td> <td>3.33</td> <td>10.53</td> <td>13.86</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024-25</td> <td>3.38</td> <td>18.15</td> <td>21.53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2025-26</td> <td>3.47</td> <td>21.46</td> <td>24.93</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Short term (days)	Long term (days)	Total (days)	2019-20	4.12	1.60	5.72	2020-21	2.37	1.77	4.14	2021-22	5.04	5.62	10.66	2022-23	5.02	8.24	13.26	2023-24	3.33	10.53	13.86	2024-25	3.38	18.15	21.53	2025-26	3.47	21.46	24.93
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Percentage of payments paid:		The percentage of payments made within 10 working days has decreased by 15% from 46% in 2024-25 to 31% in 2025-26 and was the lowest across all regional councils in 2025-26, ranking NMD 11/11 across Northern Ireland. The number of payments made within 30 calendar days has decreased by 5% between 2024-25 and 2025-26 falling from 94% to 90%. This is below the NI average of 93% of invoices paid within 30 calendar days and ranks Newry, Mourne and Down 8/11 across Northern Ireland. The Council has however, achieved the statutory target set of 90%. The percentage of payments paid outside 30 days has increased during this period from 6% in 2024-25 to 10% in 2025-26. This is above the regional average of 7% for payments paid outside 30 days with the Council ranked 8/11 across Northern Ireland.																																	
Within 10 working days	▽																																		
Within 30 calendar days	😊 ▶																																		
Outside 30 calendar days	▶																																		







Corporate Objective

Represent the voice of the district with our partners

Key action		Update	
Continue to work with key stakeholders and our statutory partners to improve the health and wellbeing across the district.		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
		Notes:	1 All of the priorities within the Community Planning Health and Wellbeing Action Plan have been progressed, including priorities addressing Isolation and Loneliness, promoting Physical Activity amongst young people, Place Based approaches to Health and Wellbeing (led by the Strategic Stakeholder Forum) and Participatory Budgeting. Under Communities Leading Change Participatory Budgeting project, a pooled budget of £98,000 was distributed to 98 local community and voluntary groups to deliver health and wellbeing events in their communities. The Council continue to support Health and Wellbeing activity of our Statutory and CV partners, including supporting the Integrated Care Systems (ALPB) and the projects of the Strategic Stakeholder Forum.
Continue to work with key stakeholders and our statutory partners to identify appropriate actions in relation to the climate change emergency		Target Progress	Jun 26 Green
		Notes:	1 The Council's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan has been finalised, which included a number of workshops with key stakeholders. The target date for launch of the strategy and associated action plan is Q2 26/27. Council also continues to work with other Councils and stakeholders through various forums including: Sustainable NI, SOLACE, NILGA, NIE and APSE.

Collaborate and engage with key tourism & hospitality sector stakeholders to reinforce a strong partnership approach to tourism growth and leadership – including tourism business clusters & industry associations		Target Progress Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Collaboration with tourism businesses, community organisations and key stakeholders continues to be a central focus. A Sustainable Tourism Network has been established with 29 businesses across the tourism sector. To work with the Network and the wider tourism and community sector Council has agreed the appointment of a dedicated facilitator. This initiative will strengthen partnerships, encourage sustainable tourism practices and support collaborative destination development. Engagement with local businesses has also facilitated the introduction of new tourism experiences and events, helping to build local capacity and support year-round tourism activity.
Work with partners to implement the Community Plan and deliver better outcomes / improve the quality of life for all		Target Progress Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Priority Activity continues to be carried out through the delivery of actions from the PB action plan and the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan. The CPP continue to support Partner Led Projects such as the NMD Youth Voice, Community Support Partnership, LMPs and LEPs.
Support elected members in their advocacy role around key local actions		Target Progress Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 By ensuring councillors are informed, resourced, and procedurally supported, Democratic Services helps them champion local priorities, hold decision-makers to account, and represent their communities effectively within and beyond the council
Implementation of Elected Member Development programme		Target Progress Jun 26 Green
	Notes:	1 Initial consideration was given to commencing preparations for the re-attainment of the Elected Member Development Charter. Discussions were held with Party Leaders to review the value and timing of pursuing re-accreditation. Following these discussions, it was recommended by Party Leaders that the Council would not proceed with re-attainment at this stage. Despite this decision, I have continued to ensure that the principles of the Charter remain embedded within our approach to Elected Member development, particularly around identifying training needs, maintaining training records, and promoting continuous learning opportunities.

Measure of Success	Status	Explanatory note
Compliance with the duty of Community Planning		During 2025-26, the Council continued to comply with the statutory duty of community planning. The Community Planning Partnership met three times during the past year.
Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live		The 2022 Residents Survey revealed that 91% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, which is well above the GB average of 81% and is an increase of 1% on the figure recorded in the 2018 Residents Survey. 99% of residents in the Slieve Croob DEA are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared to just 59% in the Newry DEA. Older residents are also more likely to be satisfied with their local area as a place to live than younger residents. The top perceived problems identified by residents are dog mess and fouling and rubbish or litter lying around.
Number of training events provided to elected members		There were two training events run for elected members during 2025-2026 and included: Code of Conduct Training Audit Committee Training There were also numerous workshops held for Elected Members including: Corporate Presentation Local Development Plan Planning

In addition to the performance measures within the Corporate Plan, the Council continues to develop and agree suites of self-imposed performance measures at all levels of the organisation, in line with the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. This is evidenced through the:

- Agreed suites of performance measures within Directorate Business Plans.
- Agreed suites of performance indicators for Arts and Heritage, Building Control, Corporate Services, Community Development, Economic Development, Environmental Health, Environmental Services, Leisure and Planning, through the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE).

As the Council's performance management arrangements continue to mature and embed, the self-imposed performance indicators will be used to manage performance at all levels of the organisation, thereby facilitating a performance improvement culture and delivering sustainable improvements for local communities.

Appendix 1: Progressing the 'proposals for improvement'

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

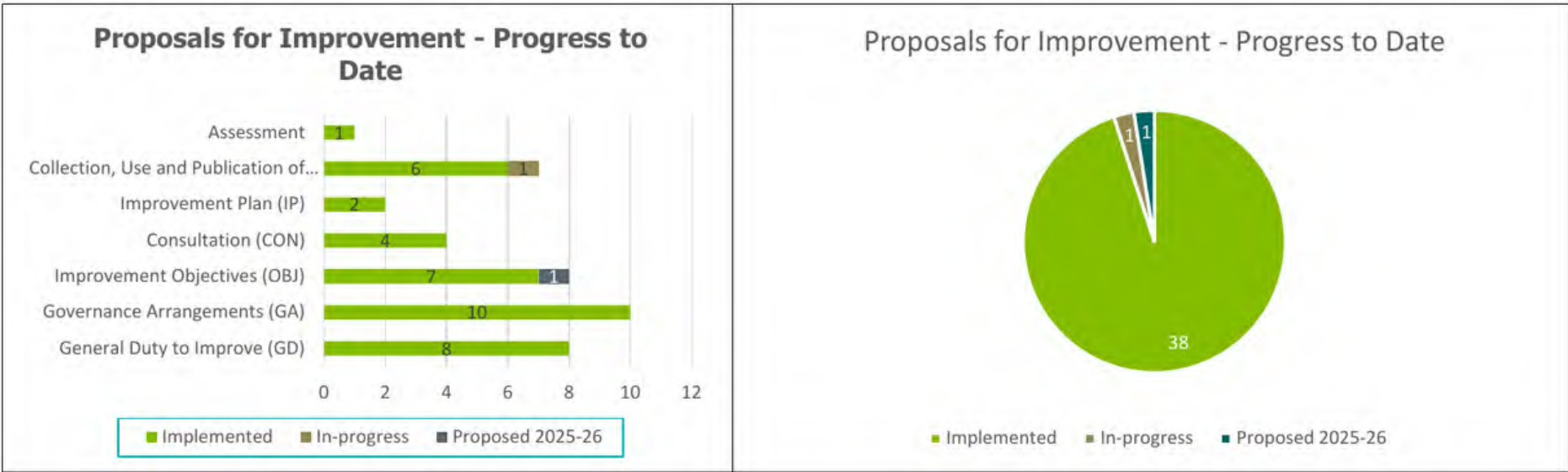
Performance Audit and Assessments: Proposals for Improvement - Progress Report

For the past seven years, the Local Government Auditor has put forward 'proposals for improvement' as part of the annual Performance Audit and Assessments which are carried out by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The purpose of the 'proposals for improvement' is to support the Council in putting in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions. The 'proposals for improvement' are categorised under the seven themes outlined below. This report provides an overview of progress to date in implementing the 'proposals for improvement', using the following legend.

Themes:

- 1. General duty to improve
- 2. Governance arrangements
- 3. Improvement objectives
- 4. Consultation
- 5. Improvement Plan
- 6. Arrangements to improve
- 7. Collection, use and publication of performance information

Legend	
Proposal implemented / on track to be implemented	
Proposal partially implemented / likely to be implemented	
Proposal not implemented	



Theme, Proposal and Progress to Date	
THEME: Improvement Objectives	
PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENT: The Council should: - consider the format of the future Self-Assessment Reports to ensure the Performance Improvement results are prominent and readily identifiable. - ensure targets and comparatives are in place for all measures of success, where this would be appropriate; and, - review how visuals are presented in the Self-Assessment Report.	
Since 2016, the Council has provided its self-assessment in the same format, and this has not been raised as an issue. The indicators and measures within the Council's current corporate plan 2024-27, which we assess as part of the Council's self-imposed indicators for the Assessment of Performance, have not been prescribed targets and where visuals have been provided, where possible, the explanatory note makes the reader aware of why it has been presented as such.	
PROGRESS TO DATE	
Following the proposal for improvement from the 2025-26 Audit and Assessment, the Council has altered the layout of this year's self-assessment to make it more reader friendly and ensure a better flow. The Performance Improvement Objectives will now be assessed first in the report, followed by the self-imposed indicators which encompass the 8 corporate objectives from the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-27. Whilst no targets have been set for the measures within the corporate plan, where the measures are the same as those within the Performance Improvement Plan, the same targets have been imposed. Similarly, where one of the seven statutory indicators of economic development, waste and planning has been included as a measure within the corporate plan the statutory target has been assigned. Where there is a comparative analysis available for a corporate plan measure from the previous year this has been included with an arrow used to indicate improvement or otherwise in performance. Where a visual has been provided the explanatory note will, where possible, explains why that specific visual has been prescribed.	

THEME: Collection, use and publication of performance information	
PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENT: The Council should ensure that its improvement plan and self-assessment report are approved in line with the Council's governance framework before publication	
Since 2015, the Council has requested through the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee, authority to publish the Performance Improvement Plan before 30 June every year, ahead of full Council ratification. This issue has never been brought up by the Northern Ireland Audit Office in any previous self-assessments.	
PROGRESS TO DATE	
The 2026-27 Performance Improvement Plan was agreed by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in May 2026 following a 9-week public consultation. This was then ratified by full Council at the start of June 2026 before being published on the Council's website before the 30 June 2026 in line with our statutory obligation and the Council's governance framework. The 2024-25 Self-Assessment was agreed by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in August 2025 followed by ratification of full Council at the start of September and was published by 30 September 2025 in line with the Council's governance framework.	
THEME: Collection, use and publication of performance information	
PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENT: Targets set out in the Improvement Plan should also be included within the Self-Assessment Report to enable the Self-Assessment report to be used as a standalone document	
In the self-assessment, targets, where set, have always been provided for the measures within the corporate plan. There is also a legend provided at the start of the document that indicates that if a green face is under the status column, then the target has been achieved/on track to be achieved and similarly if a red face is under the status of the measure, it indicates that the target was not achieved or is unlikely to be achieved.	
PROGRESS TO DATE	
Targets, where set, have now been included since 2024-25 and sit below the actual figure recorded for the assessment year in question. This will also be carried forward for all future Assessment of Performance reports.	

THEME: Assessment	
PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENT: Council should consider enhancing transparency of the self-assessment report by providing more detailed narrative to allow the reader to better understand how Council has determined the ratings of the trends in performance. Furthermore, where there are downward trends in performance or the Council has assessed targets are not likely to be achieved, appropriate explanations should be included as to how Council intends to address this	
The Residents Survey provides robust and reliable datasets for the Council to understand and track resident perceptions of the Council and its services. It is directly aligned to and influences the content of the Corporate Plan and PIP. Best practice indicates that Residents Surveys should be carried out every 3-4 years, as resident perceptions are unlikely to change on an annual basis, and the baseline data is therefore considered 'live' for this period of time. A legend is also provided in all performance reports indicating whether a target has been achieved/partially achieved or not achieved at all and where there has been an upward or downward trend in the figures year on year.	
PROGRESS TO DATE	
A second Residents survey was carried out in September 2022 which allows a comparative and trend analysis with the previous Residents Survey and provides clear transparency in how we are performing as a Council. A status and narrative are provided against every action and measure within the Assessment of Performance and where downward trends are experienced an explanation on how this has occurred is provided where possible. You will see in this Assessment Report that where applicable, a more detailed narrative has been included to allow better understanding of the Council's performance and where targets have not been achieved an explanation of what perhaps contributed to that is also included as well as what Council are doing to bring about improvement.	
THEME: General duty to improve	
PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENT: An electronic performance management system would help to achieve long term continuous improvement as it would provide the basis for a more reliable system for identifying and monitoring improvements, as well as creating efficiencies in the process that could free up time to spend on value adding activities	
Implementation of a new electronic performance system through 'OneAdvanced' has taken place. It came online in Q4 2023-24, and work has been carried out to ensure all the objectives, actions and measures across the whole suite of the Council's performance	

framework has been included from the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan, Directorate Business Plans down to Service Plans. Training has also been provided to all relevant staff, and this training has been recorded for continuous reference. Reports have now begun to be completed on the system and sent to committee for approval.

The performance management system is available for relevant employees to access on the Council’s managed favourites

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Council has continued to embed the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, to facilitate the effective cascade of strategic objectives across the organisation. The Framework features within the Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan and Directorate Business Plans, as well as the guidance for Service Plans and People Perform Grow, demonstrating how employees contribute to the achievement of community planning outcomes and strategic objectives. The Performance Improvement Policy continues to provide the content for mainstreaming the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, and was updated in Q3 2022, in line with the 4-year policy review cycle.

The Business Planning and Performance Management Cycle has also been updated to demonstrate the integrated timeline of activity required to strengthen the alignment across the Framework and facilitate the development, implementation and review of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan, Directorate Business Plans, Service Plans and People Perform Grow. The monitoring, reporting and review arrangements at each level of the Framework continue to be mainstreamed and a standard, consistent approach has been developed for performance reporting, using the red/amber/green status. Performance reports are available to a range of stakeholders through the Council’s website and Committee reporting arrangements.

Community Plan

The Community Planning team facilitated the continued implementation of the Community Plan in 2025/26 which included:

Participatory Budgeting events carried out in each of the 7 District Electoral Areas (DEA’s).

Targeting Isolation and Loneliness Workshops held across the District.

Rural Housing Workshops held in each of the 7 DEA’s.

Other partnership priorities

Corporate Plan

The Council's Corporate Plan 2024-27 was approved through the Council's committee structure in August 2024. Implementation has continued, and this is the second assessment of the objectives, actions and measures through the Council's Assessment of Performance report 2025-26.

Performance Improvement Plan

The Council published the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27 ahead of the statutory deadline and after full ratification of Council. Three of the Performance Improvement Objectives were carried forward from 2025-26, while the wording of the economic development and climate change objectives has been refined to make them more succinct, meaningful, and better reflect the evolving work taking place across these areas. A number of new measures and supporting actions have also been included across the objectives following consultation with relevant officers and the public consultation. All were developed and updated in close liaison with officers, approved by the Senior Management Team and Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee, and subject to a public consultation process between February-April 2026.

Directorate Business Plans

Four Directorate Business Plans 2026-27 were developed and approved by the Senior Management Team and relevant Council Committees. Each Business Plan also includes objectives, key actions and measures for success which are aligned to the corporate objectives. All Directorates are very proactive in engaging employees in reviewing and developing the Business Plan, organising workshops and business planning sessions.

Service Plans

During 2019-20, the Council agreed a corporate approach to developing and mainstreaming Service Plans, as a tool to enable departments to turn plans into action, monitor performance and strengthen the effective cascade of strategic objectives to departments, teams and employees. Service Plans were subsequently introduced in 2021-22 to provide an overview of the operational activity and key improvements that are planned for the year ahead, helping to ensure that teams and employees are working towards shared and agreed objectives. All departments developed a Service Plan during 2025-26, and some departments, particularly the Sustainability and Environment Department were very proactive in engaging employees in the development of the 2026-27 Service Plan.

Individual Performance

During 2019-20, the Council developed Individual Performance through the 'People Perform Grow' pilot, which seeks to align the contribution of employees to the corporate objectives and community planning outcomes, as demonstrated through the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, People Perform Grow was suspended and was subsequently launched during 2021-22 for tier four employees and above. During 2022-23, 'People, Perform, Grow' was rolled out to employees at tier 5 with People Perform Grow templates linked to individual performance objectives with the relevant Service Plan, to strengthen the cascade of corporate objectives to all employees across the organisation. An e-learning module and brochure was developed to support the effective implementation of People Perform Grow, and performance management arrangements have been introduced, through the 'PPG Tracker', to monitor progress in employee participation in People Perform Grow. Progress is reported through the Corporate Performance Dashboard on a quarterly basis.

People Perform Grow has now been introduced across all services, with comprehensive training and support provided to managers, employees and teams. During 25/26 PPG initiatives included:

- **PPG chat refresher campaign** launched with new updates to simplify the process and make it easier to focus on key areas. New updates included:
 - **New PPG Form**
 - **New PPG Tracker**
 - **New PPG Hub** with resources/videos to support the PPG process
- **PPG eLearning module** promoted as mandatory for all employees, to date over 735 skillgate users have completed this module.
- **PPG Leaders Coaching Workshops** promoted as mandatory for line managers, workshops are designed to support managers to have effective, structured and supportive PPG conversations, this is now part of the corporate training programme
- **L&D collaboration with Business Support Managers** to promote and support completion of PPG conversations in each directorate.

The Corporate Performance Dashboard continues to provide an overview of the overall organisational health of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, using a suite of statutory and self-imposed performance measures across a range of key functions. The Corporate Performance Dashboard is also aligned to the objectives within the Corporate Plan 2024-27 and risks within the Corporate Risk Register.

It provides a platform to monitor performance on a quarterly basis, identify areas of good performance, address areas of under-performance and secure continuous improvement in the delivery of key functions. The Corporate Performance Dashboard 2025-26 is made up of 18 performance measures, including the seven statutory performance indicators for economic development, waste management and planning. These performance measures may change on an annual basis and will continue to be aligned to specific organisational objectives, risks and areas for improvement.

THEME: Governance Arrangements	Status
PROPOSAL: The Council should consider using Internal Audit to review the performance improvement arrangements.	

The Council views the annual audit carried out by NIAO around the current Performance Management arrangements to be more than sufficient. However, the Council does recognise the value of engaging the Internal Audit function to identify and deliver improvements, specifically those which do not necessarily fall within the scope of NIAO audit, such as around data validation and monitoring. To this end, in 2018, an Internal Audit of the APSE Performance Indicators was carried out and all recommendations were implemented. An Internal Audit of the Corporate Plan's Performance Indicators took place in Q4 2022-23, and the Council also agreed a 4-year Internal Audit plan in April 2023 with an audit of Performance included for two of those four years with an option to increase if necessary.

PROGRESS

The Performance section had another 'Performance Data and Validations' audit take place in Q4 2025-26 which looked at a number of measures within the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26. The review looked specifically at three measures which included:

- the number of people participating in targeted health programmes – performance improvement objective 1;
- the percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years – performance improvement objective 4;
- the average processing time of major planning applications (weeks) (statutory performance indicator) – performance improvement objective 5.

Whilst the audit identified some improvements which could be incorporated into the Council's systems for the performance data and validation process the Council did receive a **satisfactory** level of assurance regarding the effective and efficient achievement of the Council's objectives.

The Performance section had a 'Performance Data and Validations' audit take place in Q4 2024-25, which looked at a number of measures within the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25. The review looked specifically at the validation processes for certain measures including statutory indicators as well as internally collected data and measures. Whilst the audit identified some improvements which could be incorporated into the Council's systems for the performance data and validation process, the Council did receive a **satisfactory** level of assurance regarding the effective and efficient achievement of the Council's objectives.

In Q4 2022-23, the Council worked with ASM to agree the Terms of Reference for an audit of specific measures of success within the Corporate Plan 2021-23. The audit identified a number of improvements which could be incorporated within the Council’s systems in relation to the performance measures in the 2021-23 Corporate Plan which have been implemented where possible within the new Corporate Plan 2024-27. Based on the information they reviewed however, they considered that the existing systems in place for recording and validating data for performance measures in the 2021-23 Corporate Plan were basically sound and provided a **satisfactory** level of assurance regarding the effective and efficient achievement of the Council’s objectives. This process provides assurance that the necessary data collation processes are in place to ensure robust, reliable and accurate datasets are reported in the public domain, ahead of the publication of the new Corporate Plan 2024-27.

Performance management training took place for members of the Audit Committee in January 2021, exploring the role of Elected Members in building high performing organisations. Performance and improvement is a standing item on the agenda of the quarterly Audit Committee meetings and has featured as a regular agenda item at the monthly Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meetings. In addition, all Standing Committees of Council consider performance information in relation to their specific functions on an ongoing basis, which is supplemented by the mid-year and annual reviews of their respective Directorate Business Plan. Elected Members have also been actively engaged in identifying key local issues and informing the development of the Corporate Plan 2024-27 and Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27.

THEME: Improvement Objectives	Status
PROGRESS	

Three of the 2025-26 performance improvement objectives have been carried forward to 2026-27 whilst the wording of our economic development and climate change objectives have been refined to make them more succinct, meaningful, and better reflect the evolving work taking place across these areas. These performance improvement objectives are based on set criteria and are aligned to the outcomes within the Programme for Government and Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down, as well as the strategic objectives within the Corporate Plan 2024-27. The five performance improvement objectives were endorsed through the public consultation and engagement process which was carried out during Q4 2025-26 and Q1 2026-27. These objectives are considered to be specific, focused and measurable, and were approved by the Senior Management Team and Strategy Policy and Resources Committee in May 2026 and ratified by full Council in June 2026 and published before 30 June 2026, in order to meet the statutory deadline.

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

The NI Audit Office has confirmed that the performance improvement objectives carried over are legitimate, clear, robust, deliverable and demonstrable, covering a range of Council services that relate to improving Council functions or improving services for communities.

As part of the process to redefine the current suite of performance improvement objectives, the Council reviewed the 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success' which underpin each objective, in order to ensure they remain meaningful and that their achievement can demonstrate improvement. Where possible and appropriate, baseline data for each 'measure of success' has been included in the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27, to demonstrate performance trends over time and targets for improvement have also been agreed.

THEME: Consultation	
PROGRESS	
The Council continues to implement a robust and inclusive consultation and engagement process in relation to the development of the annual performance improvement objectives. Overall, the 2026-27 consultation and engagement process resulted in 54 completed surveys and engagement with 68 stakeholders through the Crotlieve DEA Forum, Downpatrick DEA Forum, Slieve Croob DEA Forum, Rowallane DEA Forum and The Mournes DEA Forum as well as Section 75 groups, including Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice and the Age Friendly Alliance. This consultation and engagement process was launched through the Council's website, under its consultations page, publicised through public notices in local newspapers and through the Council's social media channels and supplemented by the 764 responses to the Residents Survey in 2022. The majority of consultees agreed with the proposed performance improvement objectives 2026-27.	
THEME: Improvement Plan	
PROGRESS	
The Council published the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27 ahead of the statutory timescale of 30 June 2026. The Council has also published the summary document 'Our Performance Looking Back Going Forward', to provide a user-friendly overview of retrospective performance during 2025-26 and the forward-looking performance objectives for 2026-27.	
THEME: Arrangements to Improve	
PROGRESS	
The Council continues to progress, implement and embed its arrangements to achieve the objectives, key actions and measures of success within the Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan, Directorate Business Plans, Service Plans and People Perform Grow. The arrangements to deliver the performance improvement objectives continue to evolve and are supported by Objective Delivery Plans which provide a detailed overview of how the objectives and associated actions are managed, monitored and reported, under the direction of the Senior Responsible Officer.	
THEME: Collection, Use and Publication of Performance Information	Status
PROGRESS	
The Business Planning and Performance Management Framework demonstrates the alignment that exists between the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Directorate Business Plans, Service Plans and People Perform Grow. It has been supplemented by an agreed cycle of activity required to embed the Framework across the organisation. All elements of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework are currently being progressed and embedded across the organisation.	

In addition to the statutory performance indicators and standards, the Council has developed and agreed suites of self-imposed performance indicators which underpin the Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan and Directorate Business Plans. These plans provide the strategic and operational context for the work of the organisation, and year on year progress against the indicators is monitored and reported through the annual Assessment of Performance, as well as the annual and bi-annual assessments of the Performance Improvement Plan and Directorate Business Plans. The Council has also developed Performance Profiles for each Directorate to present baseline performance information in a meaningful and consistent way, to facilitate a performance led approach to business planning and embed a culture of improvement.

The Council continues to form part of APSE Performance Networks and has collated benchmarking data across a range of services since 2016-17. This information has been analysed and reported to the Senior Management Team and Corporate Management Team through the Performance Profiles as well as specific APSE Reports, ensuring a performance led approach to business planning, specifically in relation to Directorate Business Plans and Service Plans. An internal audit of APSE performance indicators was carried out by ASM in November 2018, to assess the reliability of the existing benchmarking arrangements and validate the accuracy and integrity of selected APSE performance indicators. The internal audit confirmed that the existing systems in place to validate performance indicators can provide satisfactory assurance regarding the effective and efficient achievement of the Council's objectives and all recommendations have now been implemented.

Through the Assessment of Performance, the Council continues to benchmark performance with other Councils, specifically in relation to economic development, planning, waste management and prompt payments. The Councils also compares year on year performance across a broad range of performance measures within the Corporate Plan and Performance Improvement Plan.

Appendix 2: The Golden Thread

NMD Community Planning Outcomes

All people in Newry, Mourne and Down get a good start in life and fulfil their potential

All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing

All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities

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

All people in Newry, Mourne and Down live in respectful, safe and vibrant communities

NMDDC Corporate Objectives

Deliver sustainable services

Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district

Support the continued growth and development of our local economy

Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future

Represent the voice of the district with our partners

Empowering communities to play an active part in civic life

Develop and revitalise our district

Support regenerative tourism opportunities which promote our culture, heritage and environment

NMDDC Performance Improvement Objectives

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

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

We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents

We will reduce our contribution to climate change by cutting carbon emissions and improving the efficiency of our fleet and buildings

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

Ár bhFeidhmíocht Ag Amharc Siar, Ag Dul Chun Cinn

Our Performance Looking Back, Going Forward



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

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

The Local Government (NI) Act 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.



Looking Back

Assessment of Performance 2025-26

Every year, we are required to publish an Assessment of Performance to demonstrate whether planned improvements have been achieved. The Assessment of Performance sets out progress against the current 'measures of success' within the:

- **Corporate Plan 2024-27**
- **Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26**
(including the statutory performance indicators and standards)

Our performance has been tracked against set targets and trends over time, using the legend below.

Status	Trend
 Target or objective achieved / on track to be achieved	 Performance has improved since the previous year
 Target or objective partially achieved / likely to be achieved / subject to delay	 Performance is similar to the previous year
 Target or objective not achieved / unlikely to be achieved	 Performance has declined since the previous year

*Where appropriate, a 10% variance when compared to the previous year's performance has been applied.

Our District, Our Organisation, Our Performance



District

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



Community

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

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

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

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

55 Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

£14.27m awarded through the Financial Assistance Scheme since 2015



Tourism

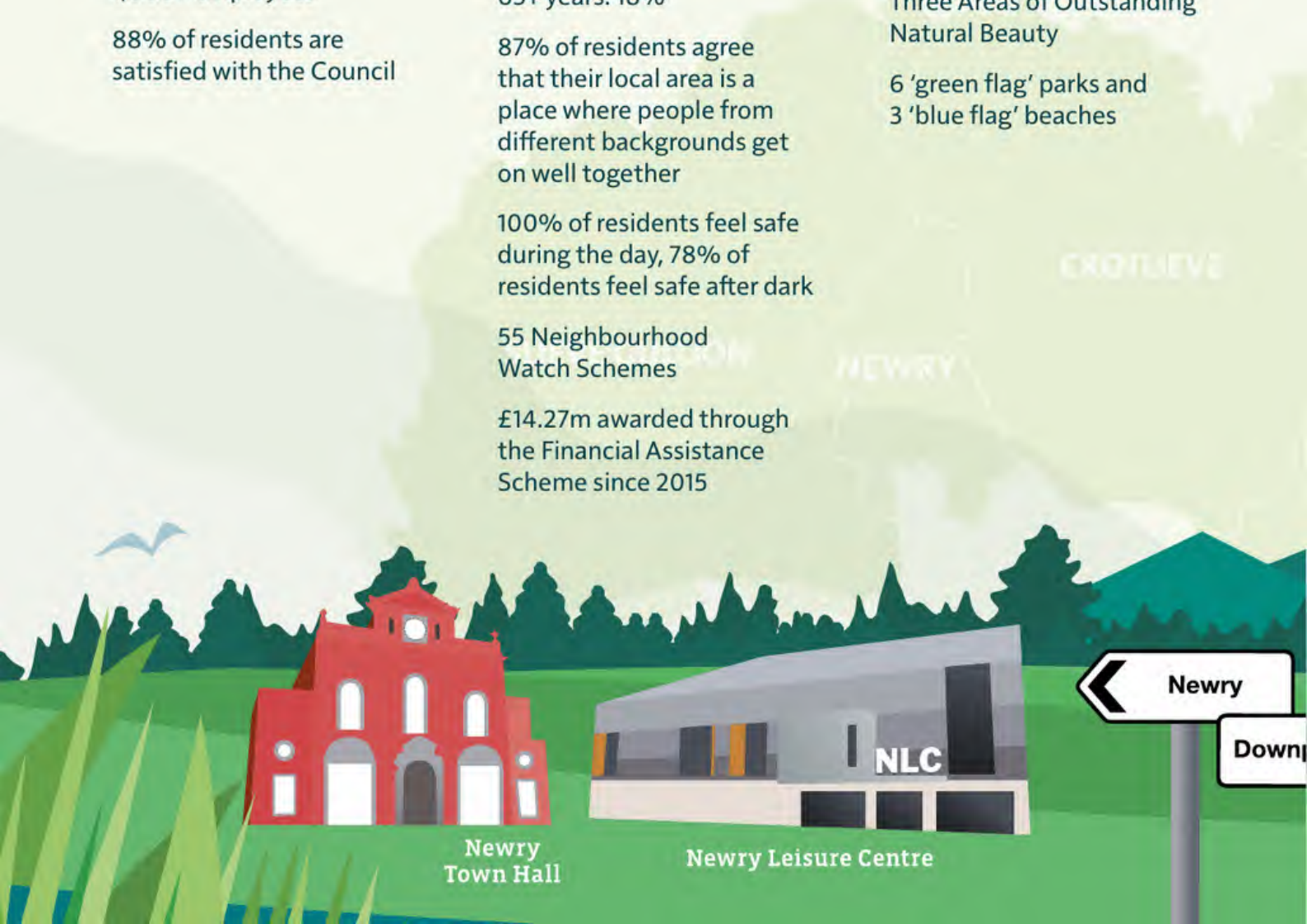
In 2025:

Numbers of overnight stays 427,157

Level of visitor spend - £60,817,412

Three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

6 'green flag' parks and 3 'blue flag' beaches





Health and Wellbeing

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

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

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

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

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



Economy

Employment rate: 78.2%

9,525 VAT Registered Businesses

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

236 new jobs promoted through business start activity

215 existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions



Environment

Recycling is important to 91% of residents

Top perceived problem for residents: Dog mess and fouling

Recycling rate: 48.3%

100% of Community Clean up requests supported

Fifth lowest level of waste to landfill across all NI Councils



Performance at a Glance

A snapshot of the past year

Performance Improvement Objective	Progress	Status Trend
 We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services	26.7% increase in paid attendances at Council leisure centres	😊 ⬆️
	39% increase in the number of people participating in targeted health programmes	😊 ⬆️
	£225,000 worth of financial assistance funding was allocated to sports clubs across the District	😊
	11.4% increase in the number of Council leisure centre memberships	😊 ⬆️
	4 capital leisure projects progressed	😊
	7 play parks upgraded across the District	😊
 We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation	236* new jobs promoted through business start activity	😊 ⬆️
	12 new social enterprise businesses supported and 16 new social enterprise jobs created	😊 ▶️
	188* new enterprises created as a result of support	😊 ⬆️
	215* existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions	😊 ▶️
	4,719 participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity in 2025-26	😊 ⬆️
 We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	35 fixed penalty notices issued and 32 paid	😞 ⬆️
	91% of all fixed penalty notices issued have been paid	😊
	100% of community clean up requests supported	😊
	Decrease in the rate of recycling, to 48.3%**	😊 ▶️
	Increase in the amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled.	😊 ▼
	10 'Live Here, Love Here' environmental projects supported	▼

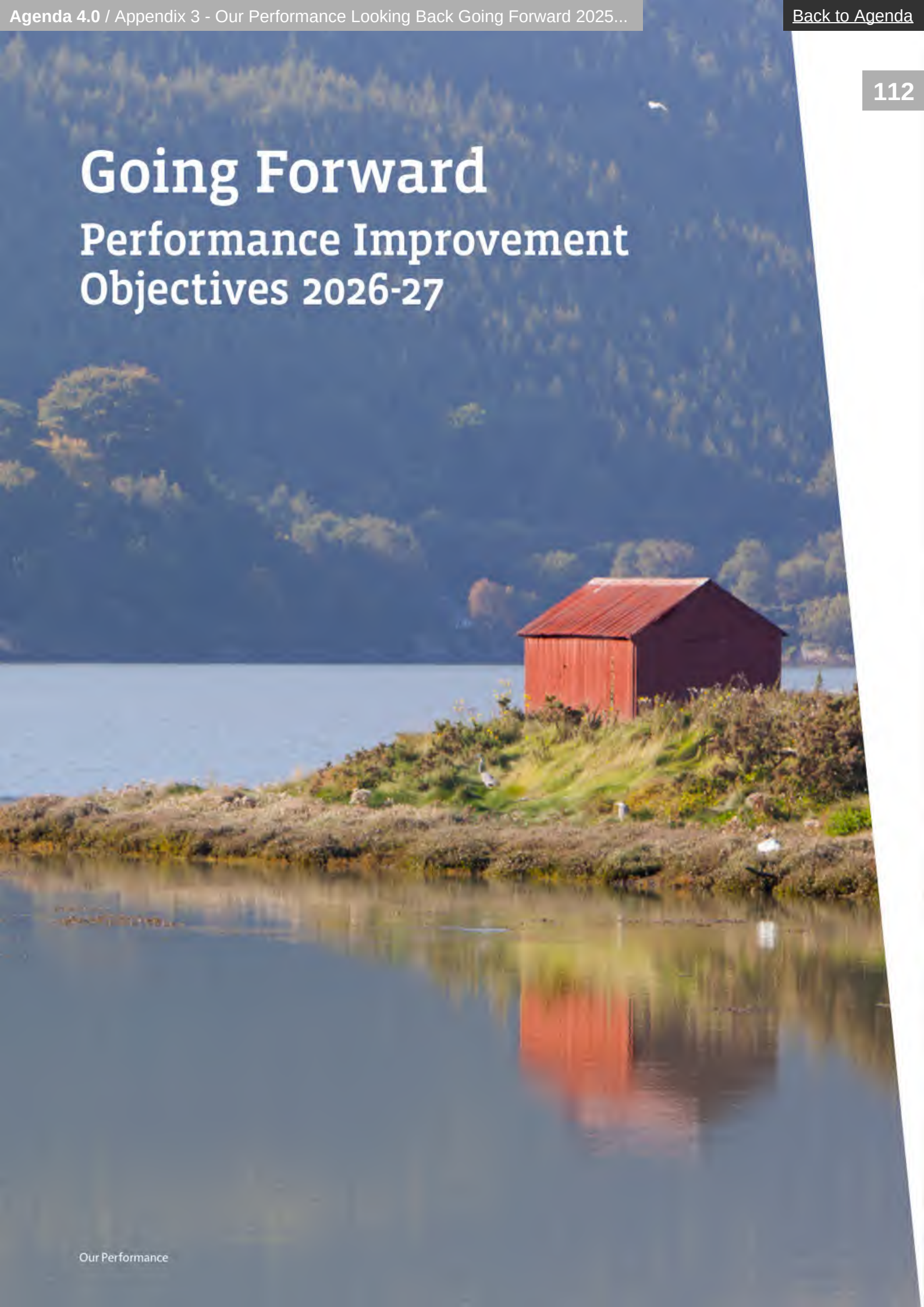
Performance Improvement Objective	Progress	Status Trend
 We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change	1 vehicle within the Council fleet that has an alternative fuel source	
	0 Council supported EV charging points installed in 2025-26	
	78% of Council fleet younger than 8 years.	
	The Baseline Emissions Footprint for Newry Mourne and Down was established and is 5,246 tCO2e (Tonnes of CO2 equivalent)	
	2,800 trees planted on Council managed estates	
 We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	During 2025-26, the Council received the second highest number of planning applications across the 11 Councils, behind Belfast City Council.	
	The processing time for local planning applications increased from 45.2 weeks in 2024-25 to 45.8 weeks in 2025-26.	
	The processing time for major planning applications increased from 29.6 weeks in 2024-25 to 58.8 weeks in 2025-26.	
	The percentage of enforcement cases progressed within the statutory timescale increased by 10.4% from 47.6% in 2024-25 to 58.0% in 2025-26	
	The number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more increased from 408 by year end 2024-25 to 519 by year end 2025-26.	
	The number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more increased from 574 by year end 2024-25 to 644 by year end 2025-26.	

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

**The 2025-26 data in relation to the statutory performance indicators for waste management remains provisional, as the end of year validated data will not be published by DAERA until Q3 2026-27.

Going Forward

Performance Improvement Objectives 2026-27



Every year, we are required to set performance improvement objectives for the services we provide, and to have in place arrangements to achieve these objectives. These objectives seek to address the issues which matter most to local people, and are:

Linked to the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and Directorate Business Plans	✓
Based on existing performance information	✓
Aligned to the seven strategic aspects of improvement	✓
Based on stakeholder consultation and engagement	✓



Objective 1

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

What you will see:

- 898,000 paid attendances at our six leisure centres by the end of 2026-27.
- 16,500 people participating in targeted health programmes across the District.
- 9,500 leisure centre memberships recorded.
- 2 play parks upgraded.
- 7 new build and/or upgraded capital leisure projects progressed including Kilkeel Leisure Centre, Newry City Park, Newcastle Centre, Rowallane Multisport hub, Crotlieve Multisport hub, Newry Multisport hub and Newcastle rock pool.
- Financial assistance allocated for sports clubs to the value of £225,000 for capital projects.
- Disability accreditation achieved in an identified tier 1 site.
- 30,000 recorded visits to Donard Park Multisport hub



Objective 2

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

What you will see:

- 279 business plans created for Start-Up businesses and employer enterprises.
- Over 700 participants engaged across all Go Succeed activity.
- Support provided to 188 existing businesses to progress growth and scaling ambitions.
- 173 new jobs promoted via business start-up activity.
- 12 social enterprise start-ups supported, and 12 social enterprise jobs created.
- 250 directly supported participants on employment pathway initiatives.
- Continued support for new and established local businesses.
- Continued support for the growth of new employment opportunities.
- Continued support to grow a labour market that is economically active and prosperous.



Objective 3

We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents

What you will see:

- Increase in the number of fixed penalty notices issued and paid.
- Responsible dog ownership and reduced levels of dog fouling, littering and illicit dumping.
- Improved opportunities to report dog fouling and identify hotspots for enforcement patrols.
- Reduction in the disposal of paint from our Household Recycling Centre sites.
- Opportunities to engage in community clean ups.
- Increased awareness of environmental messaging including recycling, dog fouling and littering.
- Decrease in overflowing bins and reduction of street bin collections.
- A cleaner, greener District, with improved civic and community pride.



Objective 4

We will reduce our contribution to climate change by cutting carbon emissions and improving the efficiency of our fleet and buildings

What you will see:

- Council's Climate Change and Sustainable Development strategy launched and published.
- Council's Climate Change Adaptation Plan published.
- Annual assessments of the Council's carbon footprint and renewable energy output completed and reported.
- Reduction in Council's carbon footprint.
- Increase in Council's renewable energy generation.
- Continued implementation of Council's fleet replacement programme.
- Reduction in vehicle emissions from Council fleet through transition to HVO.
- New electric vehicles operating within Council fleet.
- New EV charging points installed across the District.



Objective 5

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

What you will see:

- A more efficient and effective planning service.
- Improved processing times for local and major planning applications.
- Improved processing times for planning enforcement cases.
- Reduction in the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases in the system.
- Validation checklist introduced and processing time for validating planning applications improved.
- A review of representations made during the consultation period for the Draft Plan Strategy.
- A training course developed for Council staff and members in collaboration with Dfl.
- Council's enforcement strategy reviewed and agreed.
- An empowered and motivated workforce.
- Sustainable development and regeneration of the District.

Have your say

We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how Council services can be improved in the future. Full copies of the following documents are available to download from our website www.newrymournedown.org as follows:

- **Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27**
- **Assessment of Performance 2025-26**

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

For more information, contact:

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

Report to:	Full Council
Date of Meeting:	1 September 2026
Subject:	Addendum to the Assessment of Performance 2025-26 – Finalised Planning Statistics
Reporting Officer and Job Title:	Marie Ward – Chief Executive
Contact Officer and Job Title:	Catherine Hughes – Acting Head of Performance and Improvement

Purpose of Report:

For Noting

1.0	<u>Purpose and Background</u>
1.1	Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires District Councils to put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. Through the Act, the Council has a statutory requirement to produce and publish an Assessment of Performance before 30 September each year. The legislation states that the Assessment of Performance must outline the Council's progress in relation to the General Duty of Improvement, as well as planned improvements against the previous year's: • Performance improvement objectives • Statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management • Self imposed performance indicators
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	The publication of the finalised annual planning statistics 2025-26 from the Department of Infrastructure (DfI) was delayed until the 26 August 2026. This meant that the data reported in the Assessment of Performance report 2025-26 document was in draft and unvalidated. At SPR Committee, Council proposed to include the finalised results from DfI in the publication that will be published on the website by 30 September and the Head of Performance and Improvement proposed sending through a summary of any changes from what was reported to all members of the SPR Committee, which was agreed.
2.2	The table below provides a summary of what was reported in relation to the planning statistics at SPR Committee, the finalised annual statistics released by the Department and the difference between the two.

	Measures of success	Target	2025-26 Draft Statistics	2025-26 Finalised Statistics	Change
	Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	<15 weeks	60.2	45.8	-14.4
	Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)	<30 weeks	100.3	58.8	-41.5
	Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks	70%	36.4%	58.0%	+21.6%
	Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	150	Not available	519	
	Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less	700	Not available	977	
	Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more	450	Not available	644	
2.3	The finalised statistics show a lower average processing time for local and major planning applications and a higher percentage of enforcement cases progressed, however none have achieved the statutory standard for 2025-26.				

	A more detailed analysis and narrative for all the planning measures above is available in the Assessment of Performance report which now includes the finalised annual planning statistics. The Council will publish this on their website following full ratification by Council and before 30 September 2026.
3.0	<u>Recommendations</u>
3.1	To note the addendum to the Assessment of Performance 2025-26, including the finalised annual planning statistics.
4.0	<u>Resource Implications</u>
4.1	There are no financial resource implications within this report
5.0	<u>Due Regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations</u>
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	Does the proposal relate to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision ☐ No ☐ If yes, please select one of the following: ☐ Choose an item. ☐
5.3	Proposal initiating consultation The consultation 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 Please select the consultation period: ☐ Choose an item. ☐ Rationale:
6.0	<u>Due regard to Rural Needs</u>

6.1	Does the proposal relate to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service.  No – The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs 
7.0	<u>Appendices</u>
7.1	
8.0	<u>Background Documents</u>
8.1	• Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (Part 12) • Assessment of Performance 2025-26

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	24 September 2026
Subject:	Planning Department Update
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Jonathan McGilly Assistant Director Regeneration
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Jonathan McGilly Assistant Director Regeneration

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

For decision	☐	For noting only	☒
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1.0	Purpose and Background																																												
1.1	This report is a report prepared to update members on Planning Departments activity since last report tabled in January 2026 and reflecting NISRA stats up to 31 March 2026. The report also reflects some internal stats and updates.																																												
2.0	Key issues																																												
2.1	NISRA Statistics (Excludes those not validated and PADs, PAN, Certificates of lawfulness, discharge of Conditions) Live Planning application 31 December 2024 1529 Live Planning applications 31 March 2025 1526 Live planning applications 30 June 2025 1527 Live Planning applications 30 September 2025 1537 Live Planning applications 31 December 2025 1542 Live Planning applications 31 March 2026 1496 Major applications <table><tr><th>Period</th><th>Av processing time</th><th>Nr Applications received</th><th>Nr Applications withdrawn</th><th>Nr Applications decided</th></tr><tr><td>QE Sept 2024</td><td>34 wks</td><td>4</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>QE Dec 2024</td><td>21.7 wks</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>QE March 2025</td><td>19.6 wks</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>QE June 2025</td><td>54.4 wks</td><td>4</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>QE Sept 2025</td><td>84 wks</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>QE Dec 2025</td><td>156 wks</td><td>13</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>QE March 2026</td><td>0</td><td>7</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr></table>					Period	Av processing time	Nr Applications received	Nr Applications withdrawn	Nr Applications decided	QE Sept 2024	34 wks	4	0	2	QE Dec 2024	21.7 wks	0	0	2	QE March 2025	19.6 wks	3	1	4	QE June 2025	54.4 wks	4	0	2	QE Sept 2025	84 wks	1	0	4	QE Dec 2025	156 wks	13	0	1	QE March 2026	0	7	0	0
Period	Av processing time	Nr Applications received	Nr Applications withdrawn	Nr Applications decided																																									
QE Sept 2024	34 wks	4	0	2																																									
QE Dec 2024	21.7 wks	0	0	2																																									
QE March 2025	19.6 wks	3	1	4																																									
QE June 2025	54.4 wks	4	0	2																																									
QE Sept 2025	84 wks	1	0	4																																									
QE Dec 2025	156 wks	13	0	1																																									
QE March 2026	0	7	0	0																																									

Processing times for major applications for year 25/26 was 58.8 weeks

LOCAL APPLICATIONS

Period	Av processing time	Nr Applications received	Nr Applications Withdrawn	Nr Applications decided
QE Dec 2024	50.1 wks	295	34	202
QE March 2025	45 wks	271	19	236
QE June 2025	46 wks	271	8	252
QE Sept 2025	43.4 wks	304	11	269
QE Dec 2025	50.8 wks	276	12	262
QE March 2026	44.5 wks	261	12	294

Average for year 45.8 weeks

Processing times for local applications remains above target and NI Average.

During this period NMD received the second highest number of applications in NI equating to approximately 12% of NI total and determined the second highest number of applications again equating to 12% of NI total

CURRENT ANALYSIS OF ALL APPLICATIONS

Based on latest **available data as of 8/9/26:**

1650 live applications – (This includes ALL applications that are not captured and reflected in NISRA stats)

Made up as follows:

1150 applications are allocated & processing, approx.

500 awaiting allocation,

1 new application to be validated.

For period 1 April 2026 – 31 August 2026 -589 applications have been determined.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Draft Plan strategy was presented and agreed by Council on 31 March 2025 and was formally launched on 27 June and was followed by 12-week consultation period with a series of consultation sessions were facilitated across the district during this period. Representations were received and reviewed and further formal consultation on representations and counter representations was completed in Q1 2026.

LDP team are now considering focussed changes based on representations and following legal review there will be further consultation ahead of Draft Plan Strategy submission to DfI by end of 2026.

At that stage DfI will carry out the independent examination, however the timeline for this will not be known until after submission. DfI have appointed a panel of Independent Examiners which will hopefully result in a more streamlined process.

ENFORCEMENT

The NI target for the Enforcement is that 70% of enforcement cases are concluded within 39 weeks of receipt.

For 25/26

294 cases were opened

181 cases closed

231 cases were concluded

58% cases were concluded within target. (24/25 47.6%)

Challenges

Challenges remain with respect to performance against statutory targets and the number of applications live in the system is also well above manageable levels.

A number of ongoing challenges continue to impact on service delivery, in summary these are;

Statutory consultation

This remains a challenge across ALL consultees and has been discussed with DfI at a strategic level.

At March 2026 of 1053 Consultations issued by NMDDC, 66% were replied to within target of 21 days. In a comparable Council this figure is 86%.

Via engagement with Statutory Consultee Forum set up under the Planning Improvement Programme, these matters are discussed and in recent months NIEA have undertaken a review and implemented changes on a pilot bases to help address backlog issues that they face. Ongoing prioritisation pilot with NIEA remains in place along with a NIW pilot to reduce Consultations on some single house rural applications.

Validation checklists

Validation check lists have now been implemented in a pilot phase where we are seeking feedback from applicants and addressing issues that arise where possible. This initiative will hopefully help address challenges of incomplete applications and the challenges posed by seasonal surveys.

Recruitment Actions:

Staff retention and recruitment continues to be an industry wide challenge in both Local Councils and the private sector.

There is currently one vacancy at Planning Assistant level and recruitment is underway however back fill for medium to long term absences has proved challenging and does create issues for live caseloads that have to be redistributed.

Reserve lists are in place now for Senior Officers, Planning Officers and Planning Assistants.

2 No HLA students are now in post from January 2026 and this has proven to be a successful intervention.

Absence has been a particular challenge since the last update, and this is being managed as per procedures but does have an impact on outputs.

Performance Management –

Current performance improvement actions

- Majors and Legacy applications are being reviewed monthly with an agreed actions to determine / close applications.
- Ongoing performance meetings with Senior Planning staff to review performance and agree actions to address challenges.
- Ongoing engagement with statutory consultees around response times.
- Senior Planners have developed workplans with all team members to be reviewed weekly/fortnightly to plan for weekly determination figures

Additional performance improvement actions

- Dedicated training/mentoring programme to build capacity of new Planning Assistants, this is being delivered by part time Principal Planning Officer.
- A small team of external consultants have commenced work in June 2026 to work with DM teams to support staff to deal with challenges of caseload management and mentor to improve timely decision making
- A training plan for the Department is currently being developed that will review induction training and ensure professional development training is offered across all levels of the Planning team to address the ever-changing demand on planning around climate change and Environmental matters etc.
- Ongoing review of applications district wide. Allocation of caseloads based on application complexity to ensure caseloads are reflective of experience of each individual, eg
 - Allocation of applications out of sequence ie not based on the date received
 - Allocation of projects with Economic development impact, grant funding, medical considerations etc.

	• Stringent application of how many times applicants are given opportunities to resubmit information to address application shortcomings and missing information. If outstanding or revised information is not provided within specified timeframe, then will move the application to a decision. • Introduction of individual team performance management with individual performance targets to ensure output is managed at an individual level as well at a department level – Ongoing • Reviewing consultations to ensure we only consult with statutory partners where necessary. – This is ongoing, led by Seniors. • Continue to review staff complement and react to emerging resource challenges.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	Note the content of the report
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	NA
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>
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
	NA
8.0	Background Documents
	NA

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	24 September 2026
Subject:	Corporate Risk Register
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Aileen Jones – Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Joanna Tierney – Assistant Director of Finance of 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 the SMT on 8 September 2026. Quarter 1 Assurance Statements for 2026/27 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 Corporate Risk Register The Council has identified 12 corporate risks, 7 of which are red and 4 of which are amber and 1 is yellow. 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 2026. 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 Senior Management Team (SMT) discussed the uncertain and challenging funding environment. No agreement has yet been reached on the Executive's budget settlement for 2026/2027, making medium-term financial planning more difficult and creating uncertainty in relation to grants, capital investment, and regional programmes.
2.3			Directorate Risk Register – Sustainability and Environment (S&E) 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 S&E Directorate is attached at <u>Appendix 3</u>. The Risk Register was reviewed and updated with the Assistant Directors and Director of Sustainability and Environment on 10 September 2026.

2.4	Within the Sustainability and Environment Directorate Risk Register, 8 risks have been identified, including 2 new risks (no 7 and 8), covering risk in relation to defending insurance claims and complying with health and safety requirements. . 5 risks are red, 3 risks are amber, and with 2 risks (no 2 and 3) increasing in risk score since September 2025. The Sustainability and Environment Risk Register will be updated quarterly by the Directorate Management Team and considered by the Audit Committee annually.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To approve the updates to the Corporate Risk Register highlighted within the summary at Appendix 1. Full Corporate Risk Register can be evidenced at Appendix 2. To note the revised Sustainability and Environment Directorate Risk Register summary at Appendix 3 and detailed Sustainability and Environment Directorate Risk Register at Appendix 4.
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: Summary Sheet – Corporate Risk Register – September 2026 Appendix 2: Corporate Risk Register – September 2026 Appendix 3: Summary Sheet – S&E Directorate Risk Register – September 2026 Appendix 4: S&E Directorate Risk Register – September 2026
8.0	Background Documents
	None

NMDDC Corporate Risk Register Cover Sheet - Sept 2026

Risk	Description	Risk Owner(s)	Gross Risk Score	May-26	Sep-26		Comments
				Residual Risk Score	Revised Residual Risk Score		
CR01	Failure to deliver the capital investment programme for the District	SMT Caolain Boyd	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
CR02	Non-compliance with legislative requirements, including the Procurement Act 2023	SMT Sinead Murphy	25	20	20	↔	Risk score remains unchanged. Actions have been updated. A new root cause, consequence and action added to recognise the risk associated with Council vehicles and accidents.
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 Jonathan McGilly	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged. Actions have been updated.
CR05	Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements	Marie Ward SMT	20	16	16	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
CR06	Failure to adequately react to a major incident which would minimise any negative consequences/impact	SMT Sinead Murphy	25	8	8	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated. Additional detail added to the risk recognising the impact on staff resilience.
CR07	Failure to implement an economic development programme to drive growth within the district	Conor Mallon	20	16	16	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been. A new action was added recognising the funding cut to 'Go Succeed'.
CR08	Failure to manage sickness absence resulting in delays and an inability to deliver Council services.	Senior Management Team	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
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 remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
CR10	Failure to effectively plan for and manage a cyber security attack.	Veronica Keegan Gavin Ringland	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR11	Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery	Senior Management Team	25	15	15	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
CR12	Insufficient staff resources to deliver Council services in an effective and efficient manner	Marie Ward SMT	20	16	16	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.

1. Corporate Risk Register NMDDC

18/09/2026 13:19:14

Risk CR. 01 - Failure to deliver the capital investment programme for the District

Consequence	5					G	Risk Categories Buildings / Engineering / Environment Business operational/reputational	Risk Description Failure to adequately resource the capital programme Failure to effectively manage capital contracts Capital programme does not sufficiently deliver on the Corporate Objectives	Potential Root Cause Lack of availability of construction materials and increases in the cost of materials due to inflation and Cost of Living crisis Contractors on key projects fail to deliver on time and on budget Consultant and/or contractor collusion Procurement delays, failures or legal challenges Procurement Act 2023 - due to the uncertainty - became law on 24 February 2025 Governance Arrangements not being adhered to Projected timelines too optimistic Delays due to the statutory approvals process and gaining consent Lack of awareness in staff and managers Lack of resources - economic downturn/recession Funding reduced/withdrawn, timescales extended leading to increased costs Impact of inflation on the financial viability of the capital plan going forward	Consequence Impact on service delivery Financial impact - inflationary pressures Legal challenge / Negative PR Impact on quality/cost of projects Future reduction on the capital budget Reputational damage	Risk Owners Caolain Boyd; Senior Management Team	Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25	Last Review 15/09/2026				
	4					R								Residual Risk Red 20	Next Review 31/12/2026		
	3			T												Target Risk Level Yellow 9	Risk Appetite Risk Open
	2																
	1																
		1	2	3	4	5											
Probability																	

Objectives

- 1. Support the continued growth and development of our local economy
- 6. Develop and revitalise our district
- 7. Deliver sustainable services

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 Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
BRCD - Tourism	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.	In Progress	Senior Management Team	30/09/2026	Tourism -Council is to develop an outline business case for a new immersive tourism trail featuring world class visitor amenities stretching from Carlingford Lough to Strangford Lough as part of a major investment proposal under the BRCD. Approval for the Council to progress the plan to the outline business case stage has been agreed by the BRCD's Executive Board supported by BRCD partners including the DfE, DoF and TNI. The BRCD recommendation was endorsed by Council's Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on Thursday 23 April 2026.

BRCD funding - NCCR	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	30/09/2026	NCCR FBC was approved by Council April 2025 and DfC August 2025. Theatre and Conference facility: Contractor award January 2026. Programme Board, Project Board, and Contractor Progress meetings are all operational in line with project governance. Civic and Regional Hub: Following the receipt of a Pre Action Protocol on the Civic and Regional Hub, this project is delayed pending a decision on a JR estimated time November 2026. Grade A Office Development grant scheme opened Q3 25/26; following receipt of nil applications, will re open November 2026 for an extended period of 6 months.
Capital Plan Cash Flow forecasting	Ongoing forecasting dependent on progress in capital projects	In Progress	Joanna Tierney	31/12/2026	The estimates for MRP/Loan payments over the life of our capital Programme as part of the 2026/27 Rate Process is in progress. Finance Team met with Capital Team Project Managers in Q4 2025/26 to get an update on projected Capital Spend versus budget for 2025/26 and projections for 2026/27 onwards.
Procurement Act 2023	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	Caolain Boyd	30/09/2026	The guidance notes and templates have been released by Central Government. The Procurement Policy has been updated and SIB have been engaged to provide Procurement Advice. The Council will be moving to ETendersNI. Additional resource is in place to assist the team as well as additional capacity to assist with tender specification advice in S&E and AHC. Revised Procurement Policy approved by the SP&R in September 2025. Projects started before PA23 came into affect will be delivered in accordance with PCR 2015. New projects will be delivered in accordance with new procurement templates and procedures.
Resourcing for Capital Projects	Additional Resource for strategic capital projects	In Progress	Senior Management Team	30/09/2026	Councils SP&R Committee approved appointing a Strategic Capital Project Director to oversee the delivery of major capital projects across Council. The post would provide senior leadership, improve governance, strengthen programme delivery, and ensure that major projects are managed in a consistent and controlled way. The Committee also approved engaging client-side Project Managers. This would ensure project specific project and contract management of council strategic projects during the construction phase. This will result in the construction phase of project being overseen by a NMDDC appointed experienced project manager working directly to council.

Risk CR. 02 - Non-compliance with legislative requirements

Consequence	5				R	G	Risk Categories Business operational/reputational Impact on individuals (staff or public) Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)		
	4		T					Risk Description 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.	
	3								
	2								Potential Root Cause 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). Failure to adhere to road speed limits
	1								
		1	2	3	4	5			
Probability									
Consequence 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 Transport Operator Licence being revoked leading to inability to delivery key services, e.g. refuse collections									
Risk Owners Sinead Murphy; Senior Management Team									
Gross/Inherent Risk		Red 25		Last Review		15/09/2026			
Residual Risk		Red 20		Next Review		31/12/2026			
Target Risk Level		Yellow 8		Risk Appetite		Risk Averse			

Objectives

7. Deliver sustainable services

Key Controls Identified

- 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 Management Plans in place for Asbestos, Legionella, Fire Safety and Portable Appliance Testing
- 1. Policies and procedures in place - i.e H&S Policy, Procurement Policy, Access to Information, Capital Projects etc
- 1. Procurement training rolled out to all relevant staff
- 2. Compliance Reporting to Estates and Facilities Steering Group, 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 September 2025/26 on Procurement
- 3. Internal Audits Completed and Scheduled going forward annually.

Action Plans

Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Actions from Fire Risk Assessment Audits	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	The current level of risk regarding fire risks in our buildings is considered Low. The Fire Policy was updated in March 2026, 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 Council wide Contractor/s in place to undertake annual inspections of fire alarm systems and firefighting equipment. 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. A central data base for reporting fire risk assessment actions has been developed and instructions issued to Facility Managers to update the relevant action plans. Compliance reports will be reviewed at quarterly Estates and Facilities Steering Group meetings.

Advisory Internal Audit Review - Health and Safety	Ongoing internal review of Health and Safety compliance, with focused audits of high risk operational activities.	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	Focused audits of high risk operational activities in Fleet (ongoing), Refuse and Cleansing (ongoing), Grounds Maintenance planned next.
Asbestos Policy and Management Plans	Implementation of Asbestos Policies and Management Plans	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	From these audits action plans and recommendations will be forthcoming. The current level of risk for asbestos, is considered medium. Asbestos Management Policy and Management Plan has been reviewed and approved. A 2 year contract is in place to deliver asbestos management surveys. Annual programme of Asbestos Management surveys has been completed and up to date. All identified remedial actions have been completed. A Business Case was approved at September 2025 S&E for a 3 year Asbestos Management contract to commence 2027.
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	31/03/2027	E-learning is regularly promoted throughout the Organisation and will continue through the year. The number of mandatory e-learning training courses remains at 12 per employee. The overall compliance rate was 62% as at January 2025 and work will continue with Service areas to increase compliance.
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	31/03/2027	Action plan now in place to implement recommendations. There are 13 recommendations listed against the audit of compliance checking on Council Audit reporting system. 9 recommendations have been fully implemented in 25/26. 4 recommendations are partially implemented.
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	31/12/2026	Procurement Policy has been updated in line with the new legislation. Directors bring procurement actions plans to the Audit Committee Quarterly. DAC's also reported to Audit Committee quarterly. A contract management finance code went live on the 1 April 2026 to strengthen controls.
Legionella Policy and Management Plan	Implementation of Legionella Policies and Management Plans	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	The current level of risk for legionella is considered Medium. A contract is in place for Water Hygiene services. Water monitoring programme is in place in accordance with L8/HSG 274. 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 has been awarded in March 2026 to address legionella risk assessment remedial works. A prioritised works programme is currently underway.

Operator's Licence Working Group - KPI monitoring	Driver training and awareness, implementation of fleet policy and procedure	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	The current level of risk from driver speeding offences and road traffic accidents is considered High due to occurrences of drivers being detected driving over the speed limit and being issued with penalty points. The Council is duty bound to report these to the Transport Regulatory Unit who have issued an advisory letter to the Council. RTAs resulting in vehicles being damaged, including beyond repair, have increased resulting in safety concerns for staff and the public and impacting insurance cover. Joint communication from Management and Trade Unions have been issued to staff reminding them of their responsibilities and refresher driver training and awareness has been undertaken. Discussions with Trade Unions regarding introduction of technology to assist with the management of driver safety continues. Meeting took place with Councils Insurer in August 2026 regarding fleet with respect to drivers behaviours and an action plan has been developed. To be completed by 31/3/27.
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Risk CR. 03 - Failure to effectively manage waste

Consequence	5				R	G	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	
	4							Last Review 15/09/2026 Next Review 31/12/2026 Risk Appetite Risk Cautious
	3			T				
	2							
	1							
		1	2	3	4	5		
Probability								

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 Scheduled for Waste Management contracts for 2026-27
- 3. Internal Audit carried out for Fleet 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	31/03/2027	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	31/03/2027	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. Council have received the 2026/27 payments under the packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) legislation. An Addendum to arc21's Waste management Plan to cover to end of 2027 was approved and the review is ongoing.
Operators Licence	Internal Audit carried out a review of the progress in implementing TRU and FTA recommendations in October 2018. 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 2018 audit.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage	31/03/2027	A consolidated action plan in relation to compliance to the Council's Operators License (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. Update will be provided against the recommendations in due course. Councils Operators License was renewed in February 2025 by TRU. A further Internal Audit will be completed for 2026/27 on Operators Licence KPI's.
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	31/03/2027	Following approval at SP&R in September 2025, officers are engaging with a Waste Specialist to support the Council in identifying areas to proactively improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its Waste Collection and Recycling Services. Proposals have been approved at SP&R Committee for additional resources to work on a project plan. The project is aimed at reviewing how we are currently delivering waste management services and identifying opportunities to make changes that, in line with pEPR requirements, will drive forward efficiencies, improve the overall recycling rate across the district and deliver best value for rate payer

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	31/03/2027	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 have advised Council that they are finalising the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy, which they will launch for consultation in the next 1-2 weeks. The Waste Management Strategy for NI 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

Consequence	5				R	G	Risk Categories Business operational/reputational Financial Quality of Service Risk Description Failure to provide robust and timely planning decisions Potential Root Cause 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 Consequence 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 Risk Owners Conor Mallon; Jonathan McGilly Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25 Residual Risk Red 20 Target Risk Level Yellow 9	
	4							Last Review 15/09/2026
	3			T				Next Review 31/12/2026
	2							Risk Appetite Risk Open
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Probability								

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 Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
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Backlog cases	Implement action plan to reduce backlog in line with timeframe set	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	31/03/2027	Statistical overview for 25/26 has just been published and the challenges of backlog and processing times remain. 1110 local applications were received and 1077 processed in this time. This is the second highest no of apps received and processed across all authorities with average processing time of 45.8 weeks, representing similar stat to same period 24/25. Major applications processing times were 58.8 weeks which is above the average 30 week target which only 2 authorities achieved. 294 enforcement cases were opened which is a 12% increase on last year. 181 cases were closed and 231 were concluded with 58% concluded within 39 week target.
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	31/03/2027	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 2025 after Council AGM. Training for staff and members is now being considered as part of the Planning improvement programme following engagement with DfI across all Councils. The scheme of delegation and operating protocol has been reviewed by Planning Committee in September 2025, to consider the remaining actions in the audit report around thresholds for overturn decisions and review of call in panel membership. Planning committee training was delivered at July Committee meeting.
Recruitment Drive For Planners	Council want to ensure that there is an adequate number of planners going forward and to ensure there is a career path available for students.	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	31/03/2027	Following engagement with DfI and Belfast Met, a HLA initiative involving 4 Council and DfI has been developed and as a result 2 higher level apprentices joined NMDDC in January 2026, they will work across the functional areas of planning department for 2.5 years while studying 1 day per week at Belfast Met. A mentoring and support programme has been put in place and managed via a dedicated Planning team member. Externally consultancy support has been contracted to help support staff and managers deal with challenging cases and caseload management.

Regional Planning Review	The Public Accounts Committee issued a regional report on Planning in Northern Ireland on 24 March 2022	In Progress	Conor Mallon	31/03/2027	Performance improvement plan has been developed covering key areas of Planning. This was agreed between Dfl 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 Dfl , 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 Dfl and work has commenced to review and revise PIP objectives in line with recent engagement with Dfl and SOLACE. Following engagement and review of PIP actions with Dfl and SOLACE a revised PIP has been established and is being implemented in partnership with Dfl. Dfl workshop with staff to be held on 15 September to review challenges within the system and explore solutions at various stage throughout he processing cycle.
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Risk CR. 05 - Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements

Consequence	5					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		
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Probability						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 Senior Management Team; Marie Ward			
Gross/Inherent Risk								Red 20	Last Review	15/09/2026
Residual Risk								Amber 16	Next Review	31/12/2026
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	31/03/2027	The Digital Transformation Strategy 2030 has been approved by Council. Digital Transformation Manager appointed March 2026, Project Officer will take up position September 2026. A draft Digital Transformation Strategy 2030 Roadmap (live projects and proposed new pipeline of projects) will be considered by ITPG, 8 September 2026. Future investment to deliver agreed projects will be required. Quarterly ITPG meetings have been held and reported to SMT via ITPG Chair.
New HR System	New Self Service Human Resource Management system to be procured	In Progress	Marina Hughes Elaine Kirk	31/03/2027	The full Business Case was approved by ITPG on 14 May 2026. Procurement is complete and the contract with MHR for the implementation of iTrent was signed on 8 July 2026. Project delivery is underway, with a Phase 1 implementation plan in development to deliver core HR, recruitment, L & D and Manager Self Service and Employee Self Service by April 2026.
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	31/03/2027	A draft action plan / timetable of service reviews has been provided to the Trade Unions as part of the agreement to the current dispute. This will be reviewed formally with TUS when the IR Framework is implemented. However, work is progressing. With the Refuse and Cleansing review complete, Kilkeel Leisure Review at implementation stage and Arts and Tourism at consultation stage with TUS. Service areas and HR continue to work together to ensure resources are appropriately directed to undertake the work required for Service/Structure Reviews.

Risk CR. 06 - Failure to adequately react to a major incident which would minimise any negative consequences/impact

Consequence	5					G	Risk Categories Buildings / Engineering / Environment Business operational/reputational Impact on individuals (staff or public) Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)
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Probability							
Risk Description In the event of a disaster or an emergency, the Council may not respond in a way which minimises any negative consequences/impact							
Potential Root Cause Natural disasters, localised flooding, Harbour disasters, Fire Pandemics - COVID 19 Significant IT failure Inadequate preparedness to be able to respond in the event of an emergency							
Consequence Reputational damage through inadequate civic leadership to provide adequate community emergency support Loss of income Loss of life Litigation - civil/criminal Increased insurance premiums Impact on staff resilience and ability to continually respond to more frequent and prolonged emergencies							
Risk Owners Sinead Murphy; Senior Management Team							
Gross/Inherent Risk		Red 25			Last Review 15/09/2026		
Residual Risk		Yellow 8			Next Review 31/12/2026		
Target Risk Level		Green 4			Risk Appetite Risk Averse		

Objectives

7. Deliver sustainable services

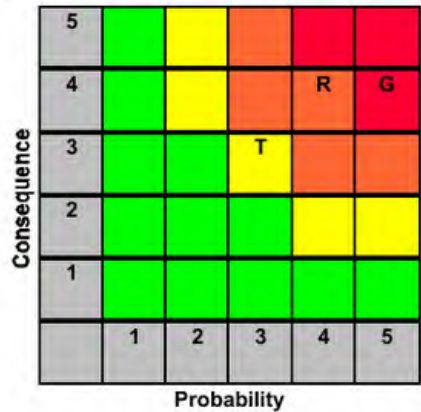
Key Controls Identified

- 1. Emergency planning measures in place, including:
 - Flood risk plan
 - Inter-agency group
- 1. Annual Winter Resilience Plan in place
- 1. Business Continuity scenario plans in place
- 1. Dedicated Emergency Planning team and professionally trained and experienced staff
- 1. Test exercises completed on a regular basis and lessons learned communicated
- 2. Member of Southern Region Emergency Planning Group
- 2. Member of the South East Flooding Recommendations Working Group
- 2. New regional local government regional model
- 3. Advisory Audit of flood grant verification took place in December 2024
- 3. Internal Audits Completed;

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Documenting Business Continuity Plans	BCPs to be documented for each Service Area	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	Departmental BCP's have been reviewed and updated. For consistency across services and Directorates review will continue. Staff resilience across all sections to be considered as part of the BCPs in 2026/27 with a full overview of all to be completed by 31.03.2027. EOI to be issued for staff to volunteer to assist as part of emergency response with appropriate training, instruction and supervision provided.
Northern Ireland Emergency Planning Structures	Officers will continue to attend and contribute to the NI Emergency Planning Structures.	In Progress	Senior Management Team	31/03/2027	Council continued to be represented at NIEPS were any upcoming incidents are discussed. Opportunities to develop mutual aid arrangements at all levels throughout Councils to be explored and embedded in EP structures.
Risk Assessments	A review of all Council Risk Assessments currently in place and a review of all Officers who have been trained in IOSH	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	31/12/2026	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. S&E completing review of H&S management controls against HSE HSG65 guidance
Scenario Planning	A new scenario planning event to take place	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	A new cross border scenario planning event is under discussion via the Central Emergency Plan team for Local Government. NMDDC SHEP team completed an emergency test exercise for SMT/CMT staff in April 2026. A review of the learnings and action plan will be cascaded to SMT-CMT

Risk CR. 07 - Failure to implement an economic development Programme to drive growth within the District



Risk Categories	Impact on individuals (staff or public) Quality of Service				
Risk Description	CR. 07 - Failure to implement an economic development Programme to drive growth within the District				
Potential Root Cause	Uncertainty in relation to the future funding landscape/opportunities Failure to engage stakeholders (public and private sector) Inflationary pressures and higher interest rates / rising costs Issues with delivery of City Deal ambitions across the District Labour Market shortages / skill shortages aligned to economic growth needs Macro-Economic challenges in international markets				
Consequence	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 Inadequate levels of service provision				
Risk Owners	Conor Mallon				
Gross/Inherent Risk	Red 20				
Residual Risk	Amber 16				
Target Risk Level	Yellow 9				
Last Review	15/09/2026				
Next Review	31/12/2026				
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. Digital Innovation and Regeneration Team Developed
- 1. FFNI Digital Transformation Projects underway
- 1. Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2020-25 in place with new strategy being developed
- 2. Local Economic Partnership and Labour Market Partnership established
- 2. DTFF Steering Group now established
- 2. Engagement with other Councils, other Departments, NILGA and the Private Sector through the Chamber of Commerce
- 2. GoSucceed Programme has a NI wide oversight group established
- 2. Programme and Project Governance Structures in place for delivery of capital projects
- 3. Internal Audit on Economic Development and Inward Investment completed 2025-26
- 3. Internal Audit on Review of Labour Market Partnership and LEP completed in 25/26 - Assurance Rating Satisfactory
- 3. Internal Audits Completed and Scheduled going forward

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
City Deals	The Belfast Region City Deal was signed in December 2021 and unlocks £1 billion of transformative co-investment.	In Progress	Conor Mallon Marie Ward	31/03/2027	The Belfast Region City Deal was signed in December 2021 and unlocks £1 billion of transformative co-investment. NCCR FBC was approved by Council April 2025 and DfC August 2025. Theatre and Conference facility: Contractor award January 2026 with works commenced onsite June 2026. Programme Board, Project Board, and Contractor Progress meetings are all operational in line with project governance. Civic and Regional Hub: Following the receipt of a Pre Action Protocol on the Civic and Regional Hub, this project is delayed pending a JR hearing, estimated time Nov 2026. Grade A Office Development grant scheme opened Q3 25/26; following receipt of nil applications, re opened May 2026 for an extended period until November 2026 BRCD/Tourism: NMDDC have obtained approval from BRCD Exc Board, DfE and TNI for the development of a new proposal to OBC stage. This was also approved at SPR April 2026. This new immersive tourism trail seeks to secure BRCD allocation of £29.2m for a tourism project for the NMDDC area. Consultancy team in place progressing with design proposals, OBC, and stakeholder engagement from June 2026. Working towards draft OBC by December 2026 and considering performance of OBC in the New Year.
DBEC	Actively engage in the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor	In Progress	Conor Mallon Marie Ward	31/03/2027	2026 and consider performance of OBC in the New Year the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor, and actively participate in the Chief Executive Board, Directors Board and Political Advisory board meetings. Collaborative opportunities being identified and pursued were appropriate.

Digital Innovation and Regeneration / DTFF (Digital Transformation Flexible Fund)	Delivery of Digital Infrastructure and Digital Related projects under the FFNI Consortium / NMDDC	In Progress	Conor Mallon Amanda Smyth	31/03/2027	Digital Transformation Flexible Fund team are responsible for centralised implementation and delivery of the DTFF programme across all Council areas. Total value of funding £7.5m. NMDDC is the lead Council for this project. Invest NI is the Investment Decision Maker. Project on target for delivery against funding allocation. BRCD Digital Pillar projects including proposed Regional Innovation Hub for NMDDC are being explored. Approval in place to progress OBC for regional innovation hub. The proposed location for the Innovation Hub is Civic and Regional Hub (refer to comment above). Contracts for Funding: A funding application is being developed for a challenge Fund that will seek innovative solutions to visitor and facility management at Castlewellan Forest Park.
Go Succeed	Future funding structures	In Progress	Conor Mallon Amanda Smyth	31/03/2027	Go Succeed: NMDDC is a delivery partner for Go Succeed, the NI business support programme offering mentoring support to businesses in specialised areas. Active engagement continues with DfE regarding funding for 26/27, which is significantly less than previous years. Subsequently, targets have been adjusted. Conversations with funders are on-going around 27/28 and beyond funding and subsequent structure for programme delivery. Indication is a higher capital element than revenue. Market testing on a reviewed operating model is underway.
LEP/LMP	Delivery of the Local Economic Partnership and the Labour Market Partnership	In Progress	Conor Mallon Amanda Smyth	31/03/2027	LEP: Council have established a Local Economic Partnership, and have secured a LoO of £4.5 Million from DfE for delivery of an action plan up to March 2028. Action Plan has been approved by the LEP and DfE and delivery is underway. LMP: NMDDC is delivery lead for NMD LMP and have delivered successfully against action plan for 25/26. DfC funding commitment for 26/27 has been delayed, with confirmation of a reduced allocation for Q1 and Q2. Pending confirmation for funding Q3-Q4. Delayed funding poses a risk to security of staff and prevents commencement of procurement against a 12-month action plan. Concerns have been raised with DfC.

Support local businesses	The Council is also providing support, advice and guidance to local businesses on start-up and growth ambitions	In Progress	Amanda Smyth	31/03/2027	Go Succeed - core business support programme - see action below International Relations: Council is recognising the opportunity to position the district from an investment perspective, having unfettered access to both UK and EU markets; working closely with INI to raise potential of district as an investment location for both local and ingenious businesses. Shaping Sustainable Places: SSS is a new funding model from DfC, DfI and DAERA from 26/27 for a 10 year period. Council are actively engaging with DfC (lead Dept) regarding the opportunity and requirements for securing funding. Artisan Markets, Make it Local campaigns continue across the year, profiling local business and shop local opportunities. Hotel Development Grant: £1 Million investment to support the development of new, or expansion of existing hotel accommodation across the distrist, with awards issued to 3 developers. Grade A Development Grant: £3 Million investment to support the development of Grade A Office accommodation in Newry City currently open for investors. Delivery against LEP action plan will deliver tailored support for local businesses, prioritising efficiencies in productivity.
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Risk **CR. 08 - Failure to adequately manage sickness absence resulting in delays and an inability to deliver Council services.**

Consequence	5		T		R	G	Risk Categories Business operational/reputational Financial Impact on individuals (staff or public) Quality of Service Risk Description CR. 08 - Failure to adequately manage sickness absence resulting in delays and an inability to deliver Council services. Potential Root Cause Increased levels of sickness absence Failure to adequately manage sickness absence Failure to conduct Return to Work Meetings following instances of absenteeism Increase in sickness absence being experienced across all sectors Consequence Increase in sickness absence Critical services failing to be delivered Financial cost of Occupational Sick Pay Impact on remaining staff of increased workloads to cover sickness absence Increased cost to Council due to the use of agency staff/overtime Risk Owners Senior Management Team Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25 Residual Risk Red 20 Target Risk Level Yellow 10
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Probability							Last Review 15/09/2026 Next Review 31/12/2026 Risk Appetite Risk Minimal

Objectives

- 2. Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district
- 8. Represent the voice of the district with our partners

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Employee Health Cash Plan
- 1. Human Resources Team
- 1. Managing Attendance Procedure
- 2. Health and Wellbeing Working Group/Team
- 2. Occupational Health Service
- 2. RTW absence interviews are now being monitored through the CMT group
- 3. Advisory Internal Audit on HR Policy completed in September 2025
- 3. Internal Audit of Sickness Absence in completed in 2023/24 - Satisfactory

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	Sinead Murphy	31/03/2027	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 Talk Money Week which was marked by 2 Lunch and Learn events, Health Checks for staff in December, World Menopause month which was marked by an information session and of course the second Health and Wellbeing Day took place at Dromantine Conference Centre on 20th October with 91 staff attending. The HWWG also issue Newsletters to promote H & WB among staff. A schedule of events for 2026 is under development. Environmental Health and HR have delivered a H&WB survey, with an independent facilitator. The H & WB survey has 2 elements – H & WB and HSE stress indicator tool and was launched on 1 September 2026. There is a phased approach to the H & WB survey culminating in an action plan on 31/03/27. Line managers are a core line management responsibility. HR will continue to provide support and management information. The level of outstanding RTW meetings remains under regular review with HR providing regular reports to SMT, CMT and management. SMT & CMT ensure compliance in their areas of responsibility. The attendance management audit (December 2023) provided satisfactory assurance. All relevant agreed actions have been completed. The outstanding RTW meeting report has been updated, mandatory training for managers has been developed and the RTW meetings process for long term absence is under review and monitored. There is a compliance rate of 93% for 2026/27. The attendance management audit (December 2023) provided satisfactory assurance. Actions relating to mandatory attendance management training and refresher training was agreed. HR have included on Skillgate Attendance Manager training for line managers to establish robust processes which contribute to reduction in sickness absence durations. Line managers are referred to the attendance management module on Skillgate and HR are providing one to one support for line managers. Further line management guidance was circulated to remind managers of the AM process and responsibility to undertake RTW interviews. HR monitoring RTW interviews are taking place.
Return to Work interviews	The completion rate of RTW in line with procedure	In Progress	Marina Hughes	31/03/2027	
Training	All Managers must complete Managing Attendance training on the Councils e-learning platform	In Progress	Marina Hughes	31/03/2027	

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

Consequence	5				R	G	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) Geopolitical instability (e.g., Iran conflict) may disrupt global energy supply, driving up fuel and energy prices, leading to increased costs, inflation, and economic slowdown. Exchange Rate risk - PEACE
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Probability							
							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 Senior Management Team; Joanna Tierney
							Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25 Last Review 15/09/2026
							Residual Risk Red 20 Next Review 31/12/2026
							Target Risk Level Yellow 9 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
- 6. Develop and revitalise our district
- 7. Deliver sustainable services
- 8. 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
Exchange Rate Risk	Timing difference between the payment and receipt of grant in relation to PEACE funding	In Progress	Joanna Tierney	30/09/2026	AD of Finance & Performance to work with the other Councils (ALGFO) in relation to reducing the risk of exchange rate uncertainties.
New Finance Solution	Council to procure an up to date finance solution which will better aid decision making and reporting going forward.	In Progress	Joanna Tierney	30/09/2026	Initial project mandate approved by ITPG on the 22 July 2025. The business case for the new finance system was approved by ITPG in May and implementation of the system will begin in October 2026
Treasury Advice - Banking	All 11 Councils receive weekly updated from our Treasury Management Expert in relation to banking and lending.	In Progress	Joanna Tierney	30/09/2026	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.
Working Groups	Multiple Officer groups discussing these financial concerns on a regular basis.	In Progress	Joanna Tierney Marie Ward	30/09/2026	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. 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. Central-Local Government Collaboration and Delivery Agreement (CDA) is being progressed via the Permanent Secretaries Group/SOLACE. The CDA aims to provide a shared framework between central and local government for setting priorities, designing funding and delivery arrangements and managing assurance. This includes proposals for a streamlined funding and assurance model that aims to simplify governance, reduce administrative burden and support more efficient delivery.

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

Consequence	5				R	G	Risk Categories Business operational/reputational Impact on individuals (staff or public) Quality of Service Risk Description Risk of a cyber security event causing significant operational, financial and reputational damage to the Council Potential Root Cause 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 competencies System vulnerabilities Supply chain breach Consequence 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 Risk Owners Veronica Keegan; Gavin Ringland Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25 Residual Risk Red 20 Target Risk Level Yellow 9
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Probability							Last Review 15/09/2026 Next Review 31/12/2026 Risk Appetite Risk Averse

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 Secuirty 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	31/03/2027	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	31/03/2027	The Disaster Recovery run book for the IT Platform has been finalised and accepted into operation. Worst Case Scenario (WCS) testing was last undertaken in November 2024. Re-tested scheduled for May 2026. Deployment phase of SOC/XIEM/XDR is complete. Desktop and laptop computers replaced as part of the Technology Refresh Project are being adopted into Warranty Status. The overarching Cyber Incident Reponses plan was exercised on 05/03/2026. Improvements deemed necessary will be incorporated and further exercising undertaken prior to 31/03/2027.
Training / Development Plans	Training to increase User Resilience	In Progress	Gavin Ringland	31/03/2027	8 training modules were delivered in 2025/26 along with 4 phishing simulations. On-going eLearning and testing campaigns are mandatory for all digital users and will continue in 2026/27 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	31/03/2027	Continuing reliance on "End of Life" Line of Business Systems is preventing the Operating Systems on all Servers from being brought up to a compliant and supported version.

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

Consequence	5		T	R		G	Risk Categories Business operational/reputational Impact on individuals (staff or public) Quality of Service Risk Description Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery Potential Root Cause In common with many sectors and employers across the UK, industrial unrest has become increasingly likely Unresolved Legacy employment issues Current economic climate Consequence 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
	4						
	3						
	2						
	1						
		1	2	3	4	5	
Probability							Risk Owners Senior Management Team Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25 Residual Risk Amber 15 Target Risk Level Yellow 10
							Last Review 15/09/2026 Next Review 31/12/2026 Risk Appetite 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 NMDDC	In Progress	Senior Management Team	31/03/2027	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. JTUS have agreed to 2 of the 3 elements of the IR Framework, which was presented to SPRC in August 2026. TU Co-ordinator Job Description is the final element for agreement, and this is at an advanced stage and likely to be finalised in September 2026.

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

Consequence	5						Risk Categories	
	4			T	R	G	Risk Description	
	3						Potential Root Cause	
	2							
	1							
		1	2	3	4	5	Consequence	
Probability							Risk Owners	
							Gross/Inherent Risk	Red 20
							Residual Risk	Amber 16
							Target Risk Level	Amber 12
							Last Review	15/09/2026
							Next Review	31/12/2026
							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	HR to look at alternative method of recruitment due to the difficulties in recruiting into key positions across Council. All Directorates are struggling to fill certain vacant posts.	In Progress	Marina Hughes	31/03/2027	Posts as part of PFF now been filled. 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 reserve lists for recruitment campaigns. This will continue to be considered. The principles of the successful recruitment campaign devised for Refuse & Cleansing has been applied within AHC, Indoor Leisure and has been planned for S & E, Maintenance. Other similar vacancies is also considered at the point of recruitment to reduce the number of recruitment exercises. Structural reviews are also considering career pathways, management development, and academies to develop our own employees.
Service Reviews	Service Reviews are currently being looked at in line with paper which was approved at SP&R.	In Progress	Senior Management Team	31/03/2027	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 completed includes, Democratic Services review, Planning staff changing from NICS to NMDDC terms and conditions, Refuse & Cleansing posts. Work in progress, includes Indoor Leisure, Digital and Communications, Capital and Procurement, Arts and Tourism. Service areas and HR continue to work together to ensure resources are appropriately directed to undertake the work required for Service/Structure Reviews.

NMDDC SE Risk Register Cover Sheet - Sept 2026

Risk	Description	Risk Owner(s)	Gross Risk Score	Sep-25	Sep-26		Comments
				Residual Risk Score	Revised Residual Risk Score		
SE01	Failure to deliver operational services	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage Sinead Trainor	20	15	15	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated
SE02	Failure to provide, maintain and operate a compliant fleet	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage	20	15	20	↑	Residual risk has increased - actions have been updated
SE03	Lack of burial capacity at Council Cemeteries	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage	20	10	15	↑	Residual risk has increased - actions have been updated
SE04	Failure to comply with relevant statutory and legislative requirements in Council Facilities	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated
SE05	Failure to deliver an effective maintenance service	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage	16	12	12	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated
SE06	Failure to procure and manage contracts in line with the Council's procurement procedures	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage Sinead Trainor	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated
SE07	Failure to effectively defend insurance Claims	Sinead Murphy SMT Sinead Trainor	25	N/A	20	↔	New risk added - Actions have been updated
SE08	Failure to comply with Health & Safety legal Requirements	Sinead Murphy SMT Sinead Trainor	25	N/A	20	↔	New risk added - Actions have been updated

Sustainability and Environment

15/09/2026 17:05:56

Risk 01. Failure to deliver operational services

Consequence	5		T	R	G		Risk Categories Business operational/reputational Impact on individuals (staff or public) Quality of Service Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory) Risk Description Failure to deliver operational services, effective schedules and priority tasks, including refuse and cleansing, HRC's, Grounds and Building Maintenance and Facilities Management. Potential Root Cause Difficulty in recruiting, including seasonal staff and Drivers with C1 licence The use of temporary contracts/agency makes it difficult to attract, recruit and retain employees Levels of absenteeism especially long term sick Legacy working arrangements and operating procedures Trade Union industrial actions Carry over of annual leave into next financial year will have an impact within some service provisions Adverse weather conditions. Consequence Health and safety risks Increase in Council complaints Staff shortages reduce service provision Services not operating effectively Reputational damage Risk Owners Sinead Murphy; Conor Sage; Sinead Trainor Gross/Inherent Risk Red 20 Residual Risk Amber 15 Target Risk Level Yellow 10
	4						
	3						
	2						
	1						
		1	2	3	4	5	
Probability							Last Review 10/09/2026 Next Review 10/12/2026 Risk Appetite Risk Averse

Objectives

Deliver sustainable services that protect our natural and built environment, continue to meet statutory duties and fur

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Business Continuity Plans
- 1. Ongoing recruitment campaigns
- 1. Overtime
- 1. Service reviews
- 1. Staff development
- 1. Work Scheduling and Prioritisation of tasks
- 1. Workforce Plans in place for each service.
- 3. Internal Audit of Services

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Business Continuity Plans	Continuously monitor, review and update the Business Continuity Plans and Contingency Plans.	In Progress	Conor Sage Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	Continued review of the Business Continuity Plans to identify and address potential issues. Emergency planning test exercise undertaken in April 26 with SMT/CMT. Review outcomes from post exercise report and implement any required changes
Directorate Re-structure	Re-structure of the Facilities Management and Maintenance department and Waste Management department, specifically the HRC / Cleansing / Garage sections/Refuse	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	Continued implementation of the Directorate Re-structure including transfer of functions from Planning For The Future
Workforce Planning and Service Reviews	Continued implementation of Workforce Plans and Service Reviews.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	Continue to implement, monitor, review and update the Workforce Plans and progress Service Reviews to ensure effective service provision in consultation with Trade Unions. HR to provide monthly Directorate updates on SMT approved recruitments and updated recruitment schedule

Risk 02. Failure to provide, maintain and operate a compliant fleet

Consequence	5		T		R	G	Risk Categories Buildings / Engineering / Environment Financial Quality of Service Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory) Risk Description Failure to provide, maintain and operate a modern, legislatively compliant (Operators Licence) and reliable fleet Potential Root Cause Failure to comply with operators licence. Failure to review, implement and comply with fleet policies and procedures. Failure to implement a vehicle replacement programme Challenge of transitioning to a green fleet. Failure to update insurance on changes to fleet including hire. Delivery times of vehicles due to global supply chain issues Failure to adhere to road speed limits RTA's resulting in vehicles being damaged, increased risk to staff and public and to insurance cover Failure to procure and effectively contract manage appropriate suite of suppliers and services contracts
	4						
	3						
	2						
	1						
		1	2	3	4	5	
Probability							
Consequence Loss of operators license / financial penalties of breaching the operators license. Reputational damage for the Council. Failure to deliver operational services Breach in health and safety. Insurance Claims Risk Owners Sinead Murphy; Conor Sage; Sinead Trainor Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25 Residual Risk Red 20 Target Risk Level Yellow 10							
Last Review 10/09/2026							
Next Review 10/12/2026							
Risk Appetite Risk Averse							

Objectives

Develop and implement key strategies and action plans and to advocate internally and externally to work towards net zer

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Driver training and compliance
- 1. Fleet Management Policy and Procedures.
- 1. Fleet Replacement Programme
- 1. Maintain fleet insurance, monitor and review motor insurance claims
- 1. Meeting PMI schedule for fleet including MOT/PSV
- 1. Sustainability and Environment Procurement Action Plan in place.
- 2. Regular Operator Licence Working Group Meetings and KPI review
- 3. Fleet Management audits and action plans.

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Fleet Management Audits and Action Plans	Implement the recommendations and action plans from the internal and external audits of Fleet Management.	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	Fleet asset management and fuel management internal audits completed in 2024/25. Currently implementing Audits recommendations with majority already implemented.
Fleet Replacement Programme	Continue to implement the 4 year Fleet Replacement Programme.	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	The 4 year vehicle replacement programme is due to complete in 2026/27. Year 4 expenditure approval granted at SPRC in May 2026. A new 4 Year Vehicle Replacement Programme is being finalised. Transition to Green Fleet is underway with procurement of 15 small and medium Electric vans in progress and EV charging infrastructure at the relevant Council facilities nearing completion on site.
Procurement Action Plan	Fleet technology	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	Fleet technology has been included in the digital project roadmap. Discussions are ongoing with JTU's.
Review of Insurance Claims	Review of active insurance claims and claims paid out in last 12 months	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	Provide quarterly report to SMT on insurance claims and actions required to prevent recurrence. Meeting took place with Councils Insurer in August 2026 regarding fleet with respect to drivers behaviours and an action plan has been developed. To be completed by 31/3/27.
Service Review of Garages and resources	Progress the service review of the Garages section.	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	Progress the service review of the Garages section to determine and inform future resource requirements in consultation with Trade Unions

Risk 03. Lack of burial capacity at Council Cemeteries

Consequence	5	T		R	G		Risk Categories Risk Description Potential Root Cause Consequence Risk Owners Gross/Inherent Risk Residual Risk Target Risk Level	Buildings / Engineering / Environment Business operational/reputational Impact on individuals (staff or public) Lack of burial capacity at Cemeteries Existing cemeteries running out of burial space. An essential service not being provided to the public. Reputational damage. Negative impact on local community. Conor Sage Red 20 Amber 15 Green 5			
	4							Last Review 10/09/2026			
	3							Next Review 10/12/2026			
	2							Risk Appetite Risk Averse			
	1										
		1	2	3	4	5					
		Probability									

Objectives

Key Controls Identified

1. Cemetery records management
1. Council burial procedures
2. Ongoing review of cemetery capacity throughout the District

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Digitalisation of burial records	Progress to procurement of a cemetery management system through ITPG	Completed	Conor Sage	31/12/2026	The Council has a legal responsibility to manage burial records and a new cemetery management system has gone live in November 2025. Post project evaluation to be completed November 2026.
Kilbroney Cemetery	Phase 3-5 - Kilbroney Cemetery	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	Business case to be completed for the planning application for Phase 3 - 5 extension to cemetery.
Review of burial provision within District	Plan ahead for the long term provision of cemeteries , burials and cremations.	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	Burial projections scoped out. Stats from 2025 in relation to time remaining in Council Cemeteries : Monkshill – 3 yrs, W'Point - 2.5 yrs, Kilbroney – 6.5 yrs, Struell – 2.5 yrs, Lough Inch – 2 yrs. Procure technical advisor to assist with the process of identifying potential land and sites to meet projected need. Capital project for expansion of Struell Cemetery is in the early stages of procurement. Officers to explore the provision of a crematorium for the District in line with legislative requirements.
Struell Cemetery	Capital project to expand the current capacity of Struell Cemetery	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	Business Case approved. Design Team Consultants have been appointed to complete the required design and tender information.

Risk 04. Failure to comply with relevant statutory and legislative requirements in Council Facilities

Consequence	5		T		R	G	Risk Categories Business operational/reputational Financial Impact on individuals (staff or public) Risk Description Failure to comply with relevant statutory and legislative requirements in Council facilities. Fire Risk Assessments/Legionella/Asbestos/ Electrical Services Potential Root Cause Failure to comply with Council policy and procedures. Failure to undertake and review risk assessments Failure to implement actions plans within required time/frames and control regimes. Consequence Injury/death to staff or public. Damage to the Council reputation. Increased insurance premiums. Breach in legislation and compliance.	Risk Owners Sinead Murphy; Conor Sage Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25 Residual Risk Red 20 Target Risk Level Yellow 10			Last Review 10/09/2026	
	4										Next Review 10/12/2026	
	3										Risk Appetite Risk Averse	
	2											
	1											
		1	2	3	4	5						
Probability												

Objectives

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Asbestos Policy and Management Plan
- 1. Compliant contracts in place
- 1. Fire Safety Policy and Management Plan
- 1. Legionella Policy and Management Plan
- 1. Portable Electrical Appliances Policy and procedure
- 2. Regular reporting to the Estates & Facilities Steering Group, Health and Safety Committee, Audit Committee and SMT
- 3. Internal Audit

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
18th Electrical Testing Codes	Continue to implement tests to achieve fixed wire and emergency light certification.	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	Programme of FWT and remedial works well progressed. Programme of emergency lighting testing/remedial works well progressed.
Asbestos Policy and Management Plan	Continued implementation of the Asbestos Management Plan.	Completed	Conor Sage	22/05/2026	Asbestos Management Surveys are up to date and remedial actions have been completed. Asbestos Policy and Management Plan approved.
Fire Safety	Policy and Management Plan to be updated and implemented	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	Fire Policy has been updated and Management Plan to be reviewed. Central database for monitoring of FRA actions in place. Fire Risk Assessments in progress. Remedial actions not being updated by Facility Managers/Maintenance Section in timely manner. This has been escalated to CMT. Contract in place for water hygiene services. Monitoring in place. Programme of legionella risk assessments has been completed. Remedial works to be undertaken by a mechanical contract which was awarded in April 26. P901 training completed by AD, HoS and Compliance Officer
Legionella Policy and Management Plan	Continued implementation of the Legionella Management Plan.	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	

Risk 05. Failure to deliver an effective maintenance service

Consequence	5					Risk Categories Buildings / Engineering / Environment Impact on individuals (staff or public) Quality of Service Risk Description Failure to develop and implement an effective maintenance service for both grounds and facilities Potential Root Cause Over reliance on reactive maintenance and contractors. Inadequate funding. Lack of inspections and documentation records. Reactive / forward planning split imbalanced Consequence H&S implications. Negative PR for the Council and reputational damage. Closure of buildings and facilities. Legal liabilities. Increased costs. Reactive and inefficient service provision. Failure to progress sustainable solution/option Risk Owners Sinead Murphy; Conor Sage Gross/Inherent Risk Amber 16 Residual Risk Amber 12 Target Risk Level Yellow 8
	4		T	R	G	
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	
Probability						Last Review 10/09/2026 Next Review 10/12/2026 Risk Appetite Risk Averse

Objectives

Deliver sustainable services that protect our natural and built environment, continue to meet statutory duties and fur

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Maintenance team meetings
- 1. Property Maintenance Strategy to be developed
- 2. Estates and Facilities Steering Group meetings
- 3. Internal audit

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Internal audits	Continued implementation in progress of internal audit action plan, updated on Goals System	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	Good progress being made in closing out internal audit action plans
Planned Preventative Maintenance Plan	Suite of maintenance and service contracts to include internal and external	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	Service and maintenance contracts being procured in accordance with procurement action plan. Each contract will specify the required service and planned maintenance requirements
Property Maintenance Plan	Develop and implement the Property Maintenance Strategy to include planned and reactive maintenance.	In Progress	Conor Sage	31/03/2027	Property Maintenance Strategy to be developed. Update of the 3i Maintenance System completed. Estates and Facilities Steering Group meeting regularly to review the delivery of reactive and planned maintenance across Council Estate. £1.5m budget allocated from reserve funding for backlog maintenance. Prioritised list of projects to be agreed at Estates and Facilities Steering Group.

Risk 06. Failure to procure and manage contracts in line with the Council's procurement procedures

Consequence	5		T		R	G	Risk Categories Buildings / Engineering / Environment Financial Impact on individuals (staff or public) Risk Description Failure to procure and manage contracts in line with the Council's procurement procedures. Potential Root Cause Insufficient and inadequate resources within the Directorate to purchase and manage Contracts Procurement Policy and procedures require review and update Lack of experience, training and awareness. Capacity of the Procurement Team to support the Directorate Lack of forward planning and appropriate management controls. Lack of timely reviews of contracts. Lack of ongoing Contract Management
	4						
	3						
	2						
	1						
		1	2	3	4	5	
Probability							Consequence Delay in meeting project deadlines Financial impact Impact on customer satisfaction through delayed service delivery. Risk of litigation. Failure to comply with the corporate Procurement Policy. Managing conflicting demands. Risk Owners Sinead Murphy; Conor Sage; Sinead Trainor Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25 Residual Risk Red 20 Target Risk Level Yellow 10
							Last Review 10/09/2026 Next Review 10/12/2026 Risk Appetite Risk Averse

Objectives

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Approved DAC's in place to cover any out of contract situations.
- 1. Governance and Procurement training delivered to staff (including Contract Management).
- 1. Manage Procurement Schedule to maintain compliance
- 1. Procurement Policy and Procedures
- 1. Sustainability and Environment Procurement Action Plan

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
SE Procurement Action Plan	Resource and implement the SE Procurement Action Plan. Speed of implementation directly related to the level of additional resources.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	Progress on the SE Procurement Action Plan is monitored and reported to the SE Committee and Audit Committee on a regular basis. Collate single contracts schedule, including DACs and expiring contracts to inform ongoing procurement pipeline and contract management.

Risk 7. Failure to effectively defend insurance claims

Consequence	5			T	R	G	Risk Categories Financial Risk Description Failure to effectively defend insurance claims Potential Root Cause Inadequate incident reporting processes across council services Poor quality or delayed evidence gathering (e.g. CCTV, inspections, witness statements) Lack of staff awareness of claims handling procedures Insufficient coordination between departments (e.g. legal, estates, waste, leisure) Weak contract management where third parties are involved Failure to retain key records (inspection logs, maintenance schedules) Delays in notifying insurers due to lack or delay in reporting Consequence Increased cost of claims, settlements, and legal fees Escalation of insurance premiums or reduced cover availability Financial pressure on council budgets and reserves Risk of fraudulent or exaggerated claims being paid Reputational damage and reduced public confidence Reduced ability to challenge repeat or opportunistic claims Reduced competition in the insurance market, resulting in fewer insurers willing to provide cover Risk Owners Sinead Murphy; Senior Management Team; Sinead Trainor Gross/Inherent Risk Red 25 Residual Risk Red 20 Target Risk Level Amber 15
	4						
	3						
	2						
	1						
		1	2	3	4	5	
Probability							Last Review 10/09/2026 Next Review 10/12/2026 Risk Appetite Risk Averse

Objectives

Deliver sustainable services that protect our natural and built environment, continue to meet statutory duties and fur

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Annual insurance renewal process completed, and in-year changes notified (council-wide)
- 1. NMD Accident Reporting and Investigation Policy & Procedure
- 1. NMD Health & Safety Policy and H&S training
- 1. Role of Insurance Officer
- 1. Successful procurement of Insurance Broker
- 1. Use of legal advisors and insurers for claims defence
- 2. Representation at OLWG from Insurance Officer
- 3. Internal Audit

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Quarterly reporting	Accidents and Insurance claims	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	Quarterly reporting of accidents and insurance claims to SMT and corporate health and safety meetings. Quarterly reports on insurance to SMT from Q2 2026/27 Gap analysis by SHEP. Incorporate into management training in S & E Future action plans e.g. targeted training, toolbox talks and initiatives.
Staff Training	Staff training and awareness and identification of issues/gaps by department.	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	
Trend analysis	Review of insurance claims and health and safety accidents to identify trends	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	

Risk 8. Failure to comply with Health and Safety legal requirements

Consequence	5			T	R	G	Risk Categories		Financial	
	4						Risk Description		Failure to comply with H&S legal requirements	
	3						Potential Root Cause		Inadequate or outdated risk assessments and safe systems of work Insufficient management oversight on health and safety Lack of staff training, competence, or supervision Poor communication of health and safety responsibilities across departments Failure to monitor compliance (inspections, audits) Resource constraints impacting implementation of controls Weak contractor management and oversight Inconsistent application of policies across service areas	
	2						Consequence		Serious injury or fatality involving staff, contractors, or the public Enforcement action by HSENI Criminal prosecution and/or fines Increased insurance claims and premiums Service disruption or ceasing of activities Reputational damage and loss of public confidence Increased scrutiny from Elected Members and auditors Reduced workforce due to industrial injury leading to employee absence	
	1						Risk Owners		Sinead Murphy; Senior Management Team; Sinead Trainor	
		1	2	3	4	5	Gross/Inherent Risk		Red 25	Last Review 10/09/2026
Probability							Residual Risk		Red 20	Next Review 10/12/2026
							Target Risk Level		Amber 15	Risk Appetite Risk Averse

Objectives

Deliver sustainable services that protect our natural and built environment, continue to meet statutory duties and fur

Key Controls Identified

- 1. Adequate supervision arrangements
- 1. Competent SHEP section
- 1. Corporate, departmental and e-learning H&S staff training programmes, toolbox talks
- 1. Dedicated resource for S & E operational
- 1. HR policy and procedures
- 1. NMD Health & Safety Policy
- 1. Occupational health support/ Health & Wellbeing services
- 1.NMD Accident Reporting & Investigation Policy & Procedure
- 1.Suitable and sufficient risk assessments and safe systems of work
- 2. Corporate H&S Joint Forum (with TU reps) – quarterly/ Departmental H&S Meetings
- 2. Monthly reports to SMT – RIDDOR
- 3. Audits and compliance monitoring

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Corporate Health and Safety Training Plan	Implementation of Health and Safety Training Plan.	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	Health and Safety training requirements identified by departments. SHEP team organise delivery within budgets.
Health Surveillance	To assess the feasibility of introducing a health surveillance programme for employees.	In Progress	Marina Hughes Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	Health surveillance requirements of Council departments has been captured. Next step will be to produce a report to outline findings and the benefits and costs of implementation.
SHEP Internal Audit Plan	Implementation of Internal Audit Plan across high risk activities.	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	Fleet audit complete. Refuse and Cleansing audit nearly concluded. Grounds Maintenance audit planned for Q3 and Q4 of 2026/27
Stress and well-being survey and action plan	Undertake confidential Stress and well-being surveys to assess well-being, identify issues and gather feedback. Findings will inform an action plan.	In Progress	Marina Hughes Sinead Trainor	31/03/2027	AAB procured to undertake a stress and well-being survey which is currently live. Focus groups will occur in November 2026.



Commercial Delivery Group

Major IT Projects

Lesson Learned Report

July 2026

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Introduction

Lessons learned are a fundamental part of effective programme and project management. Lessons (both positive and negative) should be collected, recorded, written up and communicated as part of the formal closure process.

Lessons learned are a useful means of sharing information from previous programmes and projects with others. Lessons are usually presented in the form of recommendations on the way forward or highlighting where potential improvements or modifications could be applied.

The purpose of recording and sharing lessons learned includes:

- avoiding making the same mistakes as others
- improving on current delivery standards by adopting proven good practice
- responding to changes in the programme and project management environment including new government priorities, initiatives and strategies
- contributing to organisational growth and maturity by effecting long term improvements in the way an organisation embeds and shares programme and project management best practice

This document brings together key lessons learned from major IT Projects across seven themes that collectively underpin successful delivery in complex corporate environments. These themes reflect common challenges encountered and provide practical guidance to strengthen future performance.

Each theme has been developed to highlight what works well, where risks typically arise, and how organisations can improve consistency, control and value realisation.

Using This Guidance

This document is intended to:

- Provide practical insights based on real delivery experience
- Support consistent approaches across programmes and projects
- Highlight risks and proven mitigation strategies
- Enable improved decision-making and delivery outcomes
- Each section explores the theme in more detail, outlining key lessons, common pitfalls, and recommended best practices.

Background

The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) carried out a review of ‘Major IT projects in Northern Ireland’, publishing their findings in July 2025¹. As a result, **Recommendation 10** from the report states;

‘The NICS Board should take the lead in identifying recurrent issues impacting on the delivery of major IT projects and the lessons to be learned. A clear, timebound action plan to address these issues must be developed.’

Following this, Commercial Delivery Group (CDG) issued a request to 29 live programmes and projects across multiple Northern Ireland Government Departments seeking the submission of lessons learned. A response rate of 79% was achieved. The table below identifies those programmes and projects that provided a return.

DAERA NIFAIS
DAERA ISLAND Implementation of Laboratory Information Systems across DAERA/AFBI
DAERA SPS/Windsor Framework - EU Exit (IT Systems)
DAERA CAP (IT Systems)
DE EdIS (Education information Solutions Programme)
DE EA One - Oracle Integrated System
DoF LPS NOVA Programme: Valuation Services Project
DoF LPS NOVA Programme: Land Registration Project
DoF LPS NOVA Programme: Revenues & Benefits Project
DoF Integr8 Programme
DoF Digital NI Contact Centre Project
DoF

¹ [Major IT Projects in NI 0.pdf](#)

Civil Service Pensions Systems Project
DoH Northern Ireland Picture Archiving and Communication System
DoH Encompass
DoH Core Laboratory Information Management System
DfI Planning IT System
DfI Translink Future Ticketing System
DfI NI Water Telecoms Managed Service Contract Tender
DfI NI Water Customer Contact & Billing Contract Renewal
DfI NI Water Future Corporate Systems
DoJ Causeway
DoJ Themis

7 Themes

The successful implementation of new IT systems and IT enabled programmes and projects present great opportunities to improve services but there are recurring challenges and difficulties effecting the delivery of these projects. Based on the lessons learned information shared by 22 projects recurrent issues have been collated and the following seven key themes identified.

Each of 7 themes is supported by identification of the key recurrent issue, symptoms, root cause, lessons learned and future mitigating actions.



Governance,
Decision-Making
& Programme Control



Stakeholder
Engagement,
Communication
& Collaboration



Planning, Scope
& Delivery
Management



Commercial,
Procurement &
Supplier Management



Resourcing, Skills
& Capacity



Business Readiness,
Change & Benefits
Realisation



Data, Technology
& Integration

1) Governance, Decision-Making & Programme Control

Strong governance frameworks ensure that decisions are timely, transparent, and aligned to strategic objectives. Clear escalation routes, defined roles, and effective programme controls are essential to maintaining oversight and managing risk.



Recurrent issue: Weak or slow decision-making and ownership

Symptoms:

- Delays in key decisions impacting delivery timelines
- Lack of clarity on who has authority to make decisions
- Decisions revisited or overturned due to poor ownership
- Escalations not resolved in a timely manner
- Delivery teams blocked or operating with uncertainty

Root cause: Decision-making authority and accountability are not clearly defined or consistently applied. Governance structures may exist but are not functioning effectively, leading to delays, ambiguity, and lack of ownership at critical points in delivery.

Lessons Learned:

- Clear decision rights and accountability are essential for pace and progress
- Empowered leadership enables faster and more effective delivery
- Governance should enable, not hinder, decision-making
- Timely escalation and resolution are critical to maintaining momentum
- Consistent ownership improves accountability and delivery confidence

Guiding Principle: 'Enable timely, accountable decision-making with clear ownership to maintain momentum and delivery confidence.'

Mitigation Actions/Checklist:

- Define clear decision-making roles, responsibilities, and authority levels
Owner: Project Manager (approved by SRO)
When: Start-up / Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Establish governance structures that support timely decisions
Owner: SRO
When: Start-up (designed) Initiation (formally approved) with ongoing responsibility
- Clarify escalation routes and decision thresholds
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Ensure decision-makers are empowered and available when needed
Owner: SRO
When: Start-up and Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Maintain clear records of decisions and ownership
Owner: PMO (or Project Manager where no PMO function exists)
When: Initiation (set up tools) with ongoing responsibility
- Monitor decision timelines and address delays proactively
Owner: Project Manager
When: Delivery (early) with ongoing responsibility
- Promote accountability for outcomes, not just decisions
Owner: SRO
When: Start-up (set tone) with ongoing responsibility
- Align governance forums with delivery needs and cadence
Owner: Project Manager (endorsed by SRO)
When: Initiation (initial design) with ongoing responsibility
- Foster a culture of ownership, accountability, and action
Owner: SRO
When: Start up (culture setting) with ongoing responsibility

Summary

Timely and accountable decision-making is essential to successful delivery. By clarifying ownership and strengthening governance, organisations can remove blockers, maintain momentum, and deliver with greater confidence and control.

Recurrent issue: Weak risk management and unrealistic optimism

Symptoms:

- Risks identified late or not actively managed
- Overly optimistic timelines and delivery forecasts
- Decisions delayed or not evidence-based
- Issues escalated too late to mitigate effectively
- Lack of clear accountability for managing risks and controls

Root cause: Governance structures and programme controls are either insufficiently defined or not effectively applied. There is often a culture of optimism bias, with risks underestimated and challenges not fully acknowledged, resulting in poor decision-making and limited proactive management.

Lessons Learned:

- Realistic and evidence-based planning improves delivery confidence
- Active and transparent risk management is critical throughout the lifecycle
- Clear governance structures enable timely and effective decisions
- Encouraging constructive challenge reduces optimism bias
- Strong programme controls support early intervention and course correction

Guiding Principle: ‘Enable transparent, evidence-based decision-making and proactively manage risks to maintain control and deliver with confidence.’

Mitigation Actions/Checklist:

- Establish clear governance structures with defined roles and responsibilities
Owner: SRO / Project Manager
When: Start-up (design) → Initiation (formal approval) with ongoing responsibility
- Implement robust risk and issue management processes
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (define framework, Tools, tolerances) with ongoing responsibility
- Regularly review and update risk registers with clear ownership
Owner: Project Manager (supported by Risk Owners)
When: Initiation (set ownership & cadence) with ongoing responsibility
- Use data and evidence to inform planning, forecasting, and decision-making
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (baseline plans, define data sources) with ongoing responsibility
- Encourage a culture of constructive challenge and realism
Owner: SRO
When: Start up (set tone and expectations) with ongoing responsibility
- Set clear escalation routes and thresholds for intervention
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (define tolerances & escalation paths) with ongoing responsibility
- Monitor delivery progress through structured programme controls
Owner: Project Manager (supported by PMO)
When: Initiation (design controls & KPIs) with ongoing responsibility
- Conduct regular governance forums and decision reviews
Owner: Project Manager (facilitation) / Project Board (governance and decisions)
When: Initiation (agree cadence & terms of reference) with ongoing responsibility
- Adjust plans proactively in response to emerging risks and insights
Owner: Project Manager
When: Delivery (from early stages onward) with ongoing responsibility

Summary

Effective governance, realistic decision-making, and strong programme control are essential to managing uncertainty and delivering successfully. By addressing optimism bias and strengthening risk management, organisations can improve resilience, maintain control, and achieve more predictable outcomes.

2) Stakeholder Engagement, Communication & Collaboration

Successful delivery depends on early and continuous engagement with stakeholders. Open communication, shared understanding, and collaborative ways of working help build trust and avoid misalignment.



Recurrent issue: Fragmented stakeholder engagement

Symptoms:

- Misaligned expectations across stakeholder groups
- Late or reactive stakeholder input
- Communication breakdowns and inconsistent messaging
- Duplication of effort or missed dependencies
- Stakeholder resistance due to lack of involvement

Root cause: Stakeholders are engaged too late or inconsistently, and collaboration is not structured or sustained.

Lessons Learned:

- Early identification and mapping of all stakeholders is critical
- Regular, structured engagement avoids last-minute challenges
- Clear communication channels and governance improve alignment
- Building relationships and trust enhances collaboration and responsiveness
- Stakeholder expectations must be actively managed throughout the project lifecycle

Guiding Principle: ‘Engage early, communicate consistently, and collaborate continuously to build alignment, trust, and shared ownership.’

Mitigation Actions/Checklist:

- Identify and map stakeholders at project initiation (influence vs interest)
Owner: Project Manager
When: Start-up → early Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Develop and maintain a stakeholder engagement plan
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (baseline plan) with ongoing responsibility
- Establish clear communication channels and protocols
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Schedule regular updates, workshops, and touchpoints
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (define cadence) with ongoing responsibility
- Ensure stakeholder roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
Owner: Project Manager (supported by SRO for senior stakeholders)
When: Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Capture and track stakeholder feedback and actions
Owner: PMO / Project Manager
When: Initiation (set up logs/tools) with ongoing responsibility
- Use collaborative tools to enable transparency and shared visibility
Owner: PMO
When: Initiation (tool selection & setup) with ongoing responsibility
- Escalate issues early where misalignment or risks emerge
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation onwards with ongoing responsibility
- Review and adapt engagement approach throughout the lifecycle
Owner: Project Manager
When: Delivery (regular intervals, e.g. monthly / stage gates) with ongoing responsibility

Summary

Effective stakeholder engagement is not a one-off activity but a continuous process. Proactive, structured communication and collaboration ensure alignment, reduce risk, and support successful delivery outcomes.

3) Planning, Scope & Delivery Management

Robust planning and clear scope definition provide the foundation for effective execution. Managing scope changes, maintaining realistic timelines, and tracking delivery progress are critical to achieving outcomes.



Planning, Scope & Delivery Management

Recurrent issue: Insufficient upfront planning and discovery

Symptoms:

- Scope ambiguity and frequent late changes
- Underestimated complexity and hidden dependencies
- Unrealistic timelines and delivery plans
- Reactive rather than proactive delivery management

Root cause: Inadequate early-stage investment in discovery, design and shaping results in poor foundations for delivery.

Lessons Learned:

- Investing time upfront reduces risk and rework later
- Clear and agreed scope is essential before progressing to delivery
- Realistic planning must account for complexity, dependencies, and capacity
- Delivery confidence improves when plans are evidence-based and iteratively refined
- Strong governance supports effective scope and change control

Guiding Principle: ‘Invest early in understanding and defining scope to enable realistic planning and disciplined delivery.’

Mitigation Actions/Checklist:

- Conduct structured discovery and requirements gathering before delivery starts
Owner: Project Manager
When: Start-up → early Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Clearly define and document scope, assumptions, and boundaries
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (baseline definition) with ongoing responsibility
- Validate scope and approach with key stakeholders
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (before baseline approval) with ongoing responsibility
- Develop realistic, evidence-based plans with appropriate contingencies
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (planning & baselining) with ongoing responsibility
- Identify dependencies, risks, and constraints early
Owner: Project Manager
When: Start-up → Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Establish clear change control processes for managing scope creep
Owner: Project Manager (supported by PMO)
When: Initiation (design and implement process) with ongoing responsibility
- Break delivery into manageable phases or milestones
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (planning stage/tranches) with ongoing responsibility
- Monitor progress regularly against plan and adjust as needed
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (following baseline approval) with ongoing responsibility
- Maintain strong governance and decision-making structures
Owner: SRO / Project Board
When: Start-up (Define governance intent) / Initiation (Formalise structure and cadence) with ongoing responsibility

Summary

Effective planning and scope management set the foundation for successful delivery. By investing in early discovery and maintaining disciplined control of scope and timelines, organisations can reduce risk, improve predictability, and achieve better outcomes.

4) Commercial, Procurement & Supplier Management

Well-structured commercial arrangements and proactive supplier management enable value for money and reduce delivery risk. Strong relationships, clear expectations, and performance monitoring are key.



Commercial, Procurement & Supplier Management

Recurrent issue: Commercial and procurement misalignment

Symptoms:

- Procurement processes that do not reflect delivery needs or timelines
- Contracts that lack clarity on outcomes, deliverables, or performance measures
- Misaligned expectations between client and suppliers
- Delays in procurement impacting delivery schedules
- Poor supplier performance management and limited accountability

Root cause: Commercial strategy, procurement activity, and delivery objectives are not sufficiently aligned from the outset. There is often limited collaboration between commercial, procurement, and delivery teams, leading to contracts and supplier arrangements that do not fully support intended outcomes.

Lessons Learned:

- Early alignment between commercial, procurement, and delivery teams is critical
- Clearly defined outcomes and success measures must be embedded in contracts
- Procurement approaches should be proportionate and aligned to delivery complexity
- Strong supplier relationships improve performance and responsiveness
- Ongoing supplier management is essential, not just contract award

Guiding Principle: ‘Align commercial strategy, procurement processes, and supplier management to enable value, clarity, and successful delivery outcomes.’

Mitigation Actions/Checklist:

- Engage commercial, procurement, and delivery stakeholders early and collaboratively
Owner: Project Manager
When: Start-up → early Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Define clear outcomes, deliverables, and performance measures upfront
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Select procurement routes that align with project complexity and timelines
Owner: Commercial / Procurement Lead
When: Initiation (procurement strategy stage) with ongoing responsibilities
- Ensure contracts are outcome-focused, clear, and manageable
Owner: Commercial / Procurement Lead (with Project Manager input)
When: Initiation (contract design and award) with ongoing responsibilities
- Establish strong governance for supplier selection and evaluation
Owner: Commercial / Procurement Lead
When: Initiation (procurement execution) with ongoing responsibilities
- Implement regular supplier performance reviews and relationship management
Owner: Project Manager (supported by Commercial/Contract Manager)
When: Early Delivery (once supplier onboarded) with ongoing responsibilities
- Monitor contract delivery against agreed KPIs and milestones
Owner: Project Manager (supported by Commercial/Contract Manager)
When: Delivery (from contract mobilisation onward) with ongoing responsibilities
- Address issues and underperformance proactively and early
Owner: Project Manager
When: Delivery (as soon as issues arise) with ongoing responsibilities
- Build collaborative, transparent relationships with suppliers
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (set expectations) → Delivery (embed behaviours) with ongoing responsibilities

Summary

Strong alignment between commercial strategy, procurement processes, and supplier management is critical to achieving value and successful delivery. By taking a joined-up, proactive approach, organisations can reduce risk, improve supplier performance, and ensure that commercial arrangements fully support intended outcomes.

5) Resourcing, Skills & Capacity

Access to the right skills at the right time is fundamental. Effective workforce planning, capability development, and capacity management ensure that work progresses efficiently and sustainably.



Recurrent issue: Insufficient skills, capacity and continuity

Symptoms:

- Resource gaps or over-reliance on key individuals
- Skills mismatches impacting quality and pace of delivery
- High turnover leading to loss of knowledge and momentum
- Overstretched teams resulting in burnout or reduced performance
- Delays caused by onboarding or upskilling requirements

Root cause: Resourcing is not adequately planned or aligned to delivery needs, with insufficient focus on required skills, capacity, and long-term continuity.

Lessons Learned:

- Early and realistic workforce planning is essential
- Capability requirements should be clearly defined from the outset
- Continuity of key roles supports stability and delivery confidence
- Investing in skills development reduces dependency on external support
- Knowledge management is critical to maintaining momentum

Guiding Principle: ‘Plan, build, and sustain the right capability to ensure consistent, high-quality delivery.’

Mitigation Actions/Checklist:

- Define required roles, skills, and capacity at the planning stage
Owner: Project Manager
When: Start-up → Initiation (planning phase) with ongoing responsibility
- Align resourcing strategy with delivery timelines and complexity
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (planning & baselining) with ongoing responsibility
- Secure key roles early and minimise reliance on single points of failure
Owner: Project Manager
When: Start-up → early Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Implement onboarding and knowledge transfer processes
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (define approach) → Delivery (apply as resources onboard) with ongoing responsibility
- Monitor team capacity and adjust resourcing proactively
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation onwards with ongoing responsibility
- Invest in training, development, and upskilling
Owner: Project Manager (supported by Line Managers/HR where applicable)
When: Initiation (identify needs) → Delivery (implement) with ongoing responsibility
- Establish succession and continuity plans for critical roles
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Use a blend of internal and external resources where appropriate
Owner: Project Manager
When: Initiation (resource strategy definition) with ongoing responsibility
- Maintain documentation to preserve organisational knowledge
Owner: Project Manager (supported by PMO)
When: Initiation (set standards/tools) with ongoing responsibility

Summary

Strong resourcing, capability, and continuity are fundamental to successful delivery. By proactively planning and managing workforce needs, organisations can reduce risk, maintain momentum, and deliver consistently high-quality outcomes.

6) Business Readiness, Change & Benefits Realisation

Ensuring the organisation is prepared to adopt change and realise intended benefits is critical to achieving successful outcomes. Effective change management, clear ownership, and a focus on embedding new ways of working enable sustainable impact beyond delivery.



Recurrent issue: Lack of business readiness and change ownership

Symptoms:

- Low user adoption of new systems or processes
- Resistance to change or lack of engagement from business areas
- Unclear ownership for change activities and outcomes
- Benefits not tracked, realised, or sustained
- Operational disruption at go-live due to poor preparation

Root cause: Insufficient focus on business readiness and change management, with unclear accountability for driving and embedding change. Benefits realisation is often treated as a secondary activity rather than an integral part of delivery.

Lessons Learned:

- Change management must be embedded from the outset, not added later
- Clear ownership in the business is essential for adoption and success
- Early engagement supports readiness and reduces resistance
- Benefits should be clearly defined, measurable, and actively managed
- Ongoing support and reinforcement are required to sustain change

Guiding Principle: ‘Prepare, support, and empower the business to own and sustain change, ensuring intended benefits are realised.’

Mitigation Actions/Checklist:

- Define clear business ownership and accountability for change and benefits
Owner: SRO
When: Start-up → Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Develop and implement a structured change management plan
Owner: Business Change Manager (supported by Project Manager)
When: Initiation (develop & baseline) with ongoing responsibility
- Engage users early through communication, training, and involvement
Owner: Business Change Manager (supported by Project Manager)
When: Initiation (early engagement begins) → Delivery (expand & deepen) with ongoing responsibility
- Assess and monitor business readiness throughout the lifecycle
Owner: Business Change Manager (supported by Project Manager)
When: Initiation (define approach & criteria with ongoing responsibility)
- Clearly define expected benefits, success measures, and timelines
Owner: SRO
When: Start-up → Initiation (business case stage) with ongoing responsibility
- Establish processes to track and report on benefits realisation
Owner: SRO (supported by PMO)
When: Initiation (design framework and measures) with ongoing responsibility
- Provide training and support to enable adoption
Owner: Business Change Manager / Project Manager
When: Initiation (training needs analysis and planning) → Delivery (implementation) with ongoing responsibility
- Plan for transition to business-as-usual and ongoing support
Owner: Project Manager / Business Owner
When: Delivery (planning begins early, finalised pre-go-live) with ongoing responsibility
- Reinforce and embed new ways of working post-implementation
Owner: Business Owner
When: Post-Implementation (Closure → BAU) with ongoing responsibility

Summary

Successful delivery is only achieved when change is adopted and benefits are realised. By prioritising business readiness, clear ownership, and structured change management, organisations can maximise impact and ensure sustainable outcomes.

7) Data, Technology & Integration

Strong data and technology foundations are critical to enabling effective delivery, integration, and scalability. Robust architecture, reliable systems, and high-quality data ensure that solutions are sustainable, secure, and capable of supporting organisational needs over time.



**Data, Technology
& Integration**

Recurrent issue: Data and technical foundations underestimated

Symptoms:

- Unforeseen technical challenges emerging during delivery
- Poor data quality impacting outputs and decision-making
- Systems not fit for purpose or unable to scale
- Delays due to rework of technical design or data structures
- Increased reliance on manual workarounds

Root cause: The complexity and importance of data and technical foundations are underestimated during planning and early design phases. Insufficient investment in architecture, data modelling, and technical assurance leads to weak foundations that impact delivery and long-term sustainability.

Lessons Learned:

- Early investment in technical architecture reduces downstream risk
- Data quality and structure must be treated as critical design elements
- Technical feasibility should be validated before committing to delivery plans
- Strong collaboration between business and technical teams improves outcomes
- Ongoing technical assurance helps maintain quality and alignment

Guiding Principle: ‘Invest early in strong data and technical foundations to enable resilient, scalable, and sustainable delivery.’

Mitigation Actions/Checklist:

- Define and validate technical architecture at the outset
Owner: Technical Architect (supported by Project Manager)
When: Start-up → early Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Undertake data assessment, cleansing, and modelling early
Owner: Data Lead / Technical Team
When: Start-up → Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Engage technical experts in planning and design phases
Owner: Project Manager
When: Start-up → Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Conduct feasibility assessments and proof-of-concepts where needed
Owner: Technical Architect (supported by Project Manager)
When: Initiation (before full delivery commitment) with ongoing responsibility
- Ensure systems are scalable, secure, and aligned with standards
Owner: Technical Architect (supported by Project Manager)
When: Initiation (design) with ongoing responsibility
- Build in technical assurance and review checkpoints
Owner: Project Manager (supported by PMO and Technical Architect)
When: Initiation (define checkpoints) with ongoing responsibility
- Prioritise data quality and governance throughout delivery
Owner: Data Lead (supported by Project Manager & PMO)
When: Initiation (define standards and ownership) with ongoing responsibility
- Align technology choices with long-term organisational strategy
Owner: SRO (supported by Enterprise Architect/Technical Architect where applicable)
When: Start-up → Initiation with ongoing responsibility
- Monitor and address technical risks proactively
Owner: Project Manager
When: Start-up → Initiation (identify & baseline risks) with ongoing responsibility

Summary

Underestimating data and technical foundations can significantly impact delivery success. By investing early in robust architecture and data design, organisations can reduce risk, improve resilience, and enable sustainable, high-quality outcomes.

Conclusion

This report highlights that the successful delivery of major IT projects is not dependent on a single factor, but on the consistent application of strong governance, early and sustained stakeholder engagement, robust planning, aligned commercial strategies, and the right skills and capacity.

Across all seven themes, a clear message emerges: early investment in foundations, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and a proactive, evidence-based approach to decision-making are critical to reducing risk and improving outcomes.

Organisations that embed these lessons into their delivery approaches, while fostering collaboration, accountability, and continuous learning will be better positioned to manage complexity, adapt to change, and realise the full value of their investments.

Applying the lessons learned and mitigating actions outlined in this document consistently will support future programmes and projects to achieve greater confidence, predictability, and long-term success.



National Fraud Initiative in NI 2026-27: Instructions

Date of Issue
13/08/2026

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Introduction

1. The Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG), head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO), has statutory powers to conduct data matching exercises for the purpose of assisting in the prevention and detection of fraud. The powers are contained in the Serious Crime Act 2007, which adds Articles 4a to 4h to the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.
2. The Serious Crime Act imposes a regulatory regime alongside existing fair processing and other compliance requirements of data protection legislation. Any person or body conducting or participating in the C&AG's data matching exercises must, by law, have regard to a statutory Code of Data Matching Practice.
3. Data matching involves comparing sets of data, such as the payroll or benefits records of a body, against other records held by the same or another body to see how far they match. This allows potentially fraudulent claims and payments to be identified.
4. The next data matching exercise under the C&AG's powers will be undertaken in 2026-27, as part of the National Fraud Initiative (NFI). As in previous NFI exercises, the Public Sector Fraud Authority (PSFA) will carry out the key aspects of the exercise on behalf of the C&AG, including the collection and processing of data.
5. The data obtained for the 2026-27 exercise will be matched on a cross-jurisdictional basis across the UK.

Distribution of Matches

6. Once the data matching process is completed, the output will be available to participating organisations, for consideration and investigation, via the secure NFI web-based application. Responsibility for investigating matches will rest with the participating organisations. **Organisations are not expected to investigate all matches but should use a risk-based approach to decide on how many, and which, matches to investigate.**
7. The data matching output provided by the PSFA indicates the priority reports and higher risk data matches within each report. It is important to note that the matches do not necessarily indicate fraud, but they highlight an inconsistency which may be worthy of further investigation.

Audit

8. The C&AG and local government auditor will use the output from the NFI exercise to help them assess the arrangements that the bodies they audit have in place to prevent and detect fraud.

9. Information on the role of the C&AG and the local government auditor can be found at www.niauditoffice.gov.uk.

Statutory framework

10. The C&AG conducts data matching exercises under statutory powers in the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2007.
11. The legislation requires the C&AG to prepare a code of practice to govern the data matching exercises, and to consult over it before approving and laying it before the Assembly. The original Code was laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly in July 2008. The current Code, taking account of the transfer of the NFI to the Cabinet Office and the provisions of the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), was laid in November 2018, following consultation with key stakeholders, including the Information Commissioner's Office. The Code can be viewed at [National Fraud Initiative | Northern Ireland Audit Office](#).
12. Under the legislation, the C&AG may carry out data matching exercises for the purpose of assisting in the prevention and detection of fraud, as part of an audit or otherwise. The C&AG may require certain bodies to provide data for a data matching exercise. These are bodies whose accounts are required to be audited by:
 - the C&AG, other than any body whose accounts are required to be audited by virtue of section 55 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which includes North/South Implementation bodies audited jointly by the C&AG and the Irish Comptroller and Auditor General; and
 - a local government auditor.

Therefore central government bodies (that is Northern Ireland departments, executive agencies, police and justice bodies, non-departmental public bodies and health and social care bodies) and local government bodies (district councils) must participate if required.

13. Other bodies may participate in the data matching exercises on a voluntary basis where the C&AG considers it appropriate. The requirements of data protection legislation and the GDPR will apply.
14. The C&AG may disclose the results of a data matching exercise to bodies that have provided the data. The C&AG may also disclose both data provided for data matching and the results of data matching to the Cabinet Office, the Auditor General for Wales, the Auditor General for Scotland, the Accounts Commission for Scotland and Audit Scotland, for the purposes of preventing and detecting fraud. This is an important aspect of the legislation as it enables cross jurisdictional data matching.

15. The processing of data by the C&AG in a data matching exercise is carried out with statutory authority. It does not require the consent of the individuals concerned to satisfy data protection legislation.

Privacy Notices

16. Under data protection legislation and the GDPR, NFI participants must tell individuals that their data will be processed. This information is provided by way of a Privacy Notice.
17. Participants should, as far as is practicable and unless an exemption from the fair processing requirement applies, provide or make readily available, privacy notices to the individuals about whom they are sharing information. The privacy notice should:
 - clearly explain that their data may be disclosed for the purpose of preventing and detecting fraud;
 - include details of the legal basis on which the data controller relies for the processing;
 - in accordance with the Information Commissioner's guidance, specify with whom the data will be shared; and
 - contain details of how individuals can find out more information about the processing in question.
18. For more information on privacy notices, participants should refer to the Information Commissioner's guidance at <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/accountability-framework/transparency/>
19. The Comptroller and Auditor General's full text privacy notice for the National Fraud Initiative is available on the NIAO's website at <https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/national-fraud-initiative> . It includes an explanation of the legal basis for the C&AG's data matching exercises.
20. The Key Contact for each participating organisation must submit a declaration via the [secure NFI web application](#) confirming that they have complied with Privacy Notice requirements.

Contact nominations and responsibilities

Senior Responsible Officer role

21. The director of finance, or equivalent senior named officer, will act as '**Senior Responsible Officer**' (SRO) for the NFI. The SRO is responsible for ensuring the participating organisation meets its statutory requirements. The SRO should:
 - nominate a **Key Contact**;
 - ensure the Key Contact has access to the matches via the [secure NFI web application](#) when they become available; and
 - ensure that the Key Contact fulfils all privacy notice requirements.

Key Contact role

22. The **Key Contact** is responsible for:
 - fulfilling the organisation's privacy notice requirements. The Key Contact should be in direct communication with their organisation's data protection officer or equivalent;
 - ensuring that the data formats guidance and data specifications are adhered to;
 - nominating appropriate users to upload data submissions, investigate the matches and act as point of contact for other bodies about a match ('preferred dataset contact');
 - co-ordinating and monitoring the overall exercise; and
 - ensuring that outcomes from the investigation of matches are recorded on the [secure NFI web application](#) promptly and accurately.
23. In small organisations, one person may fulfil the Key Contact, data submission, dataset contact and investigation roles.

Data submission role

24. The user responsible for the submission of the data should ensure that data:
 - meets the specifications (see Appendix 1);
 - contains a header row;
 - is in the correct format (see Appendix 3);
 - is submitted via the data file upload (DFU) facility; and
 - is submitted by the required deadline (see timetable).

Investigation role

25. The Key Contact will set up a user or number of users with access to the NFI web application so that they can review and investigate the matches. The users may also be responsible for responding to enquiries from other matched bodies if the Key Contact delegates this role.

26. Once the data matching process for each exercise is completed, the output will be available to the relevant participating body via the [secure NFI web application](#). Participating bodies are then responsible for reviewing and investigating matches as appropriate.
27. The [secure NFI web application](#) contains embedded guidance with the data matching output. It is essential that users follow this guidance as it helps with prioritising reports and the matches within them.

Data requirements

28. The data requirements for the 2026-27 data matching exercise are set out in Table 1, with the corresponding data specifications set out in Appendix 1. Points to note are:
 - The requirements of the Code of Data Matching Practice of the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland in relation to privacy notices should be adhered to. In addition, see paragraphs 16 to 20 above. Liaise with your own Data Protection Officer if you require any clarification.
 - The Data Submission section (see page 10) provides details on how to upload data securely. This is the only acceptable method.
 - For bodies whose payroll is administered through HR Connect, if you are NOT an NICS department, you must request a file of data from HR Connect administrators in line with the payroll data specification and upload it directly to the NFI web application. For NICS departments, HR Connect will provide a payroll file to NICS HR who will upload the data on behalf of all NICS departments.
 - For bodies whose creditors are administered through Account NI, each individual body must request from Account NI a file of data in line with the creditors' data specifications (standing data and payments history). Bodies will then upload their creditors' datasets directly to the NFI web application.
 - In cases where a provider submits data (e.g. payroll) direct to the NFI web application on behalf of a body, it is the body's responsibility to ensure that the provider receives full and timely instructions about this requirement and that employees are notified in line with the fair processing requirements.

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Table 1: Data requirements 2026-27

Mandatory Participants	Datasets Required
All mandatory participants (see Appendix 2)	- Payroll - Trade creditors' payment history - Trade creditors' standing data - Pensions (through relevant pension paying authority)¹
The following bodies must also submit these <u>additional</u> datasets:	
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	- Housing benefit claimants - Housing tenants - Right to Buy - Social housing waiting list
Department of Finance	- Rates - Lone Pensioner Allowance (LPA) data - Electoral register
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust Northern Health & Social Care Trust South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust Southern Health & Social Care Trust Western Health & Social Care Trust	Private supported care home residents
Department for Infrastructure	- Blue badges - Taxi driver licences
Department for Communities	State pension (to facilitate LPA data match)
Voluntary Participants	Datasets Required
Northern Ireland Audit Office	- Payroll - Trade creditors' payment history - Trade creditors' standing data
NI Water	- Payroll - Trade creditors' payment history - Trade creditors' standing data
Translink	- Payroll - Concessionary travel passes - Small pension fund
Victims and Survivors Service	- Payroll - Trade creditors' payment history - Trade creditors' standing data

¹ NI Civil Service Pensions, NI Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee, Teachers' Pensions, Health Pensions, NI Fire and Rescue Pensions and Assembly Pensions

Timetable

29. The timetable, from launch of the exercise and collection of data through to distribution of matches, is set out in Table 2 and also available on [NFI website](#).

Table 2: 2026-27 timetable

Activity	Who	How	Timing
Confirm contact details for the 2026-27 exercise	Senior Responsible Officer / Key Contact	Changes should be notified via email, as and when they arise, to: nficoordinator@niauditoffice.gov.uk and helpdesk@nfi.gov.uk	Updating of contact details is a continuous process. Changes should be notified as and when they arise
2026-27 web application becomes available	NFI Team (PSFA)	The link to the web application is https://www.nfi.gov.uk/ .	Web application for 2026-27 will be available from Friday 3 July 2026
Check the list of expected data sets	NFI Key Contact	Key Contacts should log into the 2026-27 web application Data File Upload (DFU), check that the list of expected datasets is accurate and advise any changes to the NFI Coordinator by. (nficoordinator@niauditoffice.gov.uk)	Between Monday 3 August and Friday 28 August 2026
Issue the FINAL data specifications for each data set	NFI Team (PSFA)	Final data specifications are available on the NFI GOV.UK web page	By 30 June 2026
Issue NFI Instructions to bodies participating in NFI 2026-27	NFI Coordinator (NIAO)	NIAO will email Instructions, including final data specifications, to the Senior Responsible Officer in all participating organisations (and copy to the Key Contact for information). A copy will be on the NIAO website at https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/national-fraud-initiative .	From Monday 10 th August 2026
Ensure the person uploading data has a web application account	NFI Key Contact	Key Contacts should ensure the person(s) responsible for uploading data has a user account on the web application.	By Friday 28 August 2026, and as and when future changes occur
Complete the 26-27 privacy notice compliance	NFI Key Contact	Key Contacts should ensure the privacy notice compliance declaration is completed.	By Friday 28 August 2026

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Activity	Who	How	Timing
declaration in the web application			
Extract data from systems in accordance with the data specifications and upload data to the NFI web application	NFI Key Contact / User (data upload)	Key Contacts should ensure that data is extracted from systems as at 30 September 2026 (unless otherwise stated in the data specification) and uploaded to the 2026-27 web application via the data file upload (DFU) facility as soon as quality checks have been completed.	Data must be uploaded between Wednesday 30 September 2026* and Wednesday 21 October 2026 ***
Cut-off for the main NFI 2026-27 data submission	NFI Key Contact / Senior Responsible Officer	If data is not received and processed by close of business on Wednesday 21 October 2026 it may be classed as late and a failure to fully meet your statutory duty**	5pm on Wednesday 21 October 2026***
Set up or confirm accounts for those who will be reviewing matches	NFI Key Contact	Key Contacts should ensure user accounts are set up on the web application. Users responsible for reviewing matches can access the online Help menu in preparation for the release.	By Tuesday 1 December 2026 and as and when future changes occur
2026-27 matches available	NFI Team (PSFA)	The PSFA NFI Team will send an email to Senior Responsible Officers and Key Contacts, informing them that the matches are available.	From Friday 18 th December 2026****

* A series of reminders will be issued to Key Contacts from Thursday 8 October 2026. If data has not been received, or we have not been notified of a delay, by 14 October 2026 reminders will be copied to Senior Responsible Officers i.e. 2 weeks after the submission date.

** Under Articles 4A to 4G of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

*** Failure to submit all of your required data promptly and of acceptable quality may incur additional fees and result in some datasets being excluded from the matching process for the 2026/27 results release. Data should still be submitted for a later supplementary match release.

**** There may be subsequent match releases should data not be provided by the required deadline.

Submission of data

30. Before data is extracted from local systems, it is essential that the guidance on data upload to the NFI secure website is taken into account. Information is included at the link below on how to upload data to the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) and how to format the data correctly to avoid issues. This should be read thoroughly in advance of data submission.
 - [Uploading data to the National Fraud Initiative](#)
31. As part of our ongoing commitment to keep your data secure, in line with good practice when handling personal data, you are required to password protect each dataset once extracted from the relevant systems. The document [Protect Yourself Online](#) provides guidance on using the NFI secure web application.
32. If you require any further guidance on how to extract, upload or submit data please contact the NFI Data Centre (Synectics Solutions Ltd) via email helpdesk@nfi.gov.uk or call 0845 345 8019.

Making the process more efficient

33. The Senior Responsible Officer and Key Contact can take measures to make the NFI process more efficient. These include:
 - ensuring all contact details are up to date;
 - making sure participants access the relevant training videos located in the secure NFI web application;
 - reviewing the data quality reports from the previous exercise to identify any improvements that can be made for the next data submission (these reports will be accessible from the home page of the secure NFI web application);
 - making sure that appropriate staff review all data extraction guidance documents prior to submission of data; and
 - planning in advance what investigative resources are needed, based on local expertise and knowledge, so the matches can be dealt with promptly. For example, trade creditor duplicate matches are perhaps best dealt with by a nominated person in either Internal Audit or Accounts Payable.

Communications

34. The PSFA and the NIAO are committed to ensuring the NFI is effective. We will continue to work closely with key contacts and others to provide regular and timely information to all parties involved in the investigation process. The NFI communication plan includes:
- access to NFI related reference material on the NFI web page (www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-fraud-initiative) and the NIAO web page (<https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/national-fraud-initiative>);
 - important messages to be placed within the NFI web application on the Message Board of the Home page;
 - NFI general support via nfiqueries@cabinetoffice.gov.uk ;
 - NFI technical support on 0845 345 8019 or via helpdesk@nfi.gov.uk ; and
 - general enquiries about the NFI in **Northern Ireland** should be addressed in the first instance to the NFI Co-ordinator via email at nficoordinator@niauditoffice.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – The Data Specifications

1. There is a separate data specification for each dataset type collected for the NFI. To find out what data you must supply, refer to Table 1 at page 7 of these Instructions.
2. Detailed data specifications for each dataset type have been included below. Where available, a link is also included to the data specification on the NFI website.
3. The NFI reviews data specifications before each exercise. Although changes have been kept to a minimum, some are necessary to improve the matching process and the quality of matches. [Changes for the 26-27 exercise](#) are set out in the table below and also included at the embedded link above.

Data specification	Summary of changes for the 2026-27 exercise
Payroll	Clarification on the requirement for telephone number and email address
Pensions	New field – ‘added years flag’ to capture where a pension included added years or was grated on grounds of efficiency. Update to the supporting comments for the ‘Pension abatement flag’ field.
Trade Creditors Standing Data	Update to requirements
Trade Creditor Payments History	Update to requirements
Housing Benefit	No change
Housing Tenants	Update to the required data to include any individuals aged 16 or 17 who hold tenancy in their own right
Housing Waiting List	No change
Private Supported Care Home Residents	No change
Blue Badges	Clarification on the requirements for telephone number and email address
Licences – Taxi Drivers	Clarification on the requirements for telephone number and email address
Right to Buy	No change
Electoral Register	No change

Payroll – Public Sector

To find out who should supply payroll data, please refer to Table 1 on page 7 of these Instructions.

Requirements:

- Data submitted should meet this data specification, i.e. include all field names listed below.
- Current employees from all payrolls (for example, monthly, weekly, and quarterly) should be provided.
- Data **should not** be provided in respect of payrolls processed for other organisations on an agency basis **unless**:
 - this has been authorised by the organisation;
 - the organisation has confirmed that Privacy Notices have been issued; and
 - the organisation's participation has been agreed by the C&AG.
- Ensure that there is only a single record for each employee i.e. details for individual employees with more than one post should be merged into one record. For example, for employees with multiple posts 'Gross pay to date' and 'Standard hours per week' for each post should be added together to give aggregated totals for those two fields. Other fields such as 'Date started', 'Sort code' and 'Bank account' should be provided from the main (highest earnings) post.
- **Data relating to agency workers** - Agency staff data is not required for the 2026/27 national exercise at this time. Reference to agency staff data has been included for FraudHub and ReCheck users, and so that this specification can be used should a wider roll out of this matching be scheduled in the future, beyond the current FraudHub pilot.
 - Agency workers data can currently only be provided by NFI active FraudHubs uploaded via the FraudHub and ReCheck tools as part of an on-going pilot. The agency organisation(s)/Managed Service Provider needs to have agreed to provide data to you and confirmed to you that Privacy Notices (PN) have been issued to all of their personnel.
 - Data can be provided in a single file, containing permanent staff and agency staff, with agency staff flagged as per the specification below (i.e. Agency worker flag and the name of the Agency). Alternatively, separate files can be submitted, for permanent staff and agency workers, both following the specification below.
- Ensure that there is only a **single** record for each employee i.e. details for individual employees with more than one post should be merged into one record. For example, for employees with multiple posts, 'Gross pay to date' and 'Standard hours per week' for each post should be added together to give aggregated totals for those two fields. Other fields such as 'Date started', 'Sort code' and 'Bank account' should be provided from the main (highest earnings) post.

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Field name	Data format	Comments
Employee reference number	Character	
Employee post number	Character	Leave blank if not applicable, but do not omit this field
Department	Character	Provide the Department where the employee works, for example, Social Services, Education. If this field contains a code, please provide a lookup table.
Title	Character	
Gender	Character	M, F or O
Surname	Character	
Forename(s)	Character	
Middle name(s) or middle initials(s)	Character	Please ensure you capture any middle name(s) or initial(s). You can provide this in a separate Middle name(s) or middle initial(s) field or in the 'Forename(s)' cell if preferred.
Address line 1	Character	
Address line 2	Character	
Address line 3	Character	
Address line 4	Character	
Post code	Character	
Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)	Character	This field should significantly improve address matching, provide if available.
Date of birth	Date	
Home telephone number	Character	This must be the personal mobile telephone number not a work mobile number as it is used to facilitate identity matching. This must be the personal email address not a work email address as it is used to facilitate identity matching
Mobile telephone number	Character	
Email address	Character	
Passport number	Character	
Date started	Date	
Date left	Date	Included as an independent check that only current employees are included.
Leaver indicator	Character	Included as an independent check that only current employees are included.
National insurance number	Character	
Agency worker/Contractor	Character	Fraud Hub/ReCheck only – Insert 'A' to denote an individual that is employed via a recruitment agency. Leave blank if you are not providing agency staff data.
Agency name	Character	Fraud Hub/ReCheck only - Include the name of the agency through which the individual is employed. Leave blank if you are not providing agency staff data.
Full-time/part-time flag	Character	Insert 'F' for full time (employed for more than 30 hours per week), 'P' for part time (less than 30 hours a week) or 'C' for casual/as and when employees.

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Field name	Data format	Comments
Gross pay to date	Numeric	This should be gross pay to date, NOT taxable pay to date, for the 2026-27 financial year. Do not submit a record if this field is zero.
Standard hours per week	Numeric	e.g. 16 hours as 1600 and 17 hours and 30 minutes as 1750
Date last paid	Date	
Teacher flag	Character	Insert 'T' for a teacher. Leave blank if not applicable but do not omit this field.
Sort code	Character	6 numeric characters in groups of 2 which may be separated by hyphens, e.g. 20-45-23.
Bank account	Character	Usually 8 numeric characters.
Building society roll number	Character	Building societies have a roll number or reference, which indicates the individual account to which payments are disbursed, after being paid into a single holding account.

Pensions (including occupational pensions, pension gratuities and deferred pensions)

Pensions data will be submitted by the six pension paying authorities - see footnote 1 at page 7 of these Instructions.

Requirements:

- Data submitted should meet this data specification, i.e. include all field names.
- Where data is being submitted for pension widow(er) or dependent(s) then you should ensure the widow(er) or dependent(s) name, date of birth and National Insurance Number is submitted and not that of the original pensioner.
- To ensure that the submission of data using the DFU facility is as straightforward as possible, data should now be uploaded in three separate files:
 - 1 Current pensioners, i.e. those currently in receipt of a pension;
 - 2 **If applicable** -Pensioners currently in receipt of a pension gratuity; and
 - 3 **Optional**- Deferred pensioners not currently in payment. Please note any pensions currently in payment should be included in 'Current pensioners' file.

Field name	Data format	Comments	Fields required		
			1	2	3
Employee reference number	Character		✓	✓	✓
Employee post number	Character	Leave blank if not applicable, but do not omit this field	✓	✓	✓
Title	Character		✓	✓	✓
Gender	Character		✓	✓	✓
Surname	Character		✓	✓	✓
Forename(s)	Character	Please ensure you capture any middle name(s) or initial(s). You can provide this in a separate Middle name(s) or middle initial(s) field or in the 'Forename(s)' cell if preferred.	✓	✓	✓
Middle name(s) or middle initial(s)	Character		✓	✓	✓
Address line 1	Character		✓	✓	✓
Address line 2	Character		✓	✓	✓
Address line 3	Character		✓	✓	✓
Address line 4	Character		✓	✓	✓
Post code	Character		✓	✓	✓
Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)	Character		✓	✓	✓
Date of birth	Date		✓	✓	✓
Date started pension	Date	We expect this to be blank. It is included as a check that only deferred pensions are provided.			✓

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Field name	Data format	Comments	Fields required		
			1	2	3
Date employment ended	Date	Included as an independent check that only pensioners are included.	✓	✓	
Leaver indicator	Character	Enter 'Y' if leaver or leave blank if not.	✓	✓	✓
Pensioner's widow(er) or dependent(s) indicator	Character		✓	✓	
National insurance number	Character	Enter 'W' for pension widow(er)s or 'D' for dependent and ensure the widow(er) or dependent(s) name, DOB and NI Number is submitted, rather that of the original pensioner. This should be gross pension to date, <u>NOT</u> taxable pension to date. Do not submit a record if this field is zero.	✓	✓	
Gross pension to date	Numeric		✓	✓	
Date last paid	Date		✓	✓	
Injury pension flag	Character	Police and Fire pensions only. Include a 'Y' in this field if the pensioner is in receipt of an enhanced pension due to injuries suffered at work.	✓		
Ill health retirement flag	Character	Include a 'Y' in this field if the pensioner retired on ill health grounds. This will assist with pension abatement matches.	✓		
Pension abatement flag	Character	Include a 'Y' in this field if the individual is subject to abatement rules and those rules are not currently being applied (i.e., the pension is being paid in full). Leave blank if: - Abatement rules do not apply to this scheme/individual. - The pension is already being abolished due to re-employment. Please note: Blank records are excluded from abatement matching.	✓		
Added Years Flag		New Field - Enhanced/Efficiency Retirement – Include a 'Y' in this field if the pension includes "added years" or was granted on "grounds of efficiency."	✓		

Trade creditors standing data

To find out who should provide trade creditors standing data, please refer to Table 1 at page 7 of these Instructions.

Requirements:

- Data submitted should meet this data specification, i.e. include all field names.
- There are 4 additional fields included below that are optional as we will be working with participants to determine the usefulness either for matching or displaying in subsequent reports.
- Standing data should be current at the date of extraction (30 September 2026) and should exclude dormant or suspended creditors.
- To avoid processing delays, please upload both trade creditor files simultaneously.

Field name	Data format	Comments
Creditor reference	Character	This is the unique identifier for an individual creditor. This can be in the form of a numeric or alpha numeric string.
Site ID	Character	If Creditors have more than one address, there should be a different record for each, but separately identifiable via this Site ID. If a Site ID is provided in the standing data file, it should also be included on the payments history file so that there is a unique linking field between the two datasets. This will make it possible to establish cumulative payments to individual trade creditor sites (which are attached to the standing data) and to attach the trade creditor names to each transaction on the payments history file.
Creditor name	Character	
Company Registration Number (CRN)	Character	This will be either 8 numeric characters or 2 letters and 6 numeric characters. Leave the field blank if you do not record this.
Address 1	Character	If the address is held in a single field, use the Address 1 field.
Address 2	Character	
Address 3	Character	
Address 4	Character	
Postcode	Character	
Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)	Character	This field should significantly improve address matching.

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Field name	Data format	Comments
Telephone number	Character	This may or may not have the area/STD code. It should be output as a character field so the leading zeros are not lost.
Bank sort code	Character	6 numeric characters in groups of 2 which may be separated by hyphens, e.g., 20-45-23.
Bank account number	Character	Usually 8 numeric characters.
Building Society Roll number or reference	Character	Building societies have a roll number or reference, which indicates the individual account to which payments are disbursed, after being paid into a single holding account. This should be blank for normal bank accounts.
Creditor type	Character	This field only needs to be populated if you are unable to provide just trade creditors data i.e. the submission includes other types of creditors. For example, '0 = trade creditor, 1 = benefits, 2 = payroll, 3 = factor, 4 = grants, 5 = temporary/one-off, etc. Then provide a key to the codes used. If this type of identifier is not available from the system it would be to your advantage to populate this field to enable you to filter the output more easily and focus resources on what you may deem to be the most worthwhile matches.
The fields below are optional. They have been suggested as an additional aid to filtering the matches. The usefulness of these fields will be reviewed prior to the next exercise.		
General ledger Code	Character	Optional
VAT registration Number	Character	Optional
Credit Note	Character	Optional, insert Y or N
Prepayment	Character	Optional, insert Y or N

Trade creditor payments history data

To find out who should supply trade creditor payments history data, please refer to Table 1 at page 7 of these Instructions.

Requirements:

- Data submitted should meet this data specification, i.e. include all field names.
- There are 3 additional fields included below that are optional as we will be working with participants to determine the usefulness either for matching or displaying in subsequent reports.
- Trade creditor's payments history data should cover at least the last three financial years, 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2026 (or to the date of extract). Where there has been a recent change in your creditors system then, as a minimum, payments history data from 1 April 2026 to date of extract can be accepted.
- To avoid processing delays, please uploads both trade creditor files simultaneously.

Field	Data format	Comments
Creditor reference	Character	This is the unique identifier for an individual creditor. This can be in the form of a numeric or alpha numeric string.
Site ID	Character	If trade creditors can have more than one address, these should be separately identifiable via the Site ID. If a Site ID is provided in the payments history data file, it should also be included on the standing data file so that there is a unique linking field between the two datasets. This will make it possible to: (a) establish cumulative payments to individual trade creditor sites (as detailed in the standing data) and (b) to attach the trade creditor names to each transaction on the payments history file.
Company Registration Number (CRN)	Character	This will be either 8 numeric characters or 2 letters and 6 numeric characters. Leave the field blank if you do not record this.
Suppliers invoice number	Character	This should be the reference shown on the supplier's invoice – usually a number but may have alpha prefixes or suffixes.
Internal/system invoice number	Character	Most systems generate a unique, sequential transaction number so all invoices, credit notes, payments, etc. can be separately identifiable.
Invoice date	Date	This should be the date on the invoice, but could be the date of input if the invoice date is not available.
Payment date	Date	If the invoice has not been paid then leave blank. In those cases, if your system displays

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Field	Data format	Comments
		a default date in this field and therefore you can't leave it blank, please tell us what the default date is.
Total invoice amount	Numeric	The 'total invoice amount' is inclusive of VAT, less any discount . However, some systems hold VAT exclusive amounts, with the VAT figure held separately. In this case these figures should be added together to produce the 'total invoice amount'.
VAT amount	Numeric	This should be separately identifiable for each invoice but could be nil if an invoice is zero rated, exempt or outside the scope of VAT.
Method of payment	Character	E.g. BACS, cheque, cash, payable order etc. If codes are used, a 'key' to the codes should be sent with the data submission.
Payment reference number	Character	This field should contain the cheque, payable order (PO) or BACS reference number by which the invoice was paid. This means that invoices that have been paid together would have the same cheque/PO/BACS number. If a payment has multiple reference numbers then please include them all, separated by a delimiter.
Remarks	Character	This field can be used as a free text field to include information that may assist you when investigating matches.
The fields below are optional. They have been suggested as an additional aid to filtering the matches. The usefulness of these fields will be reviewed prior to the next exercise.		
General ledger Code	Character	Optional
Credit Note	Character	Optional, insert Y or N
Prepayment	Character	Optional, insert Y or N

Housing Benefit

Housing benefit data will only be submitted by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Requirements:

- Please only supply data for those currently in receipt of housing benefit
- Ensure that there is only a single record for each reference number

Field	Data format	Comments
Authority	Character	If applicable. This field is required if the results are to be distributed back to individual housing benefit paying body
Housing benefit claim reference number	Character	
National Insurance number	Character	
Title	Character	
Surname	Character	
Forename 1	Character	
Forename 2 (middle name)	Character	
Date of birth	Character	
Sex	Character	
Type of tenancy	Character	
Address line 1	Character	
Address line 2	Character	
Address line 3	Character	
Address line 4	Character	
Postcode	Character	
Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)	Character	This field has been included within the data specification to significantly improve address matching.
Income support indicator	Character	
Second adult rebate flag	Character	
Current claim start date	Date	
Bank sort code	Character	
Building society roll number	Character	
Bank account number	Character	
Weekly rate of housing benefit	Character	
Date last paid	Date	
Child tax credit income	Numeric	
Rent income	Numeric	
Income from earnings	Numeric	
Pensions credit savings credit amount	Numeric	
Maintenance	Numeric	

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Field	Data format	Comments
Occupational pension	Numeric	
Total claimants capital declared	Numeric	
Working tax credit income	Numeric	
Incapacity benefit	Numeric	
One parent benefit flag	Character	
Student indicator flag	Character	
Disability living allowance flag	Character	
Claimant's pension credit guarantee credit flag	Character	
Claimants job seekers allowance flag	Character	

Housing Tenants

Housing tenants' data will be provided by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and housing associations.

Requirements:

- Data submitted should meet this data specification, i.e. include all field names.
- Data should only be provided in relation to residential properties. **Do not** submit data for garages, sheds etc.
- Data should be provided for all named tenants i.e. first named tenants, joint tenants or other tenants. Do not provide data for dependants.
- In order to ensure that the submission of data using the new DFU facility is as straightforward as possible, data should be uploaded in two separate files:

1 Current named tenants, including:

- any individual aged 16 or 17 who holds a tenancy in their own right; and
- those tenants where a Right to Buy (RTB) purchase is in progress; and

2 Former tenants who completed a **right to buy** application between 1 April 2023 to the date of extract (30 September 2026) or, as a minimum, 1 April 2026 to date of extract.

Field name	Data format	Comments	Fields required	
			1	2
Tenant status flag	Character	Insert a flag to indicate whether the tenant is first named tenant or other. 'F' for first named or joint tenant 'O' for 2 nd , 3 rd , etc. named tenant. To include any individual aged 16 or 17 who holds a tenancy in their own right.	✓	✓
Surname	Character		✓	✓
Forename(s)	Character	Please ensure you capture any middle name(s) or initial(s). You can provide this in a separate Middle name(s) or middle initial(s) field or in the 'Forename(s)' cell if preferred.	✓	✓
Middle name(s) or middle initial(s)	Character		✓	✓
Address line 1	Character	Where the address is a permanent address.	✓	✓
Address line 2	Character		✓	✓
Address line 3	Character		✓	✓
Address line 4	Character		✓	✓
Post code	Character		✓	✓
Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)	Character	If this field is captured. Local Authorities only.	✓	✓

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Field name	Data format	Comments	Fields required	
			1	2
Home telephone number	Character		✓	✓
Mobile telephone number	Character		✓	✓
Email address	Character		✓	✓
Date of birth	Date		✓	✓
National Insurance Number	Character		✓	✓
Number living permanently at address	Numeric		✓	
Tenant/account reference	Character	This uniquely identifies the person.	✓	✓
Housing benefit reference	Character	If the tenant is in recipient of housing benefit include the HB reference number.	✓	✓
Right to buy flag	Character	Insert 'I' in this field to identify where a purchase is in progress (current tenant) under right to buy, or a 'C' where the purchase is complete (former tenant).	✓	✓
Right to buy application stage	Numeric	Insert 1 to 4 in line with NIHE guidance on stages of a RTB application - https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Landlord/house-sales-a-tenants-guide.aspx?ext . (see page 6 of NIHE guide)	✓	✓
Tenancy start date	Date		✓	
Tenancy end date	Date	Included as an independent check that only current tenants are included.	✓	✓
Right to buy completion date	Date			✓
Number of bedrooms	Numeric	Include this data, if it is captured, to assist with your match prioritisation.	✓	
Amount of Right to Buy discount awarded	Numeric			✓

Housing waiting list

The social housing waiting list will be submitted by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Requirements:

- Data submitted should meet this data specification, i.e. include all field names.
- Data should only be provided in relation to residential properties. Do not submit data for garages, sheds, etc.
- Data should be provided for all named applicants who are either actively bidding or are eligible to bid for properties, as they have been judged higher priority. This will result in you only receiving matches relating to these higher risk individuals.

Field name	Data format	Comments
Waiting list reference	Character	This uniquely identifies the person or the application if there is more than one named applicant.
Surname	Character	
Forename(s)	Character	Please ensure you capture middle name(s) or initial(s). You can provide this in a separate middle name(s) or middle initial(s) field or in the 'Forename(s) cell' if preferred.
Address line 1	Character	
Address line 2	Character	
Address line 3	Character	
Address line 4	Character	
Post code	Character	
Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)	Character	Provide if held
Date of birth	Date	
National Insurance Number (NINO)	Character	Provide if held
Housing benefit reference	Character	Include the housing benefit reference if available
Application start date	Date	Date application was made
Application end date	Date	Included as an independent check that only current waiting list applicants are included.

Private supported care home residents

Private supported care home residents' data will be provided by the health and social care trusts as listed in Table 1 at page 7 of these Instructions.

Requirements:

- Data submitted should meet this data specification, i.e. include all field names.
- Data should relate to current care home residents who are over 18 years of age
- Data should relate to current care home residents only where the Trust is paying for all or part of the care.

Field name	Data format	Comments
Case reference	Character	
Title	Character	
Surname	Character	
Forename(s)	Character	Please ensure you capture any middle name(s) or initial(s). You can provide this in a separate Middle name(s) or middle initial(s) field or in the 'Forename(s)' cell if preferred.
Middle name(s) or middle initial(s)	Character	
Current address line 1	Character	This should be the care home address.
Current address line 2	Character	
Current address line 3	Character	
Current address line 4	Character	
Current address postcode	Character	
Date of admission	Date	
Previous address line 1	Character	
Previous address line 2	Character	
Previous address line 3	Character	
Previous address line 4	Character	
Previous address postcode	Character	
Date of birth	Date	
National insurance number	Character	
Weekly cost of care	Numeric	Provide the amount the individual receives for care costs per week. This is to enable the Public Sector Fraud

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		Authority to more accurately estimate the value of fraud or error prevented.
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Transport passes and permits (blue badges and concessionary travel) – Adult data only

Transport passes and permits data will be provided by the Department for Infrastructure and Translink.

Requirements:

- Only data relating to ADULTS over 18 should be provided.
- Data submitted should meet this data specification, i.e. include all field names.
- Please note, blue badge data should be uploaded from your local system, the Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS) system or both as applicable.
- Data should be uploaded in two separate files:
 - current adult holders of a blue badge (BB) (including local schemes); and
 - current adult holders of a concessionary travel pass (CTP).

Field name	Data format	Comments	Fields required	
			BB	CTP
Reference number	Character	This should be the internal reference number	✓	✓
Pass/Permit number	Character	This should be the actual blue badge or travel pass reference number	✓	✓
Title	Character		✓	✓
Surname	Character		✓	✓
Forename(s)	Character	Please ensure you capture any middle name(s) or initial(s). You can provide this in a separate Middle name(s) or middle initial(s) field or in the 'Forename(s)' cell if preferred.	✓	✓
Middle name(s) or middle initial(s)	Character		✓	✓
Address 1	Character		✓	✓
Address 2	Character		✓	✓
Address 3	Character		✓	✓
Address 4	Character		✓	✓
Postcode	Character		✓	✓
Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)	Character		✓	✓

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Date of birth	Date	Only data relating to adults over 18 should be provided.	✓	✓
Field name	Data format	Comments	Fields required	
			BB	CTP
National insurance number	Character	It is important to provide this field where available, in order to improve the quality of the data matching.	✓	✓
Home telephone number	Character	These must be the personal mobile telephone number/email address not a work mobile number/email address as these fields are used to facilitate identity matching.	✓	✓
Mobile telephone number	Character		✓	✓
Email address	Character		✓	✓
Permit start date	Date		✓	✓
Permit expiry date	Date		✓	✓
Permit type flag	Character	Insert 'B' in this field to indicate if the data relates to a blue badge, and 'F' for Freedom/concessionary travel passes.	✓	✓
Date last used	Date	This field is optional, its inclusion may help with follow-up.		✓

Licences - Taxi Drivers

Taxi licences data will be provided by the Department for Infrastructure.

Requirements:

- Data submitted should meet this data specification i.e. include all of the field names listed below
- Data should only be submitted for current holders of a taxi driver licence.

Field name	Data format	Comments
Reference number	Character	This should uniquely identify the individual, i.e. the licence number
Title	Character	
Surname	Character	
Forename(s)	Character	Please ensure you capture any middle name(s) or initials(s). You can provide this in a separate Middle name(s) or middle initial(s) field or in the 'Forename(s)' cell if preferred.
Middle name(s) or middle initial(s)	Character	
Address line 1	Character	
Address line 2	Character	
Address line 3	Character	
Address line 4	Character	
Post code	Character	
Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)	Character	
Date of birth	Date	
Home telephone number	Character	These must be the personal mobile telephone number/email address not a work mobile/email address as these fields are used to facilitate identity matching.
Mobile telephone number	Character	
Email address	Character	
National insurance number	Character	Where collected.
Licence start date	Date	
Licence expiry date	Date	

Rates

Rates data will be provided by the Department of Finance (DoF).

Requirements:

- Data submitted should meet this data specification i.e. include all field names.

Field	Data Format	Comments
Property Type	Character	Enter D for Domestic Enter M for Mixed
Occupancy ID	Numeric	Unique ID for occupancy (ratepayer, property, start & end dates)
Prop ID	Numeric	Unique ID for property as supplied by LPS
Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)	Character	This field has been included within the data specification to significantly improve address matching.
First Name	Character	DoF cannot split the name between first/middle/surname. The NFI data centre is content that first, middle and surname are provided in one field.
Middle Name(s) or initial(s)	Character	
Surname	Character	
Occupancy Start Date	Character	Date occupancy started. Date format DD/MM/YYYY
Sub Building Name	Character	
Building Name	Character	
Building Number	Character	
Street	Character	
Town	Character	
County	Character	
Postcode	Character	
District council	Character	
Ward	Character	
Vacancy indicator flag	Character	"Y" to indicate vacant property

Lone Pensioner Allowance (LPA)

Lone Pensioner Allowance data will be provided by the Department of Finance.

Requirements:

- Data submitted should meet this data specification i.e. include all field names.

Field	Data Format	Comments
Property Type	Character	Enter D for Domestic Enter M for Mixed
Occupancy ID	Numeric	Unique ID for occupancy (ratepayer, property, start & end dates)
Prop ID	Numeric	Unique ID for property as supplied by LPS
Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)	Character	This field has been included within the data specification to significantly improve address matching.
First Name	Character	DoF cannot split the name between first/middle/surname. The NFI data centre is content that first, middle and surname are provided in one field.
Middle Name	Character	
Surname	Character	
Gender	Character	Male/Female
National Insurance Number (NINO)	Character	
Date of Birth (DOB)	Date	
LPA Start Date	Character	Date LPA Award started. Date format DD/MM/YYYY
LPA End Date	Character	Date LPA Award ended. Date format DD/MM/YYYY
Sub Building Name	Character	
Building Name	Character	
Building Number	Character	
Street	Character	
Town	Character	
County	Character	
Postcode	Character	
District council	Character	
Ward	Character	

State Pension

State Pension data will be provided by the Department for Communities.

Requirements:

- This data will be matched with Lone Pensioner Allowance.
- Please only supply data for those in receipt of State Pension at the date of data upload.

Field	Data Format	Comments
National Insurance Number	Character	Unique identifier to associate results with the particular claim records.
Surname	Character	
Forename 1	Character	
Forename 2 (middle name)	Character	
Address line 1	Character	
Address line 2	Character	
Address line 3	Character	
Address line 4	Character	
Postcode	Character	
Date of Birth	Character	
Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)	Character	To improve address matching. Provide if held, otherwise leave field blank.

Electoral Register

Electoral register data will be submitted by the Department of Finance following purchase of the register from the Electoral Office.

Requirements:

- This data should be the latest 'full version' of the latest Electoral register (not the commercially available 'edited version').

Field	Data format	Comments
Electoral Register reference number	Character	This should be unique
Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) (if available)	Character	Each UPRN should be unique. All UPRNs held should be included in the submission even if this field is not fully populated.
Title	Character	
Surname	Character	
Forename	Character	
Middle name or middle initial	Character	
Address 1	Character	
Address 2	Character	
Address 3	Character	
Address 4	Character	
Postcode	Character	
Date of birth or Date of attainment	Date	This should exist when a member of the household has reached, or is soon to reach, the age of majority (currently 18).
Full name	Character	This should only be provided if the whole name is in the same field within the Electoral Registration system and it cannot be split into separate surname and forename fields.

Appendix 2 – Participants in NFI 2026-27

Mandatory Participants	
<i>Northern Ireland Departments</i>	
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	Northern Regional College
Department for Communities	North West Regional College
Department for the Economy	Probation Board for Northern Ireland
Department of Education	South Eastern Regional College
Department of Finance	Southern Regional College
Department of Health	South West College
Department for Infrastructure	Sport Northern Ireland
Department of Justice	Stranmillis University College
The Executive Office	Strategic Investment Board
Public Prosecution Service (non-ministerial)	Tourism NI
	Ulster Supported Employment Ltd
<i>Executive Agencies</i>	
Driver and Vehicle Agency	<i>Health Service Bodies</i>
Forensic Science NI	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Forest Service	Business Services Organisation
Labour Relations Agency	Strategic Planning and Performance Group
Legal Services Agency NI	NI Ambulance Service Trust
NI Courts and Tribunals Service	NI Social Care Council
NI Environment Agency	Northern Health and Social Care Trust
Children's Court Guardian Agency for NI	Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service
NI Medical and Dental Training Agency	Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
NI Statistics and Research Agency	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
Public Health Agency	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Youth Justice Agency	Western Health and Social Care Trust
<i>Other central government bodies</i>	<i>Local Government Bodies</i>
Agri-food and Biosciences Institute	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	Ards and North Down Borough Council
Belfast Metropolitan College	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
Commissioner for Children and Young People NI	Belfast City Council
Community Relations Council	Causeway Coast and Glens District Council
Construction Industry Training Board	Derry City and Strabane District Council
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Education Authority	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
Equality Commission NI	Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
General Consumer Council	Mid Ulster District Council
Health and Safety Executive NI	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Invest Northern Ireland	Arc 21
Libraries NI	
Livestock and Meat Commission	<i>Voluntary Participants</i>
National Museums Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NI Authority for Utility Regulation	Northern Ireland Water
NI Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment	Translink
NI Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee	Victims and Survivors Service
Northern Ireland Assembly	
Northern Ireland Civil Service Pensions	
Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service	



Northern Ireland
Audit Office

National Fraud Initiative Self-appraisal checklist

August 2026

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Background

1. The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a biennial UK-wide counter-fraud exercise. In Northern Ireland, the exercise is undertaken by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG) under his 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 Public Sector Fraud Authority, Audit Scotland and Audit Wales, which undertake the NFI exercise in England, Scotland and Wales respectively.
2. 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.
3. Information about the NFI and copies of our NFI reports are available on the [NIAO website](#).

Self-appraisal checklist

4. The NFI is one aspect of an organisation's counter-fraud arrangements. We have prepared this two-part checklist included at **Appendix 1** to help participating bodies self-appraise their involvement in the NFI, prior to and during the NFI exercises.
 - **Part A** is designed to assist **audit committee members** when reviewing, seeking assurance on, or challenging the effectiveness of their organisation's participation in the NFI.
 - **Part B** is for **officers** involved in planning and managing the NFI exercise.

5. We encourage all participating bodies to complete the checklist and present it to those charged with governance to support scrutiny of their NFI arrangements.

How to work more efficiently

6. The C&AG encourages organisations to review and investigate NFI matches efficiently and effectively. This enables them to make better use of their limited resources. Some suggestions for improving efficiency and effectiveness are included in **Appendix 2**.

Contact details

7. Any queries about this checklist, or the NFI exercise in general, should be addressed to the NFI Coordinator at the Northern Ireland Audit Office – nficoordinator@niauditoffice.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Self-appraisal checklist

Part A:			
For those charged with governance	Yes/No / Partly	Is action required?	Who by and when?
Leadership, commitment and communication			
Are we committed to the NFI? Have the board/council, audit committee and senior management expressed support for the exercise and has this been communicated to relevant staff?			
Is the NFI an integral part of our corporate policies and strategies for preventing and detecting fraud and error?			
Are NFI progress and outcomes reported regularly to senior management and elected/board members (e.g. the audit committee or equivalent)?			

Where we have not reviewed the NFI data matches returned to us, are we satisfied that alternative fraud detection arrangements are in place and that we know how successful they are?		
Does internal audit, or equivalent, monitor our approach to the NFI and our main outcomes, ensuring that any weaknesses are addressed in relevant cases?		
Do we review how frauds and errors arose and use this information to improve our internal controls?		
Do we publish, as a deterrent, internally and externally, the achievements of our fraud investigators (e.g. successful prosecutions)?		

Part B:			
For NFI Senior Responsible Officers and Key Contacts	Yes/No / Partly	Is action required?	Who by and when?
Planning and preparation			
Are we aware of emerging fraud risks, and have we put in place appropriate preventive and detective measures?			
Are we investing sufficient resources in the NFI exercise?			
Do we plan properly for NFI exercises, both before submitting data and prior to matches becoming available? This includes considering the quality of data.			
Is our NFI Key Contact the appropriate officer for that role and do they oversee the exercise effectively?			
Does the Key Contact have the time to devote to the exercise, and sufficient authority to seek action across the organisation?			
Where NFI outcomes have been low in the past, do we recognise that this may not be			

Part B:			
For NFI Senior Responsible Officers and Key Contacts	Yes/No / Partly	Is action required?	Who by and when?
the case the next time, that NFI can deter fraud, and that there is value in the assurances that we can take from low outcomes?			
Do we confirm promptly (using the online facility on the secure website) that we have met the fair processing notice requirements?			
Do we provide all NFI data on time, using the secure data file upload facility properly?			
Have we considered using the point of application data matching service offered by the NFI team (AppCheck) to enhance assurances over internal controls and improve our approach to risk management?			
Effective follow-up of matches			
Do those involved in the NFI start the follow-up of matches promptly after they become available?			

Part B: For NFI Senior Responsible Officers and Key Contacts	Yes/No / Partly	Is action required?	Who by and when?
Do we give priority to following up high-risk matches, those that become quickly out-of-date and those that could cause reputational damage if a fraud is not stopped quickly? Are we investigating the circumstances of matches adequately before reaching a 'no issue' outcome, in particular? Are we seeking help and expertise from counter fraud experts where appropriate (e.g. health bodies might liaise with Counter Fraud and Probit Services)? Are we taking appropriate action in cases where fraud is alleged (such as disciplinary action, penalties, cautions or reporting to the police)? Are we recovering funds effectively? Do we avoid deploying excessive resources on match reports where early work (e.g. on high-risk matches) has not found any fraud or error?			

Part B:			
For NFI Senior Responsible Officers and Key Contacts	Yes/No / Partly	Is action required?	Who by and when?
Where the number of high-risk matches is very low, are we adequately considering the medium and low-risk matches before we cease our follow-up work?			
Overall, are we deploying appropriate resources on managing the NFI exercise?			
Recording and reporting			
Are we recording outcomes properly in the secure NFI website and keeping it up-to-date?			
Do staff involved in NFI work use the online training modules and guidance on the secure website, and do they consult the key contact or NFI Co-ordinator if they are unsure about how to record outcomes?			
If work is done outside the secure NFI website (which is not encouraged), do we ensure that all outcomes are then recorded within the secure NFI website?			

Part B:			
For NFI Senior Responsible Officers and Key Contacts	Yes/No / Partly	Is action required?	Who by and when?
Do we provide appropriate and timely feedback to senior management, board/council members and the audit committee on NFI activity and outcomes?			

Appendix 2

How to work more efficiently

Potential inefficiency	How to work more efficiently
Participants may not be using the latest time-saving enhancements to the NFI software.	Ensure staff within the organisation who are working on the NFI keep up-to-date with new features of the secure NFI website, and with good practice, by reading the guidance notes and watching the online training modules, before they begin work on the matches.
Matches that are time-critical, and which could identify an overpayment, may not be given priority.	Key contacts should schedule staff resources so that time-critical matches can be dealt with as soon as they are received.
Investigations that fall across different parts of the organisation may not be coordinated, resulting in duplication of effort or delays in identifying overpayments.	Key contacts should coordinate investigations across internal departments where applicable, to ensure all relevant issues are appropriately actioned.
Disproportionate time may be spent looking into every match in every report.	Use the tools within the NFI web application to help prioritise matches that are the highest risk. This will save time and free up staff for the most important investigations.
Enquiries from other organisations that take part in the	Regularly review and respond to enquiries from other organisations so that investigations can be progressed.

NFI may not always be responded to promptly.	
Data quality issues that are highlighted within the web application may not be addressed before the next NFI exercise.	Review the quality of the data supplied before the next exercise, allowing time for necessary improvements before the next data upload. Better data quality will improve the quality of the resulting matches.

THIS STATEMENT IS ISSUED ON THE STRICT UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR
BROADCAST BEFORE 00.01 hrs ON WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2026

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Media Release

Local Government Auditor's Report 2026



Local councils' income continues to exceed expenditure, and financial reserves have reached their highest level ever. However, it is important that councils ensure clear and robust plans are in place to deliver maximum value and benefit for ratepayers. That is among the conclusions of a report published today (Wednesday 9 September 2026) by Northern Ireland's Local Government Auditor.

Brian O'Neill's report summarises the findings from audits of local councils' 2024-25 financial statements. It notes that income across the 11 councils totalled £1.3 billion for the year, an increase of around 8 per cent from 2023-24. This was largely driven by a 3 per cent increase in District Rates, which account for more than 60 per cent (£818 million) of councils' total income. Meanwhile, expenditure for the year totalled £1.23 billion, of which more than 40 per cent (around £500 million) related to staff costs. 2024-25 is the second successive year that council income has exceeded expenditure.

The report also highlights other aspects of councils' financial position at the end of 2024-25. It notes that:

- councils held more than £2.5 billion of land and buildings; and
- total useable reserves have increased to £566 million, the highest levels recorded to date.

Commenting on these findings, Brian O'Neill said:

"Higher levels of usable reserves available to councils has helped strengthen their financial resilience in the short term. While this is welcome, it emphasises the need for councils to ensure they have clear and robust plans in place so that ratepayers are assured that funds will be managed and used to deliver maximum value and benefit."

Similarly, buildings represent the single largest category of assets held by councils. My report therefore highlights the need for clear capital asset plans, particularly to ensure the effective and efficient management of any surplus assets."

Today's report also considers actions taken in response to previous recommendations made by the Local Government Auditor. It welcomes actions taken by councils to strengthen governance and transparency around suspected and actual fraud.

However, the report notes a mixed picture in respect of councils' management of sickness absence. The average absence per council staff member during 2024-25 was 16.8 days, a slight improvement on the 17.1 days recorded in 2023-24. Despite this, five councils reported an increase in sickness absence during the year, with absence rates in local government continuing to considerably exceed those in central government.

THIS STATEMENT IS ISSUED ON THE STRICT UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST BEFORE 00.01 hrs ON WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2026

Similarly, the report highlights that performance in processing local planning applications varies considerably between individual councils. The average processing time across councils was 19.8 weeks against a statutory target of 15 weeks. Only three of the 11 councils met the statutory target.

Commenting on the 2024-25 audits, Brian O'Neill said:

"This is my first annual report as Local Government Auditor, and I am encouraged to note that all 11 councils received an unqualified audit opinion on their financial statements for 2024-25. This means that the accounts give a true and fair view and were properly prepared. I am grateful to councils for the quality of their reporting, and to Northern Ireland Audit Office staff for their thorough and professional audit work."

The local government sector has a vital role to play in supporting local people, local economies and local services to develop and prosper. My report recognises the ongoing progress made by councils and the economic pressures facing them. There remains notable room for improvement, particularly around longstanding issues such as sickness absence and local planning applications. I welcome the ongoing collaboration between councils in tackling some of these issues. Sustaining and building on this collaboration will be vital for sharing good practice and ensuring better and more consistent performance. I look forward to continuing to engage with the sector to address the recommendations in this year's report and any outstanding actions from previous reports."

ENDS

Notes for Editors

1. The Department for Communities, with the consent of the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland, designated Northern Ireland Audit Office Director Brian O'Neill as the Local Government Auditor (LGA) in January 2026.
2. This report is based on the 2024-25 audits of all local councils, which was the last financial audit cycle before the retirement of Brian O'Neill's predecessor as LGA, Colette Kane OBE.
3. The results of work undertaken by the Local Government Auditor are reported to the Members of Local Councils and local government bodies. The report on each set of accounts is published with the accounts by the audited body. An Annual Audit Letter is also issued to each body, which is published by the audited body. In addition, a summary of key findings at each local council in relation to the improvement audits and assessments will be published in their Annual Improvement Reports.
4. This report is available on the Northern Ireland Audit Office website at www.niauditoffice.gov.uk. The report is embargoed until 00.01 hrs on Wednesday 9 September 2026.