

# Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

## Consultation on the draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2026-27



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

## Our Duty of Improvement

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

The Council is required to set performance improvement objectives for the services it provides on an annual basis, and to have in place arrangements to achieve these objectives. Each performance improvement objective must bring about improvement in at least one of the following aspects of improvement:

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

Improvement for Councils should focus on enhancing the sustainable quality of life for ratepayers and local communities, and each objective should be clearly linked to the community planning outcomes for the District.

All but one of draft performance improvement objectives 2026-27 for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has been carried forward from 2025-26. Performance Improvement Objective 2 in relation to the economy has been amended slightly to better reflect the work the Council is carrying out in this area.

They have been developed based on extensive consultation and engagement with key stakeholders and are aligned to the following regional and local plans which influence the overall direction of travel of the organisation.

- Programme for Government 2024-27
- Newry, Mourne and Down Community Plan
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan 2024-27
- Thematic Plans and Strategies, including the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy

Once agreed, the performance improvement objectives 2026-27 will be published in the annual Performance Improvement Plan. This plan will provide more detail about what we want to improve, how we will deliver improvements, how our performance will be measured and what outcomes stakeholders will experience as a result of our improvement activity.







## Our Draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2026-27

- 1. We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services**
- 2. We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting business growth, 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 improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change**
- 5. We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme**

These objectives have been selected based on the following criteria:

- Does the objective support the delivery of the Programme for Government, Community Plan and Corporate Plan 2024-27?
- Do the objectives demonstrate improvement in at least one of the seven aspects of improvement? (strategic effectiveness, service delivery, service availability, fairness, sustainability, efficiency, innovation)
- Are the objectives SMART? (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timebound)
- Are the resources in place to deliver the objective? (financial, human, leadership, skills, knowledge, governance, risk)
- Are the objectives based on robust and reliable evidence, and will they make a visible difference in the local area?
- How well are we performing?

### Legend:

Status		Trend	
	Target or objective achieved / on track to be achieved		Performance has improved
	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

\*It should be noted that the performance information contained in the 'Looking Back' section of this report may be subject to change when the results are verified and reported through the Assessment of Performance 2025-26 in September 2026.

## Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down

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

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

Through the Community Plan, the following five positive outcomes have been identified:

### Our Outcomes

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



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

The Corporate Plan 2024-27 sets out the strategic direction of the organisation and ties together a number of plans and strategies that will enable the Council to achieve the following mission and eight strategic objectives. The Corporate Plan will also contribute the achievement of the overarching vision and outcomes within the Community Plan.

### Council Mission Statement

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

### Council Strategic Objectives

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

## Your voice, your choice!

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is inviting you to put forward your views on the draft performance improvement objectives 2026-27. We are keen to ensure that our performance improvement objectives have a positive impact on the quality of life of all stakeholders across the District, including citizens, local businesses, partner organisations in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors, employees and Elected Members.

A questionnaire has been included on page 22 of this document for all stakeholders to complete and return to:

Email: [performance@nmandd.org](mailto:performance@nmandd.org)  
Address: Performance and Improvement  
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  
O'Hagan House, Monaghan Row  
Newry, Co Down  
N. Ireland, BT35 8DJ

The questionnaire is also available on the Council's website and social media channels, through the following link:






**[www.newrymournedown.org/consultations](http://www.newrymournedown.org/consultations)**














Alternatively, if you prefer to provide comments in person, please contact us on:

Tel: 0330 137 4000  
Email: [performance@nmandd.org](mailto:performance@nmandd.org)

**The closing date for responses is: 17 April 2026.**

## Performance Improvement Objective 1

We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services		
Why this matters	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One of the top priorities for improving your local area was 'Improving people's health and wellbeing (and reducing health inequalities)</li> <li>17% of our residents are not active for a single day each week.</li> <li>The third most important health and wellbeing opportunity you would like to see more of was 'physical activity opportunities such as leisure centres, gyms and sports facilities'</li> <li>Between 2018 and 2022 there has been an increase in the number of residents satisfied with the leisure centres across the District.</li> <li>65% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey agreed with this objective</li> </ul> <p>We know that keeping fit and active can help improve a person's health and wellbeing both physically and mentally and the provision of leisure facilities is key to achieving this. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council plays a key role in helping local communities to live long and healthy lives. The Council remains committed to promoting physical, mental, and emotional well-being and encouraging residents to make healthy and informed lifestyle choices and as part of this we need to always be striving to improve our leisure facilities and offerings.</p>	
	Looking Back: What we did between April - September 2025	<div>  479,270 paid attendances across the 6 leisure facilities         </div> <div>  16,384 attendances recorded of people taking part in targeted health programmes         </div> <div>  10,824 memberships recorded across the indoor leisure facilities         </div> <div>  5 play parks upgraded across the District         </div> <div>  £225,000 given out in financial assistance for major and minor capital works for sports clubs with 31 clubs and 6 facilities benefitting         </div>
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2026-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of paid attendances at indoor leisure facilities.</li> <li>Continue to deliver a range of targeted, sustainable health programmes to encourage participation in physical activity.</li> <li>Progress the leisure projects agreed within the Capital Programme.</li> <li>Provide funding through financial assistance for capital projects for sports clubs.</li> <li>Continue to monitor customer satisfaction.</li> <li>Work towards achieving disability accreditation across identified tier 1 sites.</li> </ul>	

How we will measure success	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	Status Trend	Q1/Q2 2025-26	2026-27 Target
Number of paid attendances recorded at:	698,864	768,842	737,439 (Target: 850,000)	 	479,270 *	<b>748,800</b>
Newry Leisure Centre	307,153	331,546	244,929		261,631 *	<b>335,000</b>
Down Leisure Centre	246,978	259,473	273,783		135,502 *	<b>270,000</b>
Kilkeel Leisure Centre	69,797	63,811	74,988		21,208	<b>21,000</b>
St. Colmans Sports Complex	54,024	58,491	68,662		25,268*	<b>60,000</b>
Newcastle Centre & Tropicana Outdoor Swimming Complex	25,517	27,765	30,887		16,598*	<b>27,800</b>
Ballymote Sports and Wellbeing Centre	15,365	27,756	35,949		19,063	<b>35,000</b>
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes	9,309	10,805	20,421 (Target: 20,000)	 	16,384	<b>16,500</b>
Number of attendances recorded at Donard Park Multisport Hub	New measure			-	-	<b>35,000</b>
Value of Financial Assistance funding allocated to sports clubs	New measure			-	£225,000	<b>£225,000</b>
Number of leisure centre memberships	9,534	9,923	10,050 (Target: 10,000)	 	10,824	<b>9,500**</b>
Number of capital leisure projects progressed	New measure			-	2	<b>7</b>
Number of play parks upgraded	New measure	3	4		5	<b>2</b>
<b>What you will see by March 2027</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 748,800 paid attendances at our six leisure centres by the end of 2026-27.</li> <li>• 16,500 people participating in targeted health programmes across the District.</li> <li>• 9,500 leisure centre memberships recorded.</li> <li>• 2 play parks upgraded.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Financial assistance allocated for sports clubs to the value of £225,000 for capital projects.</li> <li>• Disability accreditation achieved in an identified tier 1 site.</li> <li>• 30,000 recorded visits to Donard Park Multisport hub.</li> </ul>					
<b>Alignment</b>						
<b>Corporate Plan 2024-27</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District.</li> </ul>					
<b>Community Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing</li> <li>• All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities</li> </ul>					























Draft Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cut Health Waiting Times</li> </ul>			
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service quality	Service availability	Fairness
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director: Active and Healthy Communities</b>			

\*Following further data validation exercises these figures have changed from the Mid Year Assessment of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.

\*\* Target decreased due to 6 month closure of KLC

## Performance Improvement Objective 2

We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting business growth, job creation and pathways to employment		
Why this matters	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Improving skills, employability and job prospects' was your top priority for improving the local area in the 2022 residents survey</li> <li>• 'Supporting local businesses, attracting investment and jobs' is in your top three priorities for improvement</li> <li>• Investment to grow the economy, create jobs and attract tourists is the most important form of investment</li> <li>• 69% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey agreed with this objective</li> </ul> <p>Continuing to support and grow the economy of Newry, Mourne and Down remains a key priority for the Council. Council continues to support the growth of both new business start-ups and the growth of existing businesses through the collaborative delivery of the Go Succeed Programme. 'Go Succeed' is the new go-to source for free expert business advice focusing on the three pillars of starting, growing and scaling your business or business idea.</p> <p>The NMD Labour Market partnership (LMP) is vital for delivery against skills and employability, addressing economic inactivity, and supporting the up-skilling and re-skilling of residents in line with the demand for skills. The LMP has delivered a range of employment academies, careers fairs and jobs fairs, working closely with key stakeholders across the private and public sector.</p> <p>Delivery against the Belfast Region City Deal investment areas continues, with ambitions for job creation and the stimulation of private sector investment across the district.</p> <p>Council is leading on the implementation of a new DfE initiative for the establishment of Local Economic Partnership's which will deliver £4.5 Million of investment over a 3-year period, into initiatives that drive the creation of good jobs, productivity growth, sustainability and decarbonisation.</p>	
		81 new enterprises created as a result of support and 113* new jobs promoted through business start activity
		
		7 new social enterprise start-ups supported, and 6 new social enterprise jobs created
		
Looking Back: What we did between April-September 2025		160 existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions
		
		Delivered a range of Make it Local campaigns to support "Giant Adventures"






<b>Looking Forward:</b> What we will do in 2026-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme.</li> <li>Support the establishment of new businesses through the 'Go Succeed' Programme.</li> <li>Support the growth of existing businesses and creation of new jobs through the 'Go Succeed' Programme.</li> <li>Directly support participants on employment pathway initiatives.</li> <li>Invest in employability and skills through the implementation of the LMP Action Plan.</li> <li>Invest in the creation of good jobs, productivity growth, decarbonization and regional balance through the implementation of a Local Economic Partnership action plan.</li> </ul>					
How we will measure success	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	Status Trend	Q1/Q2 2025-26	2026-27 Target
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	12	12	12 (Target: 12)	 	7	<b>12</b>
Number of social enterprise jobs created	12	16	16 (Target: 12)	 	6	<b>12</b>
Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity	New measure		839 (Target: 712)		555	<b>712</b>
Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	361	151	332 (Target: 361)	 	189*	<b>289</b>
Number of jobs promoted via business start-up activity	187	90	193 (Target: 173)	 	113*	<b>173**</b>
Number of new enterprises created as a result of support	195	90	175 (Target: 195)	 	81	<b>119</b>
Number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions.	220	351	221 (Target: 220)	 	160	<b>220</b>
Number of participants directly supported on employment pathway initiatives	New measure			-	-	<b>250</b>
<b>What you will see by March 2027</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>289 business plans created for Start-Up businesses and employer enterprises.</li> <li>Over 700 participants engaged across all Go Succeed activity.</li> <li>Support provided to 220 existing businesses to progress growth and scaling ambitions.</li> <li>173 new jobs promoted via business start-up activity.</li> <li>12 social enterprise start-ups supported and 12 social enterprise jobs created.</li> <li>250 directly supported participants on employment pathway initiatives.</li> <li>Continued support for new and established local businesses.</li> </ul>					













	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued support for the growth of new employment opportunities.</li> <li>Continued support to grow a labour market that is economically active and prosperous.</li> </ul>			
<b>Alignment</b>				
Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the continued growth and development of our local economy</li> </ul>			
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities</li> </ul>			
Draft Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy</li> </ul>			
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service quality	Service availability	Innovation
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director: Economy, Regeneration and Tourism</b>			

\*The 2025/26 mid year figure is a draft number 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.

## Performance Improvement Objective 3

We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents		
Why this matters	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog mess and dog fouling and rubbish or litter lying around are your top two perceived problems in your local area</li> <li>• 6% of the residents surveyed were dissatisfied with the cleansing service provided by the Council.</li> <li>• 91% of residents said recycling is important to them, an increase of 5% on the 2018 residents survey figure.</li> <li>• 75% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey agreed with this objective</li> </ul> <p>Issues around street cleanliness continue to escalate largely as a result of the increased number of illicit dumping, littering and dog fouling incidents reported to the Council.</p> <p>To improve the overall cleanliness of the District, the Council has reviewed cleansing operations and is currently designing a more effective model of service provision. The Council also remains committed to collaborating with partner organisations and local communities to promote responsible dog ownership, address issues around littering and illicit dumping and generate local pride in having a cleaner, greener District for everyone to enjoy.</p>	
Looking Back: What we did between April-September 2025		Issued 17 fixed penalty notices, 14 of which were paid
		Supported 100% of all 17 community clean up requests received
		10 environmental projects funded through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' Scheme
		Increase in the amount of Local Authority collected municipal waste arisings.
		Decrease in the rate of recycling, to 51.1%
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2026-27	<p>Address issues around recycling, littering, illicit dumping and dog fouling by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing and implementing the Enforcement Improvement Plan.</li> <li>• Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity and social media campaigns.</li> <li>• Encouraging residents to bring properly sorted surplus recyclable waste to our Household Recycling Centres.</li> <li>• Supporting local community clean ups.</li> <li>• Continued implementation of a Paint Re-Use Scheme at a further 2 Household Recycling Centres.</li> <li>• Implementing a new system to determine levels of street cleanliness and identify emerging issues and hotspots.</li> <li>• Embedding the new online reporting tool for dog fouling.</li> <li>• Continuing to implement the rollout out of compactable street litter bins.</li> </ul>	

	Work in partnership with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the 'Live Here Love Here' campaigns.</li> <li>Encourage community groups to 'Adopt a Spot'.</li> <li>Highlight the impact of littering on the marine environment.</li> </ul>					
How we will measure success	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	Status Trend	Q1/Q2 2025-26 Actual	2026-27 Target
Number of fixed penalty notices issued	110	25	31 (Target: 120)	 	17	<b>100</b>
Number of fixed penalty notices paid	91	19	26 (Target: 96)	 	14	<b>80</b>
Percentage of issued fixed penalty notices that are paid	New measure			-	82.4%	<b>80%</b>
Percentage of community clean up requests supported	New measure		100% (Target: 90%)		100%	<b>90%</b>
Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	10	9	15		10	<b>No target</b>
The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling	49.6%	50.1%	48.7% (Target 50%)	 	51.1%	<b>70% by 2030</b>
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	2,319t	932t	429t (Target <20,954 t)	 	257t	<b>&lt;20,954 tonnes* * (2019-20)</b>
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	82,842t	84,636t	85,383t (Target 85,500)	 	45,591t	<b>85,500 tonnes* * (2019-20 target)</b>
<b>What you will see by March 2027</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the number of fixed penalty notices issued and paid.</li> <li>Responsible dog ownership and reduced levels of dog fouling, littering and illicit dumping.</li> <li>Improved opportunities to report dog fouling and identify hotspots for enforcement patrols.</li> <li>Reduction in the disposal of paint from our Household Recycling Centre sites.</li> <li>Opportunities to engage in community clean ups.</li> <li>Increased awareness of environmental messaging including recycling, dog fouling and littering.</li> <li>Decrease in overflowing bins and reduction of street bin collections.</li> <li>A cleaner, greener District, with improved civic and community pride.</li> </ul>					
<b>Alignment</b>						
Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future</li> </ul>					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment</li> </ul>					
Draft Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment</li> </ul>					






7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service availability	Innovation	Sustainability
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director: Sustainability and Environment</b>			

\*The Q1/Q2 2025-26 data for the statutory waste management performance indicators remains provisional and will be finalised when the year-end data is validated and published by DAERA.

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

## Performance Improvement Objective 4

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

<b>Why this matters</b>	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Managing waste, reducing climate change, investing in renewable energy etc. was important to you.</li><li>Green technology skills were the second most important training support needed to improve the growth of resident employability.</li><li>91% of residents said recycling is important to them, an increase of 5% on the 2018 residents survey figure.</li><li>59% of respondents to our 2024-25 survey agreed with this objective</li></ul> <p>Our climate is changing, and we need to prepare. Greenhouse gas emissions cause the Earth’s atmosphere to hold more radiation from the sun which increases the overall temperature of the planet. This change in temperature is altering our climate and causing one of the greatest threats of our time. In October 2019 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council declared a ‘Climate Emergency’.</p> <p>NMDDC is acutely aware of how intrinsic sustainability and care of our district is to its future. Within our new Council structure, a Sustainability Department has been created. This is led by a dedicated Assistant Director with responsibility for issues such as Energy, Council Fleet, Facilities Maintenance and Biodiversity.</p> <p>Environmental sustainability has become a key objective in the development of our capital projects, providing economic growth for the region in an inclusive and sustainable way. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council aims to embed the ethos of sustainability throughout its operations and to provide leadership for the community.</p> <p>The Council also forms part of the Local Government Climate Action Network which is helping to deliver the NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme. This network will enable us to collaborate with other Councils and relevant statutory partners to develop a strategic approach for climate action.</p>		
<b>Looking Back:</b> What we did between April-September 2025		Established the baseline for the Council’s carbon footprint	
		Established the Council’s baseline for renewable energy generation and overall energy consumption	
		Planted 89 trees across the District	
		76% of Council fleet younger than 8 years	
		Progressed the action plan contained within the Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2024-30)	
<b>Looking Forward:</b> What	Address issues around climate change and sustainability by:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Launching the Sustainability and Climate Change strategy.</li></ul>		



















we will do in 2026-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Plan.</li> <li>• Implementing the actions from the biodiversity strategy 2024-30.</li> <li>• Supporting the continued implementation of new Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.</li> <li>• Undertaking the annual assessment of the Council's carbon footprint and renewable energy output.</li> <li>• Continuing to implement the Council's fleet replacement programme.</li> <li>• Continuing to implement the Active Travel Masterplan.</li> </ul>					
How we will measure success	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	Status Trend	Q1/Q2 2025-26 Actual	2026-27 Target
Carbon footprint of Council estate	New measure – Being established			-	5,246 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	<b>50% reduction by 2040</b>
Energy Consumption baseline:	New measure – Being established			-		<b>No Target Set*</b>
Electricity					4,584,089 kWh	
Mains Gas					4,996,994 kWh	
Heating Oil (Kerosene)					12,449,723 litres	
Fleet Use (Diesel)					837,901 litres	
Fleet Use (Unleaded Petrol)					4,995 litres	
Renewable energy generation	New measure – Being established			-	154,684 kWh	<b>No Target Set*</b>
Percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years		75%	79% (Target: 85%)		76%	<b>75%</b>
Number of vehicles within the Council fleet that have an alternative fuel source		1	1 (Target: 10)		1	<b>16</b>
Number of trees planted on Council managed estate		2,800	257 (Target: 2,800)		89	<b>2,800</b>
Number of Council supported EV charging points		20	0 (Target: 18)		0	<b>12</b>
<b>What you will see by March 2027</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of the Council's Climate Change and Sustainable Development strategy.</li> <li>• Publication of the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Plan.</li> </ul>					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued implementation of the Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2024-2030).</li> <li>2,800 new trees planted.</li> <li>Annual Carbon footprint reported for Council estate.</li> <li>Annual Renewable energy reported for Council estate.</li> <li>Annual Energy consumption reported for Council estate.</li> <li>Reduction in vehicle emissions from Council fleet.</li> <li>New electric vehicles operating within Council fleet.</li> </ul>			
<b>Alignment</b>				
Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future</li> </ul>			
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment</li> </ul>			
Draft Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment</li> </ul>			
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic Effectiveness	Efficiency	Innovation	Sustainability
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director: Sustainability and Environment</b>			

\*Further detail in relation to these measures will be established once the Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy has been agreed and published and an associated action plan developed.

## Performance Improvement Objective 5

We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme		
<b>Why this matters</b>	<p>Delivering a more efficient and effective Planning Service for customers is a key priority for improvement for the Council. Planning plays a significant role in promoting sustainable development, regeneration, economic prosperity, investment and job creation for present and future generations of our District. 72% of respondents to our 2025-26 survey also agreed with this objective.</p> <p>The new portal, which launched in December 2022, allowing customers to submit applications online and track live planning applications, is now fully operational and amendments and changes remain ongoing as per agreed structures.</p> <p>Work continues on the Planning Improvement Programme and following discussions with SOLACE and DFI, the programme has been reviewed for 2025-26 and a new work programme is in place.</p> <p>Staff retention and recruitment remain challenging, however as of January 2026 all vacant posts have been filled. Additionally, as part of the Performance Improvement Programme two Higher Level Apprenticeship officers commenced employment in January 2026. Performance against the statutory targets still remains a challenge and continues to be reviewed by SMT and SPR Committees.</p>	
<b>Looking Back:</b> What we did between April-September 2025		72.5% of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks which exceeds the statutory target of 70%
		Average processing time of 44.6 weeks for local planning applications, which is above the regional average of 19.4 weeks
		Average processing time of 54.4 weeks for major planning applications, which is above the regional average of 34.0 weeks.
		Received 583 local planning applications, which is the second highest across Northern Ireland and accounts for 12% of all the applications received regionally.
<b>Looking Forward:</b> What we will do in 2026-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases which have been in the system for over 12 months.</li> <li>• Ongoing work with agents and architects to improve the standard of planning applications submitted.</li> <li>• Support employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries'.</li> <li>• Review and consult on representations made during the consultation period after the launch of the Draft Plan Strategy.</li> <li>• Explore the development of a training programme for staff and members in collaboration with the Department of Infrastructure (DfI) as part of the Council's performance improvement programme for planning.</li> <li>• Review Council's Enforcement Strategy.</li> </ul>	

How we will measure success	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	Status Trend	Q1/Q2 2025-26 Actual	2026-27 Target
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	21.6	33.7	45.2 (Target: <15 weeks)	 	44.6 weeks	<b>&lt;15 weeks</b>
Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)	89.0	154.8	29.6 (Target: <30 weeks)	 	54.4 weeks	<b>&lt;30 weeks</b>
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks	58.6%	60.0%	47.6% (Target: 70%)	 	72.5%	<b>70%</b>
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more**	228	352	408 (Target: 150)	 	516	<b>150</b>
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less**	934	1,154	1,118 (Target: 700)	 	1,021	<b>700</b>
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more**	503	599	574 (Target: 450)	 	641	<b>450</b>
What you will see by March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A more efficient and effective planning service.</li><li>• Improved processing times for local and major planning applications.</li><li>• Improved processing times for planning enforcement cases.</li><li>• Reduction in the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases in the system.</li><li>• An empowered and motivated workforce.</li><li>• Increased confidence in the Planning system.</li><li>• Sustainable development and regeneration of the District.</li><li>• A review of representations made during the consultation period for the Draft Plan Strategy.</li><li>• A training course developed for Council staff and members in collaboration with DfI.</li><li>• Council’s enforcement strategy reviewed.</li></ul>					
Alignment						
Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliver sustainable services</li></ul>					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities</li></ul>					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing</li><li>• Reform and Transformation of Public Services</li></ul>					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service availability	Sustainability	Efficiency		
Responsible Officer	Director: Economy, Regeneration and Tourism					

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

\*\*The 2026-27 targets have been carried forward from 2025-26 and will be reviewed prior to the publication of the Performance Improvement Plan 2026-27, in June 2026.

## Strategic Alignment

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

## Consultation on the draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2026-27

<b>I am responding:</b>	as an individual	
	on behalf of an organisation (please state)	

### Question 1

**Which consultation group do you belong to?** *Please tick all that apply.*

Resident	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elected Member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Business	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Community Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Voluntary Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statutory Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other, please provide further information below.

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### Question 2

**Do you agree that the draft Performance Improvement Objectives are appropriate for our District?**

<b>Performance Improvement Objective 1</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services		
<b>Comments:</b>		
<b>Performance Improvement Objective 2</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting business growth, job creation and pathways to employment		
<b>Comments:</b>		
<b>Performance Improvement Objective 3</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>

We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents		
<b>Comments:</b>		
<b>Performance Improvement Objective 4</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change		
<b>Comments:</b>		
<b>Performance Improvement Objective 5</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme		
<b>Comments:</b>		

### Question 3

**Would you suggest any alternative Performance Improvement Objective(s), 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success'?**

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### Question 4

**Which of the areas outlined below would you like to see Newry, Mourne and Down District Council make improvements to in the future? (please tick 3 areas)**

Area	
Arts Centres and Museums	
Building Control	
Car Parking	
Cemeteries	
Cleansing Service	
Community Services/Centres	
Council Parks and Open Spaces	

Council Website	
Economic Development (Programmes to support the economy)	
Environmental Health	
Grants, Procurement and Finance	
Harbours and Marinas	
Leisure Centres	
Licensing (dogs, gaming, entertainment etc)	
Planning	
Play Parks	
Recycling	
Bin Collection	
Registration Services (Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships)	
Tourism Events	
Visitor Attractions	
Visitor Information Centres	
Other Services (please specify)	

**What specific improvements would you like Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to make in future years?**

Completed questionnaires or comments should be submitted by **17 April 2026** to:

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

**In Writing:** Performance and Improvement  
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
Co Down  
BT35 8DJ

**Telephone:** 0330 137 4000

**Thank you for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire.**

**We look forward to hearing from you.**