

Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23

Mid Year Assessment



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

**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

Contents

	Page
Introduction	3
Progress at a Glance	4
Performance Improvement Objective 1 We will encourage local people to lead healthy and active lives by improving the quality of our parks and open spaces	5
Performance Improvement Objective 2 We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs	7
Performance Improvement Objective 3 We will improve the cleanliness of our District by addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	9
Performance Improvement Objective 4 We will build the capacity of local communities through the Financial Assistance Scheme	11
Performance Improvement Objective 5 We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	12







Introduction

This report provides an overview of the Council's progress in implementing the performance improvement objectives between April-September 2022. Where possible, performance has been tracked against the targets set within the Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23.

Performance Improvement Objectives 2022-23

- 1. We will encourage local people to lead healthy and active lives by improving the quality of our parks and open spaces**
- 2. We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs**
- 3. We will improve the cleanliness of our District by addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents**
- 4. We will build the capacity of local communities through the Financial Assistance Scheme**
- 5. We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme**

Legend

Status		Legend	
	Target or objective achieved / on track to be achieved		Performance has improved since Q1/Q2 2021-22
	Target or objective partially achieved / likely to be achieved / subject to delay		Performance is similar to Q1/Q2 2021-22
	Target or objective not achieved / unlikely to be achieved		Performance has declined since Q1/Q2 2021-22

It should be noted that:

- For the statutory performance indicators for economic development, planning and waste management, performance has been compared to the same period in 2021-22.
- The information contained within this report may be subject to change when the results are verified, validated and reported through the annual Assessment of Performance which will be published by 30 September 2023.

Progress at a glance

Performance Improvement Objective	Progress	Status Trend
We will encourage local people to lead healthy and active lives by improving the quality of our parks and open spaces	160,234 visits recorded at Warrenpoint Municipal Park	
	109,433 visits recorded at 10 community trails	
	Green flag accreditation for 5 parks, including Slieve Gullion Forest Park and Delamont Country Park	
	Blue flag accreditation for Cranfield, Murlough and Tyrella beaches	
	Four play park projects have been completed with a further three projects progressed.	
We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs	92 new jobs promoted through business start activity	
	10 new social enterprises supported and 4 new social enterprise jobs created	
	247 businesses supported and 467.5 mentoring days delivered through 'NMD Growth', 'Digital Growth', 'Tender for Growth' and 'Sales Accelerator'	
	9.5 new jobs and 2 new businesses created through SEAFLAG 2	
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	62 fixed penalty notices issued and 48 paid	
	Assistance provided towards 31 community clean ups	
	£13k awarded towards 10 environmental projects through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' scheme	
	Increase in the rate of recycling	
	Decrease in the amount of waste sent to landfill	
We will build the capacity of local communities through the Financial Assistance Scheme	Over £1m awarded towards 304 successful applications through the Financial Assistance Scheme	
	£214k awarded towards Sport and Community Facilities Capital projects	
	£121k awarded towards 9 Tourism and Arts Events and a further £114K towards 13 Arts & Culture Projects across the District.	
	5 capacity building sessions delivered to community groups that have been awarded funding	
	4,993 participants have taken part in completed projects funded through the Financial Assistance Scheme	
We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	The average processing time for local planning applications increased to 17.6 weeks	
	The average processing time for major planning applications increased to 303.8 weeks	
	50.0% of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks	
	Increase in the number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	
	Slight decrease in the number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more	

Performance Improvement Objective 1







We will encourage local people to lead healthy and active lives by improving the quality of our parks and open spaces

Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism

Progress:

- The Council continues to work towards UNESCO Global Geopark designation for Mourne, Gullion, Strangford with a Master plan and Business and Improvement plan being delivered.
- The Council is progressing the development of the concept, design, outline business case and completion of PAD for the Narnia Experience at Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor.
- Progress is underway to attain planning for new visitor facilities at Tyrella beach.
- The outdoor performance and interpretive space at Slieve Gullion Forest Park is now complete.
- The draft proposals for the viewpoint upgrade, walking trails and visitor information centre at Delamont Country Park have been finalised. A Planning application has been submitted for trail development and enhancement at Delamont Country Park and a procurement exercise to appoint a suitable company to carry out design, supply and installation of all signage, interpretation and furniture/seating is progressing.
- The Council, working with ORNI(Outdoor Recreation NI), erected signage on responsible use of outdoor space across the District's parks and beaches.
- There are 2 community trails being developed this year with a further 4 trails progressed to shovel ready. ORNI are also carrying out feasibility studies for the development of a further three trails.
- A diverse range of activities have been delivered at Warrenpoint Park, including a celebration event of community, gardening and food to mark the completion of the parks heritage fund project. In late August an interactive trail was installed with an accompanying website which allows you to scan QR codes at each activity point to discover further details about Warrenpoint Municipal Park. Wake the Giant in the Park and the Loughside Festival were also hosted in Warrenpoint Park.

Measure of Success	2022-23		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1/Q2 Actual		
Number of recorded visits at:				
Kilbroney Park*	No target	Data not available	-	The number of visits recorded at Kilbroney Park will be reported through the Assessment of Performance 2022-23.
Slieve Gullion Forest Park*	No target	Data not available		The number of visits recorded at Slieve Gullion Forest Park will be reported through the Assessment of Performance 2022-23.
Carlingford Lough Greenway	No target	Data not available	-	The number of visits recorded at the Carlingford Lough Greenway will be reported through the

				Assessment of Performance 2022-23.
Delamont Country Park	No target	Data not available		The number of visits recorded at Delamont Country Park will be reported through the Assessment of Performance 2022-23.
Warrenpoint Municipal Park	No target	160,234		160,234 visits were recorded at Warrenpoint Municipal Park between April and September 2022. This is an increase of 14.6% when compared to the 139,845 visits recorded for the same period last year.
Community trails	120,000	109,433 visits		109,433 visits were recorded at 10 community trails. Drumkeeragh Forest recorded the most visits (17,165) between Q1/2 2022-23
Number of parks with green flag accreditation	5	5		The Council was awarded green flag accreditation for five parks, including Kilbroney Park, Slieve Gullion Forest Park and Delamont Country Park and green flag heritage accreditation for Warrenpoint Municipal Park and Newry Canal.
Number of parks with green flag heritage accreditation	3	2		
Number of beaches with blue flag accreditation	3	3		The Council was awarded blue flag accreditation for Cranfield, Murlough and Tyrella beaches in Q1 2022-23.
Number of new/upgraded play parks	7	4		The Council has completed 4 play park projects in 2022-23 with three projects progressed. Equipment has been procured for the two new play parks at Darraghs Cross and Teconnaught. Kittys Road play park is currently being upgraded with work already started on site.

*New counter systems have been installed across selected Council parks and work is underway to verify the quality of the data for accuracy. It should be noted that the baseline data records the number of vehicles entering the parks which is multiplied by 4 to calculate the number of individual visits.

Performance Improvement Objective 2









We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs






Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2022-23, the Council:

- Awarded a new contract to deliver the multi-media 'Make it Local' marketing campaign to stimulate footfall and support local businesses across the District. It will be launched in Q3 2022-23 and will feature interested local businesses.
- Administered the DAERA Micro Business Development Grant in May 2022 which saw 58 Letters of Offer accepted to the value of £199,803.14.
- Supported 154 entrepreneurs with an approved Business Plan, creating 92 new businesses and promoting 92 new jobs.
- Supported 247 local businesses and delivered 467.5 mentoring days, 25 workshops, 2 thematic programmes, 1 Master Class, 1 Trade Visit and 1 'Meet the Buyer' event through the 'NMD Growth', 'Digital Growth', 'Tender for Growth' and 'Sales Accelerator' programmes.

Measure of success	2022-23		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1/Q2 Actual		
Number of business plans approved through NI 'Go For It'*	312	154		154 Business Plans approved, achieving 49.4% of the annual target.
Number of new business starts created through NI 'Go For It'	187	92		92 new businesses created, achieving 49.2% of the annual target.
Number of new jobs promoted through NI 'Go For It' (statutory performance indicator)	>155 173 (updated standard)	92	 	92 new jobs promoted, achieving 59.4% of the statutory annual target. When compared to Q1/Q2 2021-22, this is below the 114 jobs which were promoted through the NI 'Go For It' programme.
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	12	10		10 new social enterprise start-ups engaged, achieving 83% of the annual target.
Number of social enterprise jobs created	12	4		4 new social enterprise jobs created, achieving a third of the annual target.
Number of businesses supported through 'NMD Growth'	105	104		104 businesses supported, achieving 99% of the annual target.
Number of jobs created through 'NMD Growth'	50		-	The number of jobs created will be monitored in Q4 and reported through the Assessment of Performance 2022-23.
Number of businesses	77	42		42 businesses supported, achieving 54.5% of the annual target.

supported through 'Digital Growth'				
Number of jobs created through 'Digital Growth'	135		-	The number of jobs created will be monitored in Q4 and reported through the Assessment of Performance 2022-23.
Number of businesses supported through 'Tender for Growth'	57	43		43 businesses supported, achieving 75.4% of annual target.
Number of jobs created through 'Tender for Growth'	99.5		-	The number of jobs created will be monitored in Q4 and reported through the Assessment of Performance 2022-23.
Number of businesses supported through 'Sales Accelerator'	34	58		58 businesses supported in wave 2 and 3 of the programme, achieving well over 100% of the annual target. This programme was launched during Q1 2021-22, with good levels of uptake which have continued into Q1 and Q2 2022-23.
Number of jobs created through 'Sales Accelerator'	120		-	The number of jobs created will be monitored in Q4 and reported through the Assessment of Performance 2022-23.
Number of businesses supported through 'Digital Surge'	15	15		The Council has supported 15 businesses through the Digital Surge Programme, which accounts for 100% of its annual target.
Number of new jobs created in coastal areas (SEAFLAG 2)	Mar 2023: 5.5	To date		To date, 9.5 new jobs have been created through the SEAFLAG programme, exceeding the 2023 target of 5.5 new jobs. It should be noted that project targets/objectives are individual to each project. The COVID 19 Pandemic delayed the commencement and completion of some projects which in turn had a knock on effect on the creation of new jobs and businesses. Progress against the targets set will continue to be monitored by SEA FLAG until 31 March 2023. Targets scheduled to be met after 31 March 2023 will be monitored by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).
		9.5		
Number of new businesses created in coastal areas (SEAFLAG 2)	Mar 2023: 2	2		A total of two new businesses have been created in Ardglass and Kilkeel and the 2023 target has been achieved.

Performance Improvement Objective 3

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






Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Sustainable Environment

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2022-23, the Council:

- Received 405 service requests for incidents of illicit dumping (264), littering (45) and dog fouling (96).
- Issued 58 littering and fly tipping fixed penalty notices (45 of which have been paid) and 4 dog fouling fixed penalty notices (3 of which have been paid). Overall, 77.4% of fixed penalty notices have been paid to date.
- Assisted 31 voluntary organisations, community groups, sports associations, schools and individuals with community clean ups across the District. This included eight beach cleans at a range of locations.
- Supported the NI 'Live Here Love Here' scheme, through which £13,000 was awarded towards 10 environmental projects covering themes such as community clean ups, community food growing initiatives and skill sharing in horticulture and community growing.
- Recorded an increase in the rate of recycling and a decrease in the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill and municipal waste arisings. All current statutory standards have been achieved.

Measure of success	2022-23		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1/Q2 Actual		
LEAMS score (Keep NI Beautiful Cleanliness Index)	65	-	-	The annual Cleaner Neighbourhoods Survey results for the 2022-23 financial year will be published by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful in July 2023 and the LEAMS score for Newry, Mourne and Down will be reported through the annual Assessment of Performance 2022-23.
Number of fixed penalty notices issued (littering, fly tipping and dog fouling)	150	62	☹️	The Council issued 62 fixed penalty notices, achieving 41.3% of the annual target. To date, 48 of the fixed penalty notices have been paid which represents 38.4% of the annual target. FPN's not paid will be referred for legal action with a higher penalty likely to apply.
Number of fixed penalty notices paid (littering, fly tipping and dog fouling)	125	48	☹️	
Number of community clean ups supported	100	31	☹️	The Council assisted with 31 community clean ups between April and September 2022.
Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	No target	10	😊	A total of 10 environmental projects across Newry, Mourne and Down received funding through the NI

				'Live Here Love Here' small grants scheme.
The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (<i>statutory performance indicator</i>)	50% by 2020 (65% by 2030)	Q1	 	In 2021-22 the Council did not achieve the 2020 recycling target of 50%, falling slightly below this at 49.1%. For Q1 2022-23 however, the 2020 target has been exceeded with the rate of recycling recorded as 51.8%. This falls below the regional average of 53.8% and the Council is currently ranked 8/11 across Northern Ireland. When compared to Q1 2021-22, this represents an increase of 1.4% in the rate of recycling, from 50.4% to 51.8%, which is just below the regional rate of increase of 1.7% when comparing the same quarters.
		Actual		
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled (<i>statutory performance indicator</i>)	<20,954 tonnes (2019-20)	564 tonnes	 	During Q1 2022-23, the Council sent 564 tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste to landfill which was the second lowest across Northern Ireland and has only used 2.7% of the NILAS* allowance. When compared to Q1 2021-22, the amount of waste that was sent to landfill decreased by 14.3%, from 658 tonnes.
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings (<i>statutory performance indicator</i>)	No target	22,351 tonnes		When compared to Q1 2021-22, the amount of local authority collected municipal waste arisings decreased by 7.1%, from 24,059 tonnes to 22,351 tonnes. This decrease is similar to the regional trend and may be attributed to householders returning to the workplace post pandemic, thus generating less waste at home.

*NILAS: Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme.

Performance Improvement Objective 4





We will build the capacity of local communities through the Financial Assistance Scheme

Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Active and Healthy Communities

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2022-23:

- The Council awarded £1,013,210 towards 304 applications across 18 themes, including Community Engagement, Summer Schemes, Irish Language and Local Biodiversity.
- The most popular themes were Community Engagement, Good Relations and PCSP Community Safety and Support, through which £181,598 was awarded towards 112 successful applications.
- The highest amount of funding was awarded to Sports Facility Capital projects (£214,143 awarded to 4 applications) followed by Tourism and Arts Events (£121,424 awarded to 9 projects) and Arts and Culture projects (£114,325 towards 13 projects)
- The Council awarded £12,760 towards 13 Suicide Prevention and Emotional Wellbeing projects.
- Through existing Service Level Agreements, the Council awarded a total of £604,761.62 to the Newry Gateway Club, Newry Mourne and Down Community Advice, County Down Rural Community Network and Confederation of Community Groups.

Measure of Success	2022-23		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1/Q2 Actual		
% of successful financial assistance applications*	70%	67.8%		Between April and September 2022, the Council received 485 applications to the first two calls of the 2022-23 Financial Assistance Scheme. 329 (67.8%) applications were successful with 78 failing stage 1 and 78 failing stage 2 of the process. 92% of successful applications were awarded funding with the Council using the score and rank process across five of the themes.
% of financial assistance applications funded*	No target	62.7%	-	
Number of capacity building sessions delivered	7	5		The Council delivered five capacity building sessions focusing primarily on procurement training and making a claim.
Number of participants at training sessions	300	91		A total of 91 people attended the sessions which were targeted specifically at community groups who had been awarded funding..
Number of participants/beneficiaries of the Financial Assistance Scheme	C50,000	4,993		To date, the Council has recorded 4,993 participants on those projects which have already been delivered and completed. The total number of participants benefitting from the Financial Assistance Scheme is likely to increase substantially when the final claim and evaluations forms are submitted by successful applicants.

Performance Improvement Objective 5





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



Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism

Progress:

During Q1 2022-23, the Council:

- Received 388 planning applications in total which is the highest across Northern Ireland.
- The Council decided on 424 applications in Q1 2022-23, which is the highest across Northern Ireland. 396 local planning applications were approved, resulting in an approval rate of 93.4%, which is below the Northern Ireland average of 95.1%.
- Processed 37.8% of local planning applications within the statutory standard of <15 weeks, which is below the regional average of 45.9%. This represents a decrease of 4.8% when compared to the 42.6% of applications processed within <15 weeks during Q1 2021-22.
- Received 2 major planning applications, decided on 1 application and approved 1 application. Similar to Q1 2021-22, no major planning applications were processed within the statutory standard of <30 weeks which is below the current regional average of 23.3%.
- Opened 98 enforcement cases which is the third highest across NI and concluded 116 cases in total during Q1 2022-23. As at 30 June 2022, the Council had 700 planning enforcement cases in the system, which is by far, the highest across Northern Ireland.

Measure of Success	2022-23		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1 Actual		
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks) <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	<15 weeks	17.6 weeks		During Q1 2022-23, the average processing time for local planning applications was 17.6 weeks which is above the regional average of 16.6 weeks. When compared to Q1 2021-22, this represents an increase of 0.8 weeks for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks) <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	<30 weeks	303.8 weeks		During Q1 2022-23, the average processing time for major planning applications was 303.8 weeks which is significantly above the regional average of 51.3 weeks. When compared to Q1 2021-22, this represents an increase of 261.2 weeks for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	70%	50.0%		During Q1 2022-23, 50% of planning enforcement cases were concluded within 39 weeks, which is well below the regional average of 70.3%. When compared to Q1 2021-22, this represents a decrease of 4.4% for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Number of planning applications in the	150	221		As at 30 June 2022, Newry, Mourne and Down had 221 planning applications in the system for 12 months or more. This

system for 12 months or more				represents an increase of 34 applications when compared to 31 March 2022 and a further reduction of 71 applications is required to achieve the annual target.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less	700	775		As at 30 June 2022, Newry, Mourne and Down had 775 planning applications in the system for 12 months or less. This represents a decrease of 96 applications when compared to 31 March 2022 and a further reduction of 75 applications is required to achieve the annual target.
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more	450	469		As at 30 June 2022, Newry, Mourne and Down had 469 enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more. This represents a decrease of 3 cases when compared to 31 March 2022 and a further reduction of 19 cases is required to achieve the annual target.