

Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25

Mid Year Assessment



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

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Introduction

This report provides an overview of the Council's progress in implementing the performance improvement objectives between April-September 2024. Where possible, performance has been tracked against the targets set within the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25.

Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-25

- 1. We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our local 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**

Legend

Status		Legend	
	Target or objective achieved / on track to be achieved		Performance has improved since Q1/Q2 2023-24
	Target or objective partially achieved / likely to be achieved / subject to delay		Performance is similar to Q1/Q2 2023-24
	Target or objective not achieved / unlikely to be achieved		Performance has declined since Q1/Q2 2023-24

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 2023-24.
- 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 2024.

Progress at a glance

Performance Improvement Objective	Progress	Status Trend
We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our local facilities and services	330,357 paid attendances recorded across the six Council Leisure Centres	 
	155,659 visits recorded at 10 community trails	 
	9,217 leisure centre memberships recorded	 
	9,388 people participating in targeted health programmes	 
	9,153 recorded attendances of young people participating in targeted youth health and wellbeing initiatives	 
We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses job creation	69 new jobs promoted through business start activity	 
	8 new social enterprises supported, and 8 new social enterprise jobs created	 
	115 business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	 
	179 businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions	 
	135 new enterprises created as a result of support.	 
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	12 fixed penalty notices issued and 10 paid	 
	100% of community clean up requests supported	
	£30k awarded towards 15 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 improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change	Carbon footprint of Council estate to be progressed in line with the Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations 2024	
	1 vehicle within the Council fleet currently has an alternative fuel source. Orders are due to be placed for 10 No small electric vans.	
	30 trees planted on the Council managed estate	
	18 dual EV chargers are to be installed across the District through the collaborative ORCs.	
	70% of Council fleet younger than 8 years	 
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 43.1 weeks	 
	The average processing time for major planning applications decreased to 118.5 weeks	 
	The percentage of planning enforcement cases progresses within 39 weeks decreased to 40.8%	 
	Increase in the number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	
	Increase in the number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more	

Performance Improvement Objective 1

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








Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Active and Healthy Communities

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2024-25, the Council:

- Ran a comprehensive summer activity programme across the District during July and August.
- Continued to work with the capital estates team on progressing the design for Jennings Park in order to submit a planning application.
- Progressed the essential remedial work at Newry Pool.
- Completed the Play Strategy review and produced a Play Strategy Review Report.
- Sports capital financial assistance call was opened and completed in Q1/Q2.

Measure of Success	2024-25		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1/Q2 Actual		
Number of paid attendances at:	850,000	330,357	😊	In the first six months of 2024-25 there were a total of 330,357 paid attendances recorded across the six leisure centres in the District. The highest number was recorded in Down Leisure Centre accounting for 38% of the total paid attendances recorded.
Newry Leisure Centre		104,406	▼	
Down Leisure Centre		126,234	▶	
Kilkeel Leisure Centre		39,785	△	
St. Colmans Sports Complex		25,625	△	
Newcastle Centre & Tropicana Outdoor Swimming Complex		12,329	▼	
Ballymote Sports & Wellbeing Centre		14,116	△	
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes	20,000	9,388	😊 ▼	During Q1 & Q2 of 2024-25 participation in targeted health programmes reached 9,388 which is 47% of the annual target. This figure does however represent a

				10.2% decrease on the figure recorded for the same period last year.
Number of young people participating in targeted youth health and wellbeing initiatives	15,000	9,153	 	Between April & September 2024, 9,153 attendances were recorded of young people participating in youth health and wellbeing initiatives across the District, achieving 61% of the annual target. This figure does however represent a 35% decrease on the figure recorded for the same period last year. These initiatives included summer sports camps, teen fitness, volleyball and £1 summer activities which have been impacted as a result of the closure of Newry swimming pool.
Number of leisure centre memberships	10,000	9,217	 	A total of 9,217 leisure centre memberships were recorded by the end of Q2 2024-25 which is a decrease of 6.9% when compared to the 9,904 memberships recorded at the end of Q2 2023-24
Number of capital leisure projects progressed	No target	8		Projects being progressed at different stages for Donard Park, Dundrum, Kilkeel Leisure Centre, Jennings Park & Dunleath.
Number of recorded visits at community trails	265,000	155,659	 	155,659 visits were recorded at the community trails across the District between April and September of this year, achieving over 58.7% of the annual target set. This figure also represents a 29% increase on the figure recorded for the same period last year.

Performance Improvement Objective 2








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




Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2024-25, the Council:

- Approved the 2024-25 Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Action Plan with two LMP meeting conducted.
- LMP Employment Pathway Job Fair event on 24th May with 50 employers; 13 support organisations; and 301 attendees, over 625 jobs were on offer and 71% of attendees were aged 18-49.
- LMP Golf Futures – Post Primary School engagement (50 pupils) Amgen Irish Open
- Recruitment commenced for LMP HGV academy.
- Received funding £192,650.00 for Multiply from UKSPF to upskill employees on numeracy
- Delivered a range of master classes (in person and online) via Go Succeed
- Delivered a Make it Local campaign in Newcastle to support the business community during Eats and Beats and the Amgen Irish Open.
- Continues to support the startup and growth of Social Enterprises in NMD.
- Continues to support artisan traders via artisan markets held monthly in Downpatrick, Newcastle and Warrenpoint. .

Measure of success	2024-25		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1/Q2 Actual		
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	12	8	 	8 new social enterprise start-ups engaged, achieving 67% of the annual target.
Number of social enterprise jobs created	12	8	 	8 new social enterprise jobs created, achieving 67% of the annual target.
Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity	712	460		Between April and September 2024, 460 people registered for the Go Succeed Programme achieving 65% of the annual target. These registrations were across the three pillars of: Engage: 226 Foundation 55, and Growth: 179
Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	361	115	 	115 Business Plans approved, achieving 32% of the annual target. These include: 102 Business Plans 13 Enterprise Action Plans

Number of new enterprises created as a result of support	195	135		226 start-ups registered for 'Go Succeed' between April and September 2024. Using the methodology developed by the programme this has resulted in 135 new startups registering to be created, achieving 69% of the annual target.
Number of new jobs promoted through business start up activity NI 'Go Succeed' <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	170	69		69 jobs were created between April and September 2024. Go Succeed offers 3 types of plans (Basic, Enterprise Action and Business). This accounts for 41% of the annual target
Number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions	220	179		179 businesses received 1-2-1 diagnostic support. Mentoring is allocated depending on growth ambitions i.e. 10 hours. 15 hours and 21 hours. Average support is 15 hours.

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







Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Sustainability and Environment

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2024-25, the Council:

- Received 371 service requests for incidents of illicit dumping and fly tipping (293) and dog fouling (78).
- Issued 12 fixed penalty notices (10 of which have been paid). Overall, 83.5% of fixed penalty notices have been paid to date.
- Assisted 12 voluntary organisations, community groups, sports associations, schools and individuals with community clean ups across the District.
- Supported the NI 'Live Here Love Here' scheme, through which £30,469 was awarded towards 15 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. All current statutory standards have been achieved.

Measure of success	2024-25 Target	Q1/Q2 Actual	Status	Explanatory note
LEAMS score (Keep NI Beautiful Cleanliness Index)	65	-	-	The annual Cleaner Neighbourhoods Survey results for the 2023-24 financial year have not yet been published by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. Once it is released it will be reported through the annual Assessment of Performance 2024-25.
Number of fixed penalty notices issued (littering, fly tipping and dog fouling)	120	12		The Council issued 12 fixed penalty notices, achieving 10% of the annual target. To date, 10 of the fixed penalty notices have been paid which represents 83.5% of the annual target. FPN's not paid will be referred for legal action with a higher penalty likely to apply. It should be noted that the post responsible for the management of the enforcement team continues to be vacant.
Number of fixed penalty notices paid (littering, fly tipping and dog fouling)	96	10		
Percentage of community clean up requests supported	90%	100%		The Council assisted with 12 community clean ups between April and September 2024, providing

				support to all requests from the community.
Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	No target	15		A total of 15 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	Q1 Actual	 	In Q1 2024-25, the 2020 target has been exceeded with the rate of recycling recorded as 52.5% for Newry, Mourne and Down. This falls below the regional average of 54.5% and the Council is currently ranked 9/11 across Northern Ireland. When compared to Q1 2023-24, this represents an increase of 0.1% in the rate of recycling, from 52.4% to 52.5%.
		52.5%		
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled (<i>statutory performance indicator</i>)	<20,954 tonnes (2019-20)	51	 	During Q1 2024-25, the Council sent 51 tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste to landfill which was the second lowest across Northern Ireland and has only used 0.2% of the NILAS* allowance. When compared to Q1 2023-24, the amount of waste that was sent to landfill decreased by 90%, from 504 tonnes.
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings (<i>statutory performance indicator</i>)	No target	23,250		When compared to Q1 2023-24, the amount of local authority collected municipal waste arisings increased by 3.5%, from 22,473 tonnes to 23,250 tonnes. This increase is higher than the 1.6% increase experienced at the regional level.

*NILAS: Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme.

Performance Improvement Objective 4









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

Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Sustainability & Environment

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2024-25, the Council:

- Progressed the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy which will be brought to Committee for approval in Q4 2024-25.
- Continued the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan which will be brought to Committee for approval in Q4 2024-25.
- Progressed the development of the Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2023-30), with a publication of the strategy due in Q4 2024-25.
- Continues to implement the Fleet Replacement Programme. Fleet modernisation is delivering a significant reduction in CO2 emissions.

Measure of Success	2024-25 Target	Q1/Q2 Actual	Status	Explanatory note
Carbon footprint of Council Estate	No Target			The introduction of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 has set a target of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 came into effect on 3rd May 2024. These regulations require Council to provide the following reports: •Climate Mitigation – Report due by 31st October 2025 •Climate Adaptation – Report due by 31st March 2026 The requirement for carbon baseline reporting commences for financial year ending 31st of March 2025.
Renewable Energy generation	No Target			
Energy Consumption Baseline	No Target			
Percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years	85%	70%	 	70% of the Council's fleet is younger than 8 years and is an increase of 9% when compared to the 61% recorded for the same period last year.
Number of vehicles within the Council fleet that have an alternative fuel source	10	1	 	Approval has been granted for the replacement of a proportion of existing small and medium sized diesel vans with electric vehicles. Orders are now due to be placed for 10 No small electric vans. The funding has been approved for charging infrastructure, procurement for this project is currently underway.
Number of trees planted on Council managed estate	2,800	30		30 trees have been planted across the District during Q1 & Q2. In general, the planting season takes place during Q3 &

				Q4 with a number of projects planned to take place during this period.
Number of Council supported EV charging points	18	0	😐	18 dual chargers are to be installed through the collaborative ORCs (On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme) project, which is currently being procured, with delivery expected by the end of Q4 2024-25.

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 Economy, Regeneration and Tourism

Progress:

During Q1 2024-25, the Council:

- Received 287 planning applications in total which is the third highest across Northern Ireland.
- The Council decided on 274 applications in Q1 2024-25, which is the second highest across Northern Ireland. 247 local planning applications were approved, resulting in an approval rate of 90.1%, which is below the Northern Ireland average of 94.5%.
- Processed 1.8% of local planning applications within the statutory standard of <15 weeks, which is below the regional average of 43.4%. This represents a decrease of 14.6% when compared to the 16.4% of applications processed within <15 weeks during Q1 2023-24.
- Received 6 major planning application, decided on 4 applications and approved 3 applications. In Q1 2023-24, 25% of major planning applications were processed within the statutory standard of <30 weeks which is below the current regional average of 43.9%. This represents an increase of 25% compared to the 0% applications processed within <30 weeks in Q1 2023-24.
- Opened 76 enforcement cases which is the third highest across NI with 71 cases concluded. As of 30 June 2024, the Council had 814 planning enforcement cases in the system, which is by far, the highest across Northern Ireland.

Measure of Success	2024-25		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1 Actual		
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks) <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	<15 weeks	43.1 weeks		During Q1 2024-25, the average processing time for local planning applications was 43.1 weeks which is above the regional average of 19.0 weeks. When compared to Q1 2023-24, this represents an increase of 14.5 weeks for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks) <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	<30 weeks	118.5 weeks		During Q1 2024-25, the average processing time for major planning applications was 118.5 weeks which is above the regional average of 38.6 weeks. When compared to Q1 2023-24 however, this represents a decrease of 394.5 weeks for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within	70%	40.8%		During Q1 2024-25, the percentage of cases concluded within 39 weeks was 40.8% which is below the regional average of 69.7%. When compared to Q1 2023-24,

39 weeks (<i>statutory performance indicator</i>)				this represents a decrease of 26.5% for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	150	397		As of 30 June 2024, Newry, Mourne and Down had 397 planning applications in the system for 12 months or more. This represents an increase of 45 applications when compared to March 2024 and 157 applications when compared to 30 June 2023. A reduction of 247 applications is required to achieve the annual target.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less	700	1,108		As of 30 June 2024, Newry, Mourne and Down had 1,108 planning applications in the system for 12 months or less. This represents a decrease of 46 applications when compared to 31 March 2024 and an increase of 84 applications when compared to 30 June 2023. A reduction of 408 applications is required to achieve the annual target.
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more	450	598		As of 30 June 2024, Newry, Mourne and Down had 598 enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more. This represents a decrease of 1 case when compared to 31 March 2024 and an increase of 61 cases when compared to 30 June 2023. A reduction of 148 cases is required to achieve the annual target.