

Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23



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

**Newry, Mourne
and Down**

District Council

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An Cathaoirleach
Chairperson
Councillor Michael Savage



An
Príomhfheidhmeannach
Chief Executive
Marie Ward

Foreword

Welcome to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23. Following another challenging year for us all, which was dominated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, when we look back, we can be proud of our achievements.

The Council worked tirelessly to deliver essential services and implement the performance improvement objectives. Our residents and visitors continued to re-connect with the natural beauty of the District and we recorded over 1.6m visits at Kilbroney Park, Slieve Gullion Forest Park and Warrenpoint Municipal Park. We retained blue flag accreditation for our beaches, supported 94 community clean ups and issued more fixed penalty notices to address environmental crime than in previous years.

Through our economic development programmes, we supported 423 local businesses and social enterprises and helped to create 235 local jobs. We improved the processing times of local planning applications and we hope to achieve further improvements following the implementation of the new electronic planning system later this year. Through the Financial Assistance Scheme, we awarded over £1.5m to local community

groups to deliver a range of projects which 54,908 people benefitted from.

However, whilst much has been achieved, there is still more to do to make Newry, Mourne and Down a great place to live, work, visit and invest in. Through this year's performance improvement objectives, we will continue to focus on what matters most to you - improving the quality of our parks and open spaces, growing the local economy, improving the cleanliness of our District, building the capacity of local communities and improving the performance of our Planning Service.

We remain confident that the Council will continue to improve the quality of life for all local communities and build a District we can all be proud of.

Introduction

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 sets out a General Duty of Improvement for local government, whereby all district councils must put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. The Council is required to set annual improvement objectives for the services it provides and to have in place arrangements to achieve these objectives. The Council recognises 'improvement' to mean activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities.

The performance improvement objectives do not describe every improvement the Council plans to make during 2022-23. Alternatively, they provide an overview of how the Council will address the issues which matter most to local communities. The Performance Improvement Plan outlines the Council's objectives for improvement, how performance will be measured and what positive outcomes stakeholders can expect as a result of improvement activity. It represents the Council's commitment to achieving continuous improvement in the delivery of key services.

Performance Improvement Objectives 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**

These objectives have been developed within the context of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. They are:

✓	Linked to the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and Directorate Business Plans
✓	Based on a robust and reliable evidence base, including performance trends
✓	Aligned to the seven strategic aspects of improvement
✓	Legitimate, clear, robust, deliverable and demonstrable

Our District, Our Organisation, Our Performance



District

Population: 181,669
 Households: 67,735
 7 District Electoral Areas
 41 Elected Members
 1,000+ employees
 87% of residents are satisfied with the Council



Community

Life expectancy:
 Male: 79.3 years / Female: 83.2 years
 Age Profile: 0-15 years: 23% / 65+ years: 16%
 72% of residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together
 94% of residents feel safe during the day, 87% of residents feel safe after dark
 117 Neighbourhood Watch Schemes
 18,407 food parcels delivered to vulnerable households
 €8.3m awarded through the Financial Assistance Scheme since 2015



Economy

Employment rate: 74.8%
 8,865 VAT Registered Businesses
 11.1% of the population aged 16-64 years have no qualifications
 215 new jobs promoted through business start activity
 411 businesses supported and 4,509 mentoring hours delivered through economic development programmes



Tourism

Between 2018 and 2019:
 15% increase in visitor numbers, to 516,203
 21% increase in visitor spend, to €83.7m
 Three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 5 'green flag' parks and 3 'blue flag' beaches



Health and Wellbeing

79% of residents feel they are in very good or good health
 78% 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
 100k recorded visits at community trails
 1.3m+ recorded visits at Kilbroney and Slieve Gullion Forest Parks








Environment

Recycling is important to 86% of residents
 Top perceived problem for residents: Dog mess and fouling
 Recycling rate: 51.9%
 321 community clean ups supported since 2018
 Second lowest level of waste to landfill across all NI Councils



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

<p>Why this matters</p>	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of COVID-19 on mental health and well-being is one of your top concerns and the Council should provide well maintained parks and green spaces • 'Improving people's health and wellbeing (and reducing health inequalities)' is your second highest priority for improvement • Over the past few years, investment in local community projects, such as parks, has become more important to you • 94% of respondents to our 2022-23 survey agree with this objective <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the strong correlation between healthy lifestyles and outdoor recreation. The Council's greenways and blueways have become increasingly popular, providing opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to lead healthy and active lives whilst enjoying the natural beauty of our District. During 2021-22, the Council carried out Visitor Satisfaction Surveys for its forest parks and beaches. The findings from the surveys indicate that, overall, 83% of visitors are satisfied with our three forest parks and 67% are satisfied with our three beaches.</p> <p>However, high visitor numbers can put pressure on parks and open spaces, particularly in relation to car park congestion, littering, irresponsible behaviour and general wear and tear on the environment. Promoting good visitor management will enhance the quality of the Council's parks and open spaces, ensuring they are welcoming, safe and well maintained places to encourage local people to be active and healthy.</p>	
<p>Looking Back: What we did in 2021-22</p>		<p>1.6m visits recorded at Kilbroney Park, Slieve Gullion Forest Park and Warrenpoint Municipal Park</p>
		<p>3 'blue flag' beaches and 5 'green flag' parks</p>
		<p>83% of visitors are satisfied with our three forest parks</p>
		<p>211,718 visits recorded at 10 community trails</p>
		<p>The Forest Parks team won the 2020-21 Green Flag 'Team of the Year' award</p>
<p>Looking Forward: What we will do in 2022-23</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop the district's bid to achieve UNESCO Global Geopark designation • Invest in new facilities at Kilbroney Park and Rostrevor Forest, Tyrella beach, Delamont Country Park and Camlough Lake • Explore options to install visitor counters at Delamont Country Park • Retain five green flag and three green flag heritage accreditations for the Council's parks 	





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain blue flag accreditation for Cranfield, Murlough and Tyrella beaches Build four new play parks and upgrade three existing play parks Identify new community trails to develop in future years Promote good visitor management across all Council parks and open spaces 					
How we will measure success	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	Status Trend	2022-23 Target
Number of recorded visits at:						
Kilbroney Park	453,704	454,848	584,148	915,500	△	No targets
Slieve Gullion Forest Park	253,376	366,444	183,712	462,240	△	
Carlingford Lough Greenway	40,219	73,138	47,005	35,021	▽	
Delamont Country Park	New performance measure					
Warrenpoint Municipal Park	-	205,126	119,600	212,694	△	
Community trails (existing)	46,044	57,849	96,563	211,718	△	120,000
Number of parks with green flag accreditation	3	3	4	5	△	5
Number of parks with green flag heritage accreditation	-	-	1	3	△	3
Number of beaches with blue flag accreditation	3	3	2	3	△	3
Number of new/upgraded play parks	17	9	0	3	△	7
What you will see by March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements to the Council's parks, beaches and open spaces including effective visitor management arrangements UNESCO Global Geopark status achieved for Mourne Gullion Strangford Five green flag awards and three green flag heritage awards for the Council's parks Three blue flag awards for the Council's beaches Four new play parks and three upgraded play parks 					
Alignment						
Corporate Plan 2021-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District and reduce health inequalities Support sustainable forms of tourism which value our environment and cultural heritage 					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities 					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We all enjoy long, healthy, active lives People want to live, work and visit here 					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service quality	Fairness	Innovation		
Responsible Officer	Director: Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism					

*2020-21: Whilst blue flag accreditation was awarded for the Council's three beaches, lifeguard services were not offered at Murlough beach due to COVID-19 restrictions.

**The visitor counters at the Dublin Bridge entrance at the Carlingford Lough Greenway were not operational during 2021-22, as this area was designated for COVID-19 testing.

Performance Improvement Objective 2

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

<p>Why this matters</p>	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of COVID-19 on businesses and employment is your top concern, and the Council should support local businesses, especially those which have been impacted most by restrictions • 'Supporting local businesses, attracting investment and jobs' is your top priority for improvement • Investment to grow the economy, create jobs and attract tourists is the most important form of investment • 95% of respondents to our 2022-23 survey agree with this objective <p>Whilst the global economic impact of COVID-19 is unparalleled, early indications suggest that the local economy is recovering. Between 2019 and 2020, Newry, Mourne and Down recorded increases in the number of VAT/PAYE registered businesses, employee jobs and the birth rate of new businesses. When compared to 2020, the monthly claimant count for unemployment benefit during 2021 is also reducing, but remains above pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p>Continuing to support the economic recovery of Newry, Mourne and Down remains a key priority for the Council. During 2021-22, the Council awarded approximately £1m to assist local businesses in navigating the impact of pandemic. The Council also continued to deliver a range of economic development programmes to help new and established businesses to innovate, grow and expand. However, whilst much has been achieved, there is still more to do to rebuild and revitalise the local economy.</p>	
<p>Looking Back: What we did in 2021-22</p>		<p>215 new jobs promoted through business start activity</p>
		<p>12 new social enterprise start-ups supported and 13 new social enterprise jobs created</p>
		<p>409 businesses supported and 4,509 mentoring hours delivered through the 'NMD Growth', 'Digital Growth', 'Tender for Growth' and 'Sales Accelerator' programmes</p>
		<p>'Make it Local' campaign delivered to stimulate footfall and the re-opening of businesses across the District</p>
<p>Looking Forward: What we will do in 2022-23</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll-out the NMD 'Make it Local' and 'A Place to Work' campaigns to safely stimulate footfall and revitalise our local economy • Support the creation of new business starts and promote new jobs through the NI 'Go for It' programme • Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme • Support local businesses and create new jobs through the 'NMD Growth', 'Digital Growth', 'Tender for Growth', 'Sales Accelerator' and 'Digital Surge' programmes 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the creation of new jobs and businesses in coastal areas through SEAFLAG 2 					
How we will measure success	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	Status Trend	2022-23 Target
Number of business plans approved through NI 'Go For It'*	300	298	266	358	△	312
Number of new business starts created through NI 'Go For It'	204	203	181	215	△	187
Number of new jobs promoted through NI 'Go For It'	184	183	164	215	△ 😊	>155 173* (updated standard)
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	9	10	12	12	▶	12
Number of social enterprise jobs created	15	12	13	13	▶	12
Number of businesses supported through 'NMD Growth'	New programme	198	198	175	😊	105
Number of jobs created through 'NMD Growth'		42	38	107.5	△	50
Number of businesses supported through 'Digital Growth'	New programmes		90	93	△	77
Number of jobs created through 'Digital Growth'			5.5	45.5	△	135
Number of businesses supported through 'Tender for Growth'			39	75	△	57
Number of jobs created through 'Tender for Growth'			6	36	△	99.5
Number of businesses supported through 'Sales Accelerator'			-	66	△	34
Number of jobs created through 'Sales Accelerator'			-	0	-	120
Number of businesses supported through 'Digital Surge'			-	3	△	15
Number of new jobs created in coastal areas (SEAFLAG 2)*			New programme	7		9
Number of new businesses created in coastal areas (SEAFLAG 2)*	1			2	😊	2
What you will see by March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 312 entrepreneurs supported with an approved Business Plan and >155 new jobs promoted through the NI 'Go For It' programme 12 social enterprise start-ups supported and 12 social enterprise jobs created 273 businesses supported, 404.5 jobs created and 6,220 mentoring hours delivered through the 'NMD Growth', 'Digital Growth' and 'Tender for Growth', 'Sales Accelerator' and 'Digital Surge' programmes The social economy and fishing dependent communities benefit from inward investment and growth More support for new and established local businesses and more employment opportunities across the District The economic recovery of Newry, Mourne and Down is underway, as the District becomes more economically active and prosperous 					
Alignment						













Corporate Plan 2021-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills 			
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities 			
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone can reach their potential Our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon neutral People want to live, work and visit here 			
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service quality	Service availability	Innovation
Responsible Officer	Director: Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism			

*Updated 'Go for It' 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.

**Figures for all economic development programmes are accurate, as at 30 June 2022, and may be subject to amendment in line with governance arrangements.

***SEAFILAG 2 includes year on year cumulative results for both performance indicators and total targets when the programme concludes in March 2023.

Performance Improvement Objective 3

We will improve the cleanliness of our District by addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents									
Why this matters	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog mess and dog fouling is your top perceived problem • Rubbish or litter lying around is a problem for many of you, particularly those living in urban areas • The Council should continue to keep the local environment clean, ensure dog fouling is kept to a minimum and reduce the perceived increase in littering • 90% of respondents to our 2022-23 survey agree with this objective <p>Between 2019-20 and 2020-21, the LEAMS* score for the District remained at 64, which falls just below the current regional average of 65. 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 over the past three years, and the prioritisation of the refuse collection service throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>In order to improve the overall cleanliness of the District, the Council is currently reviewing cleansing operations to design a more effective model of service provision. The Council also remains committed to collaborating with partner organisations and local communities to promote responsible dog ownership, address issues around littering and illicit dumping and generate local pride in having a cleaner, greener District for everyone to enjoy.</p>								
Looking Back: What we did in 2021-22	<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Issued 118 fixed penalty notices, 100 of which were paid</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Supported 94 community clean-ups</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Decrease in the rate of recycling, from 50.4% in Q1 to 45.4% in Q3</td> </tr> </table>		Issued 118 fixed penalty notices, 100 of which were paid		Supported 94 community clean-ups		Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out		Decrease in the rate of recycling, from 50.4% in Q1 to 45.4% in Q3
	Issued 118 fixed penalty notices, 100 of which were paid								
	Supported 94 community clean-ups								
	Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out								
	Decrease in the rate of recycling, from 50.4% in Q1 to 45.4% in Q3								
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2021-22	<p>Address issues around littering, illicit dumping and dog fouling by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the Enforcement Improvement Plan • Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity and social media campaigns • Working with Louth County Council to raise awareness of the impact of littering and illicit dumping along the border area • Encouraging residents to bring properly sorted surplus recyclable waste to our Household Recycling Centres • Supporting local community clean ups • Launching the mobile 'apps' to enable Officers and residents to record and report incidents of environmental crime <p>Work in partnership with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission surveys to monitor street cleanliness and identify emerging issues and hotspots • Promote the 'Live Here Love Here' campaigns 								

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage community groups to 'Adopt a Spot' Highlight the impact of littering on the marine environment 					
How we will measure success	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	Status Trend	2022-23 Target
LEAMS score (Keep NI Beautiful Cleanliness Index)	72	64	64	-		65
Number of fixed penalty notices issued	54	83	52	118		150
Number of fixed penalty notices paid	50	72	26	100		125
Number of community clean ups supported	100	94	33	94		100
Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	27	34	24	18		No target
The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling	51.4%	53.7%	51.9%	49.2% (Q1-Q3)	 	50% by 2020
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	1,846t	2,131t	2,538t	2,062t (Q1-Q3)	 	<20,954 tonnes (2019-20)
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	82,136t	84,610t	86,900t	67,697t (Q1-Q3)		No target
What you will see by March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of fixed penalty notices issued and paid Responsible dog ownership and reduced levels of dog fouling, littering and illicit dumping Improved opportunities to report littering, dog fouling and illicit dumping Opportunities to engage in community clean ups and participate in the 'Live Here Love Here' campaign and 'Adopt a Spot' scheme Landfill and recycling targets are achieved A cleaner, greener District, with improved civic and community pride 					
Alignment						
Corporate Plan 2021-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance, protect and promote our environment 					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment 					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment 					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service availability	Innovation	Sustainability		
Responsible Officer	Director: Neighbourhood Services					
















*Local Environmental Auditing Management System is carried out by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.





**The Q1-Q3 2021-22 data for the statutory waste management performance indicators remains provisional and will be finalised when the year-end data is validated and published by DAERA.

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

****The Council is working towards the regional recycling target of 65% by 2030.

Performance Improvement Objective 4

We will build the capacity of local communities through the Financial Assistance Scheme											
Why this matters	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of COVID-19 on 'mental health and well-being' and 'vulnerable, isolated and lonely' residents are amongst your top concerns, and the Council should support community groups and charities • 'Improving community relations and safety, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour' is the third highest priority for improvement for residents • 94% of respondents to our 2022-23 survey agree with this objective <p>The Council remains committed to building the capacity of local communities, enabling them to have a voice in shaping the future of their District. Through the Financial Assistance Scheme, local communities are empowered to address local issues using public funds. Since 2015-16, the Council has awarded over £8.3m to 2,651 applications across a range of thematic areas including community engagement, summer schemes and festivals.</p> <p>However, the overall success rate of applications to the Financial Assistance Scheme reduced from 72% in 2020-21 to 69% in 2021-22. This can largely be attributed to specific themes recording lower success rates, including 'Events and Festivals', 'Summer Schemes', 'Service Level Agreements', 'Let's Grow' and 'Major/Minor Capital Projects'. These themes will benefit from targeted intervention and additional support through the Council's training and capacity building sessions.</p> <p>In addition, the number of projects funded during 2022-23 may reduce as applications are now scored and ranked, in line with the new Financial Assistance Policy, and demand for funding can often exceed the level of funding available for some themes.</p>										
Looking Back: What we did in 2021-22	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>£1.54m awarded to 374 projects across 20 thematic areas</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>£936k awarded towards major and minor capital projects</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>36,486 volunteer hours recorded to deliver projects and 54,908 beneficiaries of the scheme</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>98% of applicants are satisfied with the support received from the Programmes Unit</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>69% of applications to the financial assistance schemes were successful</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		£1.54m awarded to 374 projects across 20 thematic areas		£936k awarded towards major and minor capital projects		36,486 volunteer hours recorded to deliver projects and 54,908 beneficiaries of the scheme		98% of applicants are satisfied with the support received from the Programmes Unit		69% of applications to the financial assistance schemes were successful
	£1.54m awarded to 374 projects across 20 thematic areas										
	£936k awarded towards major and minor capital projects										
	36,486 volunteer hours recorded to deliver projects and 54,908 beneficiaries of the scheme										
	98% of applicants are satisfied with the support received from the Programmes Unit										
	69% of applications to the financial assistance schemes were successful										
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch 3 financial assistance calls across a minimum of 19 thematic areas to support the delivery of community led projects • Continue to promote and roll out the Electronic Grant Management System 										






	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver training and capacity building to support local voluntary and community groups in applying for financial assistance, with an emphasis themes with lower success rates • Promote the online training module to potential applicants, including those who were unsuccessful in 2021-22 					
How we will measure success	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	Status Trend	2022-23 Target
% of successful financial assistance applications*	71%	71%	72%	68.8%		70%
% of financial assistance applications funded*	71%	71%	64%	68.8%		No target
Number of capacity building sessions delivered	New performance measure			6		7
Number of participants at training sessions	New performance measure			140	-	300
Number of participants / beneficiaries of the Financial Assistance Scheme	New performance measure			54,908		c50,000
What you will see by March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circa £1.4m awarded to local voluntary and community groups through the Financial Assistance Scheme (including FMA's and SLA's) • Improved and accessible training and support when applying for financial assistance • Voluntary and community groups are supported in meeting their objectives and delivering projects across a range of themes • Representatives from the community and voluntary sector are empowered to have a voice and shape the future of their area • Improved community capacity and cohesion across Newry, Mourne and Down 					
Alignment						
Corporate Plan 2021-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable and support people to engage in inclusive and diverse activities in their communities 					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All people in Newry, Mourne and Down live in respectful, safe and vibrant communities 					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect • We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives 					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service availability	Fairness	Innovation		
Responsible Officer	Director: Active and Healthy Communities					










*The methodology for scoring specific themes within the Financial Assistance Scheme was reviewed in 2020-21 and the success rate of the applications funded reduced as some themes were scored and ranked, based on the funding available.

**Score and rank was not fully implemented in 2021-22 due to additional COVID-19 Recovery funding being made available.

Performance Improvement Objective 5

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

<p>Why this matters</p>	<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. 95% of respondents to our 2022-23 survey also agreed with this objective.</p> <p>The implementation of the Planning Service Improvement Programme is well underway. Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the processing times for planning applications have improved when compared to previous years. Whilst performance may be temporarily impacted by the implementation of the new electronic planning system during 2022-23, the Council remains committed to achieving the statutory standards and providing a quality service to all customers.</p> <p>In January 2022, the Council carried out a Customer Satisfaction survey with 113 Planning Agents in order to identify those aspects of the service which are working well and any areas for improvement. Based on the 29 responses submitted, which equates to a low response rate of 25%, the findings indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 69% are satisfied with the reception service • 48% are satisfied with the expertise and knowledge of Planning Officers • 7% are satisfied with the time taken to process applications <p>The feedback from the survey will be used to identify and inform further improvements to the Planning Service.</p>	
<p>Looking Back: What we did between April-December 2021</p>		<p>Processed 46.9% of planning enforcement cases within 39 weeks, which is below the regional average of 70%</p>
		<p>Average processing time of 18.3 weeks for local planning applications, which is above the regional average of 16.8 weeks</p>
		<p>Average processing time of 49.8 weeks for major planning applications, which is below the regional average of 55.9 weeks</p>
		<p>Received 1,324 local planning applications, which is the highest across Northern Ireland</p>
		<p>11% reduction in the number of live enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more</p>
<p>Looking Forward: What we will do in 2022-23</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases which have been in the system for over 12 months • Work with agents and architects to improve the standard of planning applications submitted • Support employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries' • Effectively implement the new electronic planning system 	

How we will measure success	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	Q1/Q2/Q3 2021-22 Actual	Status Trend	2022-23 Target
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	18	20.6	19	18.3	 	<15 weeks
Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)	76.6	94	64.6	49.8	 	<30 weeks
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks	52.9%	36.2%	40.9%	46.9%	 	70%
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more**	224	183	195	187		150
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less**	800	685	857	825		700
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more**	734	620	546	486		450
What you will see by March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more efficient and effective planning service • Improved processing times for local and major planning applications • Improved processing times for planning enforcement cases • Reduction in the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases in the system • An empowered and motivated workforce • Increased confidence in the Planning system • Sustainable development and regeneration of the District 					
Alignment						
Corporate Plan 2021-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement 					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities 					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People want to live, work and visit here 					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service availability	Service quality	Efficiency		
Responsible Officer	Director: Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism					

*Annual planning figures will be validated by the Department for Infrastructure and published through the Annual Report 2022-23.

**The 2022-23 targets have been carried forward from 2021-22.

Strategic Alignment

Performance Improvement Objective	Corporate Objective(s)	Community Planning Outcome(s)	Duty of Improvement
We will encourage local people to lead healthy and active lives by improving the quality of our parks and open spaces	Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District and reduce health inequalities Support sustainable forms of tourism which value our environment and cultural heritage	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 Fairness Innovation
We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs	Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills	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 addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	Enhance, protect and promote our environment	All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment	Strategic effectiveness Service availability Innovation Sustainability
We will build the capacity of local communities through the Financial Assistance Scheme	Enable and support people to engage in inclusive and diverse activities in their communities	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down live in respectful, safe and vibrant communities	Strategic effectiveness Service availability Fairness Innovation
We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	Strategic effectiveness Service availability Service quality Efficiency

Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards

Section 89 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the Council to publish the results of the performance indicators and standards that are set by central government around economic development, planning and waste management.

The seven statutory performance indicators and standards, as outlined in the Local Government Performance Indicators and Standards Order (2015), are set out below:

Ref	Statutory Performance Indicator	Annual Standard
Economic Development		
ED1	The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity	>155 173* (updated target)
Planning		
P1	The average processing time of major planning applications	<30 weeks
P2	The average processing time of local planning applications	<15 weeks
P3	The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks	70%
Waste Management		
W1	The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse)	50% by 2020
W2	The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	<20,954 tonnes (2019-20 target)
W3	The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	85,500 tonnes

*Updated 'Go for It' programme target for the number of jobs promoted in Newry Mourne and Down: 173. An amendment to the standard set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 is awaiting legislative passage and approval.

The Council has put in place the following arrangements to monitor progress against the standards set for the statutory performance and indicators:

- Inclusion within the Performance Improvement Plan, with progress being monitored on a bi-annual basis by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.
- Inclusion within Directorate Business Plans, with progress being monitored on a bi-annual basis by the relevant Council Committee.
- Data submissions to Government Departments, with reports being issued to monitor the performance of each Council, outlining regional trends and comparisons.

Self Imposed Performance Indicators

The Council has identified the following self imposed performance indicators to measure progress in delivering the Corporate Plan 2021-23.

Corporate Objective	Measure of Success
Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills	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
Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District and reduce health inequalities	Number of people participating in targeted health programmes
	Attendance at free play sessions
	Number of attendances at Council indoor leisure facilities
Enhance, protect and promote our environment	Level of street cleanliness across the District (Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Street Cleanliness Index)
	65% of municipal waste recycled by 2030
	Level of compliance with Sustainable Development Duty
Support sustainable forms of tourism which value our environment and cultural heritage	Increased visitor spend
	Increased overnights stays
	Increased visitor satisfaction
Enable and support people to engage in inclusive and diverse activities in their communities	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 and percentage of financial assistance projects funded and successfully delivered
Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities	Progress against key Belfast City Region Deal projects
	Number of public realm schemes delivered
	Increased business growth and employment
Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement	Increased citizen satisfaction
	Compliance with the Duty of Improvement

Advocate with others for the benefit of all people of the District	Compliance with the Duty of Community Planning / monitor delivery of outcomes with partners
	Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live

The Council has put in place the following arrangements to monitor progress against the self imposed performance indicators:

- Inclusion within the Performance Improvement Plan, with progress being monitored by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee through the annual Assessment of Performance.
- Some performance indicators are included within Directorate Business Plans, with progress being monitored on a bi-annual basis by the relevant Council Committee.

These performance indicators are aligned to community planning outcomes. This will ensure the Council continues to address the needs and aspirations of local communities and deliver sustainable outcomes for all, now and in the future.

Identifying the Performance Improvement Objectives 2022-23

The performance improvement objectives 2022-23 have been carried forward from 2021-22, as they remain relevant and meaningful. They have been developed, reviewed and updated in close liaison with Elected Members, Senior Management Team, Corporate Management Team and employees across the organisation. Each objective is underpinned by a suite of 'supporting actions', 'measures of success' and outcomes for stakeholders. They are clearly aligned to the Community Plan and Corporate Plan 2021-23, as well as other regional and local plans, particularly the Council's Business Plans which have been developed by each Directorate. These plans influence and guide the overall direction of travel for the organisation.

- Draft Programme for Government
- Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down 2017-2030, Priority Actions Areas and District Electoral Area (DEA) Action Plans
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan 2021-23
- Thematic plans and strategies, including the IT Strategy and Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy
- Annual Directorate Business Plans 2022-23

The Council has also taken into consideration performance information from the following sources to support the development of the performance improvement objectives:

- The Northern Ireland Audit Office Audit and Assessment Reports and 'proposals for improvement', which are currently being progressed
- The Assessment of Performance 2020-21, including progress against performance improvement objectives, measures of success within the Corporate Plan 2021-23 and statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management.

Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down

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

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

The Community Plan sets out the following five positive outcomes:

Our Outcomes

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



Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan 2021-23

The Corporate Plan 2021-23 sets out the following mission statement and eight strategic objectives:

Council Mission Statement

'To support and advocate for a welcoming District which is progressive, healthy and sustainable, providing better economic, environmental and social outcomes for all'

Council Strategic Objectives

 <p>Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills</p> <p>We will facilitate investment by new and growing businesses while contributing to the further development of workforce skills to retain existing and attract new industries.</p>	 <p>Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district and reduce health inequalities</p> <p>We will help to reduce health inequalities and improve the quality of life for all by contributing fully to programmes, services, facilities and amenities.</p>
 <p>Enhance, protect and promote our environment</p> <p>We will contribute to tackling climate breakdown and reducing harmful impacts on the environment while enabling residents and visitors to enjoy our rich natural and built heritage.</p>	 <p>Support sustainable forms of tourism which value our environment and cultural heritage</p> <p>We will support and advocate for increased investment and development in tourism which promotes our unique assets and increases visitor satisfaction and spend.</p>
 <p>Enable and support people to engage in inclusive and diverse activities in their communities</p> <p>We will encourage people to play an active part in civic life in all its forms and develop the capacity of communities, particularly those in greatest need, to attract the right support to address needs and sustain valued projects and facilities</p>	 <p>Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities</p> <p>We will work with residents, businesses and our partners in regeneration to further develop desirable places to live, work, invest in and visit across the District.</p>



Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

We will build a high performing Council, fit for the future, that delivers efficient and effective services for the benefit of all



Advocate with others for the benefit of all people of the District

We will lobby and campaign with government and others to attract investment, develop modern infrastructure across the District, address needs and improve the quality of life for all.

Alignment with the Strategic Aspects of Improvement

In accordance with the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, each performance improvement objective seeks to bring about improvement in at least one of the following aspects:

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

The table below outlines how Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's performance improvement objectives 2022-23 are aligned with the seven specified aspects of improvement:

Performance Improvement Objective	Seven Aspects of Improvement						
	Strategic Effectiveness	Service Quality	Service Availability	Fairness	Sustainability	Efficiency	Innovation
We will promote healthier lifestyles by increasing participation in physical activity	✓	✓		✓			✓
We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs	✓	✓	✓				✓
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by reducing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling	✓		✓		✓		✓
We will build the capacity of local communities through the Financial Assistance Scheme and DEA Forum initiatives	✓		✓	✓			✓
We will improve the average processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the recommendations from the Planning Service Review	✓	✓	✓			✓	

The Council has also assessed the performance improvement objectives against the following criteria, and considers them to be:

- Legitimate
- Clear
- Robust
- Deliverable
- Demonstrable

Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment

In accordance with the Section 75 requirements of the Northern Ireland Act (1998), whereby the Council must carry out its functions having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard for the desirability to promote good relations, the Performance Improvement Plan has been subject to an equality screening. The outcome of the equality screening process determined that the Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23 is not subject to an equality impact assessment, with no mitigating measures required.

In accordance with the Rural Needs Act Northern Ireland (2016), the Council has given due regard to rural needs by carrying out a Rural Needs Impact Assessment of the Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23.

Consultation and Engagement

The Council is committed to listening to local people and taking on board their views. Since 2017, the Council has carried out extensive consultation and engagement, inviting key stakeholders, including Elected Members, residents, local businesses and community planning partners to put forward their views on the proposed performance improvement objectives.

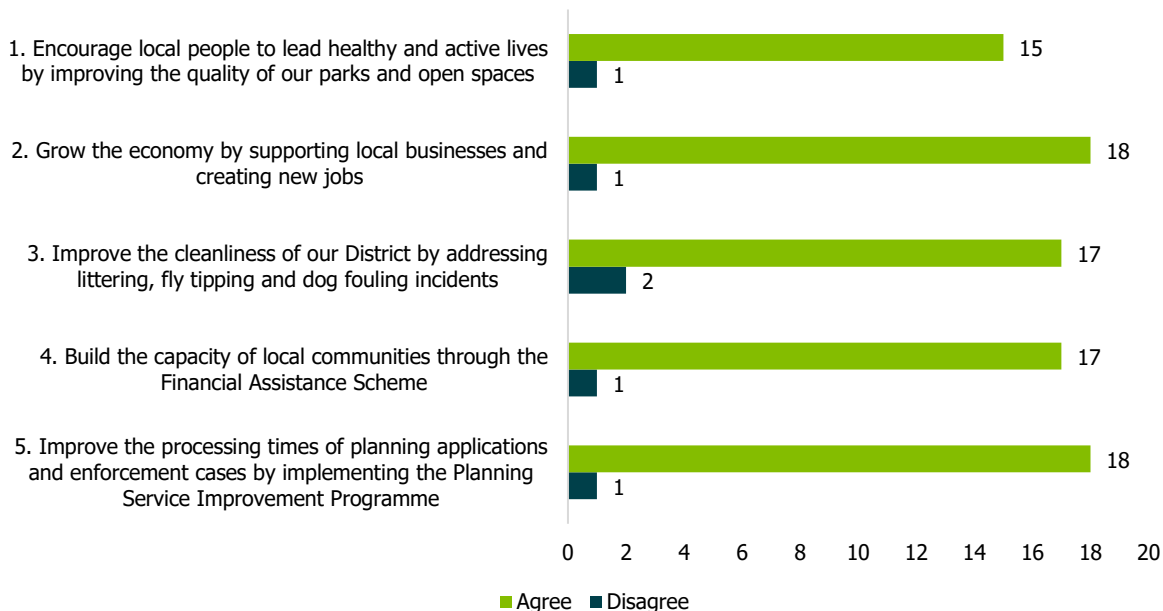
This year, the Council used the Speak NMD platform to host the consultation and engagement process. As a dedicated online space, which is facilitated through the Newry, Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership, Speak NMD enables residents to participate in local consultation and engagement activities and have their say on the issues and decisions which have an impact on their local area. Through Speak NMD, an electronic survey, idea's board and quick poll in relation to the draft performance improvement objectives 2022-23 was published and promoted. The consultation and engagement process was promoted further through the Council's website and social media channels, and circulated to key internal and external stakeholders.

The overall consultation and engagement process resulted in 19 completed surveys and engagement with 94 stakeholders through the DEA Forums, Youth Council and Cedar Foundation. This response has been supplemented by the input of 1,345 respondents to the consultation on COVID-19 and the Corporate Plan in 2020 and Residents Survey in 2018.

Electronic documentation, survey on the draft performance improvement objectives 2022-23, ideas board and quick poll on the Speak NMD platform	Survey: 19 responses Ideas Board: 4 ideas Quick poll: 10 responses
Engagement with the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven District Electoral Area Forums which are made up of Elected Members and independent members representing the voluntary, community and business sectors Section 75 groups, including the Newry and Mourne Youth Council and Cedar Foundation 	94 consultees
Electronic survey and focus groups on the impact of COVID-19 and the Corporate Plan 2021-23 (September 2020)	560 respondents to survey 21 participants in focus groups
Residents Survey (September 2018)	764 respondents

The consultation responses revealed widespread support for the proposed performance improvement objectives, with almost all respondents agreeing with each of the five objectives.

Agreement on Performance Improvement Objectives (2022/23)



The areas for improvement and issues raised through the overall consultation and engagement processes are clearly aligned to the five performance improvement objectives 2022-23, and will be addressed through the Performance Improvement Plan, and as part of the Council’s business planning process.

Achieving Continuous Improvement

Transforming and improving how the Council delivers services is a key objective within the Corporate Plan. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to developing a 'can do' culture, where managing performance and achieving improvement is everyone's responsibility. In pursuing the corporate vision and objectives, the Council has identified the following three core values:

We will be:	What this means:
Accountable	We will be accountable for how we plan for and use resources sustainably
Collaborative	We will work in partnership with others
Transparent	We will be transparent in how we make decisions

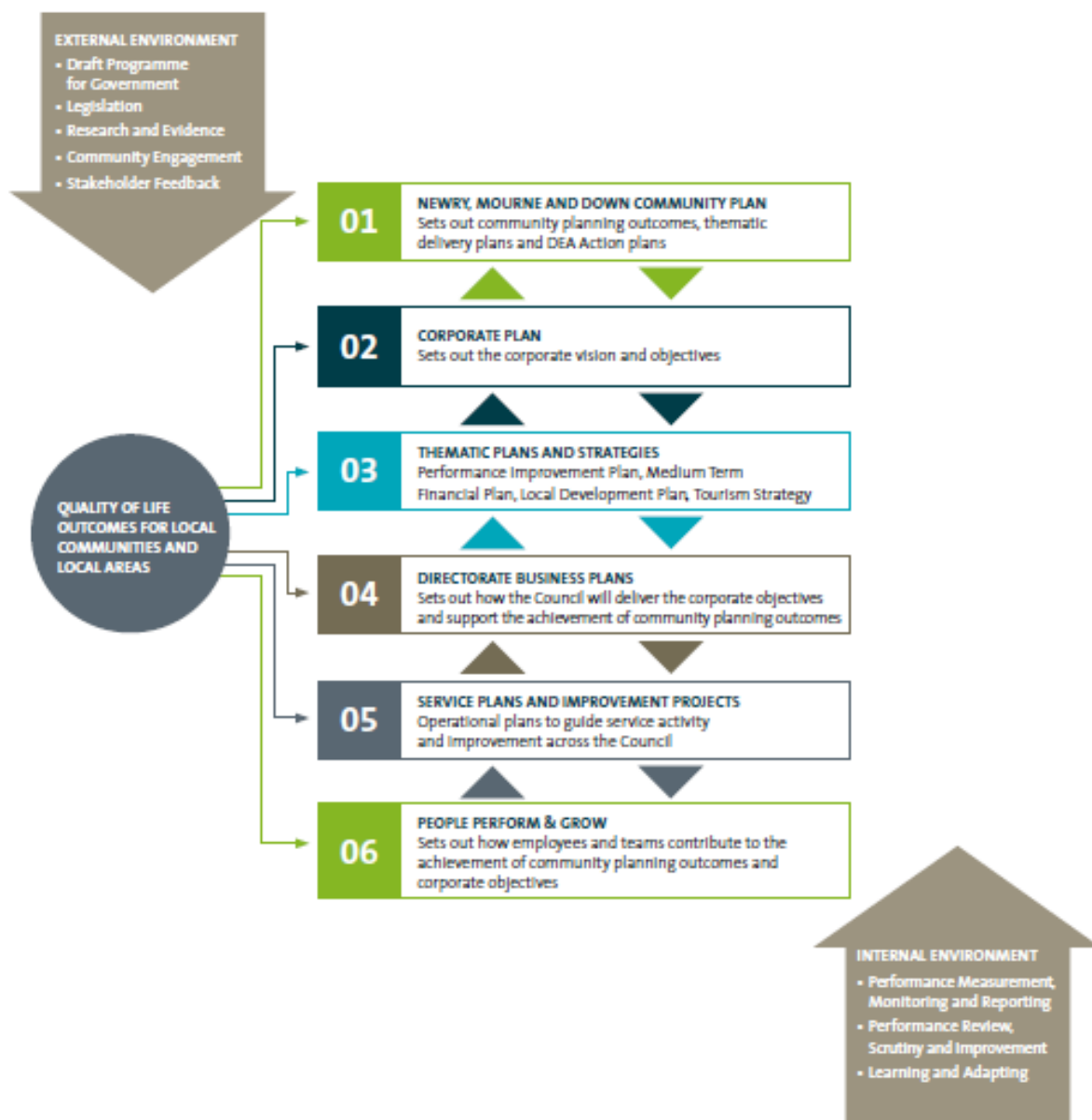
The Council has put in place a number of frameworks and systems to drive forward continuous improvement and facilitate a performance improvement culture. These include the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, Policy Development Framework, Equality Scheme, Governance Framework and Risk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

The Council also assesses how performance compares with other Councils. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is working with the Association of Public Service Excellence to benchmark performance against the performance of Councils across Northern Ireland and other jurisdictions. This information is being used to collate a robust and reliable evidence base, to help identify and address future areas for improvement.

The Performance Improvement Plan underpins the Council's overall approach to effective performance management. It supports the Council in identifying more efficient and effective ways of working to facilitate the achievement of community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and Directorate objectives, which together support the continued implementation of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework.

Business Planning and Performance Management Framework

The Council’s Business Planning and Performance Management Framework drives and provides assurance that community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and performance improvement objectives are being delivered, with the primary goal of making life better for our citizens.



The Community Plan and Corporate Plan sit within a hierarchy of plans that informs the Council’s overall direction of travel and guides all activity within the organisation. Community planning outcomes and corporate objectives are cascaded across the organisation through thematic plans and strategies and Directorate Business Plans. Performance indicators continue to be developed at all levels across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, in order to ensure performance is measured, monitored and evaluated on a continuous basis.

During 2022-23, the Council will continue to progress and mainstream the development, implementation and review of Service Plans and roll out of Individual Performance (People Perform Grow), both of which seek to demonstrate the 'line of sight' between the work of employees and how they contribute to the achievement of community planning outcomes and corporate objectives.

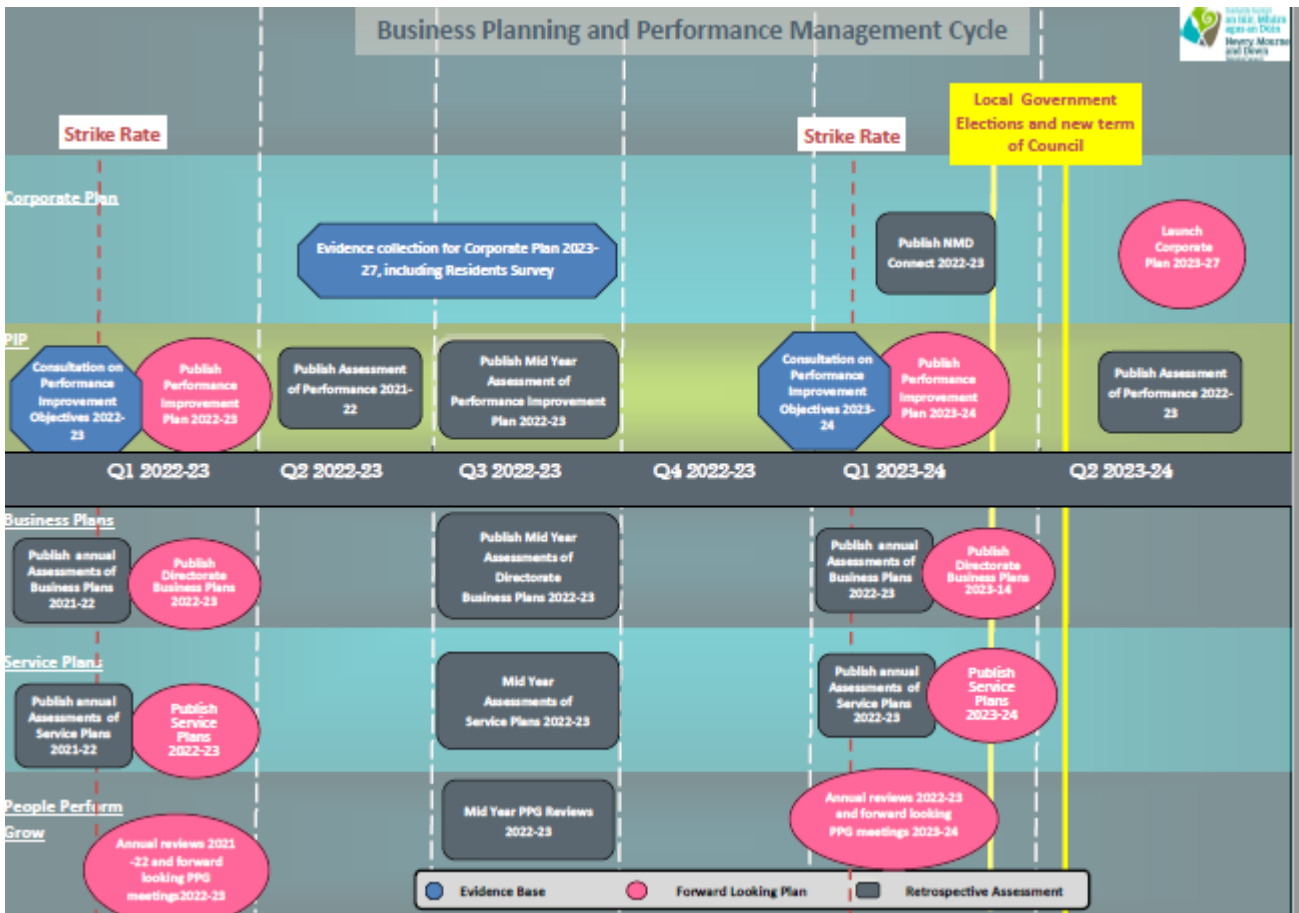
Through the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, the Council will manage performance at all levels across the organisation, in order to ensure the necessary steps are taken to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions. Each level of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework is, and will be, accompanied by a relevant set of performance measures to monitor and assess the Council's progress in improving the quality of life for local communities.

The table below provides a description of the various plans and strategies that form part of the Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework.

Community Plan	The Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down sets out the long-term vision for improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the District. Developed in collaboration with partners across the statutory, business and voluntary sectors, the Community Plan is underpinned by Priority Actions Areas and seven DEA Action Plans, which seek to deliver the five community planning outcomes at a local level. Progress in implementing the Community Plan is reviewed on a biennial basis.
Corporate Plan	The Corporate Plan 2021-23 sets out the vision, values and strategic objectives for the Council. Each strategic objective is underpinned by 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success'. Progress in delivering the Corporate Plan is reported annually through the NMD Connect Newsletter and Assessment of Performance.
Thematic Plans and Strategies	The Council has put in place a number of Thematic Plans and Strategies to support the implementation of the Community Plan and Corporate Plan, including the Performance Improvement Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan and Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy. These plans provide the strategic context for multiple programmes of work across the organisation.
Directorate Business Plans	Business Plans are developed annually to demonstrate how Directorates contribute to the achievement of community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and performance improvement objectives. Directorate Business Plans include suites of key performance measures to measure progress and drive continuous improvement, with performance being monitored and reviewed bi-annually by the relevant Committee.
Service Plans and Improvement Projects	Service Plans and Improvement Projects are operational and set out the direction for service areas across the Council. They outline how each service contributes to the delivery of community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and performance improvement objectives, include key performance measures and provide a mechanism to manage performance consistently across the organisation.

<p>People Perform Grow</p>	<p>The Council recognises the significant role employees play in contributing to the achievement of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Thematic Plans and Strategies, Directorate Business Plans and Service Plans. People Perform Grow demonstrates the link between the work of employees and how they contribute to the achievement of key plans and strategies, as well as the outcomes experienced by local communities.</p>
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The Business Planning and Performance Management Framework is complemented by the integrated cycle of activity outlined in the diagram below.



Governance Arrangements

Reviewing performance and reporting progress to Elected Members and other key stakeholders is very important, as it facilitates transparency, accountability and improvement in everything the Council does. The governance arrangements to develop, monitor, report and review the Council's progress in implementing the Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23 are outlined below:



The Council must publish an Assessment of Performance by 30 September 2022 which will provide an overview of how the Council has performed during 2021-22. The Assessment of Performance will be published on the Council's website and is supplemented by the Mid Year Progress Report for the Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23.

The arrangements the Council has put in place to secure continuous improvement are subject to an annual audit and assessment by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. Subject to the General Duty of Improvement being met, the Northern Ireland Audit Office will issue a Letter of Assurance to both the Council and Department for Communities.

How to Propose New Performance Improvement Objectives

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council welcomes your ongoing feedback on the performance improvement objectives 2022-23, as well as any suggestions you may have on how services can be improved in the future.

The Council can be contacted in the following ways:

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