

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Assessment of Performance 2020-21

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Overall Assessment of Performance 2020-21

The past year has been a year like no other when our city, towns and villages came to a standstill as we collectively responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has challenged us to re-think the way we work, the services we provide and the way we provide them. As a Council, when we look back and reflect on the past year, we can be proud of our achievements.

The Council continued to provide essential services, including refuse collection, street cleansing, Environmental Health and Registration. We worked alongside our community planning partners to deliver 18,407 food parcels to our most vulnerable households. We supported 367 local businesses and social enterprises, helped create 60 new jobs and awarded approximately £1m to assist local businesses in responding to the pandemic. The Council also worked in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to establish and implement import controls ahead of the EU exit.

More people than ever re-connected with the natural beauty of our District by visiting our wonderful forest parks, beaches and mountains and we recorded a 72.6% increase in visits to our community trails. Through the Financial Assistance Scheme, the Council continued to support community groups by awarding £731k towards 377 local projects and whilst the statutory standards for processing planning applications and enforcement cases have not yet achieved, performance improved during 2020-21.

In response to the pandemic, a number of Council facilities were closed and some services were temporarily suspended throughout 2020-21. We recorded a 95.9% reduction in attendances at our leisure facilities and the number of community clean ups we assisted with reduced from 94 in 2019-20 to 33 in 2020-21. The current LEAMS (street cleanliness) score for the District has remained at 64 which falls slightly below the Northern Ireland average of 65, and whilst the amount of biodegradable municipal waste that is sent to landfill increased slightly, it remains one of the lowest across the eleven Councils.

As we look forward, 2021-22 is all about COVID-19 recovery. Through the Corporate Plan 2021-23 and Performance Improvement Plan 2021-22, the Council has put in place plans to focus on what matters most to you – improving the quality of life for all local communities and building a District we can all be proud of.

Introduction

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

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

The Assessment of Performance 2020-21 provides an overview of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's progress in delivering the following:

General Duty of Improvement

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

Performance Improvement Objectives

In the absence of published performance improvement objectives 2020-21, and on the basis that the majority of the draft performance improvement objectives 2020-21 have been carried forward to 2021-22, the Council has used this Assessment of Performance to establish a baseline to monitor and report progress against the majority of the 'measures of success' which underpin the performance improvement objectives 2021-22.

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

Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards

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

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

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

Self Imposed Performance Indicators

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

Where possible, progress in delivering the 'measures of success' within the Performance Improvement Plan 2021-22 and Corporate Plan 2021-23 has been aligned to the Community Plan, in order to demonstrate how the Council is contributing to the achievement of community planning outcomes. The golden thread that exists between the Community Plan, Corporate Plan 2021-23 and Performance Improvement Plan 2021-22 is highlighted further in Appendix 2.

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

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

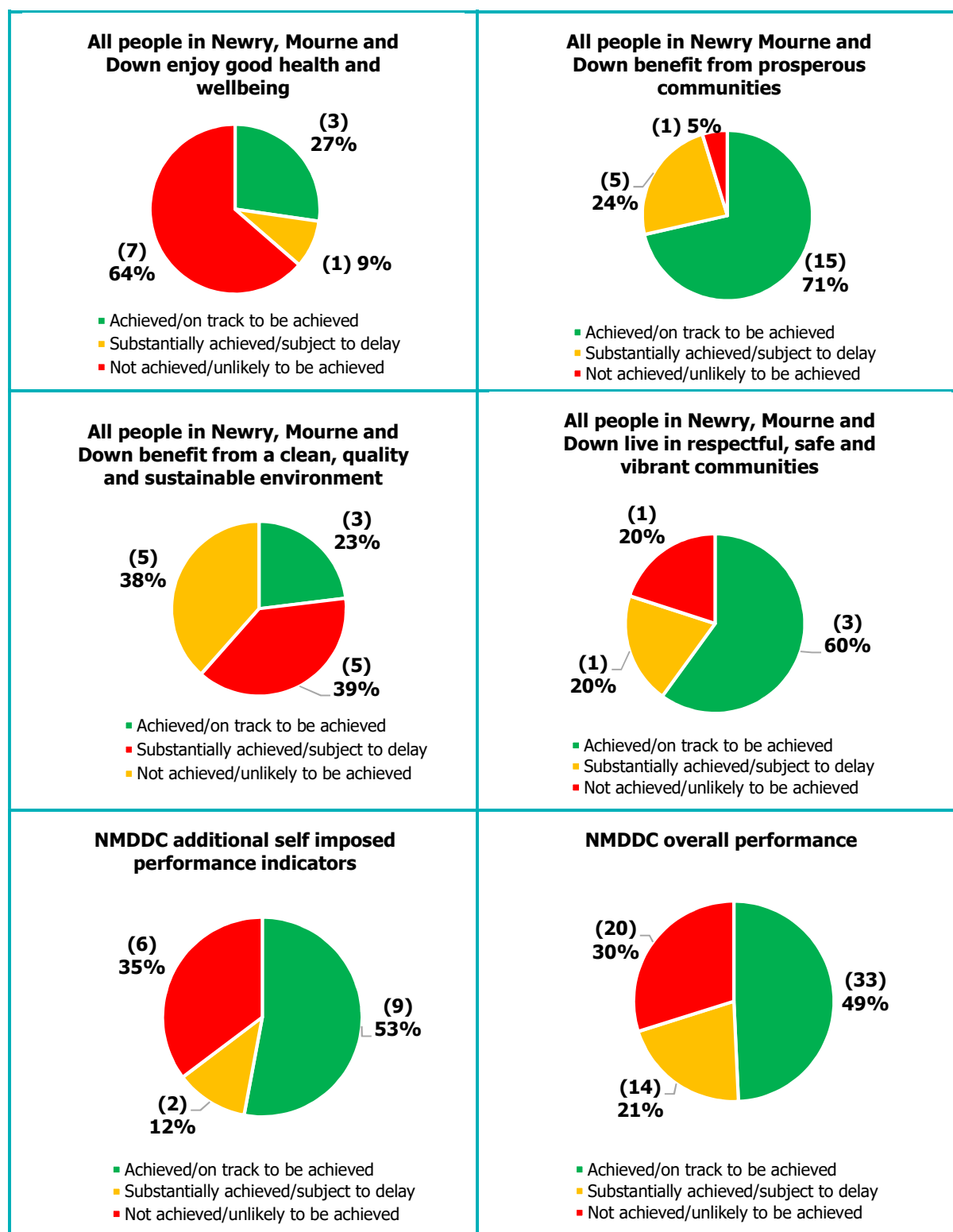
Legend

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

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

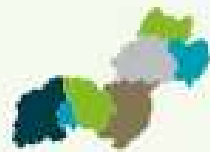
Performance at a Glance

The legend has been applied to the 'measures of success' within the Performance Improvement Plan 2021-22, and Corporate Plan 2021-23, in order to provide an overview of progress against the four community planning outcomes and overall performance of the Council.



*Where a 'measure of success' has been allocated a status and trend, both have been counted in the charts.

Our District, Our Organisation, Our Performance



District

Population: 181,368
Households: 87,222
7 District Electoral Areas
41 Elected Members
1,000+ employees
87% of residents are satisfied with the Council



Tourism

Between 2018 and 2019:
15% increase in visitor numbers, to 516,201
31% increase in visitor spend, to £83.7m
Three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Community

Life expectancy:
Male: 79.2 years / Female: 83.3 years
Age Profile: 0-15 years: 22% / 65+ years: 16%
94% of residents feel safe during the day, 87% of residents feel safe after dark
18,407 food parcels delivered to vulnerable households



Health and Wellbeing

75% 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
1m+ recorded visits to Council parks and open spaces



Economy

Employment rate: 73.6%
8,865 VAT Registered Businesses
Average weekly earnings: £560 (full time)
13% of the population aged 16-64 years have no qualifications
181 new business starts supported and 164 new jobs promoted through business start activity




















Environment

Recycling is important to 86% of residents
Top perceived problem for residents: Dog mess and fouling
Recycling rate: 52.6%
ISAMS (street cleanliness) score: 64



A snapshot of 2020-21

Performance Improvement Objective	Progress	Status Trend
 <p>We will encourage local people to lead healthy and active lives by improving the quality of our parks and open spaces</p>	95.9% reduction in recorded attendances at Council leisure centres	▽
	79% reduction in the number of participants on Everybody Active 2020	▽
	91% of users said they are likely to return to the Councils leisure centres	😊
	3 'blue flag' beaches and 4 'green flag' parks	😊
	84% of visitors are satisfied with Warrenpoint Park and 89% agree the park enhances their local quality of life	😊
	72.6% increase in recorded visits at four community trails	△
 <p>We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs</p>	Between 2018-2019, 14.7% increase in overnight stays and 20.7% increase in visitor spend	△
	164 new jobs promoted through business start activity	😊
	40 social enterprise businesses supported and 13 new social enterprise jobs created	😊
	327 businesses supported and 47.5 jobs created through 'NMD Growth', 'Digital Growth' and 'Tender for Growth'	😊
	Up to 1,000 businesses engaged in the #re:Launch Leadership Summit and 400 participants took part in NMD Enterprise Week	😊
	Increase in the number of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses, birth rate of new businesses and employee jobs	△
	103% increase in the number of job seekers and out of work universal credit claimants	▽
 <p>We will improve the cleanliness of our District by</p>	Decrease in the number of fixed penalty notices issued and paid	▽
	Decrease in the number of community clean ups supported	▽
	Slight decrease in the rate of recycling, to 52.6%	▶
	One of the lowest levels of waste sent to landfill across all NI Councils	😊

addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	LEAMS (street cleanliness) score of 64 retained and falls just below the regional average of 65	
	60 schools participated in the calendar poster competition	
	15 schools attended the virtual teachers Eco-Schools Information event	
 We will build the capacity of local communities through the Financial Assistance Scheme	£731k awarded to 377 projects across 18 thematic areas	
	Electronic Grant Management System launched and online training module developed	
	Newry, Down and Kilkeel Leisure Centres converted to food distribution hubs between March-August 2020	
	18,407 food parcels delivered to vulnerable households and 144 community organisations enlisted as volunteers	
	72% of residents agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	
 We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	The Council received, decided on and approved the highest number of planning applications across the 11 Councils	
	The processing time for local planning applications improved from 20.6 weeks in 2019-20 to 19 weeks in 2020-21	
	The processing time for major planning applications improved from 94 weeks in 2019-20 to 64.6 weeks in 2020-21	
	The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks increased from 36.2% in 2019-20 to 40.9% in 2020-21	

*The 2020 tourism estimates have not yet been published by the NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and the 2019 Local Government District (LGD) tourism data is reported.

**The 2020-21 data in relation to the statutory performance indicators for waste management remains provisional, as the end of year data is currently being validated by DAERA and will be published in Q3 2021-22.

COVID-19 Response and Arrangements

In March 2020, a global pandemic was declared and the UK Government issued guidelines to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This included the closure of non essential businesses and schools, coupled with the introduction of public health and social distancing measures.

In response to the pandemic, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council activated its Emergency Plan, closed a number of facilities and suspended some services to protect the public and employees. This included leisure facilities, community centres, arts centres, museums and parks, as well as cancelling events and festivals.

However, the delivery of many services continued with limited disruption, ensuring they were 'COVID-19 secure'. This included refuse collection, Building Control, Planning, Environmental Health and Registration. Some services also experienced increased demand and new services were introduced to support local communities and businesses to navigate and respond to the impact of the global pandemic.

What we did	Status Trend
323,685 visitors to the corporate website, 1,957 social media notifications published and 6,615 more social media users	△
3,661 Environmental Health service requests responded to, 821 of which were related to COVID-19	△
1,171 health and safety visits undertaken, including 1,098 inspections which were related to COVID-19	△
2,178 births, 1,633 deaths and 238 marriages/civil partnerships registered 32 outside venues approved for marriages/civil partnerships	😊
15,223 invoices paid, 86% of which were paid within 30 calendar days	😊
798 letters of offer, totalling approximately £1m, awarded to local businesses to help them respond to the pandemic	😊
76 COVID-19 specific grants, totalling £227k, awarded to local community groups	😊

During 2020-21, the Council commissioned an internal audit of Emergency Planning, including the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This internal audit assessed:

- The effectiveness of the Council's deployment of the Emergency Plan and prioritisation of service provision
- Appropriateness and integrity of the Council's IT systems
- Adequacy and effectiveness of internal and external communications and wellbeing programmes for employees

The findings of the internal audit identified many instances of positive behaviour and action by the Council in its emergency planning response and provided satisfactory assurance in relation to the systems in place to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

General Duty of Improvement

The Council recognises improvement to mean activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities. During 2020-21, the Council continued to strengthen and embed the arrangements it has put in place to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions, in order to improve the quality of life for all local communities.

Following the Performance Audit and Assessment 2019-20, the Local Government Auditor concluded that:

Improvement planning and publication of improvement information

- The Council has discharged its duties in connection with (1) improvement planning and (2) publication of improvement information in accordance with section 92 of the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.

Improvement assessment

- The Council has as far as possible discharged its duties under Part 12 of the Local Government Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities guidance sufficiently. The Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Act during 2019-20.

The Council is currently awaiting feedback from the Local Government Auditor regarding the outcome of the Performance Audit and Assessment 2020-21.

Arrangements to secure continuous improvement

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

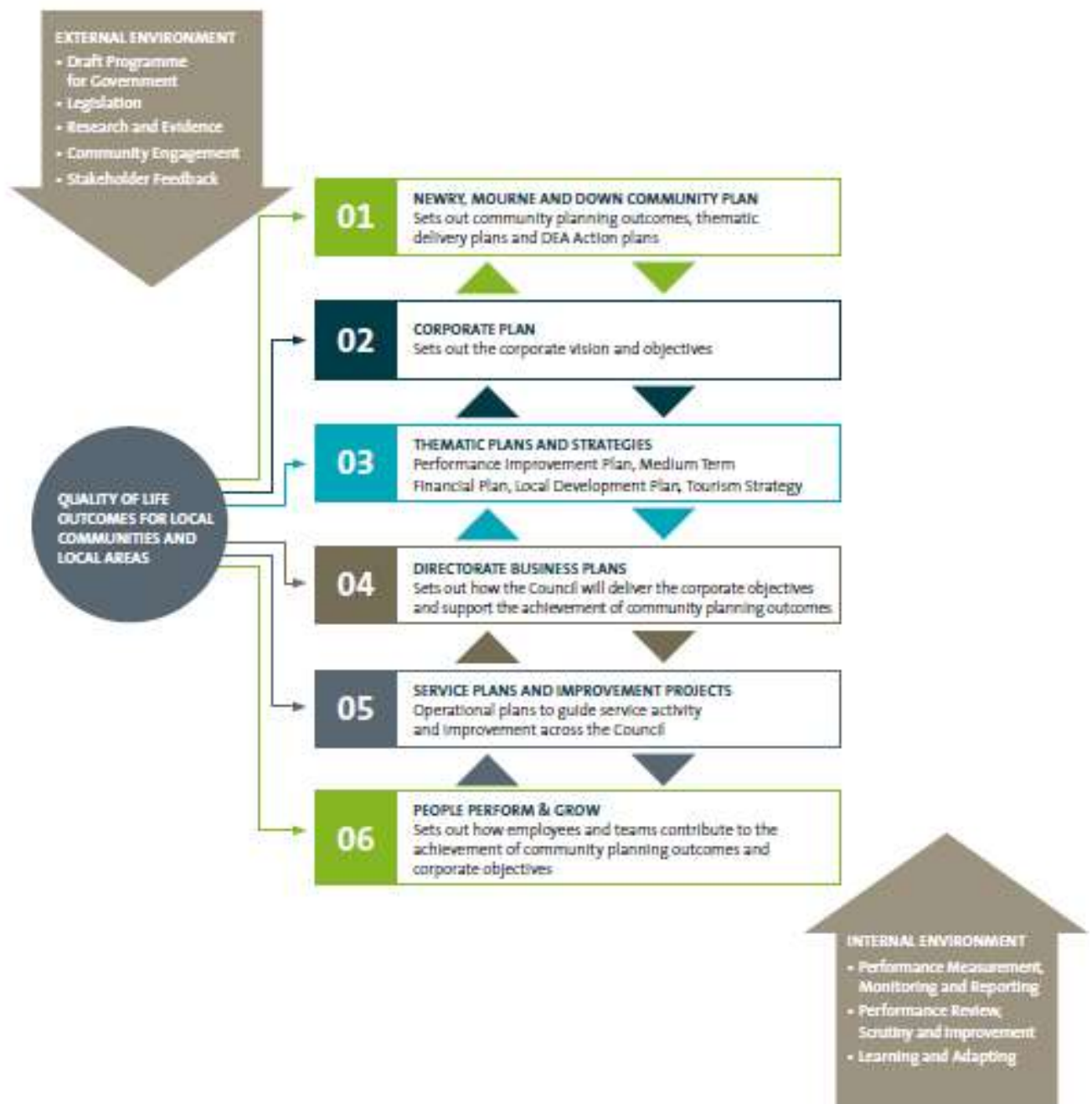
Over the past four years, the Council has continued to implement and embed the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework:

- The Council has developed and agreed integrated planning, monitoring and reporting cycles, which have been aligned to ensure everyone in the organisation is working towards shared objectives, with progress being monitored and reported on a regular basis. This integrated timeline of activity is outlined in the Business Planning and Performance Management Cycle.
- The governance arrangements at all levels of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework have been strengthened, with the delivery of the Performance Improvement Plan and Directorate Business Plans being monitored and reported on a bi-annual and annual basis.

- All departments are required to produce Service Plans 2021-21, outlining core operational activity and improvement activity which will support the achievement of strategic objectives.
- Individual Performance is being progressed during 2021-22 through phase 1 of 'People Perform Grow', which seeks to link and align the contribution of employees with strategic objectives. Performance management arrangements are also being developed and introduced to support the effective implementation of Service Plans and People Perform Grow.
- A Corporate Performance Dashboard has been developed and agreed to monitor and report progress against a suite of 14 key performance indicators on a quarterly basis to the Senior and Corporate Management Teams. The performance indicators are aligned to both the Corporate Plan and Corporate Risk Register.
- The Performance Improvement Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to secure continuous improvement in the delivery of services, and the objectives seek to bring about improvement across the seven areas outlined in the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

Further information on the Council's arrangements to secure continuous improvement and progress in implementing the 'proposals for improvement', which have been put forward by the Northern Ireland Audit Office, is outlined in Appendix 2.

Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and Cycle





Community Planning Outcome

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

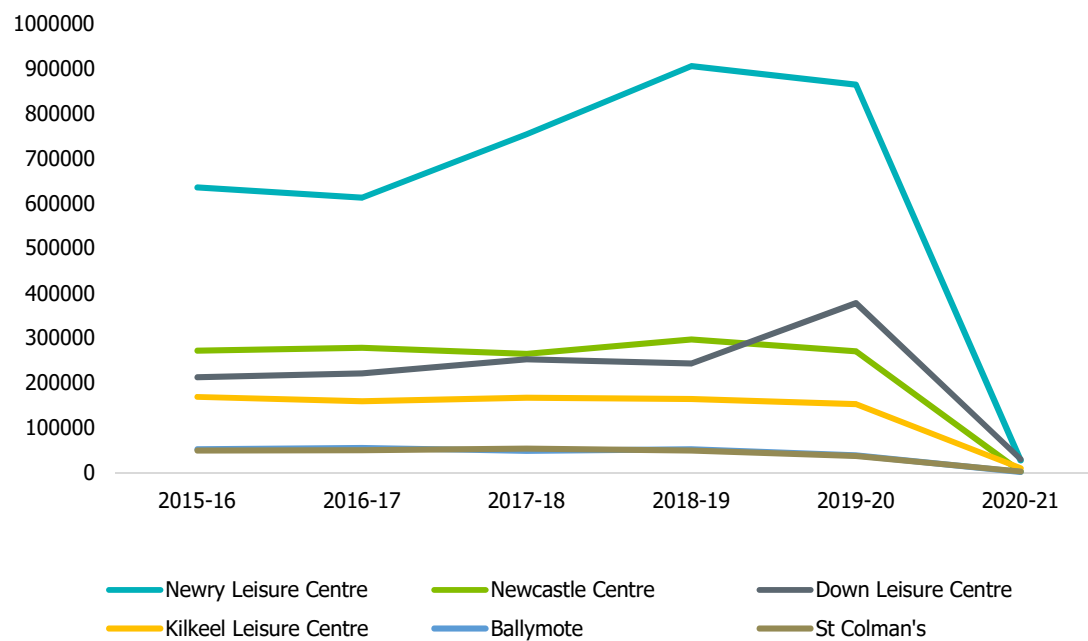
Corporate Objective

Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District and reduce health inequalities

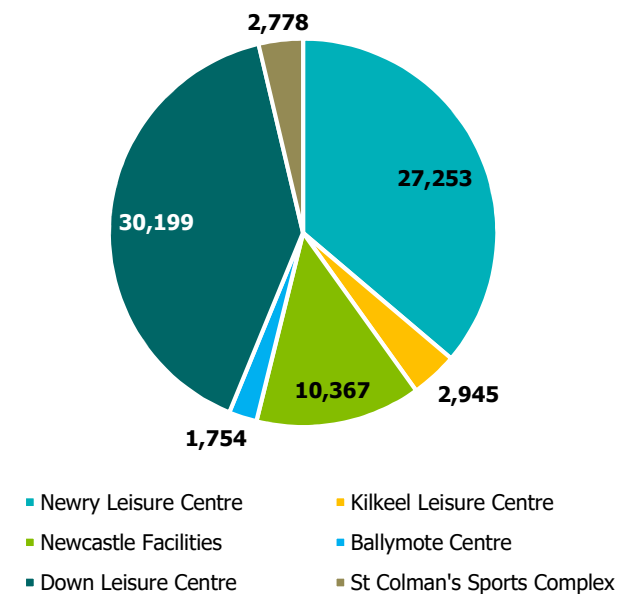
Measure of Success	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		Status Trend	Explanatory note
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes (Everybody Active 2020)	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		Between 2017-18 and 2019-20, total participation in the Everybody Active programme increased by 56.9%, from 6,879 to 10,793 participants. However, between 2019-20 and 2020-21, participation levels declined by 79% as a result of reduced programme activity during the COVID-19 pandemic.
	8,279	6,879	8,280	8,089	8,279	10,793	3,818	2,270		
Attendance at free play sessions	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		Over the past four years, 3,946 children and young people took part in community play initiatives across the District. Participation peaked in 2019-20 at 1,276 participants and subsequently declined by 66% in 2020-21, when only virtual programmes and small outdoor group activity could be delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic.
	-	1,175	-	1,065	-	1,276	-	430		
Increase in the number of people using Council leisure facilities	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		Between 2017-18 and 2019-20, the total number of attendances at Council leisure facilities increased by 12.7%, with targets being exceeded on an annual basis. However, between 2019-
	1,436,739	1,613,522	1,472,781	1,787,515	1,678,140	1,818,040	1,922,131	75,296		

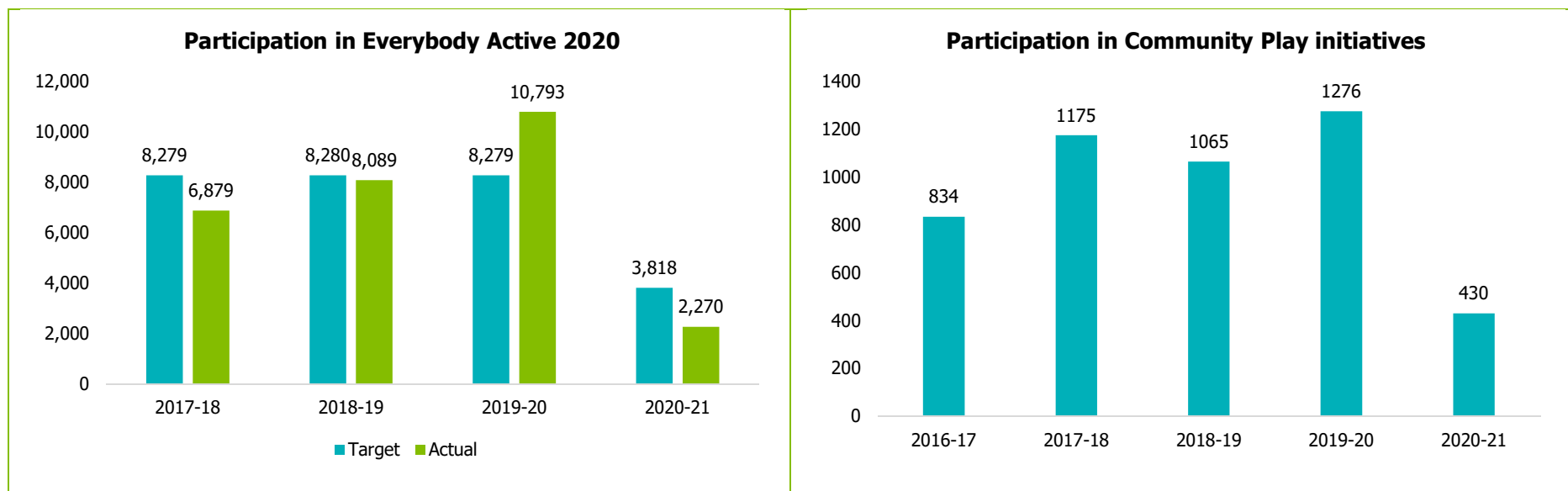
20 and 2020-21, the number of attendances recorded reduced by 95.9% and the Council only achieved 3.9% of the target set. The reduction in attendances can be attributed to the closure of facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent public health guidelines and social distancing restrictions. In March 2021, the Council carried out a Post Covid-19 Leisure Survey and 91% of respondents stated that they were 'likely' or 'very likely' to return to the leisure centres.

Attendances at Council leisure facilities



Leisure Centre attendances 2020-21

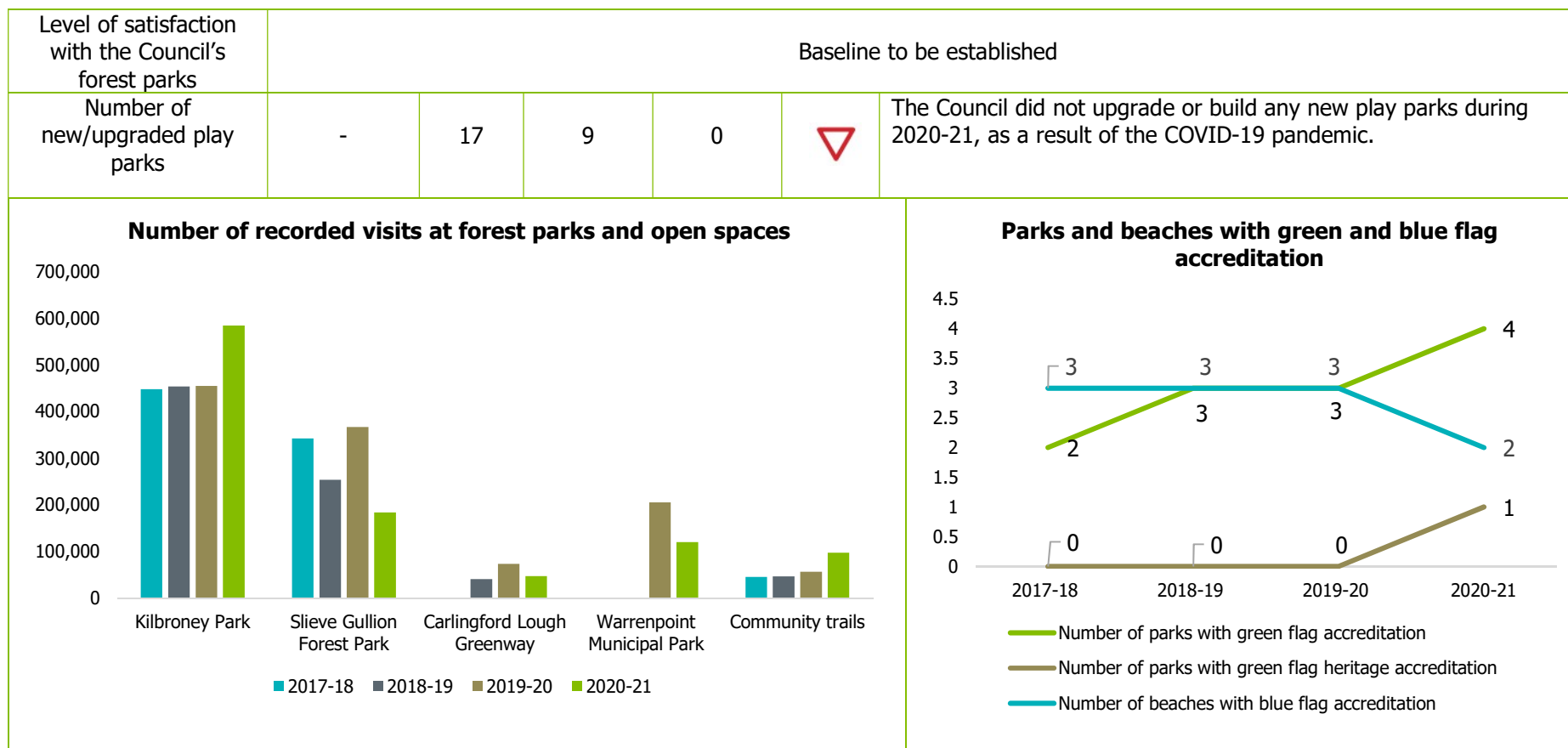




Performance Improvement Objective 1

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

Measure of success	2017-18 Actual	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory note
Number of recorded visits at:						
Kilbroney Park	447,616	453,704	454,848	584,148	-	During 2020-21, the Council recorded 814,865 visits to three parks and open spaces, 71.7% of which were at Kilbroney Park. This represents a reduction of 8.9% when compared to the 894,430 visits recorded in 2019-20. This reduction can largely be attributed to new visitor counter systems being installed which has resulted in incomplete datasets.
Slieve Gullion Forest Park	341,888	253,376	366,444	183,712		
Carlingford Lough Greenway	-	40,219	73,138	47,005		
Warrenpoint Municipal Park	-	-	205,126	119,600	▼	The closure of Warrenpoint Municipal Park for 10-12 weeks during the first lockdown phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the absence of organised activities during 2020-21, resulted in a 41.7% reduction in the number of recorded visits when compared to 2019-20.
Community trails	45,289	46,044	56,348	97,281	▲	During 2020-21, the Council recorded 97,281 visits to four community trails, with 32.5% of visits recorded at Bunkers Hill and 24.9% at Tobar Mhuire. This represents a total increase of 72.6% visits when compared to 2019-20, which can be attributed to the opening of Ballynahinch RFC and Saul GAC, coupled with increased usage during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Number of parks with green flag accreditation	2	3	3	4	▲	In 2020-21, the Council received four green flags for Kilbroney Park, Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Warrenpoint Municipal Park and the Newry Canal, as well as green flag heritage accreditation for Warrenpoint Municipal Park. Cranfield, Murlough and Tyrella beaches are generally awarded blue flag accreditation on an annual basis. However, lifeguard services were not offered at Murlough beach during 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 restrictions. All three beaches have since been awarded blue flag accreditation for 2021-22.
Number of parks with green flag heritage accreditation	-	-	-	1	▲	
Number of beaches with blue flag accreditation	3	3	3	2	▶	





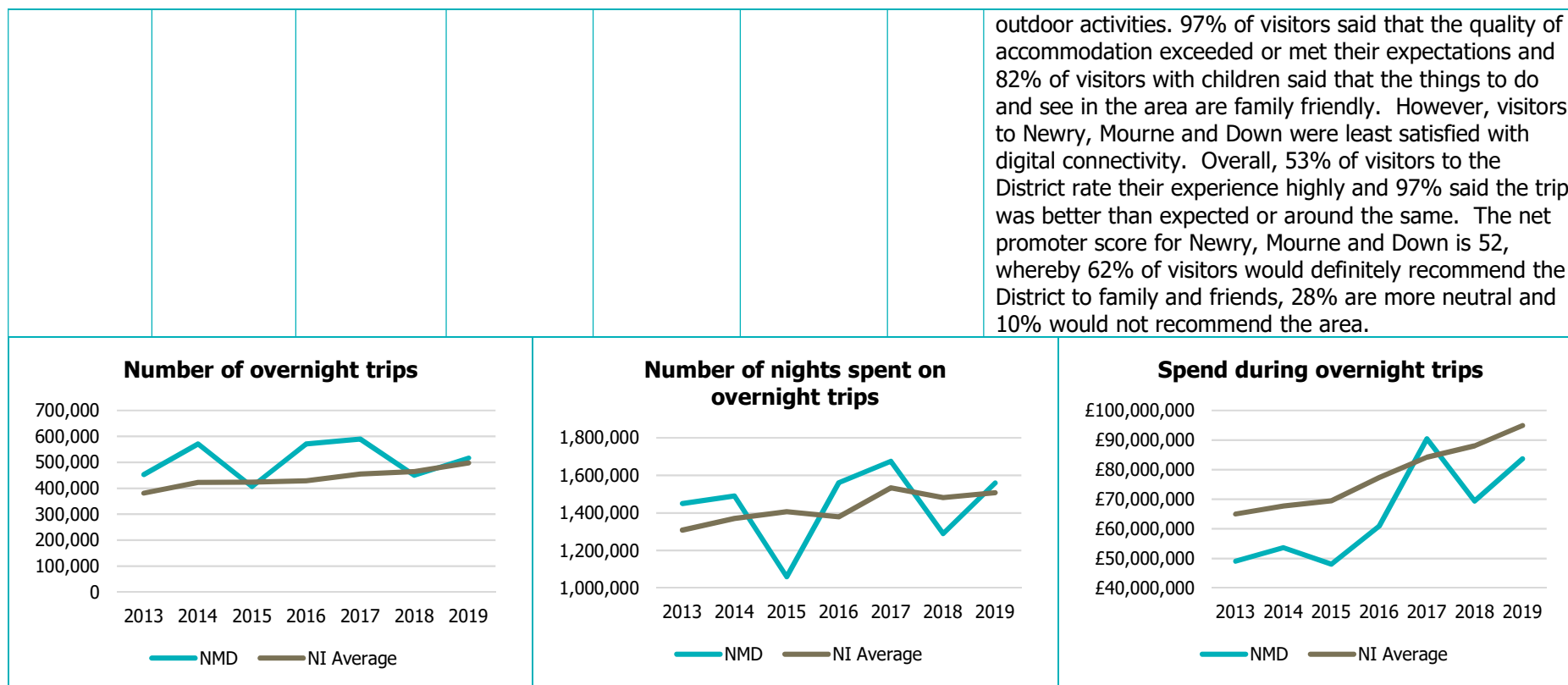
Community Planning Outcome

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

Corporate Objective

Support sustainable forms of tourism which value our environment and cultural heritage





Measure of Success	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Trend	Explanatory Note
Increased overnights stays	406,302	571,054	589,581	449,953	516,203	△	Between 2015 and 2019, the number of overnight trips in the District increased by 27%, including an increase of 14.7% between 2018 and 2019. Newry, Mourne and Down accounts for 9.4% of all overnight trips in Northern Ireland, and since 2015, the average number of nights spent in Newry, Mourne and Down also increased by 47.1% to 1,559,810 nights. The average overnight trip per visitor has therefore increased from 2.6 in 2015 to 3 in 2019.
Increased visitor spend	£48,071,493	£60,934,823	£90,432,246	£69,345,336	£83,671,689	△	Between 2015 and 2019, visitor spend in Newry, Mourne and Down increased by 74%, including a 20.7% increase between 2018 and 2019, which equates to an overall increase of £35.6m being generated by local tourism. Visitor spend in Newry, Mourne and Down currently accounts for 8% of all visitor spend in Northern Ireland and the average spend per trip also increased from £118.31 in 2015 to £162.09 in 2019.
Increased visitor satisfaction	-	-	-	Net promoter score: 52	-	-	Tourism Northern Ireland's Visitor Attitude Survey (2018) reveals that the main reason for visiting Newry, Mourne and Down is 'to see beautiful scenery and landscapes' and leisure visitors are more likely to participate in



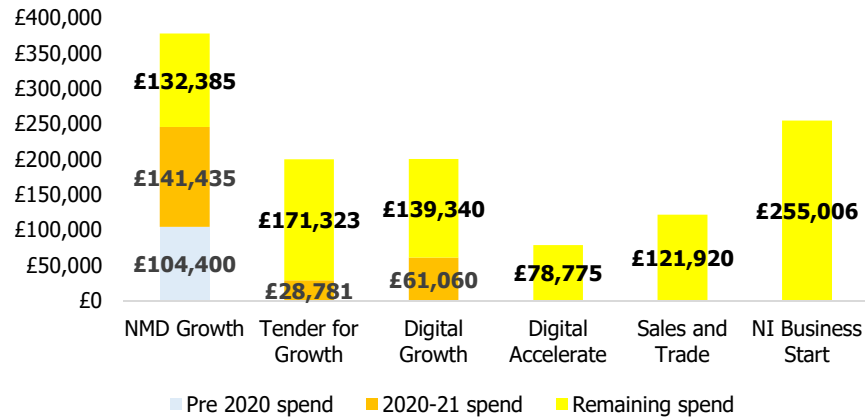
*The 2020 tourism estimates have not yet been published by the NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and this report reflects the 2019 Local Government District (LGD) tourism data. NISRA has confirmed that the tourism estimates should not be used on a year on year comparison basis, and should be used as a trend analysis, alongside other local tourism information.

Corporate Objective

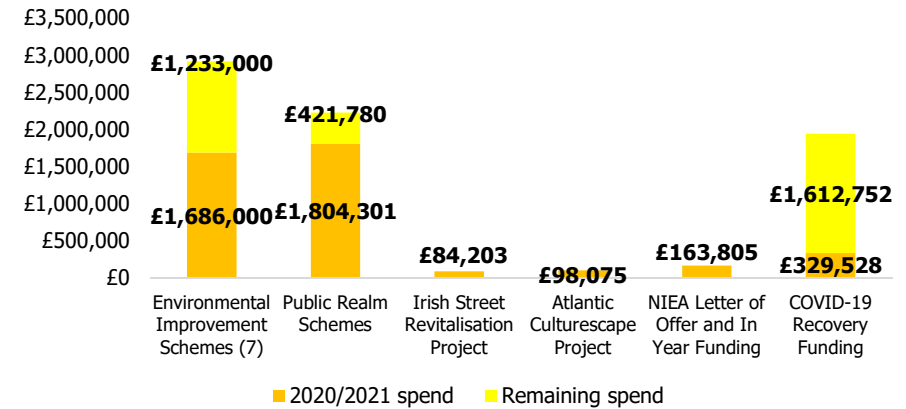
Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills

Measure of Success	2020-21		Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Number of jobs created and businesses supported through Council programmes	Jobs created	Businesses supported		Through the 'NMD Growth', 'Digital Growth', 'Tender for Growth' and the 'Social Economy' programmes, the Council supported 367 local businesses and created 60.5 jobs during 2020-21. The majority of businesses supported (54%) and jobs created (59.5%) were delivered through the 'NMD Growth' programme.
	60.5	367		
Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity	Target	Actual	 	Through the NI Business Start programme, the Council promoted 164 new jobs during 2020-21, exceeding the statutory target of >155 jobs. However, the Council approved 266 Business Plans, which equates to 91% of the target of 293 Business Plans and 181 business starts which equates to 91% of the 199 target set.
	>155	164		
Amount of investment secured by the Council	Economic Development	Regeneration		Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has secured £8,667,870 in external funding to invest in economic development and regeneration schemes across the District. The Council is currently delivering six economic development programmes which are partially funded through the European Regional Development Fund and Department for Economy. The amount of external investment secured for these programmes over the past few years amounts to £1,234,425 and to date, 27.2% (£335,676) of the total funding has been spent and claimed back from the relevant funder. The Council is also delivering a number of regeneration schemes which are partially funded by the Department for Infrastructure and Northern Ireland Environment Agency. This includes seven environmental improvement schemes and various projects across the local Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The amount of external investment secured for these programmes over the past few years amounts to £7,433,445 and to date, 56% (£4,165,912) of the total funding has been spent and claimed back from the relevant funder.
	£1,234,425	£7,433,445		

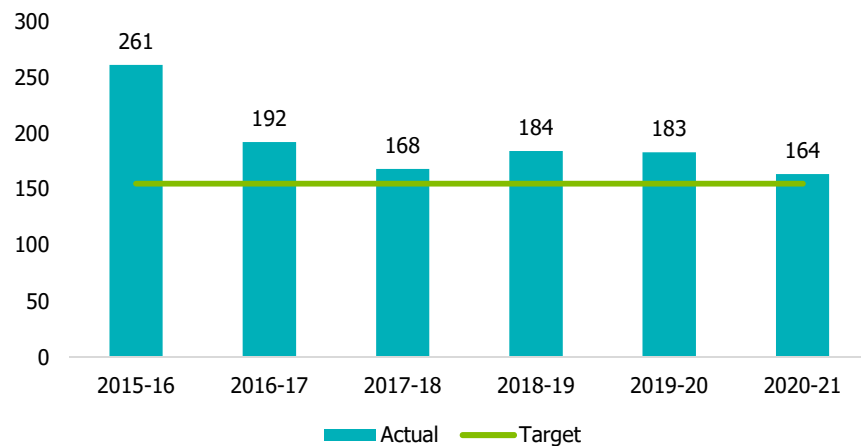
Economic Development - Investment secured and spent by the Council



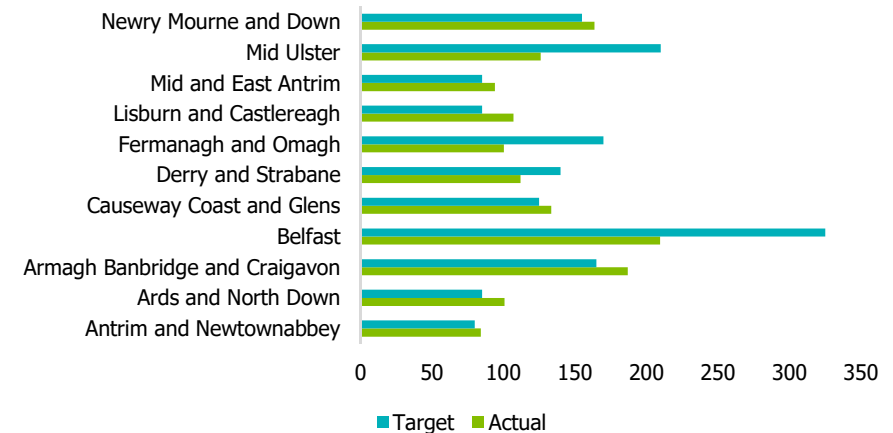
Regeneration - Investment secured and spent by the Council



Number of new jobs promoted through the business start programme








Number of jobs promoted against target 2020-21 (NI)



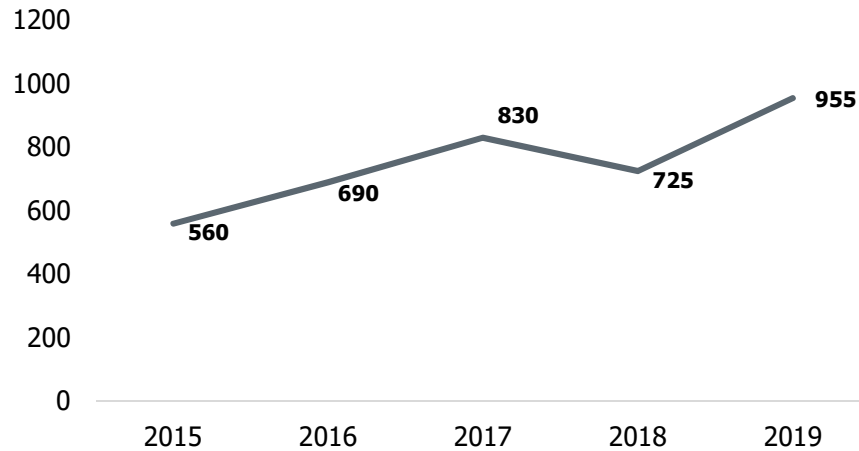
*NI Business Start programme funding secured on 1/04/2021 for a two year cycle.

Corporate Objective

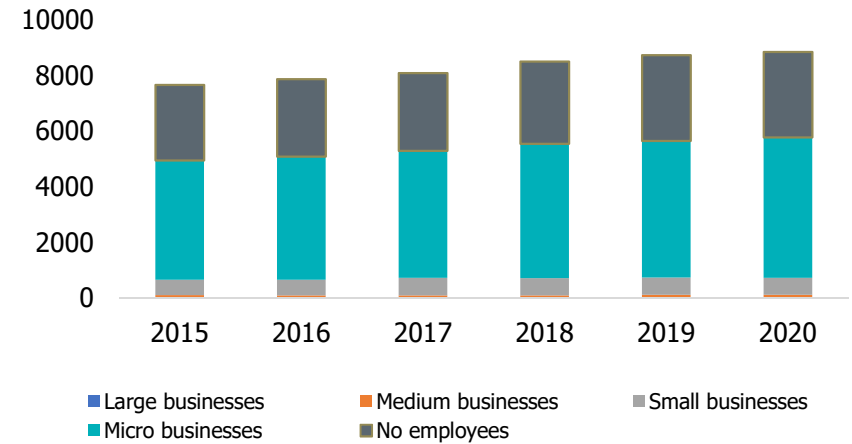
Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities

Measure of success	2020-21	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Progress against BRCD projects	Progress underway		The Outline Business Case's (OBC's) for all projects under the key themes of regeneration, tourism, 'skills and employment' and 'digital and innovation' have been submitted to the Board. For Newry, Mourne and Down this includes the OBC's for the Newry City Centre Regeneration Scheme, Newcastle Gateway to the Mournes, Southern Relief Road, Innovation Space in Newry, skills and employment programme of investment, as well as other digital and connectivity investments.
Number of public realm schemes delivered	4		During 2020-21, eight environmental improvement schemes commenced, four of which are now complete at Ballyhornan, Annalong, Dundrum and Hilltown. The remaining schemes at Killleagh, Meigh and Hilltown are scheduled to complete during Q2 2021-22 and the design and consultation phase of the Warrenpoint Front Shore Public Realm Scheme is also well underway.
Increased business growth and employment	8,865 VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses		Since 2015, the number of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses in Newry, Mourne and Down increased by 15.5%, from 7,675 in 2015 to 8,865 in 2020. This includes an increase of 1.4% between 2019 and 2020 which can largely be attributed to the creation of an additional 130 new micro businesses. The birth rate of new businesses in Newry, Mourne and Down also peaked at 955 in 2019, which is the highest on record since 2015 and accounts for 14.4% of all new business births in Northern Ireland. Between 2015 and 2019, the number of employee jobs across Newry, Mourne and Down also increased by 11%, from 52,341 to 58,113, which is currently the 7 th highest across Northern Ireland, accounting for 7.5% of all regional employee jobs. This trend correlates with the 33% reduction in the number of job seekers allowance and out of work universal credit claimants, from 3,770 in 2015 to 2,510 in 2019. However, between 2019 and 2020, the number of job seeker and out of work universal credit claimants increased significantly by 103%. This is similar to the regional trend and for the first time since 2015, the claimant count in Newry, Mourne and Down is higher than the regional average. This increase can largely be attributed to the impact of the pandemic on the local economy with more people becoming unemployed or having their hours reduced, resulting in very low earnings below the administrative earnings threshold. In addition, some people who may not have previously been eligible for universal credit due to partner earnings, are now eligible as a result of work allowance increases.
	58,113 employee jobs		
	5,105 job seekers and out of work universal credit claimants		

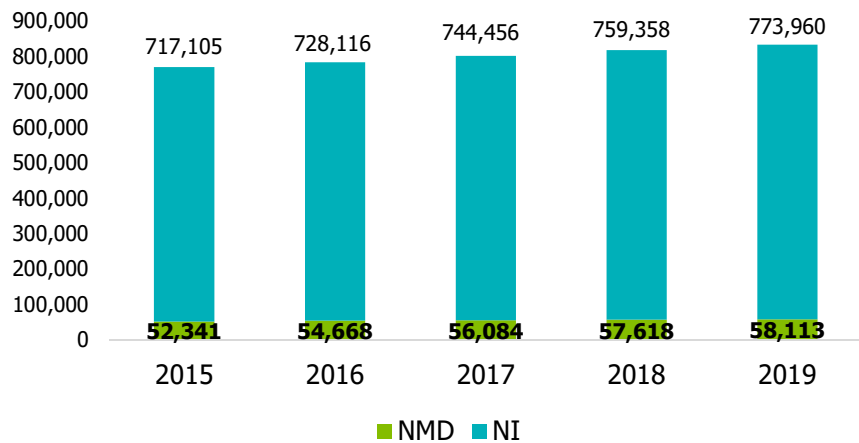
Birth rate of newly registered businesses in Newry, Mourne and Down



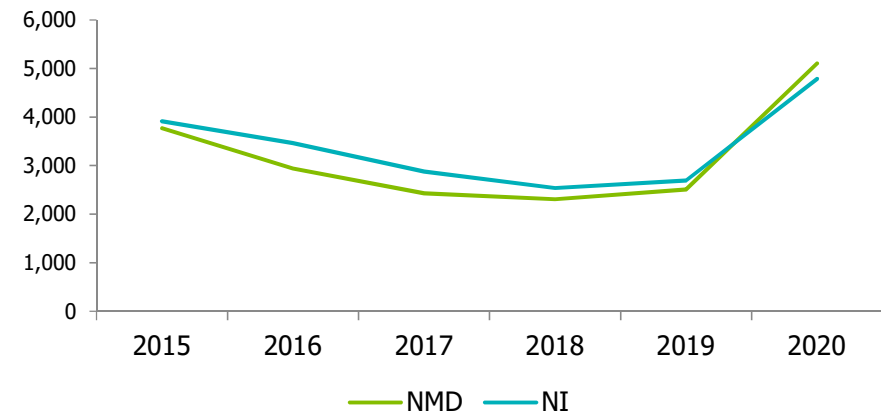
VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses operating in Newry, Mourne and Down



Number of employee jobs



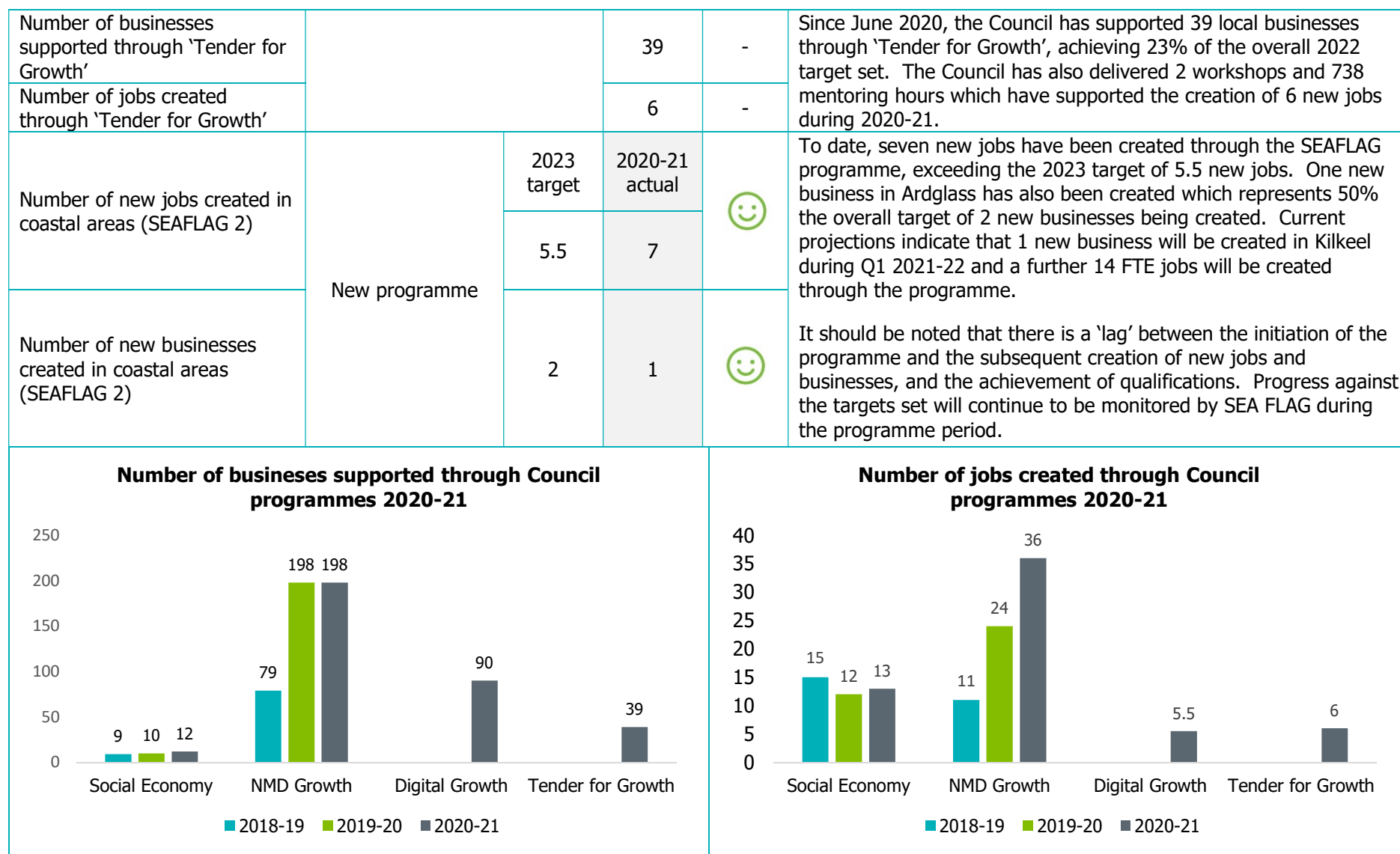
Job Seekers Allowance and Out of Work Universal Credit Claimants



Performance Improvement Objective 2

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

Measure of success	2017-18 Actual	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Number of business plans approved through NI 'Go For It'	245	300	298	266	▶	Since 2015-16, the Council has consistently exceeded the statutory target of promoting >155 jobs through business start-up activity. Compared to previous years, overall performance during 2020-21 declined when a total of 266 business plans were approved which resulted in 181 new business starts and 164 jobs being promoted. Whilst the Council is currently ranked 3/11 across Northern Ireland for promoting the third highest number of jobs, this decline in performance can largely be attributed to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent lockdown restrictions and low levels of uptake to the programme during Q1 2020-21.
Number of new business starts created through NI 'Go For It'	167	204	203	181	▶	
Number of new jobs promoted through NI 'Go For It'	168	184	183	164	😊 ▶	
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	12	9	10	12	△	Since 2017-18, the Council has consistently exceeded the targets set for the number of new social enterprise start-ups supported and jobs created. During 2020-21, the Council supported 12 new social enterprise start-ups and 40 existing social enterprises, assisted 54 people in increasing their skills for entering employment and created 13 new social enterprise jobs, as well as 32 new volunteering jobs.
Number of social enterprise jobs created	16	15	12	13	△	
Number of businesses supported through 'NMD Growth'	New	79	198	198	▶	Since 2018, the Council has supported 475 local businesses through 'NMD Growth', including 198 businesses during 2020-21, achieving 63% of the overall 2022 target set. The Council has also delivered 25 workshops, 9 thematic programmes and 5,820 mentoring hours which have supported the creation of 71 new jobs, including 36 jobs during 2020-21.
Number of jobs created through 'NMD Growth'		11	24	36	△	
Number of businesses supported through 'Digital Growth'	New programmes			90	-	Since January 2020, the Council has supported 90 local businesses through 'Digital Growth', achieving 35% of the overall 2022 target set. The Council has also delivered 9 workshops, 2 masterclasses and 1,407 mentoring hours which have supported the creation of 5.5 new jobs during 2020-21.
Number of jobs created through 'Digital Growth'				5.5	-	






Community Planning Outcome

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

Corporate Objective



Enhance, protect and promote our environment




Measure of Success	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		Status Trend	Explanatory Note
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
Level of street cleanliness across the District (KNIB street cleanliness score)	-	72	-	72	-	64	-	64	▶	The Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) Cleaner Neighbourhoods Survey indicates that the 2020-21 LEAMS score for the District has remained at 64 which falls slightly below the regional average of 65. During 2021-22, the Council will work with KNIB to commission a detailed analysis of the Cleaner Neighbourhoods survey results for Newry, Mourne and Down, in order to identify key areas for improvement.
65% of municipal waste recycled by 2030	50% by 2020	46.1%	50% by 2020	51.4%	50% by 2020	53.7%	50% by 2020	52.6%	😊 ▶	Since 2017-18, the Council increased the overall rate of recycling by 6.5% to 52.6%, exceeding the 50% recycling target by 2020. However, similar to the regional trend, the level of recycling reduced during 2020-21 and DAERA has established a working group to identify the root causes behind the declining rate of recycling. Indicative findings suggest that this may be attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with more people working from

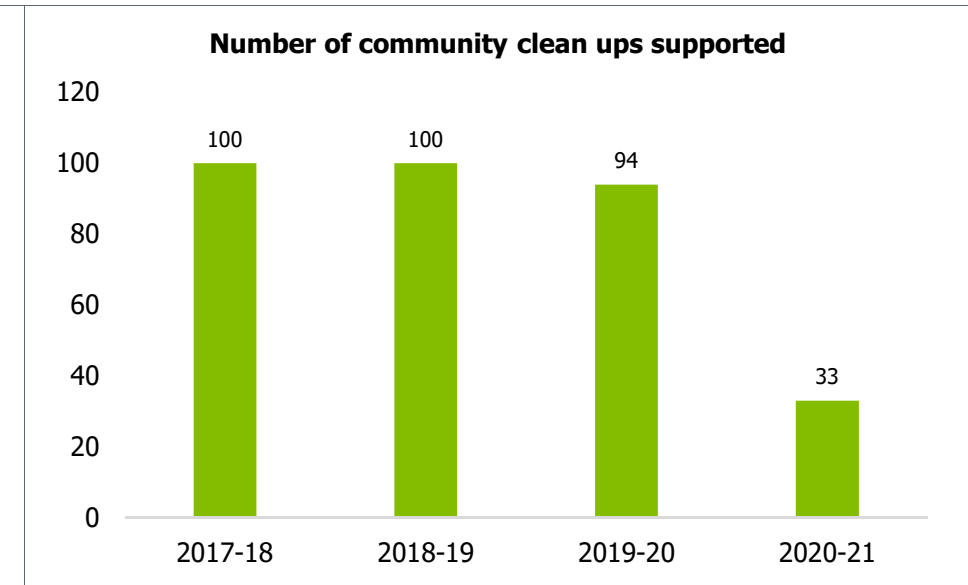
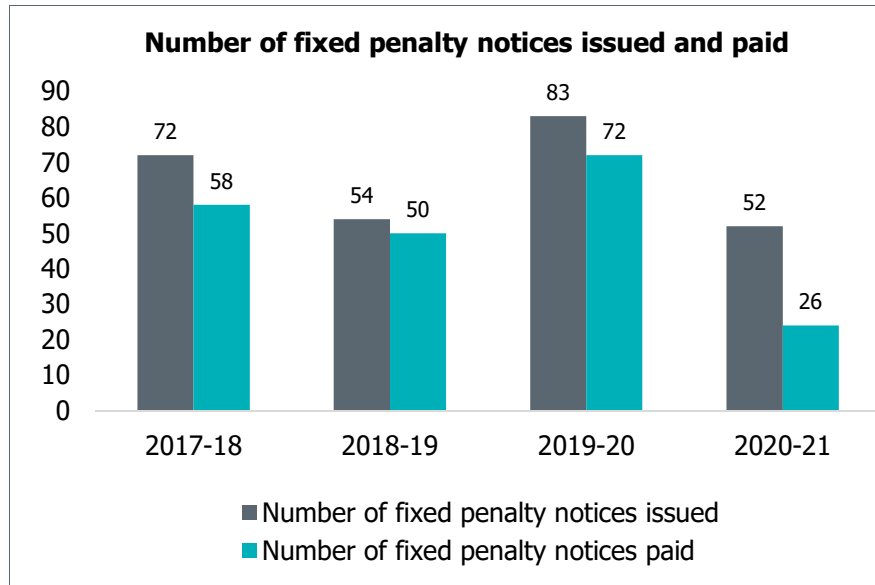
									home coupled with the displacement of commercial waste. This trend may potentially be contributing to the increased levels of domestic waste collected whilst having a negative impact on the overall rate of recycling and tonnage of waste sent to landfill.
Level of compliance with sustainable development duty		The Council has made significant progress in addressing the impact of climate change locally. Through the Sustainability and Climate Change Forum, the implementation of the Council's Local Climate Action Plan is underway and the impact of Council operations on the climate is currently being reviewed. Further initiatives include the Climate Change Symposium 'Our Climate Our Challenge' in March 2020 which attracted 100 delegates, participation in the FASTER project which aims to install 73 electric rapid charging points in Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Scotland, installation of a pilot solar farm on a Council site and development of a 'Climate Change Park' at the Islands Park in Newcastle. The Council is also working in partnership with Sustrans to develop a draft Active Travel Masterplan, is the Lead Partner for the €9 million CANN (Collaborative Action for the Natura Network) Project which seeks to protect and restore protected habitats and has published a Policy and Action Plan to phase out Single Use Plastics within Council premises.							



Performance Improvement Objective 3

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

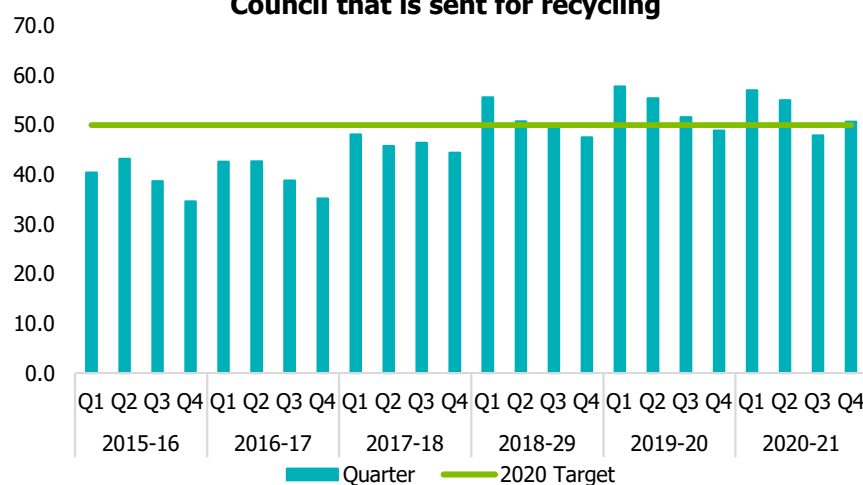
Measure of success	2017-18 Actual	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
LEAMS* score (Keep NI Beautiful Cleanliness Index)	72	72	64	64		KNIB carries out Cleaner Neighbourhoods Surveys on an annual basis. The 2020 LEAMS score for the Newry, Mourne and Down remained at 64, which is slightly below the current Northern Ireland average of 65. This is the lowest recorded regional score since the survey began in 2012 and KNIB suggests that the declining trend may be linked to higher levels of littering and dog fouling on the transects inspected, as well as a year on year decrease in cleansing spend across the 11 Councils.
Number of fixed penalty notices issued	72	54	83	52		Between 2019-20 and 2020-21, the number of illicit dumping incidents reported to the Council increased from 434 to 817 whilst the number of littering and dog fouling incidents

Number of fixed penalty notices paid	58	50	72	26 (to date)		decreased from 353 to 322. The increased levels of fly tipping may be linked to the closure of the Household Recycling Centres during Q1 2020-21, when the Council recorded the highest number of illicit dumping incidents (242). The number of fixed penalty notices issued reduced from 83 in 2019-20 to 52 in 2020-21 which can largely be attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and compliance with social distancing restrictions. 26 fixed penalty notices have been paid to date.
Number of community clean ups supported	100	100	94	33		<p>Through the Neighbourhood Services and Active and Healthy Communities Directorates, the Council actively supports clean ups which are carried out by local community groups and residents. Between 2017-18 and 2020-21, the Council supported 327 clean ups across the District, including 33 during 2020-21.</p> <p>The reduction in the number of community clean ups supported during 2020-21 can be attributed to the temporary suspension of the service in Q1 and Q4 and subsequent compliance with the COVID-19 public health guidelines and social distancing restrictions when the service was provided in Q2 and Q3. However, between April-August 2021, the number of community clean ups supported by the Council increased to 64.</p>
Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	16	27	34	24		<p>Since 2017-18, the Council has supported 101 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects, including 24 during 2020-21. Successful projects generally focus on a range of environmental themes including pollution solutions, biodiversity recovery, climate action, littering, dog fouling and community food growing initiatives.</p>

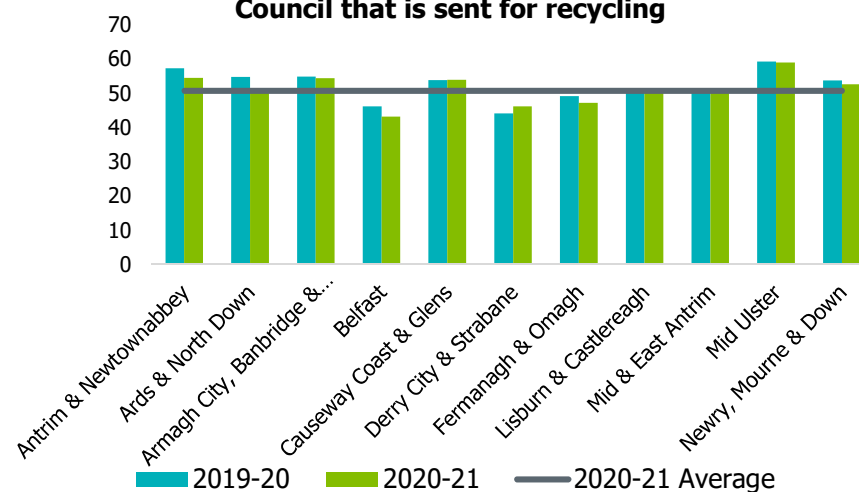




Measure of success	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		Status Trend	Explanatory note
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling	50% by 2020	46.1%	50% by 2020	51.4%	50% by 2020	53.7%	50% by 2020	52.6%	 	Since 2017-18, the Council increased the overall rate of recycling by 6.5%, to 52.6%, exceeding the 50% recycling target by 2020. The rate of recycling is also above the 2020-21 regional average of 50.7% and the Council is ranked 5/11 across Northern Ireland. However, between 2019-20 and 2020-21, the overall rate of recycling reduced by 1.1%. This is similar to the regional downward trend which indicates a 1.2% reduction in the overall rate of recycling across Northern Ireland.

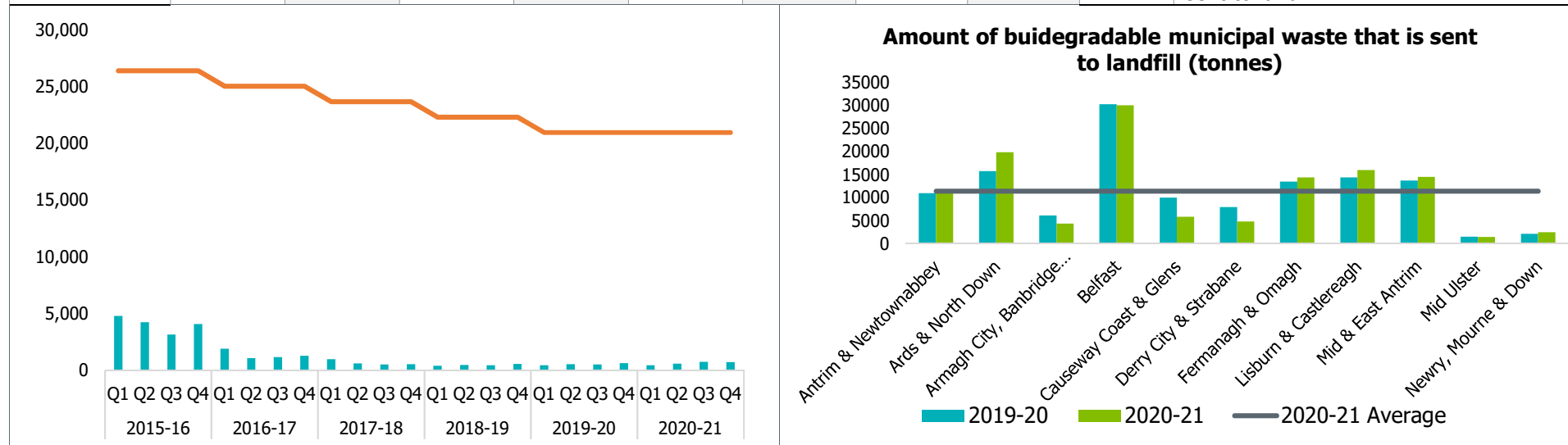
Percentage of household waste collected by the Council that is sent for recycling



Percentage of household waste collected by the Council that is sent for recycling

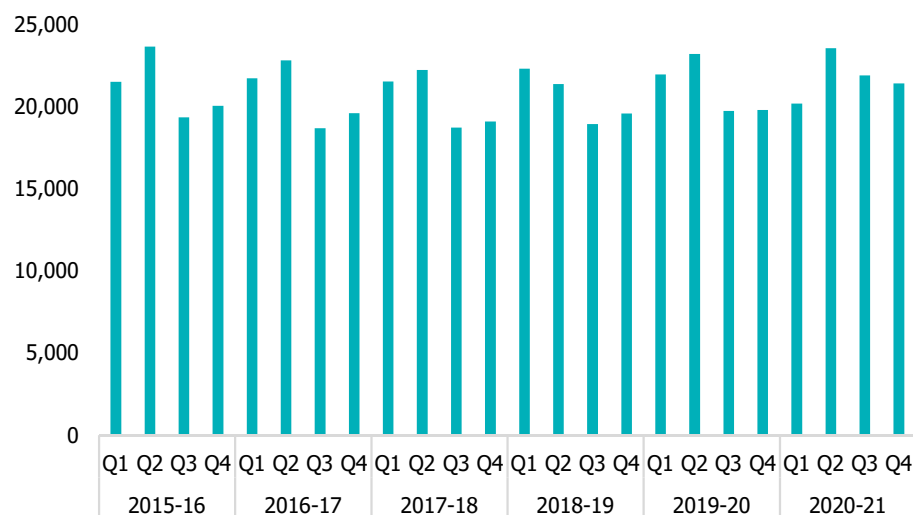


Measure of success	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		Status Trend	Explanatory note
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	<23,675	2,612t	<22,314	1,846t	<20,954	2,131t	<20,954	2,494t	 	<p>Since 2015-16, the amount of biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste that is sent to landfill reduced by 84.7%, to 2,494 tonnes, and the Council only used 11.9% of the most recent Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme allowance. This falls well below the 2020-21 regional average of 11,409 tonnes and the Newry, Mourne and Down is ranked 2/11 across Northern Ireland. However, whilst Newry, Mourne and Down is one of the best performing Councils across Northern Ireland, between 2019-20 and 2020-21, the Council recorded a 17% increase (363 tonnes) in the amount of waste that is sent to landfill.</p>

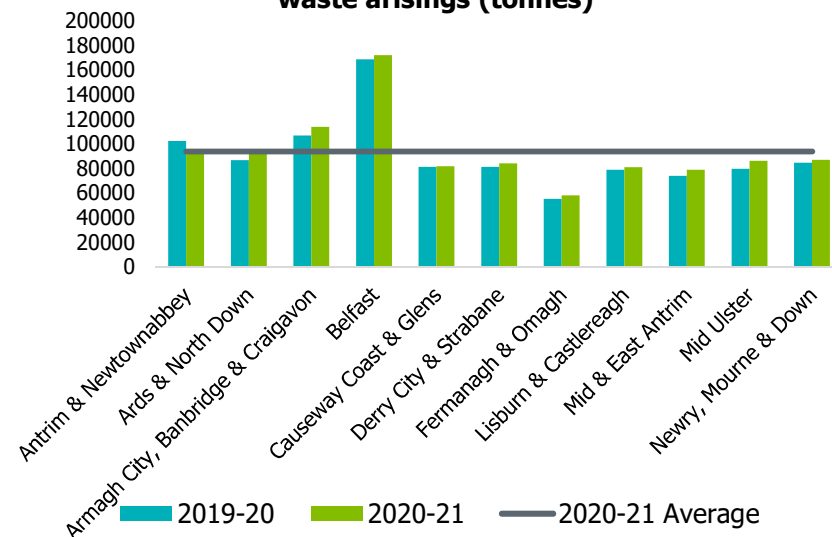


Measure of success	Actual 2017-18	Actual 2018-19	Actual 2019-20	Actual 2020-21	Trend	Explanatory note
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	81,483t	82,136t	84,610t	86,980t	▶	Since 2017-18, the amount of local authority collected municipal waste arisings increased by 6.7% to 86,980 tonnes, which falls below the 2020-21 regional average of 93,746 tonnes. Newry, Mourne and Down is currently ranked 7/11 across Northern Ireland and the increase in municipal waste arisings is likely to have significant financial implications for the Council.

Amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings (tonnes)



Amount of local authority collected municipal waste arisings (tonnes)



*Local Environmental Auditing Management System (LEAMS) which is carried out by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.

**The 2020-21 data in relation to the statutory performance indicators for waste management remains provisional, as the end of year data is currently being validated by DAERA, and will be published in Q3 2021-22. There are slight variances between the quarterly figures and the rolling 12 month figures, as outlined in the DAERA reports.

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



Community Planning Outcome

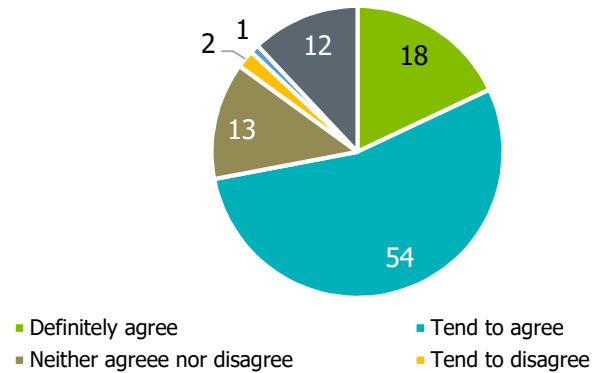
All people in Newry, Mourne and Down live in respectful, safe and vibrant communities

Corporate Objective

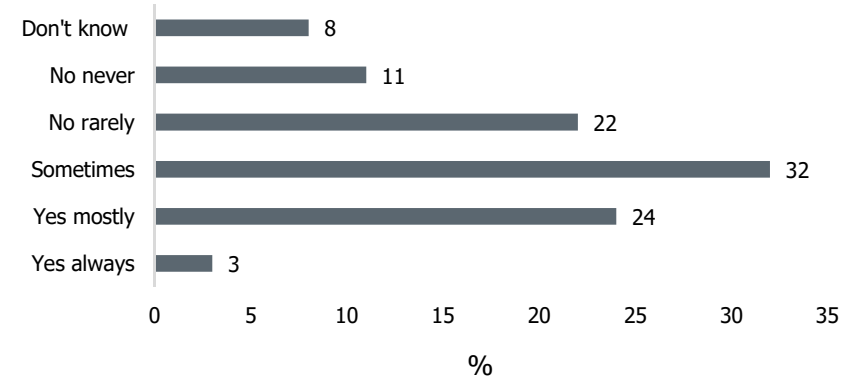
Enable and support people to engage in inclusive and diverse activities in their communities

Measure of Success	2018 Actual	Status	Explanatory Note
Percentage of residents who agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	72%		<p>In September 2018, the Council commissioned a Residents Survey to establish a robust and reliable evidence base in relation to resident perceptions about their local area, the performance of the Council and key priorities for improvement in the future. A representative sample of 764 residents revealed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 72% agree that the area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together 62% agree that the Council consults with and listens to the views of local people, and 22% neither agree or disagree 59% feel that they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area
Percentage of residents who agree that the Council consults with and listens to the views of local people	62%		
Percentage of residents who feel that they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area	59%		
Number and percentage of financial assistance projects funded and successfully delivered	64% of projects awarded funding	-	<p>The next Residents Survey will be carried out during 2022-23 to track and monitor resident perceptions of the Council, satisfaction with Council services and the local area as a place to live. Feedback from the Residents Survey will be used to inform the development of future plans and strategies, including the Corporate Plan and Performance Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Since 2015-16, the Council awarded £6.5m to 2,242 successful applications through the Financial Assistance Scheme. This includes £731,019 being awarded to 377 projects across 18 thematic areas during 2020-21, with the most popular themes being 'community engagement', 'community festivals' and 'summer schemes'. Overall, 72% of applications received were successful and 64% were awarded funding.</p>

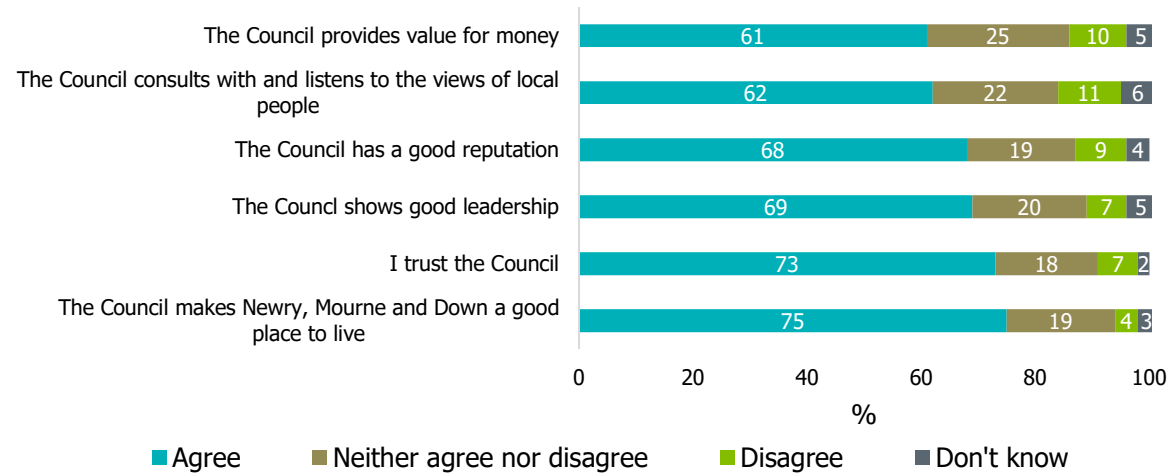
To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together? (%)



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



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

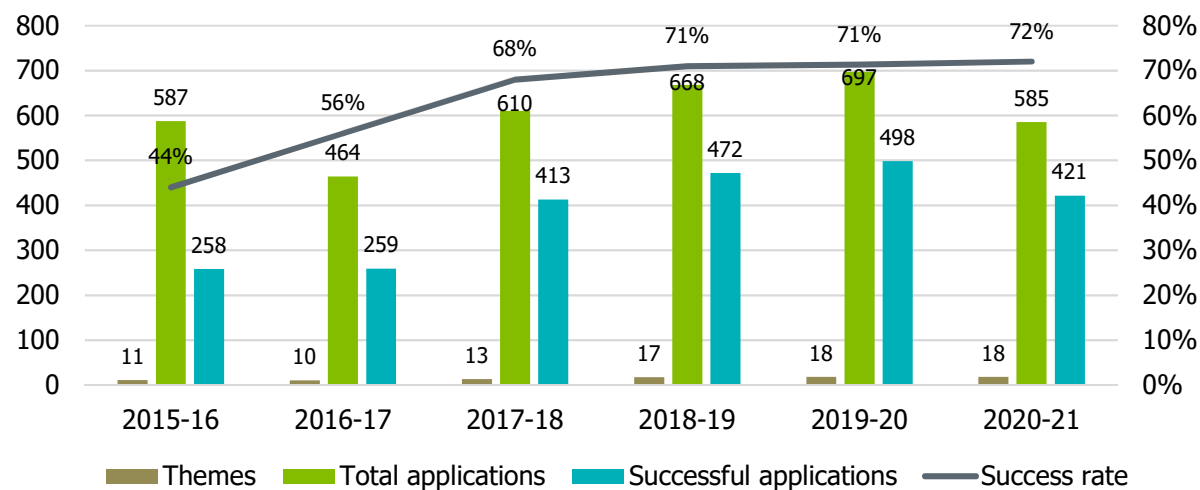


Performance Improvement Objective 4

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

Measure of success	2017-18 Actual	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	Trend	Explanatory Note
% of successful financial assistance applications	68%	71%	71%	72%	▶	The overall success rate of applications to the Council's Financial Assistance Scheme increased from 44% in 2015-16 to 72% in 2020-21. However, in 2020-21, the Council scored and ranked applications in line with the Financial Assistance Policy, and 377 of the 421 successful applications were awarded £731,019 in total. Significant shortfalls between the amount of funding available and requested were recorded under the 'community engagement' and 'local biodiversity' themes.
% of financial assistance applications funded	68%	71%	71%	64%	▼	




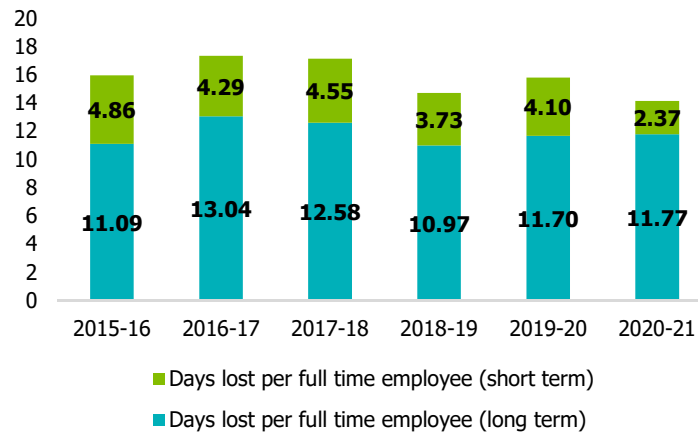
Financial Assistance applications received v success rate



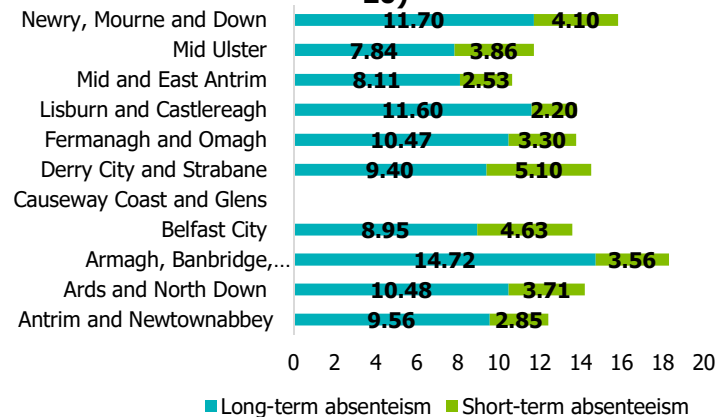
Corporate Plan 2021-23: Self imposed performance indicators

Corporate Objective

Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

Measure of Success	Status Trend	Explanatory Note																						
Increased citizen satisfaction		The 2018 Residents Survey revealed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">87% are satisfied with the Council overall75% agree that the Council makes Newry, Mourne and Down a good place to live73% trust the Council61% believe the Council provides good value for money, which is above the GB average of 51%																						
Compliance with Duty of Improvement		The certificate of Compliance was received from the Local Government Auditor in relation to the Duty of Improvement 2019-20. The Council is currently progressing the implementation of the 'proposals for improvement' which were put forward by the NI Audit Office in 2019-20, to help improve the arrangements in place to secure continuous improvement and facilitate a performance improvement culture. However, the Council was not required to publish the 2020-21 Performance Improvement Plan and is currently awaiting the outcome of the 2020-21 Performance Audit and Assessment.																						
Level of absenteeism		<div><p>Days lost per full time employee (NMD)</p><table><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Long term (NMD)</th><th>Short term (NMD)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2015-16</td><td>11.09</td><td>4.86</td></tr><tr><td>2016-17</td><td>13.04</td><td>4.29</td></tr><tr><td>2017-18</td><td>12.58</td><td>4.55</td></tr><tr><td>2018-19</td><td>10.97</td><td>3.73</td></tr><tr><td>2019-20</td><td>11.70</td><td>4.10</td></tr><tr><td>2020-21</td><td>11.77</td><td>2.37</td></tr></tbody></table><p>■ Days lost per full time employee (short term) ■ Days lost per full time employee (long term)</p></div>	Year	Long term (NMD)	Short term (NMD)	2015-16	11.09	4.86	2016-17	13.04	4.29	2017-18	12.58	4.55	2018-19	10.97	3.73	2019-20	11.70	4.10	2020-21	11.77	2.37	<p>During 2020-21, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recorded 13.55 days lost per employee. This represents a decrease from 15.80 days in 2019-20, particularly in relation to short term absence, which reduced from 4.10 days to 2.37 days per employee and is the lowest level of short term absence recorded since 2015-16. Significantly, 63.5% of the workforce (654 employees) had no recorded absence during 2020-21, which represents a significant increase when compared to the 46.2% of employees with no recorded absence in 2019-20. This reduction in short term absenteeism may partly be attributed to the working arrangements which were introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, when a number of employees were furloughed or working from home.</p> <p>In 2019-20, Newry, Mourne and Down recorded 15.80 days lost per employee which was the second highest level of</p>
Year	Long term (NMD)	Short term (NMD)																						
2015-16	11.09	4.86																						
2016-17	13.04	4.29																						
2017-18	12.58	4.55																						
2018-19	10.97	3.73																						
2019-20	11.70	4.10																						
2020-21	11.77	2.37																						

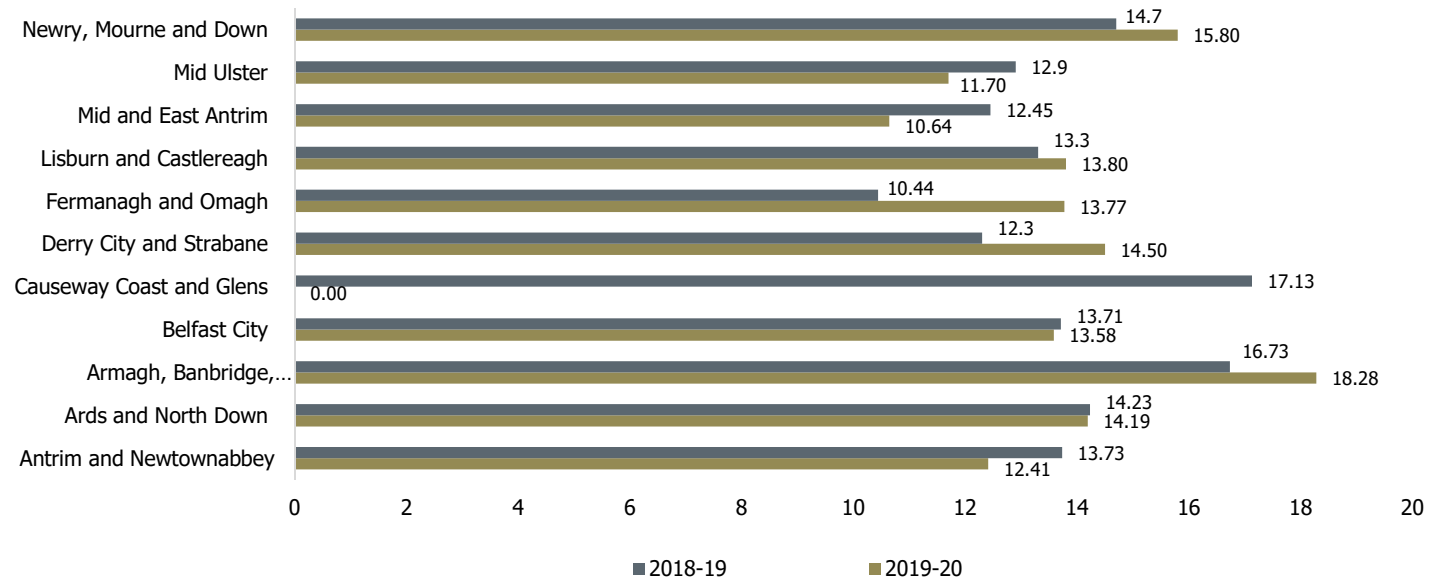
Days lost per full time employee (NI 2019-20)



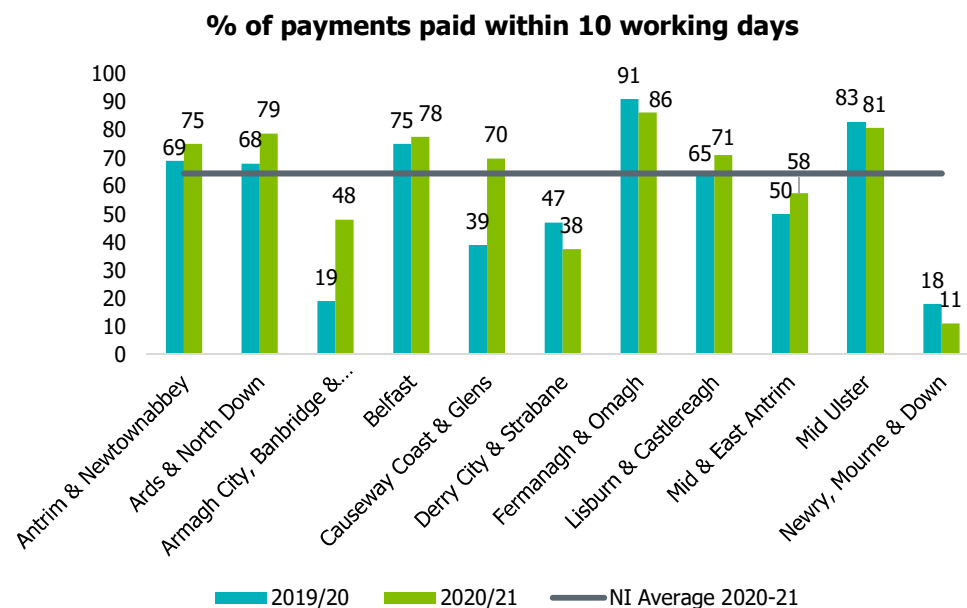
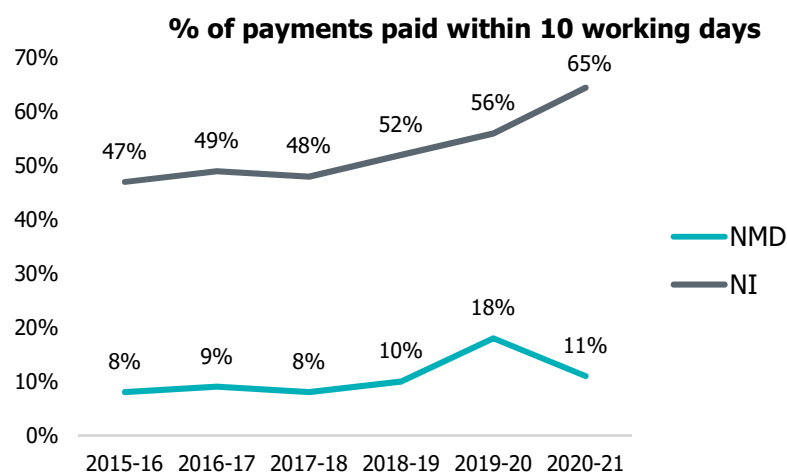
absenteeism across Northern Ireland and the Council was ranked 10/11. This represents an increase of 1.1 days when compared to the 14.7 days lost per employee in 2018-19, which was the third highest level of absenteeism recorded across Northern Ireland and the Council was therefore ranked 9/11. Between 2018-19 and 2019-20, the percentage of working days lost at Newry, Mourne and Down also increased from 6.68% to 7.18%, both of which were above the regional averages, and in contrast to the regional trend, which indicated a reduction in absenteeism during the same period.

Going forward, the Council remains committed to reducing the level of absenteeism further and continues to strengthen the reporting mechanisms between Human Resources, line managers, as well as the Corporate and Senior Management Teams.

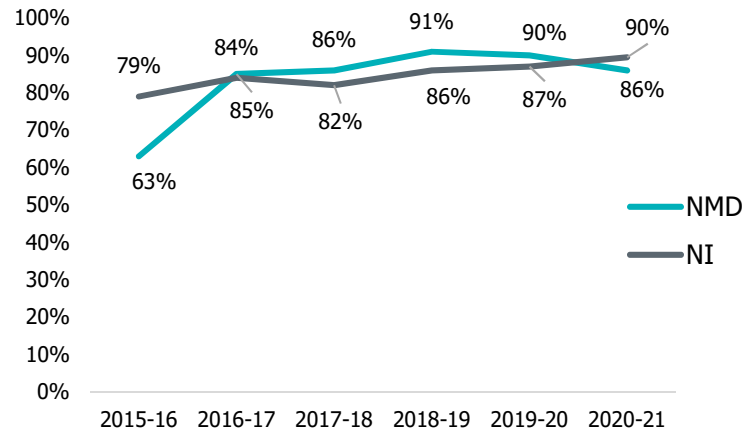
Days lost per full time employee (NI)



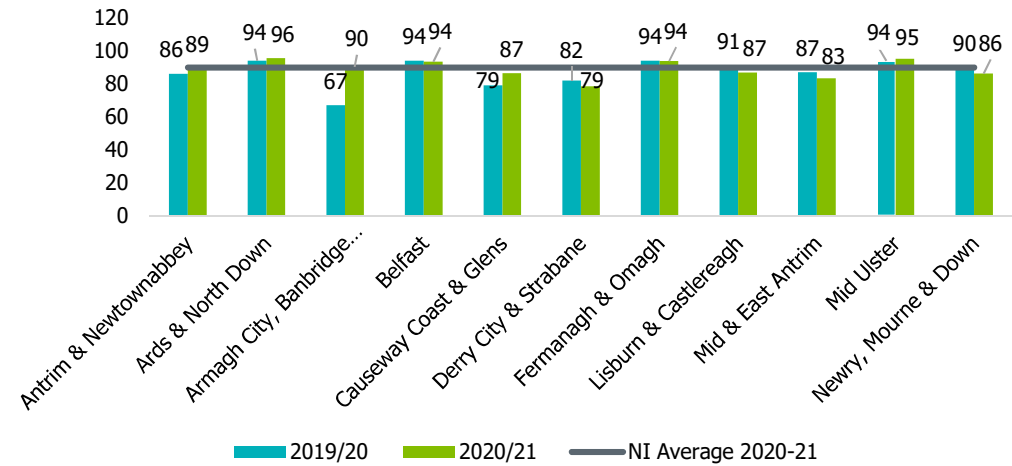
Percentage of payments paid:		Between 2018-19 and 2019-20, the Council made significant progress in the percentage of payments paid within 10 working days, which increased from 10% to 18%. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this reduced to 11%, falling well below the regional average of 64.5% and the Council is therefore ranked 11/11 across Northern Ireland. Progress with payments made within 30 calendar days has also declined slightly, from 90% in 2019-20 to 86% in 2020-21, falling below the current regional average of 89.5% and the Council is ranked 9/11 across Northern Ireland. The percentage of payments paid outside 30 days has also increased from 10% in 2019-20 to 14% in 2020-21, which is above the regional average of 10.5% and the Council is ranked 9/11 across Northern Ireland.
Within 10 working days	▽	
Within 30 calendar days	▷	
Outside 30 calendar days	▽	



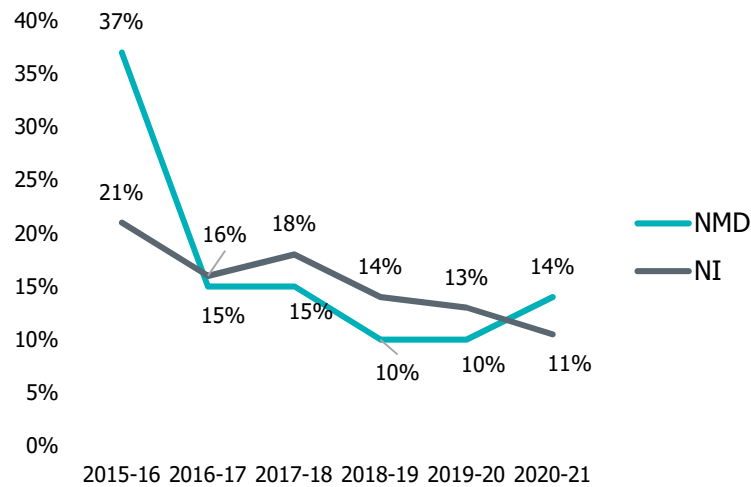
% of payments paid within 30 calendar days



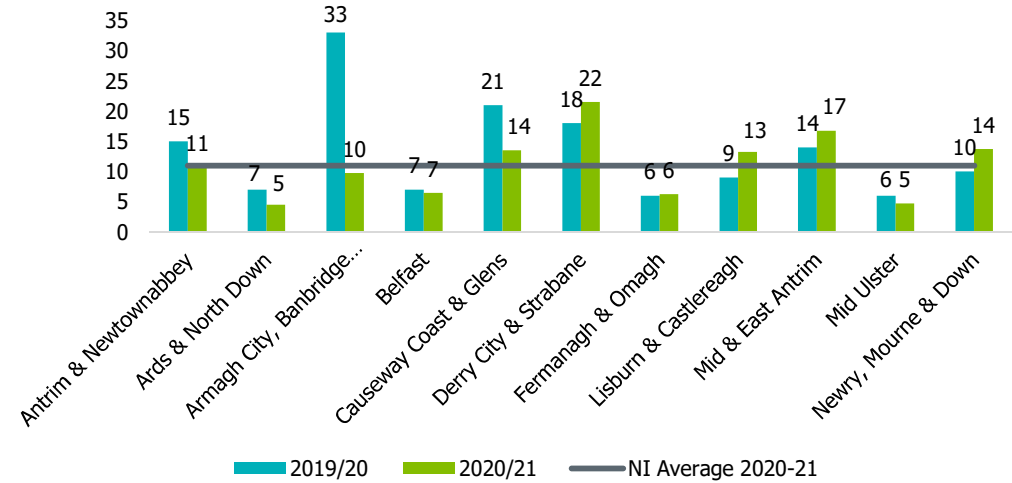
% of payments paid within 30 calendar days



% payments paid outside 30 days





% of payments paid outside 30 days





Corporate Objective






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

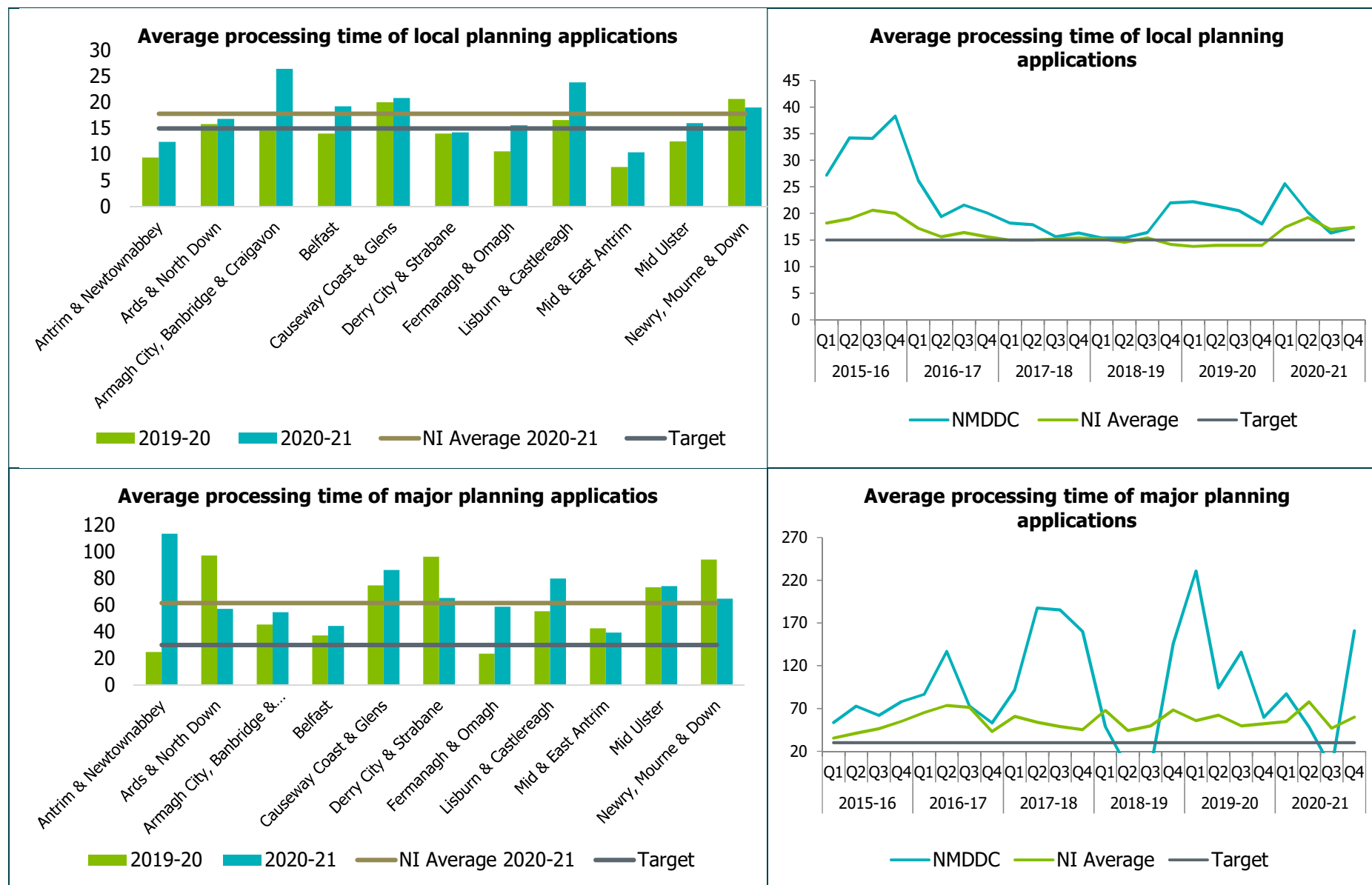
Measure of Success	Status	Explanatory note
Compliance with the duty of community planning / monitor delivery of outcomes with partners		During 2020-21, the Council continued to comply with the statutory duty of community planning. The Community Planning Partnership met on a regular basis, championing the establishment of the Community Co-ordination Hub and enlisting 144 community organisations to help deliver 18,407 food parcels to vulnerable households. Current priority work areas include active travel, housing and mental health and the Stakeholder Forum is also progressing the implementation of the 'Renewal and Recovery Plan' which is focused on improving community wealth, health provision and skills.
Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live		The 2018 Residents Survey revealed that 90% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, which is well above the GB average of 80%. 99% of residents in the Rowallane DEA are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared to just 78% in the Downpatrick DEA. Residents in rural areas are also more likely to be satisfied with their local area as a place to live than residents in urban areas. The top perceived problems identified by residents are dog fouling and barking dogs, particularly for residents in urban areas.

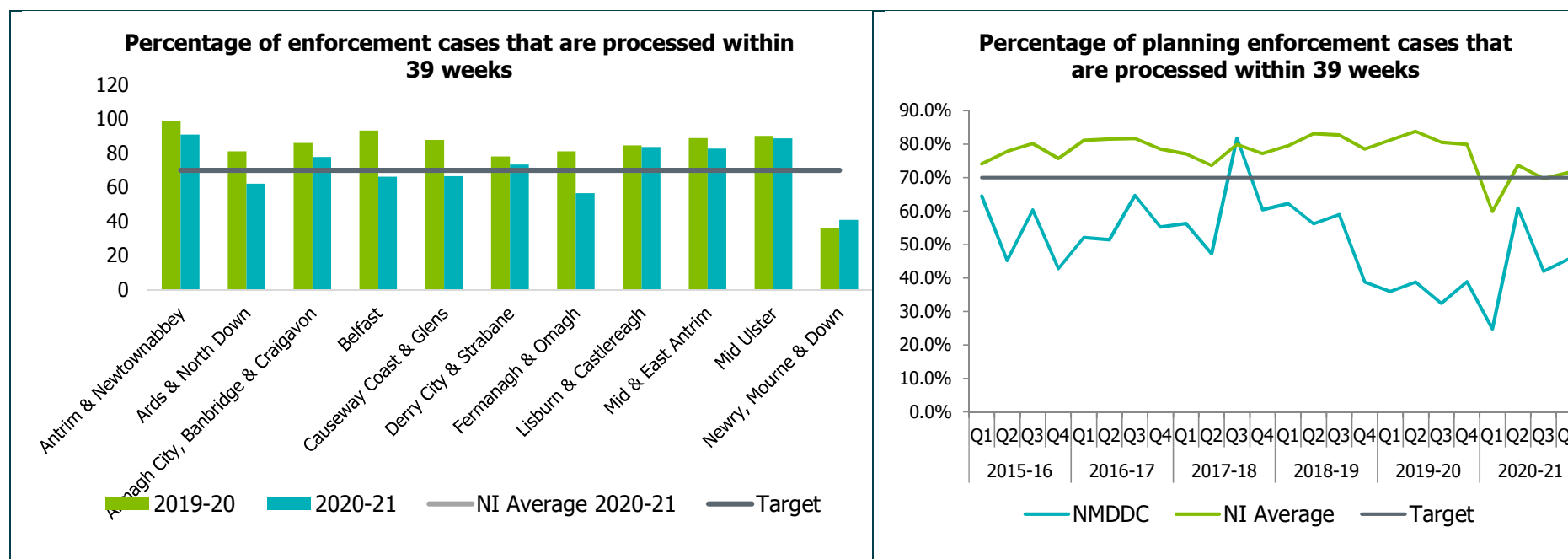
Performance Improvement Objective 5

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

Measure of success	2017-18 Actual	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	17	18	20.6	19	 	During 2020-21, Newry, Mourne and Down received 1,645 local planning applications which is the highest across Northern Ireland and represents a slight increase when compared to 2019-20. The processing time for local planning applications decreased from 20.6 weeks in 2019-20 to 19 weeks in 2020-21 which is above the regional average of 17.8 weeks and exceeds statutory standard of <15 weeks. However, whilst only 34.8% of local planning applications were processed within the statutory standard, Newry, Mourne and Down was the only Council to improve the average processing time of local planning applications between 2019-20 and 2020-21. The

						Council is currently ranked 7/11 across Northern Ireland for processing local planning applications.
Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)	127.6	76.6	94	64.6		During 2020-21, Newry, Mourne and Down received 12 major planning applications which is the second highest across Northern Ireland and represents an increase of four applications when compared to 2019-20. The processing time for major planning applications decreased from 94 weeks in 2019-20 to 64.6 weeks in 2020-21 which is above the regional average of 61.4 weeks and exceeds statutory standard of <30 weeks. Only 14.3% of local planning applications were processed within the statutory standard and the Council is ranked 6/11 across Northern Ireland for processing major planning applications.
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks	59.9%	52.9%	36.2%	40.9%		The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks increased from 36.2% in 2019-20 to 40.9% on 2020-21 which falls well below the regional average of 69.9% and statutory standard of 70%. However, whilst the Council is currently ranked 11/11 across Northern Ireland for processing enforcement cases, Newry, Mourne and Down was the only Council to improve the percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks between 2019-20 and 2020-21.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	197	224	183	195		Between 2019-20 and 2020-21, the number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more increased by 6.6%. Newry, Mourne and Down currently has the 5 th highest number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more across Northern Ireland.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less	675	800	685	857		Between 2019-20 and 2020-21, the number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less increased by 25.1%. Newry, Mourne and Down currently has the 2 nd highest number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less across Northern Ireland.
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more	571	734	620	546		Between 2019-20 and 2020-21, the number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more decreased by 12%. Newry, Mourne and Down currently has the highest number of live enforcement cases in the system (819) across Northern Ireland, 49.5% of which have been in the system for two years or more.





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

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

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

Appendix 1: Progressing the 'proposals for improvement'

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Performance Audit and Assessments: Proposals for Improvement - Progress Report

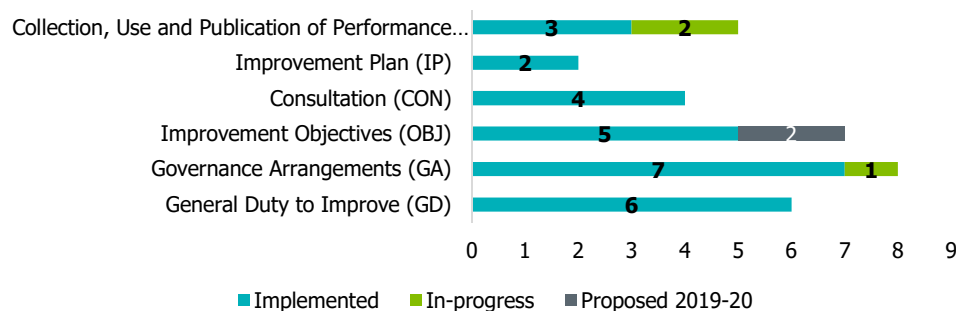
For the past four years, the Local Government Auditor has put forward 'proposals for improvement' as part of the annual Performance Audit and Assessments which are carried out by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The purpose of the 'proposals for improvement' is to support the Council in putting in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions. The 'proposals for improvement' are categorised under the seven themes outlined below. This report provides an overview of progress to date in implementing the 'proposals for improvement', using the following legend. It should be noted that the implementation of a number of 'proposals for improvement' has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Themes:

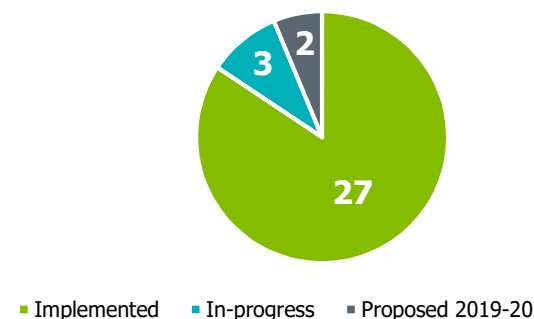
1. General duty to improve
2. Governance arrangements
3. Improvement objectives
4. Consultation
5. Improvement Plan
6. Arrangements to improve
7. Collection, use and publication of performance information


Legend	
Proposal implemented / on track to be implemented	😊
Proposal partially implemented / likely to be implemented	😐
Proposal not implemented	😞

Proposals for Improvement - Progress to date



Proposals for Improvement - Progress to date



Theme, Proposal and Progress to Date	
THEME: General duty to improve	Status
<p>PROPOSAL: The Council should take steps to further develop, establish and embed all elements which underpin its Business Planning and Performance Management Framework more fully across the organisation and each of its Directorates. This should ensure that corporate priorities and performance improvement objectives are effectively cascaded to all employees.</p>	
<p>The Council has continued to embed the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, in order to facilitate the effective cascade of strategic objectives across the organisation. The Framework features within the Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan and Directorate Business Plans, as well as the guidance for Service Plans and People Perform Grow, demonstrating how employees contribute to the achievement of community planning outcomes and strategic objectives. The Performance Improvement Policy continues to provide the content for mainstreaming the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework.</p> <p>The Business Planning and Performance Management Cycle has also been updated to demonstrate the integrated timeline of activity required to strengthen the alignment across the Framework and facilitate the development, implementation and review of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan, Directorate Business Plans, Service Plans and People Perform Grow. The monitoring, reporting and review arrangements at each level of the Framework continue to be mainstreamed and a standard, consistent approach has been developed for performance reporting, using the red/amber/green status. Performance reports are available to a range of stakeholders through the Council's website and Committee reporting arrangements.</p>	
<p>Community Plan</p> <p>During 2019-20, the Community Planning Partnership reviewed progress in implementing the Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down. The statement of progress was submitted to the Department for Communities during Q3 2019-20 and is accessible to a range of stakeholders through the corporate website. The Community Planning Partnership is currently preparing the second Statement of Progress which will be submitted to the Department for Communities in November 2021 and a formal review of the Community Plan is scheduled to take place in April 2022.</p>	
<p>Corporate Plan</p> <p>The Corporate Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council was approved by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee on 12 March 2020 and was scheduled to be ratified by full Council on 6 April 2020. However, in response to the restrictions associated</p>	

with the Coronavirus pandemic, this meeting was cancelled and in April 2020, the Party Representatives Forum agreed that the official publication of the Corporate Plan should be delayed, enabling the organisation to:

- Plan ahead, identify and anticipate the key challenges and opportunities within the current and future internal and external environments.
- Review the current suite of strategic objectives, supporting actions and measures of success, to ensure they remain meaningful, relevant and realistic.

In Autumn 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent impact on Council service delivery, a further consultation and engagement exercise was undertaken. Virtual focus groups were held with a representative sample of 21 residents and an online survey was launched on Councils website and social media platforms which generated 560 responses. As part of the consultation and engagement process, participants were asked their views on a number of issues, including whether the corporate objectives originally identified were still deemed to be relevant in the current climate. Feedback confirmed widespread support for the corporate objectives and the Corporate Plan 2021-23 was approved and launched in Q4 2020-21.

Performance Improvement Plan

In line with the guidance issued by the Department for Communities, the Council did not publish the Performance Improvement Plan 2020-21. However, the draft performance improvement objectives 2020-21, supporting actions and measures of success were developed in close liaison with employees, approved by the Senior Management Team and Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee, and subject to a public consultation process between February-May 2020. Four of the five draft performance improvement objectives were carried forward to 2021-22.

Directorate Business Plans

In response to the growing uncertainty around Covid-19, Emergency Business Plans, which covered the periods April-September 2020 and October 2020-March 2021, were developed for each Directorate and approved by the Senior Management Team and relevant Council Committee. These plans provided a mechanism to manage and co-ordinate activity, plan ahead to support and anticipate business recovery, by outlining:

- Challenges and opportunities (internal and external environments)
- Customer needs and expectations
- New / essential / statutory / desirable / delayed / suspended services
- Key objectives, activities, timescales and anticipated outcomes

- Financial resources – projected expenditure, income, additional costs and external funding
- Human resources – staffing levels, re-deployment and remote working
- Governance arrangements (ongoing monitoring and review)

Progress in implementing the Emergency Business Plans was monitored and reported to the Senior Management Team and relevant Council Committee during 2020-21, providing robust baseline information to:

- Monitor and evaluate the Council's overall response to COVID-19, during the initial lockdown and subsequent phases
- Identify areas of good practice and shared learning - what is working well and what could work better
- Explore opportunities to identify business transformation at all levels of the organisation

The Emergency Business Plans also formed part of the internal audit of Emergency Planning (COVID-19 response) and no recommendations for improvement were received in this respect. The assessments of the Emergency Business Plans 2020-21 have been used to inform and support the development of Directorate Business Plans 2021-22.


Service Plans

During 2019-20, the Council agreed a corporate approach to developing and mainstreaming Service Plans, as a tool to enable departments to turn plans into action, monitor performance and strengthen the effective cascade of strategic objectives to departments, teams and employees. The purpose of Service Plans is to provide an overview of the operational activity and key improvements that are planned for the year ahead, helping to ensure that teams and employees are working towards shared objectives. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the introduction of Service Plans was suspended until 2021-22 and all departments are now required to have a Service Plan in place.

Individual Performance

During 2019-20, the Council progressed Individual Performance through the 'People Perform Grow' pilot, which seeks to align the contribution of employees to the corporate objectives and community planning outcomes, as demonstrated through the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, People Perform Grow was suspended until 2021-22. Phase 1 has now been launched for tier four employees and above, as well as any employees who would like to volunteer to take part in the process.

People Perform Grow templates link individual performance objectives with the relevant Service Plan, in order to strengthen the cascade of strategic objectives to all employees across the organisation. An e-learning module and brochure has also been developed

to support the effective implementation of People Perform Grow and performance management arrangements are currently being developed to track progress and evaluate the overall process ahead of the organisational roll-out in 2022-23.	
The Corporate Performance Dashboard has been developed to provide an overview of the overall organisational health of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, using a suite of statutory and self imposed performance measures across a range of key functions. The Corporate Performance Dashboard is aligned to the objectives within the Corporate Plan 2021-23 and risks within the Corporate Risk Register. It provides a platform to monitor performance on a quarterly basis, identify areas of good performance, address areas of under-performance and secure continuous improvement in the delivery of key functions. The Corporate Performance Dashboard 2020-21 is made up of 14 performance measures, including seven statutory performance indicators for economic development, waste management and planning. These performance measures may change on an annual basis and should be aligned to specific organisational priorities and areas for improvement.	
Areas for improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to strengthen the alignment across all elements of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. • Further embed and mainstream the Performance Improvement Policy and Business Planning and Performance Management Framework through the effective implementation of Service Plans and Individual Performance. • Strengthen the suites of performance indicators at all levels of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. • Mainstream the use of the Corporate Performance Dashboard amongst the Senior and Corporate Management Teams. • Continue to use performance information to identify and drive performance improvement at all levels of the organisation. 	
THEME: Governance Arrangements	Status
PROPOSAL: Senior Management Team should facilitate members of the Audit Committee and SPR Committee with training and support to discharge their performance improvement responsibilities.	
Performance management training was scheduled to take place for members of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in March 2020. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this training session was delayed and it is anticipated that a further training session will be organised during 2021-22. Following the involvement of the Council in developing and delivering a regional masterclass on performance which was organised by the NI Local Government Association (NILGA) in January 2019, Newry Mourne and Down formed part of a Working Group tasked with organising a second masterclass entitled: 'Performance Improvement for Transforming Councils'. The draft programme was developed and the Masterclass was scheduled to take place in May 2020. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the masterclass has also been delayed until further notice.	

Performance and improvement is a standing item on the agenda of the quarterly Audit Committee meetings and has featured as a regular agenda item at the monthly Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meetings. In addition, all Standing Committees of Council consider performance information in relation to their specific functions on an ongoing basis, which is supplemented by the mid year and annual reviews of their respective Directorate Business Plan. Elected Members have also been actively engaged in identifying key local issues and informing the development of the Corporate Plan 2021-23 and Performance Improvement Objectives 2021-22.

Areas for improvement

- Develop and deliver training and capacity building sessions for Elected Members on performance management.
- Work with Internal Audit to develop and agree a programme to validate the accuracy of performance information and adequacy of data collation processes in relation to the Corporate Plan 2021-23 and future Performance Improvement Plans.

THEME: Improvement Objectives


The Council should redefine objectives so that they are more specific rather than aspirational and open-ended. This would enhance both transparency and meaningfulness of the Council's commitment to continuously improve its functions as it should be easier to link projects to objectives and see how the completion of projects contributes to the achievement of the identified objective.

Status



In 2021-22, the Council adopted five performance improvement objectives, four of which were carried forward from 2020-21. These performance improvement objectives are based on set criteria and are aligned to the outcomes within the Programme for Government and Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down, as well as the strategic objectives within the Corporate Plan 2021-23. The five performance improvement objectives 2021-22 were endorsed through the public consultation and engagement process which was carried out during Q1 2021-22. These objectives are considered to be more specific, focused and measurable, and were approved by the Senior Management Team and Strategy Policy and Resources Committee in June 2021. The NI Audit Office will determine whether this proposal for improvement has been achieved as part of the Performance Audit and Assessment 2021-22.


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

The Council should review the measures of success attributed to the supporting actions underpinning the improvement objectives and ensure that the measures are meaningful and their achievement demonstrates improvement.	
<p>As part of the process to redefine the performance improvement objectives 2021-22, the Council reviewed the 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success' which underpin each objective, in order to ensure they are meaningful and that their achievement can demonstrate improvement. Where possible and appropriate, baseline data for each 'measure of success' has been included and targets have been agreed.</p> <p>A new template to highlight key information in relation to each performance improvement objective has also been devised and provides an overview of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why this objective matters • Looking Back: What we did • Looking forward: What we will do • How we will measure success, including baseline trends over time and targets where appropriate • Outcomes for stakeholders / What you will see • Alignment with the Corporate Plan, Community Plan and Programme for Government • Seven Aspects of Improvement • Responsible Officer <p>The NI Audit Office will determine whether this proposal for improvement has been achieved as part of the Performance Audit and Assessment 2021-22.</p>	
Areas for improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Department for Communities and other key stakeholders to review the legislation and agree a way forward for all. 	
THEME: Consultation	
<p>For the past two years, the Council has received no 'proposals for improvement' in relation to Consultation. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the agreed consultation process on the draft performance improvement objectives 2021-22 was reduced to an online survey, supplemented by virtual meetings with key stakeholder groups, including section 75 groups. Overall, the consultation and engagement process resulted in 41 completed surveys and engagement with 100 stakeholders through the seven District Electoral Area Forums which are made up of Elected Members and independent members representing the voluntary,</p>	

community and business sectors and Section 75 groups, including the Older Persons Forums in Newry and Downpatrick, Newry and Mourne Youth Council and Cedar Foundation. This consultation and engagement process has been supplemented by the 1,345 responses to the consultation on COVID-19 and the Corporate Plan in 2020, as well as the Residents Survey in 2018.

Areas for improvement

- Identify new and innovative, accessible and inclusive mechanisms to engage stakeholders in the development of future performance improvement objectives, ensuring continued compliance with Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, as well as COVID-19 restrictions.

THEME: Collection, Use and Publication of Performance Information	Status
PROPOSAL: The Council should continue to develop and embed its performance management framework and establish a performance management system as a priority.	
<p>The Business Planning and Performance Management Framework demonstrates the alignment that exists between the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Directorate Business Plans, Service Plans and Individual Performance. It has been supplemented by an agreed cycle of activity required to embed the Framework across the organisation. All elements of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework are being progressed during 2021-22, with particular progress being made in relation to Service Plans and People Perform Grow.</p>	
<p>In addition to the statutory performance indicators and standards, the Council has developed and agreed suites of self imposed performance indicators which underpin the Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan and Directorate Business Plans. These plans provide the strategic and operational context for the work of the organisation, and year on year progress against the indicators is monitored and reported through the annual Assessment of Performance, as well as the annual and bi-annual assessments of the Performance Improvement Plan and Directorate Business Plans. The Council has also developed Performance Profiles for each Directorate to present baseline performance information in a meaningful and consistent way, facilitate a performance led approach to business planning and embed a culture of improvement.</p>	
<p>The Council continues to maintain and manage the excel based performance management system. This system provides an overview of around 200 performance indicators, highlighting trends over time and against target. The performance management system is available for all employees to access on the shared drive. A project mandate for an electronic performance management system was developed and considered by the IT Projects Group and Senior Management Team in 2019 and will be considered further during Q2 2021-22, in line with the continued implementation of the IT Strategy.</p>	

Through the Strategic Finance Working Group meetings, Elected Members and senior management have an opportunity to focus on a specific Directorate, through an in-depth analysis of the overall performance, financial challenges and efficiency opportunities. This has included a 'deep dive' into existing suites of performance measures, which highlight areas of good and underperformance, and set the context for the key challenges and opportunities for the Directorate to consider over the coming years. To date, the performance of the Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism, Neighbourhood Services and Active and Healthy Communities Directorates has been explored, evaluated and discussed by the Strategic Finance Working Group.

PROPOSAL: The Council should continue working with other Councils and the Department to agree a suite of self-imposed indicators and standards. This will enable meaningful comparisons to be made and published in line with its statutory responsibility.



Through the NI Local Government Performance Improvement Working Group and Multi-Stakeholder Group, the Council has been working with the Department for Communities and the NI Audit Office to consider benchmarking arrangements and review the guidance issued by the Department for Communities in relation to performance improvement.

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




In November 2019, Newry, Mourne and Down was the first Council in the UK to undertake a full validation of all APSE performance indicators. The purpose of the validation was to assess the adequacy of the data collation processes and accuracy of performance information submitted. The outcome of the audit was broadly 'satisfactory' and the recommendations will be progressed further during 2020-21, in order to provide additional assurances in relation to data accuracy and quality.






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


Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to strengthen the governance arrangements around key plans and strategies, and ensure, where appropriate, performance is reported in a consistent format across the organisation. Update the Directorate Performance Profiles on an annual basis to facilitate a performance led approach to business/service planning. Progress the effective implementation of Service Plans and People Perform Grow. Continue to form part of the Multi-Stakeholder Group, which is made up of local government, Department for Communities and the NI Audit Office, to consider benchmarking within the context of the legislative requirements of Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.





Performance Audit and Assessment 2019-20 – Progress to date against Action Plan

Thematic Area: Duty to Improve	Timescale	Status
Strengthen the alignment between the Performance Improvement Plan 2020-21, Corporate Plan 2020-23 and Community Plan.	2019-20	
Continue to use performance information to identify and drive improvements across the organisation.	Ongoing	
Identify and strengthen the suites of performance indicators at all levels of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, particularly within the emerging Corporate Plan, Business Plans and Service Plans.	Ongoing	
Further embed the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and Performance Improvement Policy across the organisation by mainstreaming a corporate approach to developing Service Plans.	2019-20 2020-21	
Continue to populate and manage the excel based system and progress the identification of a suitable electronic performance management system.	Ongoing	
Facilitate staff briefings/roadshows in relation to the Corporate Plan 2020-23 and supporting plans.	2019-20	
Thematic Area: Governance Arrangements	Timescale	Status
Review and strengthen the Terms of Reference for all Committees in relation to performance and improvement responsibilities.	Ongoing	

Contribute to the development and delivery of a regional training and capacity building programme for Elected Members around performance and improvement. Supplement this programme with local training sessions for the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.	2019-20	
Progress the recommendations arising from the internal audit of performance indicators around the accuracy of performance information and adequacy of data collation processes.	2019-20	
Work with Internal Audit to develop and agree a programme to validate the accuracy of performance data and the integrity of data collation processes in relation to the Corporate Plan and Performance Improvement Plan.	2019-20 2020-21	

Thematic Area: Improvement Objectives	Timescale	Status
Review and redefine the performance improvement objectives, so that they are more specific.	2019-20	
Review and strengthen the 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success' which underpin each objective.	2019-20	
Work with departments to communicate and enhance awareness of future performance improvement objectives.	2020-21	
Continue to embed the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework in order to ensure community planning outcomes, corporate priorities and performance improvement objectives are effectively cascaded to Directorate Business Plans and Service Plans.	2019-20	
Continue to identify and collate robust baseline data to facilitate a performance driven approach to strategic planning. Use performance data to identify year on year trends, carry out comparisons with other local authorities, set targets for the future and inform the development of new plans and strategies.	Ongoing	

Thematic Area: Consultation	Timescale	Status
Identify new and innovative, accessible and inclusive mechanisms to engage stakeholders in the development of future performance improvement objectives and areas of improvement, using existing processes where possible.	Ongoing	

Thematic Area: Improvement Plan	Timescale	Status
Strengthen the alignment between the emerging Corporate Plan 2019-23, Performance Improvement Plan 2020-21 and future Business Plans and Service Plans.	2020-21	
Thematic Area: Collection, use and publication of performance information	Timescale	Status
Continue to strengthen the governance arrangements around key plans and strategies, and ensure, where appropriate, performance is reported in a consistent format across the organisation.	Ongoing	
Update the baseline data included in the 'Performance Profiles' for each Directorate to support the development of Business/Service Plans and facilitate a performance driven approach to business/service planning.	2019-20	
Continue to form part of the Multi-Stakeholder Group, which is made up of local government, Department for Communities and the NI Audit Office, to consider the benchmarking within the context of the legislative requirements of Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.	Ongoing	

Appendix 2: The Golden Thread

NMD Community Planning Outcomes

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

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

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

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

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

NMDDC Corporate Objectives

Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

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

Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District and reduce health inequalities

Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills

Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities

Support sustainable forms of tourism which value our environment and cultural heritage

Enhance, protect and promote our environment

Enable and support people to engage in inclusive and diverse activities in their communities

NMDDC Performance Improvement Objectives

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

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

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

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

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