

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Assessment of Performance 2021-22

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Overall Assessment of Performance 2021-22

The past year has been another challenging year for us all in the district with COVID-19 still very much dominating everyone's life, both at home and at work.

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

We continued to address and achieve a number of key priorities, in particular the Belfast Region City Deal, which will bring important benefits for our district, allowing us to progress with the Newcastle Gateway to the Mournes project, the regeneration of Newry City and the development of the Southern Relief Road. Our Digital Programme of Investment will play a critical role in contributing to economic inclusion and sustainable growth, creating skills and employment for a digital future.

However, whilst much has been achieved, there is still more to do to. We recognise where we need to improve and are committed to delivering further improvements e.g., we have delivered improvement to planning, however there has been a slight decline in recycling, and less people engaged in targeted health programmes. We will continue to focus on what matters most to you - improving the quality of our parks and open spaces, growing the local economy, improving the cleanliness of our District, building the capacity of local communities and improving the performance of our Planning Service.

As we look forward to 2022-23, we will continue to bring more opportunities as our ambition remains for Newry, Mourne and Down to be one of the best places to live, work, invest in and visit.

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 2021-22 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 overnight 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.

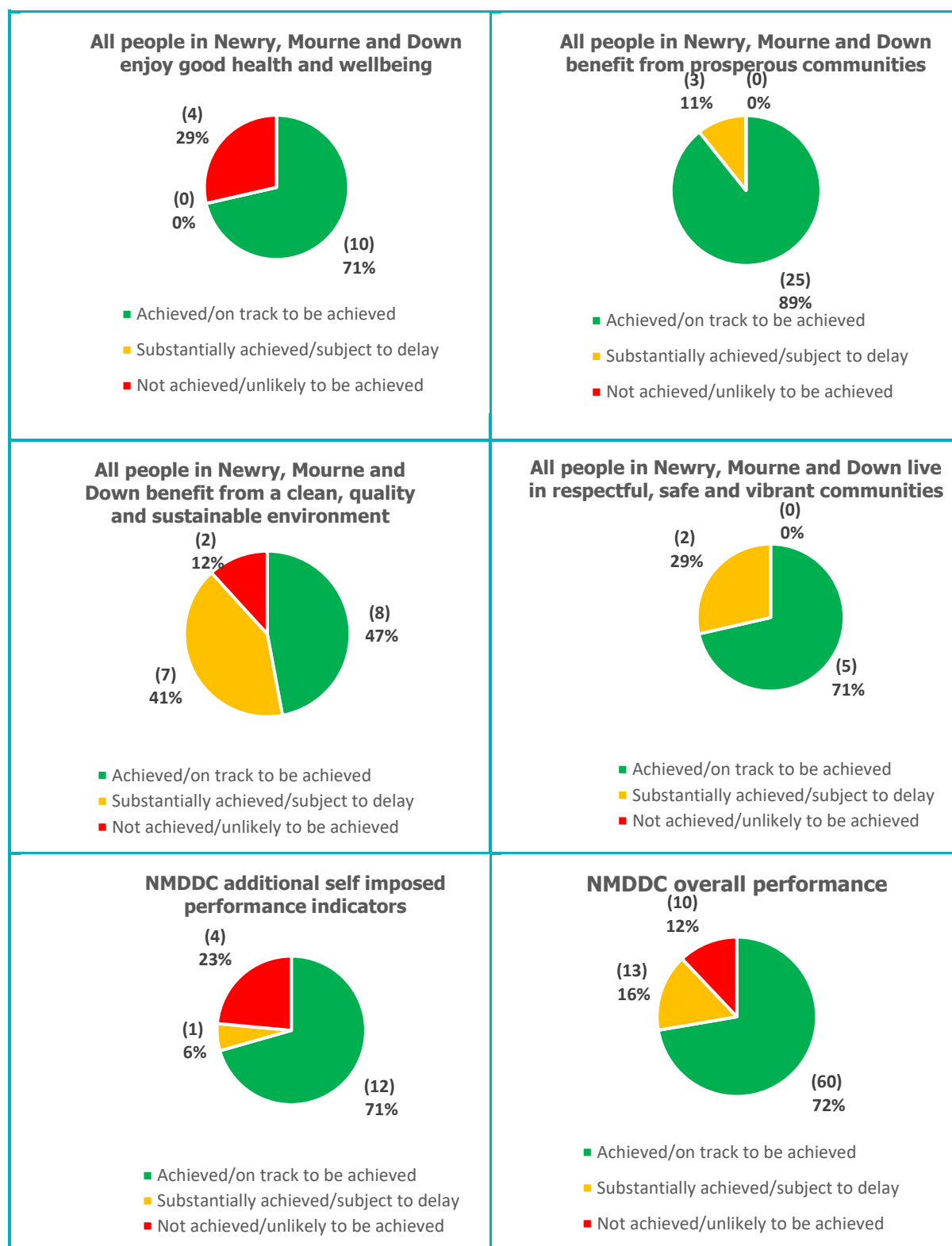
Legend

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



Community

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



Tourism

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



Health and Wellbeing

79% of residents feel
they are in very good
or good health
78% of residents are
physically active at least
once a week for 30mins
73.5% of customers are
satisfied with the Council's
six leisure facilities
200k recorded visits at
community trails
1.3m+ recorded visits
at Kilbroney and Slieve
Gullion Forest Parks



Economy

Employment rate: 74.8%
9,045 VAT Registered
Businesses
11.1% of the population
aged 16-64 years have
no qualifications
215 new jobs promoted
through business start
activity
409 businesses supported
and 4,509 mentoring hours
delivered through economic
development programmes








Environment

Recycling is important
to 86% of residents
Top perceived problem
for residents: Dog mess
and fouling
Recycling rate: 49.1%
321 community clean ups
supported since 2018
Second lowest level of
waste to landfill across
all NI Councils



A snapshot of 2021-22:

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>	494% increase in recorded attendances at Council leisure centres	△
	79% increase in recorded visits to Kilbroney and Slieve Gullion Forest Parks	△
	78% increase in recorded visits at Warrenpoint Municipal Park	△
	119% increase in recorded visits at community trails	△
	3 'blue flag' beaches and 5 'green flag' parks	😊
	83% of visitors are satisfied with the Council's forest parks	😊
	2 new play parks built and 1 play park upgraded	😊
 <p>We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs</p>	215 new jobs promoted through business start activity	😊 △
	12 new social enterprise businesses supported and 13 new social enterprise jobs created	😊
	409 businesses supported and 189 jobs created through the 'NMD Growth', 'Digital Growth', 'Tender for Growth' and 'Sales Accelerator' programmes	😊 △
	Increase in the number of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses, birth rate of new businesses and employee jobs	😊
	'Make it Local' campaign rolled out	😊
 <p>We will improve the cleanliness of our District by addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents</p>	118 fixed penalty notices issued and 100 paid	△ 😊
	94 community clean ups supported	△ 😊
	Slight decrease in the rate of recycling, to 49.1%*	▶ 😞
	One of the lowest levels of waste sent to landfill across all NI Councils*	😊 ▼
	2021-22 LEAMS (street cleanliness) score of 64 which falls below the regional average of 66**	▶
	Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out	😊
	£1.54m awarded to 374 projects across 20 thematic areas	😊

 <p>We will build the capacity of local communities through the Financial Assistance Scheme</p>	69% of applications to the financial assistance scheme were successful	▶ 😐
	£936k awarded towards major and minor capital projects	😊
	36,486 volunteers hours recorded to deliver projects and 54,908 beneficiaries of the FA scheme	😊
	6 capacity building sessions delivered to 140 participants	😊
	98% of applicants are satisfied with the support received from the Programmes Unit	😊
 <p>We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme</p>	The Council received and decided on the highest number of planning applications and approved the second highest number of planning applications across the 11 Councils	😊
	The processing time for local planning applications improved from 19 weeks in 2020-21 to 18.8 weeks in 2021-22	😞 ▶
	The processing time for major planning applications improved from 64.6 weeks in 2020-21 to 44.3 weeks in 2021-22	😞 ▶
	The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks increased from 40.9% in 2020-21 to 48.5% in 2021-22	😞 ▶
	The number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more improved by 13.6%	😞 ▶

*The 2021-22 data in relation to the statutory performance indicators for waste management remains provisional, as the end of year validated data will be published by DAERA in Q3 2022-23.

** LEAMS score remains provisional as Cleaner Neighbourhoods Report 2021-22 has not yet been published.

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 2021-22, 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 2020-21, 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

- In light of the impact of COVID-19 on Council services, the Local Government Auditor has been unable to assess whether the Council has discharged its duties under Part 12 of the Act and acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently during 2021-22. The Local Government Auditor has not conducted an assessment to determine whether the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act in subsequent years.

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.

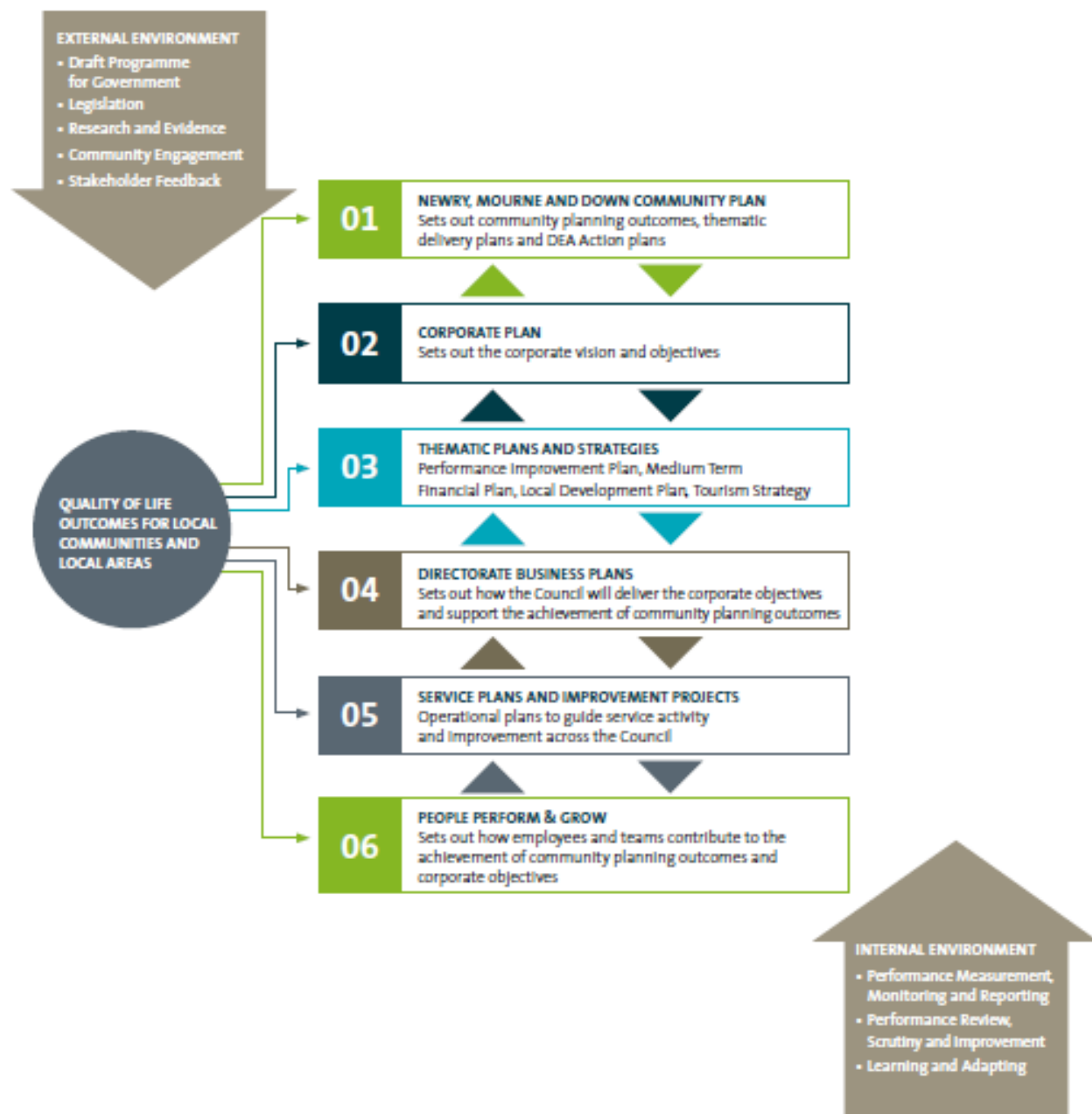
Over the past five years, the Council has continued to implement and embed the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework:

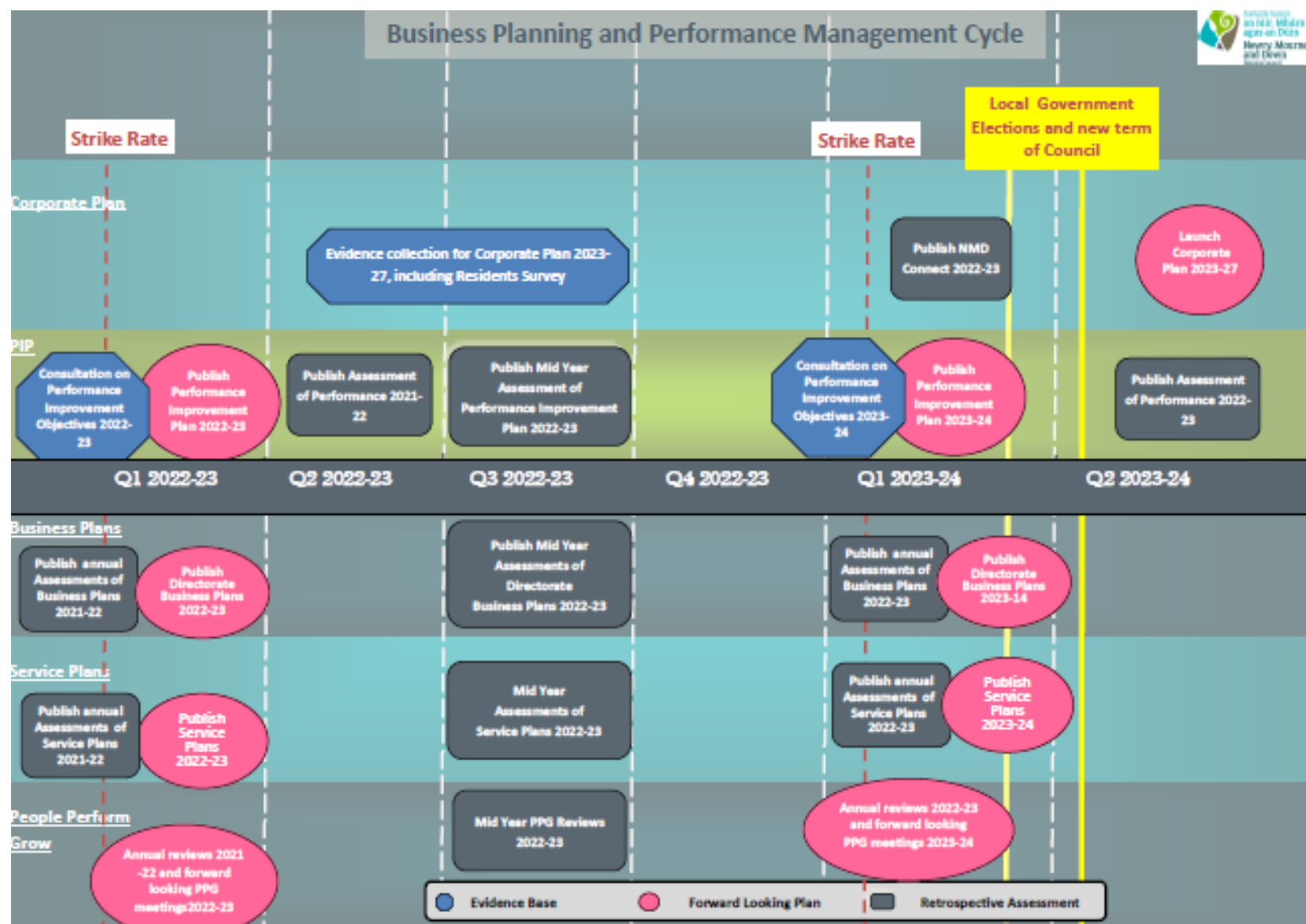
- The Council has developed and agreed integrated planning, monitoring and reporting cycles, which have been aligned to ensure everyone in the organisation is working towards shared objectives, with progress being monitored and reported on a regular basis. This integrated timeline of activity is outlined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

- A number of Directorates and departments also organised business and service planning sessions to engage officers in reviewing performance during 2021-22, setting direction in 2022-23 and communicating the objectives within the Corporate Plan.
- All departments produced Service Plans 2021-22, outlining core operational activity and improvement activity which will support the achievement of the objectives within the Corporate Plan and Directorate Business Plans.
- Individual Performance has been progressed through the 'People Perform Grow' initiative, which seeks to link and align the contribution of employees with strategic objectives. All employees at tier four and above have had an opportunity to participate in People Perform Grow and performance management arrangements have been introduced to support and monitor the effective implementation and roll-out of People Perform Grow across the organisation. The effective implementation of People Perform Grow is monitored through the Corporate Performance Dashboard.
- Through the Corporate Performance Dashboard, progress continues to be monitored and reported against a suite of 18 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 Council continues to secure greater alignment across the business planning, performance and risk management arrangements, with the Corporate Risk Register being directly aligned to the Corporate Plan 2021-23 and Directorate Risk Registers being aligned to Directorate Business Plans. An interactive workshop was also organised for the Senior and Corporate Management Teams in May 2023 to provide an overview of progress in relation to the implementation of the Corporate Plan 2021-23, status of key corporate risks and the key objectives for each Directorate during 2022-23.
- 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.
- The Council has also commissioned the second Residents Survey to identify and understand perceptions of the Council and the local area as a place to live. The findings from the survey build a robust and reliable evidence base to inform future Corporate Plans, PIP's and Directorate Business Plans ensuring the strategic direction of the organisation is focused on the needs and aspirations of residents.

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 1.

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

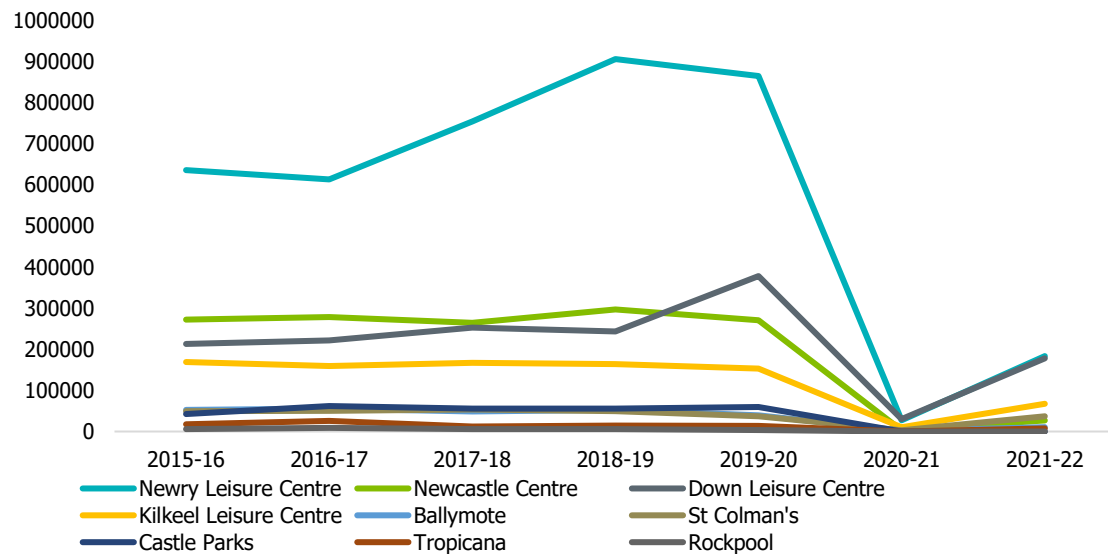
Key Action	Status	Update
Promote healthier lifestyles, including increased physical activity levels, diet and emotional wellbeing.		<p>Throughout 2021-22, the Council increased capacity across leisure facilities, whilst adhering to COVID-19 safety measures. This included additional gym sessions in Newry and Downpatrick Leisure Centres, improved accessible car parking at Newry Leisure Centre and upgraded reception areas in Newry and Kilkeel Leisure Centres. Swimming lessons and soft play sessions were re-introduced and the Tropicana Outdoor Swimming Complex in Newcastle re-opened in July 2021, following an investment of £150,000.</p> <p>The Council also engaged 322 participants in several physical activity programmes, including the Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS) which helps clients manage chronic health conditions, Macmillan Move More which encourages clients to take part in physical activity during and after cancer treatment and NMD Be Active for Health which provides bespoke physical activity opportunities for people who are inactive and at risk of chronic illness. During July-August 2021, 750 children and young people also took part in the Councils 'Get Active for Summer' fitness activities.</p>
Continue to implement the Leisure Facilities and Play Strategy for the District.		<p>The Council continued to implement the Sports Facility Strategy, delivering maintenance and upgrades at identified sites, including an investment of £30,000 to upgrade Newry tennis courts. The Council also continued to implement the Play Strategy, opening a new</p>

		flagship play area at Loanda Crescent, Newry in 2021 and a new play park in Ballymartin in 2022.
Develop and implement a Sports Development and Open Spaces Strategy for the District.		The tender process to appoint consultants to develop the Playing Fields Strategy and Multi Sports Hubs Strategy is complete and the condition surveys for the playing fields are underway. These strategies were prioritised in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the demand for these facilities across the district. Once both strategies are developed, the Council will commence preparations for the Sports Development and Open Spaces Strategy.

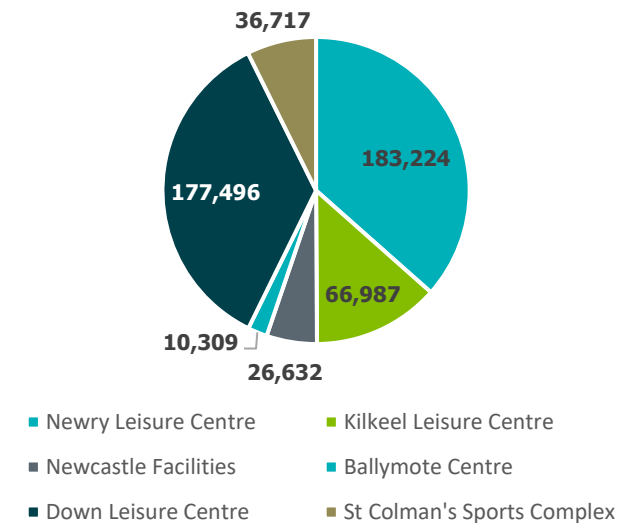
Measure of Success	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		Status Trend	Explanatory note
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes (Everybody Active 2020)	8,280	8,089	8,279	10,793	3,818	2,270	-	322		Between 2017-18 and 2019-20, total participation in the Everybody Active programme increased by 56.9%, from 6,879 to 10,793 participants. This programme ended in 2020 and Council engaged people through a range of targeted health programmes. However, due to the pandemic and associated restrictions, coupled with the vulnerability of those being targeted for these programmes numbers have decreased dramatically, with only 322 participants completing the 3 key health programmes of PARS, Be Active Health and Macmillan Move More in 2021-22. Whilst this represents a reduction of 85.8% when compared to 2020-21 this needs to be considered in the context of different programmes being offered.

Attendance at free play sessions	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		Over the past five 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 has subsequently declined with no free play sessions being offered in 2021-22 due to budget constraints and the ongoing restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
	-	1,065	-	1,276	-	430		0		
Increase in the number of people using Council leisure facilities	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		Following the significant decrease in the number of attendances at Council leisure facilities during 2020-21 due to the closure of facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent public health guidelines and social distancing restrictions, there has been a 494% increase in the number of attendances between 2020-21 and 2021-22. While this remains below pre-pandemic levels by 75% it does indicate a step towards full recovery, and reflects the findings of the Post COVID-19 leisure survey whereby 91% of respondents stated they were 'likely' or 'very likely' to the return to the leisure centres.
	1,472,781	1,787,515	1,678,140	1,818,040	1,922,131	75,296	-	447,095		

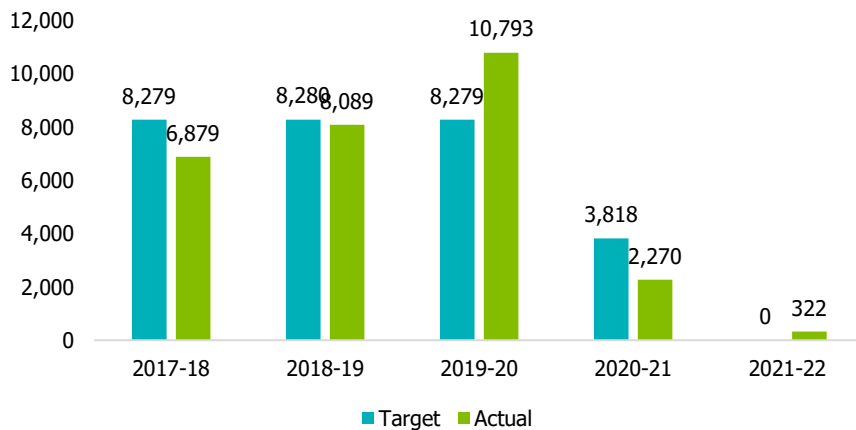
Attendances at Council leisure facilities



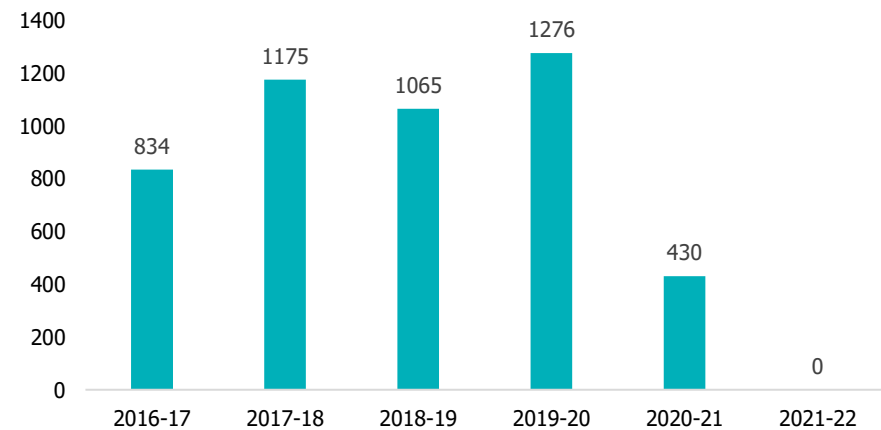
Leisure Centre attendances 2021-22



Targeted Health Programmes











Participation in Community Play initiatives






Performance Improvement Objective 1

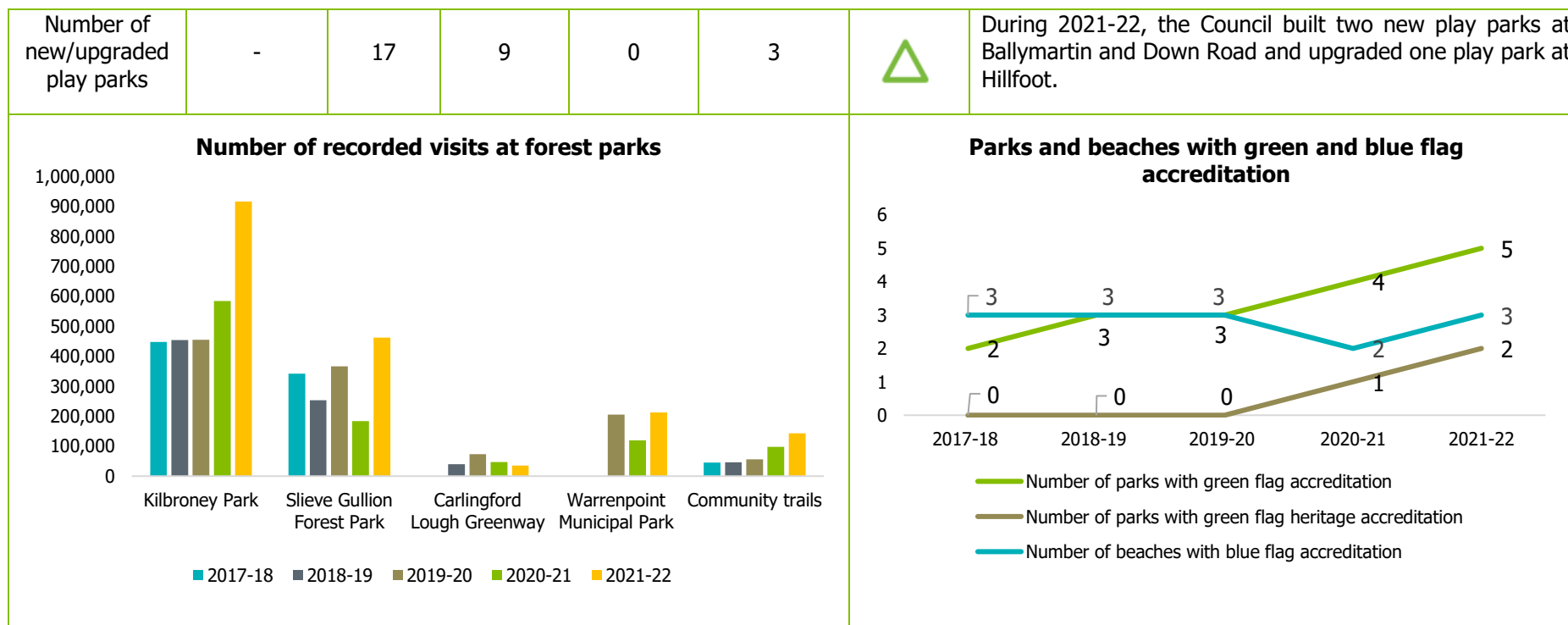
We will encourage local people to lead healthy and active lives by improving the quality of our parks and open spaces

Supporting action	Status	Update
Continue to develop the district's bid to achieve UNESCO Global Geopark designation.		The Council continues to work towards UNESCO Global Geopark designation for Mourne, Gullion, Strangford.
Invest in new facilities at Kilbroney Park and Rostrevor Forest, Tyrella beach, Slieve Gullion Forest Park and Delamont Country Park.		The Fallows phase 1 trail at Kilbroney Park is almost complete and phase 2 commenced in November 2021. Progress is well underway in relation to the plans for new visitor facilities at Tyrella beach and works to facilitate conservation dune grazing are now complete. The outdoor performance and interpretive space at Slieve Gullion Forest Park is almost complete and the draft proposals for the viewpoint upgrade, walking trails and visitor information centre at Delamont Country Park are currently being finalised. A Planning application has been submitted for Trail development and enhancement at Delamont Country Park.
Retain green flag accreditation for Kilbroney Park, Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Warrenpoint Municipal Park and Newry Canal and heritage accreditation for Warrenpoint Municipal Park.		The Council retained green flag accreditation for Kilbroney Park, Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Warrenpoint Municipal Park and Newry Canal and heritage accreditation for Warrenpoint Municipal Park.
Apply for green flag accreditation for Delamont Country Park and heritage accreditation for Newry Canal.		The Council achieved green flag accreditation for Delamont Country Park and green site heritage accreditation for Newry Canal.
Retain blue flag accreditation for Cranfield, Murlough and Tyrella beaches.		The Council retained blue flag accreditation for Cranfield, Murlough and Tyrella beaches.

Build three new play parks and upgrade two existing play parks.		The Council completed two new play parks at Ballymartin and Down Road and one upgrade at Hillfoot. The planning and design phase for new play parks at Kilmorey Park and Annalong is also complete.
Complete three new community trails.		In partnership with Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI), the Council delivered three new Community Trails at Aughrim Hill, Daisy Hill Woods and Glendesha Forest, as well as an extension to the Tievenadarragh Forest Car Park. Collectively, these trails provide new off-road walking routes, and some also provide opportunities for cycling and horse riding.
Promote good visitor management across all Council parks and open spaces.		The Council continued to work with partner agencies to deliver a Social Sustainability campaign which focused on good visitor management by encouraging people to be mindful of their surroundings and consider the impact of their actions on others. This included the #LeaveNoTrace campaign which promoted 7 handy tips to preserve the local area and respect the natural environment.

Measure of success	2017-18 Actual	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory note
Number of recorded visits at:							
Kilbroney Park	447,616	453,704	454,848	584,148	915,500		During 2021-22, the Council recorded 1,412,761 visits to two parks and open spaces, 64.8% of which were at Kilbroney Park. This represents a 73.4% increase when compared to the 814,865 visits recorded in 2020-21. The number of recorded visits to Slieve Gullion Forest Park increased by over 150% when compared to 2020-21. These increases can largely be attributed to the new visitor counter systems which have been installed and are now fully operational across these three sites.
Slieve Gullion Forest Park	341,888	253,376	366,444	183,712	462,240		
Carlingford Lough Greenway	-	40,219	73,138	47,005	35,021		

Warrenpoint Municipal Park	-	-	205,126	119,600	212,694	△	During 2021-22, 212,694 visits were recorded for Warrenpoint Municipal Park. This represents an increase of 77.8% increase when compared to 2020-21, which can be attributed to the reopening of the park throughout 2021-22 and the re-introduction of organised activities. There was also a 3.7% increase on the number of visits recorded when compared to 2019-20.
Community trails*	45,289	46,044	57,849	96,563	211,718	△	During 2021-22, the Council recorded 211,718 visits to 10 community trails with 17% recorded at Bunkers Hill and 16% at Drumkeeragh Forest. This represents a total increase of 119% when compared to 2020-21, which can be attributed to the opening and extending of community trails throughout the year, as well as increased usage amongst residents.
Number of parks with green flag accreditation	2	3	3	4	5	△	In 2021-22, the Council received five green flags for Kilbroney Park, Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Warrenpoint Municipal Park, Delamont Country Park and Newry Canal, including two green flag heritage accreditations for Warrenpoint Municipal Park and Newry Canal.
Number of parks with green flag heritage accreditation	-	-	-	1	2	△	
Number of beaches with blue flag accreditation	3	3	3	2	3	△	
Level of satisfaction with the Council's forest parks	-	-	-	-	83%	😊	The three Council run beaches of Cranfield, Murlough and Tyrella were also awarded blue flag accreditation in 2021-22. In September 2021, the Council carried out a public consultation on its three forest parks (Delamont, Kilbroney and Slieve Gullion) to gauge customer satisfaction with the parks and their associated facilities, as well as how they may be improved going forward. The first year of this survey indicates that 83% of all visitors to the three parks were satisfied with the parks, with 95% of visitors to the parks agreeing /strongly agreeing that visiting the park had a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing.



*The methodology for calculating the recorded visits at community trails has been reviewed and finalised and previous years figures have been amended accordingly.





Community Planning Outcome


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




Corporate Objective

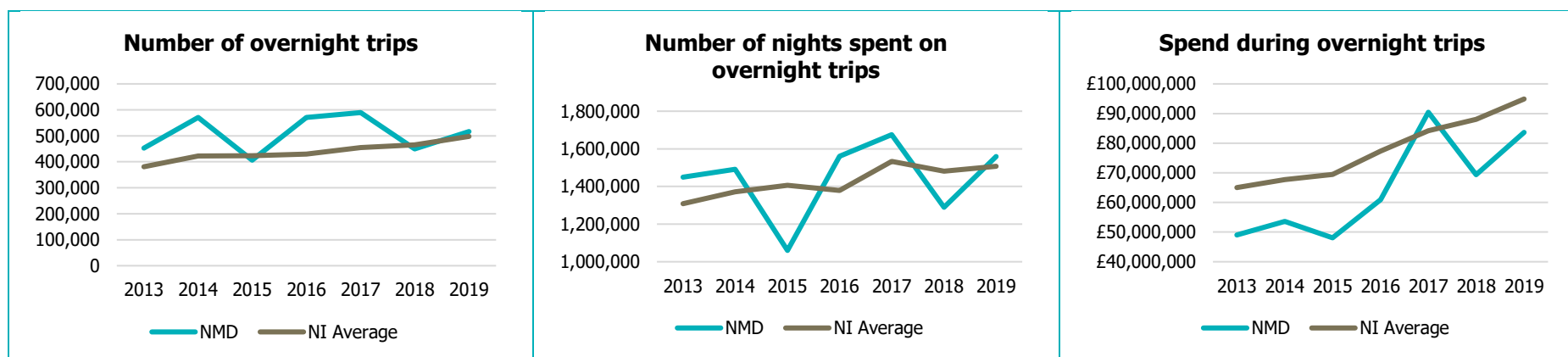
Support sustainable forms of tourism which value our environment and cultural heritage

Key action	Status	Update
Develop the tourism proposition for the district in line with Tourism NI's Experience Brand.		<p>The Council continued to deliver the current Tourism Strategy for Newry, Mourne and Down and commenced the development of the new Tourism Strategy 2022-27, which will include a central theme of Sustainable Tourism Growth. The Council also reviewed and launched the Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy in line with COVID-19 recovery and the revised priorities for the sector.</p> <p>The Council also engaged with tourism and hospitality businesses on the development of new and existing tourism experiences, and now provides 68 tourism experiences, 48 of which are 'Embrace a Giant Spirit Brand' aligned with Tourism NI. The Visit Mourne campaigns continued, focusing on Outdoors, Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) experiences and Food during the spring and the family market during the summer.</p>
Work with Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland, government departments, and the private sector to grow the economic impact of the tourism industry and to address barriers to growth.		Engagement with tourism and hospitality businesses continued during 2021-22, through business cluster groups, regular industry updates and stakeholder engagement with industry associations. The Council is also working in partnership with tourism businesses, landowners and central Government stakeholders to address long-term sustainability issues in the Mourne Mountains.

Invest in major tourism capital projects that will attract international visitors to NI and the district.		Progress continues on the delivery of capital projects at key tourism sites across the District, including Delamont, Camlough Lake, Slieve Gullion Forest Park and Kilbroney Forest Park. The Outline Business Case and grant funding for the Mourne Gateway project have been approved, as part of the Belfast Region City Deal appraisal process, and preparations are now underway to develop the Full Business Case.
Implement a Sustainable Tourism Growth Plan to ensure responsible development of our tourism offering with respect to environmental, social and economic considerations.		Sustainable Tourism Growth will be a central theme in the new Tourism Strategy 2022-27.
Continue to develop the district's bid to achieve the UNESCO Global Geopark designation by summer 2021.		The Geopark masterplan has been developed with key actions around Sustainable Tourism development and the bid for UNESCO Global Geopark Status for Mourne Gullion Strangford remains under consideration. A suite of resources has been made available online for seven field sites within the aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark, with accompanying virtual tours of Camlough, Cranfield and Ballyhornan to facilitate outdoor education. Since launching the new Visit Mourne Tourism Destination website, there have been 275,437 users and 676,878 page views.

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.
Measure of Success	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Trend	
Increased visitor satisfaction	-	-	-	-	Satisfaction with Parks 83% (Baseline)		<p>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'. In recognition of this the Council conducted a forest parks and beaches survey in 2021 to ascertain levels of satisfaction with the parks and beaches, as well as with facilities available, cleanliness and car parking. The parks collectively scored a satisfaction rating of 83%, however Slieve Gullion Forest Park and Delamont Country Park scored 91% respectively whilst Kilbroney park scored 78%. Whilst this may be attributed to a slightly lower satisfaction rating with amenities than the other parks 'the Fallows' phase 1 trail at Kilbroney Park is almost complete and phase 2 commenced in November 2021.</p> <p>The three beaches collectively scored a satisfaction rating of 67%.</p>
					Satisfaction with Beaches 67% (Baseline)		






*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

Key action	Status	Through the CIOUpdate
Provide a programme of support that will increase growth and investment for new and established businesses across the district.		<p>The Council continued to deliver direct mentoring support to businesses through a framework of business support programmes; In 2021-22, across 4 core programmes 409 businesses were supported in their growth plans, 19 programmes/workshops delivered, 1 trade mission facilitated to Edinburgh with 5 businesses participating, and 1 meet the buyer event with 41 businesses participating.</p> <p>The expansion of our small business sector is a key priority for Council. In 2021-22, 358 businesses plans for new start-up enterprises were produced, in turn supporting the creation of 215 new start up businesses and promoting the creation of the 215 new employment positions.</p>

		<p>The Council secured £3.8m for investment in Smaller Settlements during 2022-23. This includes investment in four Environmental Improvement Schemes and 7 Revitalisation Schemes. A proportion of £1.3m allocated to the seven revitalisation schemes will provide financial assistance to established businesses to invest in shop front enhancements.</p> <p>Through the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2021-22 which aimed to tackle poverty and social isolation in deprived areas, the Council administered grant aid to 59 businesses to the value of £175,955.</p> <p>The Council delivered the 'Make it Local' promotional campaign, through social media, radio, billboard and print, to highlight the unique business offering across the District and encourage shoppers to shop locally, in store or online. The Council also recommenced the popular artisan markets in Downpatrick, Newcastle and Warrenpoint which were held quarterly and is developing new markets in Newry and South Armagh during 2022.</p> <p>In partnership with the Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency and Down Business Centre, the Council organised NMD Enterprise Week in November 2021, which included a range of face to face and online activities to showcase the entrepreneurial networks and support available for residents and businesses across the District</p> <p>Through the £1.9m COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Plan, the Council continued to provide financial support to local businesses, processing grant payments to 712 businesses to the value of £1.041 m through the Department for Communities Recovery Fund.</p>
Work with partners to enhance employability and skills, provide quality jobs for all our citizens and meet the needs of our businesses.		<p>The Council continued to implement the Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy and is working with partners in the employability, skills and education sectors through a new Labour Market Partnership (LMP) in the District. Through the LMP, the Council developed a local Action Plan which delivered initiatives under the key themes of access to work, skills for work and NMD A Place to work. The focus of the Action Plan</p>

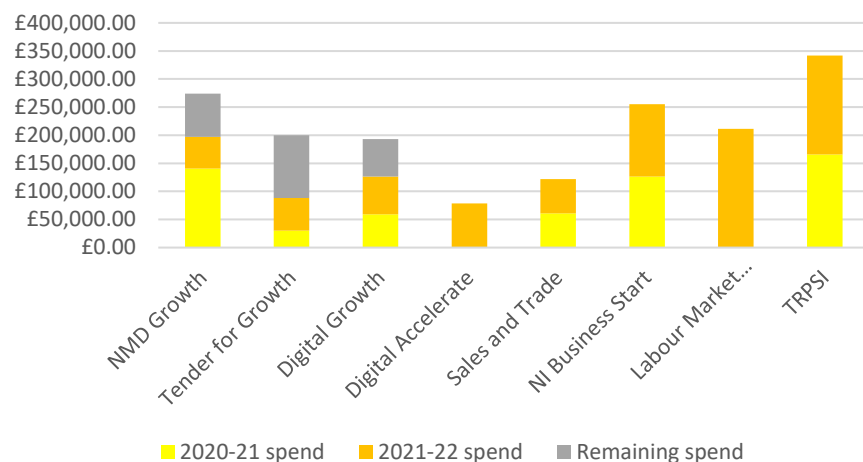
		<p>is to support people to move closer to or into the labour market, and to grow the labour market in order to address localised skills and employability challenges facing local businesses. During 2021-22 the LMP delivered three employment academies providing training to 53 people in the areas of Health and Social Care or HGV Drivers Licence; a start up business development programme supporting 25 entrepreneurs to secure employment through self-employment and the establishment of a viable enterprise; an apprenticeship awareness campaign.</p>
<p>Maximise the district's location as a cross-border gateway to Great Britain, Ireland and international markets.</p>		<p>The geographic location of Newry, Mourne and Down and the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Economic Partnership will enable the Council to secure cross border investment, boost trade opportunities for local businesses, increase production in key sectors and secure higher employment levels.</p> <p>The Council continues to actively engage with the eight Council's located on the Belfast – Dublin Economic Corridor, with the view to taking forward a strategy and action plan that will position the Council and economic corridor as a prime investment location, enabling access to regional, national and international markets.</p>
<p>Secure investment in infrastructure that enables the future economic growth of the district.</p>		<p>Full Fibre Northern Ireland (FFNI) is a Consortium and a programme made up of 10 of the 11 Northern Ireland Councils. In 2018 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council agreed to undertake the role of the "Lead Council" on behalf of and with the agreement of the Consortium Members. A total of £23.1m of DCMS funding has been drawn down to connect public sector sites with Full Fibre designed to level up public services and speed up the rollout of Ultrafast Fibre across the province. At a Consortium site level, over 887 buildings have been connected to include hospitals, community centres, fire and ambulance stations and council buildings to Gigabit capable (1000mpbs) full fibre. This marks the completion of one of the largest non-state aid public sector broadband projects in Northern Ireland and will make a tangible difference to the lives of families, people and communities across the province.</p>

		In the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area, 68 Council sites (hubs) were connected to the value of £2.3m via FFNI. A further 34 Business Services Organisation (BSO) sites were also connected in the NMDDC area improving the access to Ultrafast fibre. Through FFNI, the connection of public sector hubs will fast track homes and businesses not currently within scope for Ultrafast commercial investments. This future-proofed connectivity will underpin and support a wide range of current digital transformation growth deals and SMART City projects which are currently being rolled out across Council areas.
Through the BRCD partnership, implement a series of (1) skills and employment and (2) digital and innovation programmes to meet the needs of the region.		The Belfast Region City Deal was signed in December 2021, confirming the commitment of partners to deliver all City Deal proposals. Overall, the £1 billion investment will support the creation of up to 20,000 new jobs and an increase of £400m of gross value added (GVA) across the region. BRCD includes five projects that will transform Newry, Mourne and Down, including the Mourne Mountains Gateway, Newry Southern Relief Road, Newry City Centre Regeneration, Digital and Innovation projects and Skills and Employment projects.

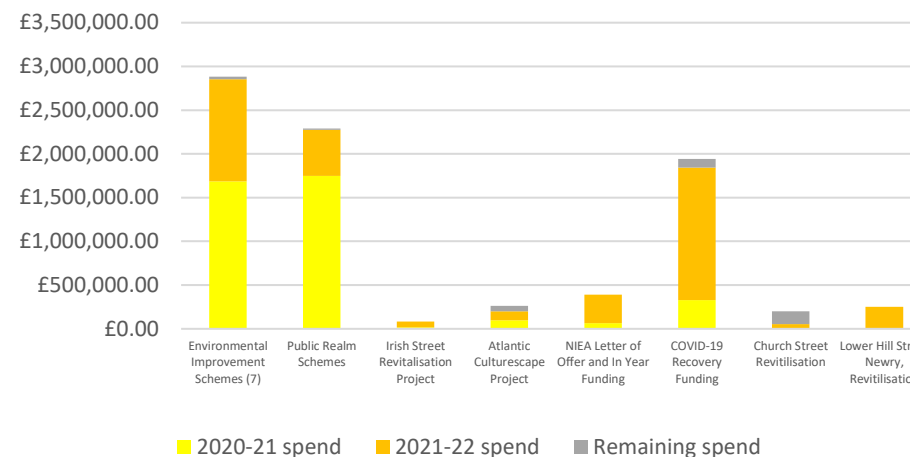
Measure of Success	2020-21		2021-22		Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Number of jobs created and businesses supported through Council programmes	Jobs created	Businesses supported	Jobs created	Businesses supported		Through the 'NMD Growth', 'Digital Growth', 'Tender for Growth', 'Sales Accelerator' and the 'Social Economy' programmes, the Council supported 421 local businesses and created 202 jobs during 2021-22. The majority of businesses supported (42%) and jobs created (53%) were delivered through the 'NMD Growth' programme.
	60.5	367	202	421		
Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		Through the NI Business Start programme, the Council promoted 215 new jobs during 2021-22, exceeding the statutory target of >155 jobs by 39%, and the Council is placed 4/11 amongst Councils in NI. The Council also approved 358 business plans which exceeds
	>155	164	>155 should this be updated standard?	215	 	

						the target of 312 business plans by 15% and supported 215 business starts which exceeds the 187 target set by 15%.
Amount of investment secured by the Council	Investment		2020-21	2021-22		<p>During 2021-22 Newry, Mourne and Down held funding contracts to the value of £10.5m in external funding for investment in economic development and regeneration with £4.8m spent during 2021-22 in economic development and regeneration schemes across the District. This is an increase of 25% when compared to the value of the funding contracts held in 2020-21.</p> <p>£837k was spent against economic development programmes, six of which are partially funded through the European Regional Development Fund and Department for Economy. Two programmes are funded via the Department for Communities and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.</p> <p>The Council is also delivering a number of regeneration schemes, which spent £4.0m of investment. These are partially funded by the Department for Communities, Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, the Department for Infrastructure and Northern Ireland Environment Agency. This includes environmental improvement schemes and various projects across the local Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.</p>
	Economic Development - Total Value of Funding Contracts Held:		£1.2m	£1.8m		
	Economic Development – Annual Spend:		£583,515	£837,390	△	
	Regeneration – Total Value of Funding Contracts Held:		£7.2m	£8.7m		
	Regeneration – Annual Spend:		£3.9m	£4.0m	△	

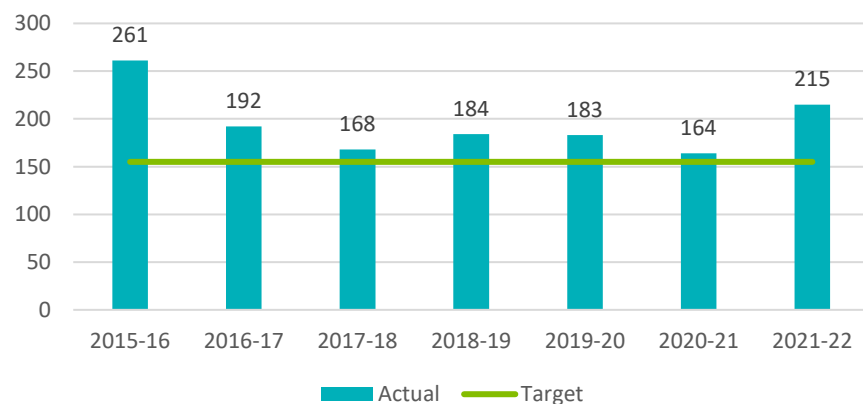
Economic Development - Investment secured and spent by Council



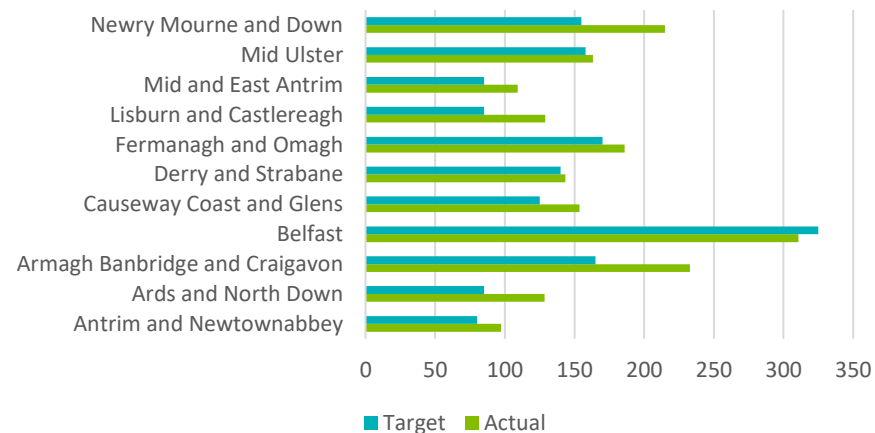
Regeneration - Investment secured and spent by the Council



Number of new jobs promoted through the business start programme






Number of jobs promoted against target (NI) 2021-22









*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

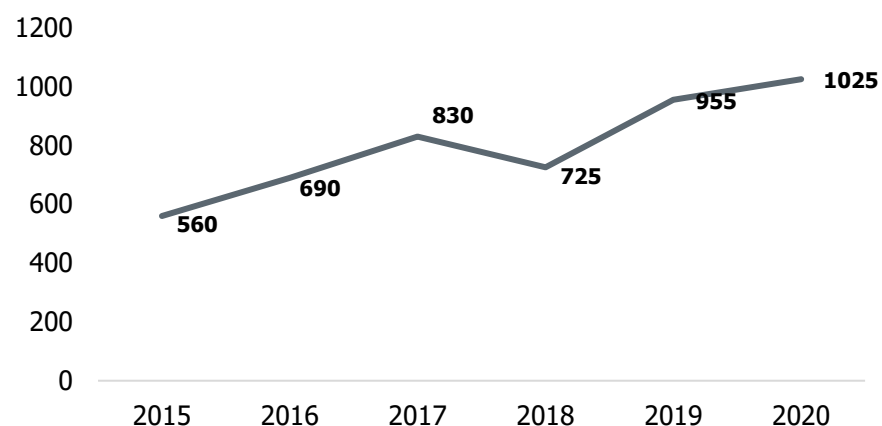
Key action	Status	Update
Progress the Belfast Region City Deal, ensuring inclusive economic growth for the region.		The Belfast Region City Deal was signed in December 2021, confirming the commitment of partners to deliver all City Deal proposals. Overall, the £1 billion investment will support the creation of up to 20,000 new jobs and an increase of £400m of gross value added (GVA) across the region. BRCD includes five projects that will transform Newry, Mourne and Down, including the Mourne Mountains Gateway, Newry Southern Relief Road, Newry City Centre Regeneration, Digital and Innovation projects and Skills and Employment projects.
Implement priority projects identified within masterplans and village plans.		<p>In 2021-22 the Council completed public realm schemes, with a combined investment of approximately £4m, in seven rural villages. The Council also invested £495k in revitalisation schemes in Church Street, Downpatrick and Hill Street, Newry.</p> <p>Following on from this investment, the Council in 2022 will take forward £3.9m investment in rural areas, through the implementation of four Environmental Improvement Schemes, seven revitalisation schemes, and the Make it Local communication and engagement campaign.</p> <p>The Council is also progressing concept designs for a future Environmental Improvement Scheme in Church St Downpatrick, subject to funding from the Department for Communities (DfC).</p>
Establish a new civic centre, theatre and conference facility that will revitalise Newry City and the wider district.		The Newry City Centre Regeneration scheme will deliver a civic hub, theatre and conferencing facilities, new public realm scheme and grade A office provision, revitalising the city centre. The scheme will also create and sustain jobs, increase visitor numbers, and stimulate the local economy.

Develop a car parking strategy in line with strategic regeneration development needs and sustainability.		The work on the Bann Road car park facility has been completed and is operational as a Park N Share facility.
Progress Downpatrick Regeneration.		<p><u>Irish Street Development</u></p> <p>The Council is working in partnership with DfC to bring forward a mixed-use development project on the former PSNI site and adjacent carpark. The development brief will go to market in autumn 2022.</p> <p><u>Regeneration working group</u></p> <p>The Council secured £128,000 from the Department for Communities to deliver an innovative revitalisation scheme in Irish Street in Downpatrick. Projects included a shop front scheme which improved 13 premises, production of a heritage leaflet and street banners to raise the profile of Irish Street. A scheme to improve the appearance of the former PSNI Station was also undertaken, alongside a branding project for Irish Street, which includes promotional material such as shopping bags, shop window stickers and a dedicated website.</p> <p>Council also engaged key stakeholders on the establishment of a new Regeneration working group involving Elected members, relevant government agencies, Government Departments and key strategic local stakeholders to progress regeneration priorities for the town centre.</p> <p><u>Church Street, Public Realm</u></p> <p>The Council is progressing concept designs for a future Environmental Improvement Scheme in Church Street, Downpatrick, subject to funding from DfC.</p>

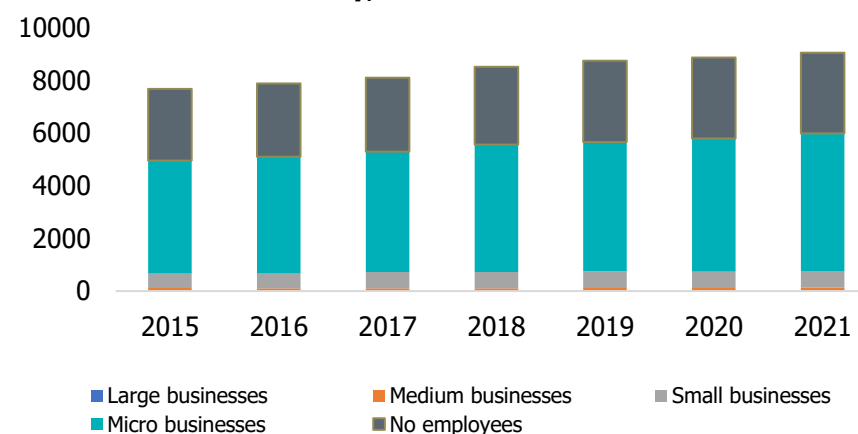
Measure of success	2020-21	2021-22	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Progress against BRCD projects	Progress underway	Progress underway		The Belfast Region City Deal was signed in December 2021, confirming the commitment of partners to deliver against City Deal proposals. BRCD includes five projects that will transform Newry, Mourne and Down, including the Mourne Mountains Gateway, Newry Southern Relief Road, Newry City Centre Regeneration, Digital and Innovation projects and Skills and Employment projects. OBCs for Mourne Mountain Gateway and Newry City Centre Regeneration have been approved; OBCs for Southern Relief Road, digital and innovation remain in progress. A regionally focused working group has been established to progress investments under Skills and Employability.
Number of public realm schemes delivered	4	3		<p>During 2021-22, the Council completed the final public realm schemes delivered under Rural Development Programme (RDP) funding; seven public realm schemes were delivered in Newtown, Meigh, Hilltown, Killyleagh, Dundrum and Ballyhornan.</p> <p>The Council also completed the 'Public Realm Enhancement Scheme' across six main urban centres and commenced phase 1 of the Warrenpoint Front Shore Public Realm Scheme in July 2022.</p> <p>The Council is also progressing plans to implement four 'Small Settlement Public Realm Schemes' in Bessbrook, Castlewellan, Saintfield and Rostrevor and is working on the design for public realm improvements to Church Street, Downpatrick.</p>
Increased business growth and employment	8,865 VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses	9,045 VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses		Since 2015, the number of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses in Newry, Mourne and Down increased by 17.9%, from 7,675 in 2015 to 9,045 in 2021. This includes an increase of 2.0% between 2020 and 2021 which can largely be attributed to the creation of an additional 180 new micro businesses. The birth rate of new businesses in Newry, Mourne and Down also peaked at 1,025 in 2020, which is the highest on record since 2015 and accounts for 16.1% of all new business births in Northern Ireland.
	59,018 employee jobs	61,203 employee jobs		Between 2015 and 2021, the number of employee jobs across Newry, Mourne and Down also increased by 16.9%, from 52,341 to 61,203, which is currently the 3 rd highest across Northern Ireland, accounting for 7.8% of all regional employee jobs. A 3.7% increase in employee jobs

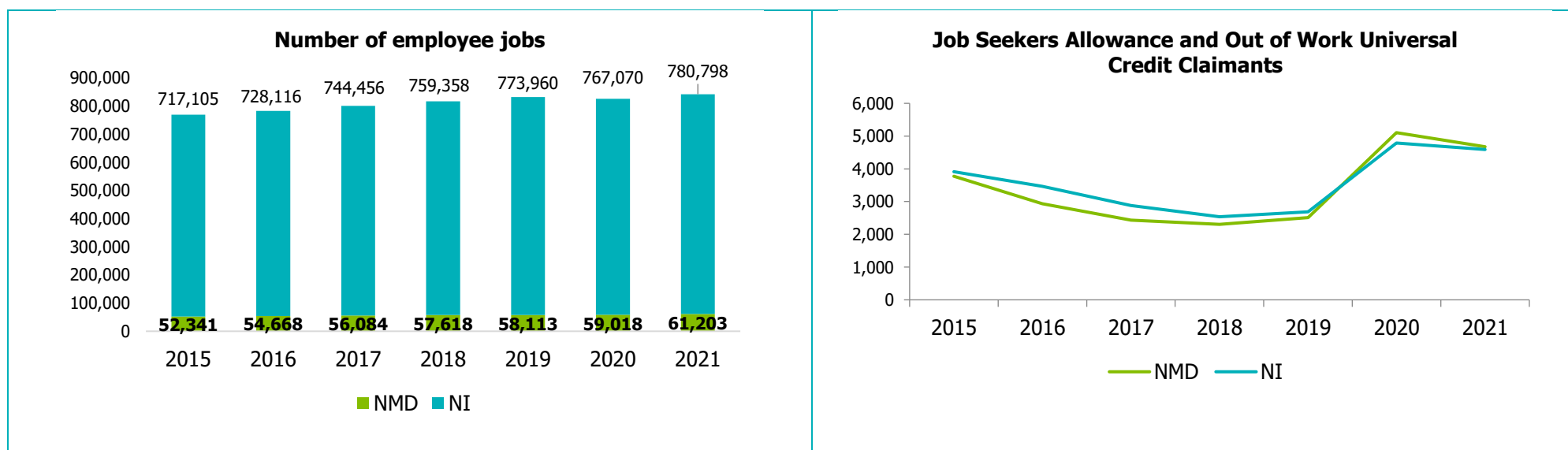
	5,105 job seekers and out of work universal credit claimants	4,675* job seekers and out of work universal credit claimants		was recorded in 2021-22 when compared to the 2020-21 employee jobs figure of 59,018. This trend correlates with the 8.4% reduction in the number of job seekers allowance and out of work universal credit claimants, from 5,105 in 2020 to 4,675 in 2021, which is the first decrease since this figure nearly doubled between 2019 and 2020 which 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. This is similar to the regional trend where the claimant count reduced by 4.1% between 2020 and 2021 and for the second time since 2015, the claimant count in Newry, Mourne and Down is higher than the regional average.
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Birth rate of newly registered businesses in Newry, Mourne and Down



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











* As yet NINIS has not released the 2021 claimant count annual averages data for LGD level and therefore the figure in the report is extracted directly from the NOMIS website as advised by DoF.

Performance Improvement Objective 2

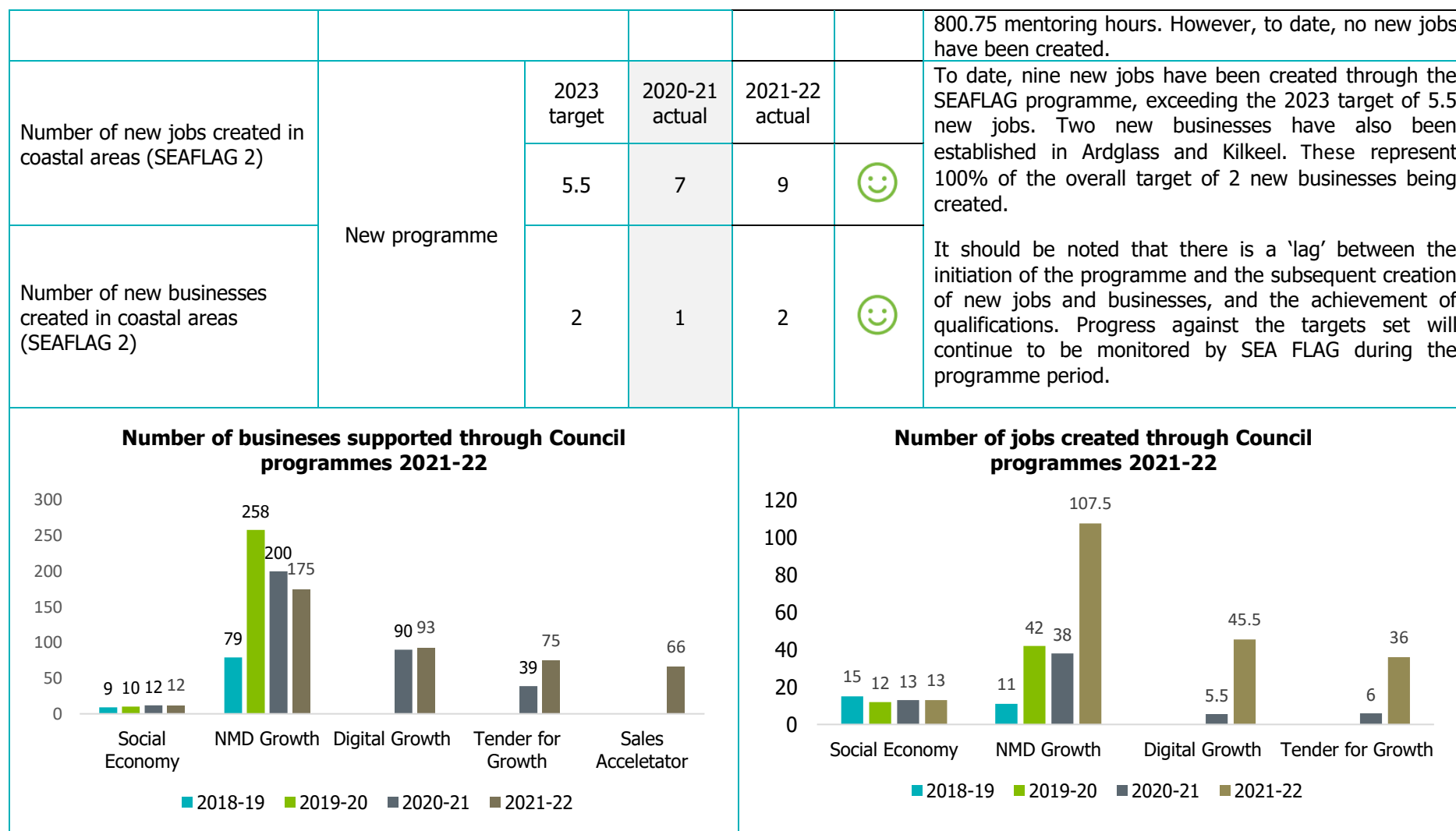
We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs

Key action	Status	Update
Implement a District wide marketing campaign to revitalise our local economy and safely stimulate footfall across our District.	😊	The Council implemented the 'Make it Local' promotional campaign, encouraging residents to shop locally for products or services, either in store or online, thereby supporting jobs and supply chains which contribute to the economic recovery of the District.
Support the creation of new businesses and promote new jobs through the NI 'Go for It' programme.	😊	The Council exceeded the targets set through the NI 'Go For It' programme, creating 215 new business starts and promoting 215 new jobs, exceeding the statutory target of >155.

Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme.		The Council exceeded all targets set through the Social Economy programme, supporting 15 social enterprises, delivering 190 mentoring days, assisting 54 people to gain increased skills for entering employment and creating 35 new volunteering jobs.
Support local businesses and create new jobs through 'NMD Growth', 'Digital Growth', 'Tender for Growth' and 'Sales and Trade'.		The Council continued to deliver a range of economic development programmes which focused on helping businesses to grow, enhance their competitiveness and digital capabilities and identify new tendering opportunities. Through these programmes, the Council supported 409 local businesses and created 189 local jobs.
Support the creation of new jobs and businesses in coastal areas through SEAFLAG 2.		The Council continued to deliver the SEAFLAG 2 programme, which has been extended until March 2023. The programme targets for the number of new jobs and businesses created in coastal areas have been exceeded.

Measure of success	2017-18 Actual	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Number of business plans approved through NI 'Go For It'	245	300	298	266	358		Since 2015-16, the Council has consistently exceeded the statutory target of promoting >155 jobs through business start-up activity. While overall performance during 2020-21 declined, 2021-22 saw the number of new business starts created increase by 18.8% with the number of new jobs promoted increasing by 31.1%. This has been the highest number of jobs promoted through the NI 'Go For It' programme since 2015-16, with Newry, Mourne and Down ranked 3/11 for the number of jobs promoted across NI. Newry, Mourne and Down also approved 358 business plans in 2021/22 placing the Council 3/11 across NI for business plan approvals. For 2022-23 there will be an updated 'Go for It' programme target for the number of jobs promoted in
Number of new business starts created through NI 'Go For It'	167	204	203	181	215		
Number of new jobs promoted through NI 'Go For It'	168	184	183	164	215		

							Newry Mourne and Down:173. An amendment to the standard set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 is awaiting legislative passage and approval.
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	12	9	10	12	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 2021-22, the Council supported 12 new social enterprise start-ups and 15 existing social enterprises, assisted 54 people in increasing their skills for entering employment and created 13 new social enterprise jobs, as well as 35 new volunteering jobs.
Number of social enterprise jobs created	16	15	12	13	13	▶	
Number of businesses supported through 'NMD Growth'	New	79	198	198	175	😊	Since 2018, the Council supported 650 local businesses through 'NMD Growth', including 175 businesses during 2021-22, achieving 88% of the overall 2022 target set. The Council has also delivered 28 workshops, 15 thematic programmes and 6,637 mentoring hours which have supported the creation of 198.5 jobs, including 107.5 new jobs during 2021-22. This is an increase of nearly 183% when compared to the 2020-21 figure of 38 new jobs.
Number of jobs created through 'NMD Growth'		11	42	38	107.5	△	
Number of businesses supported through 'Digital Growth'	New programmes			90	93	△	Since January 2020, the Council has supported 183 local businesses through 'Digital Growth', achieving 70% of the overall 2022 target set. The Council has also delivered 15 workshops, 3 masterclasses and 2,776 mentoring hours which have supported the creation of 51 new jobs, including 45.5 new jobs during 2021-22.
Number of jobs created through 'Digital Growth'				5.5	45.5	△	
Number of businesses supported through 'Tender for Growth'				39	75	△	Since June 2020, the Council has supported 114 local businesses through 'Tender for Growth', achieving 67% of the overall 2022 target set. The Council has also delivered 7 workshops and 1,598 mentoring hours which have supported the creation of 42 new jobs, including 36 new jobs during 2021-22.
Number of jobs created through 'Tender for Growth'				6	36	△	
Number of businesses supported through 'Sales and Trade'				-	66	△	Since the programme launched in September 2021 the Council has supported 66 businesses through 'Sales Accelerator', achieving 66% of the overall 2022 target set. The Council has also delivered 22 workshops and
Number of jobs created through 'Sales and Trade'				-	0	-	










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

Key action	Status	Update
Develop a Circular Economy Plan for the district to make best use of our waste and resources.		Whilst this action remains important to the Council the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that the Council has had to prioritise other waste management services and therefore no further progress has been made.
Develop and implement a strategic plan for controlling environmental crime.		The Council's Enforcement Improvement plan has been developed and progress in implementing the plan is monitored and reported to the Neighbourhood Services Committee on a quarterly basis. The Council is currently working to extend enforcement powers to Park Wardens and Mourne Heritage to help oversee and protect prime tourist areas. Enforcement Officers are being strategically assigned to identified "hotspots" where there has been an increase in dog fouling and littering offences. However, acknowledgement that an insufficient number of Enforcement Officers are employed to cover the district and the Council has noted that recruitment has been difficult which may be a consequence of the challenging recruitment market.
Develop and implement the Local Development Plan.		Preparation of the LDP is underway. Disruption and slippage experienced as a consequence of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors meant that it was not possible to complete and publish the draft Plan Strategy (dPS) by the end of March 2022 and consequently there was the need to revise the LDP timetable. The revised timetable was approved by Council on 1 August 2022 (awaiting agreement of




		Department of Infrastructure). Preparation of the dPS is ongoing and the indicative timeframe for the publication of the dPS is now March 2023.
Develop a Local Climate Change Adaption Plan.		<p>The development of the Local Climate Adaption Plan which identifies the impact of climate change on a range of operations, including flooding, storms, heat, coastal erosion, heat and drought, is underway. The Council is allowing green spaces to go back to nature, creating habitats for wildlife and designated employees have attended training on climate change to enable them to take adaption and mitigation actions within their sectors. The initial mapping stages of this work have been completed to allow the Council to move towards defining the necessary mitigations. This work must be completed by March 2023.</p> <p>Newry, Mourne and Down is the lead partner for the €9 million CANN (Collaborative Action for the Natura Network) Project which seeks to protect and restore protected habitats. The CANN Project reached the finals in the Ecology section of the prestigious Innovation in Politics awards, reinforcing the significance of the project in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss. This project which involved 13 partners across three jurisdictions will be complete by December 2022. A celebration Event will mark the completion and highlight the achievements in protecting both habitats and the biodiversity of the areas involved.</p>
Implement priority projects identified within AONB action plans and protect our biodiversity.		<p>In 2020, the Council launched a new initiative to re-wild areas of the District. The project involves improving Council owned green spaces for wildlife by changing the grass mowing schedule or planting native wildflowers, shrubs, and trees. Rewilding has been carried out in some of our larger parks such as Kilbroney Park in Rostrevor and Islands Park in Newcastle. The Council has allowed areas to grow, giving plants already present in the soil a chance to flower. Native wildflowers have also been sown, which are beneficial for the environment and Council was awarded funding from the Environment Fund to purchase new mowers which will help to manage these wildflower meadows more effectively.</p> <p>Several biodiversity projects are being developed across the Ring of Gullion AONB, including the incorporation of wildflower areas in the grasslands of Bessbrook Pond</p>





		Field and the development of a Biodiversity and Access Plan for the Forkhill Greenspace. Work is also underway in Strangford Lough to assess the potential for advanced moorings to protect seagrass beds as a blue carbon habitats, which improve the water quality and protect the coast against storm damage.
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Measure of Success	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		Status Trend	Explanatory Note
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
Level of street cleanliness across the District (KNIB street cleanliness score)	-	72	-	64	-	64	-	64		The Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) Cleaner Neighbourhoods Survey for 2021-22 has not yet been released but an email from their communications manager indicates that the 2021-22 LEAMS score for the District has remained at 64 which falls below the regional average of 66.
65% of municipal waste recycled by 2030	Target 50% by 2020	Actual 51.4%	Target 50% by 2020	Actual 53.7%	Target 50% by 2020	Actual 51.9%	Target 65% by 2030	Actual 49.1%	 	Since 2017-18, the Council increased the overall rate of recycling by 3% to 49.1%. This however falls below the 2020 target of 50% and is well below the 2030 target of 65%. Similar to the regional trend, the level of recycling reduced again during 2021-22 and the Council is placed 7/11 across Northern Ireland.
Level of compliance with sustainable development duty		<p>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. The Council is involved in several projects to increase the availability of EV charging points in residential areas, both as a member of the NI consortium and with a specific local initiative. This will result in a minimum of 20 new charging points across our district.</p> <p>The Council has also moved to eliminate, as far as possible single use plastic items from Council premises.</p>								








Performance Improvement Objective 3

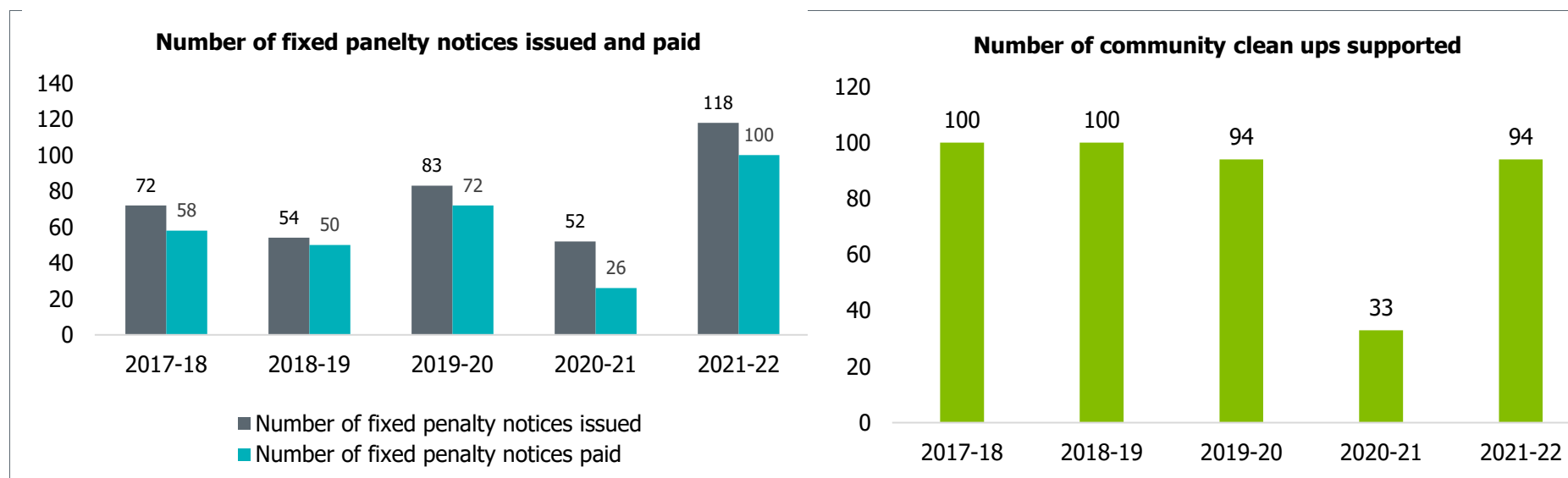
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents



Key action	Status	Update
Address issues around littering, fly tipping and dog fouling by:		
Implementing the Dog Fouling Strategy and Enforcement Improvement Plan.		Progress in implementing the Enforcement Improvement Plan is monitored and reported to the Neighbourhood Services Committee on a quarterly basis. Key achievements to date include 40,000 dog waste bags purchased to replenish the nine dispenser units erected since December 2021 across the District. Ten kitchen caddies have been procured and are being delivered to schools across the District and the 'Live Here Love Here' billboard campaign regarding dog fouling and anti-littering has been implemented across the District.
Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity campaigns and dog licenses.		During June-July 2021, the Council developed and delivered a social media campaign to encourage responsible dog ownership, entitled 'That is Disgusting', which recorded an overall reach of 172,658 and total video views of 47,470. The Council has also included information on responsible dog ownership on dog licenses.
Working with Louth County Council to raise awareness of the impact of fly tipping along the border area.		Newry, Mourne and Down District Council launched the new public awareness campaign "Take it Home" with colleagues from Louth County Council to tackle the issue of littering and illegal dumping. The campaign featured 15 short videos featuring memorable messages relating to littering, illegal dumping and fixed penalties with the aim of raising awareness and driving the behaviour change we need across both Districts. The campaign ran from the 18 th May to 21 st June across Facebook and Twitter, generating a reach of 26.3K and engagement of 318.

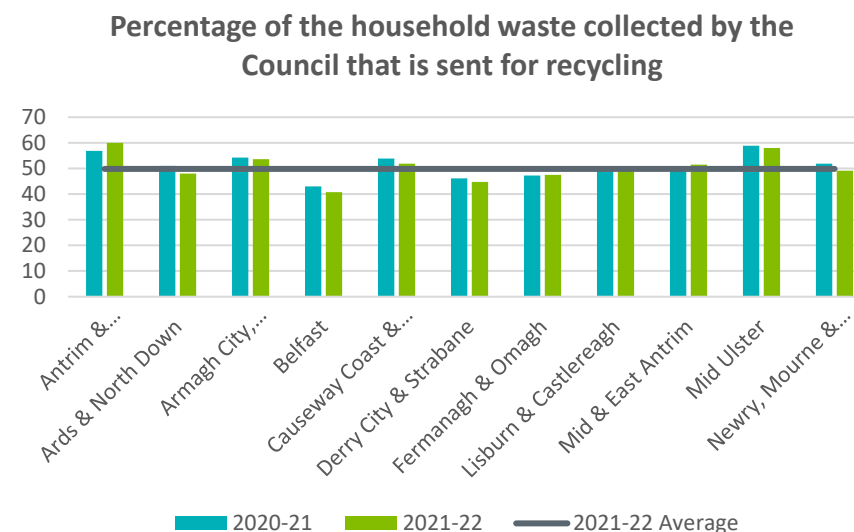
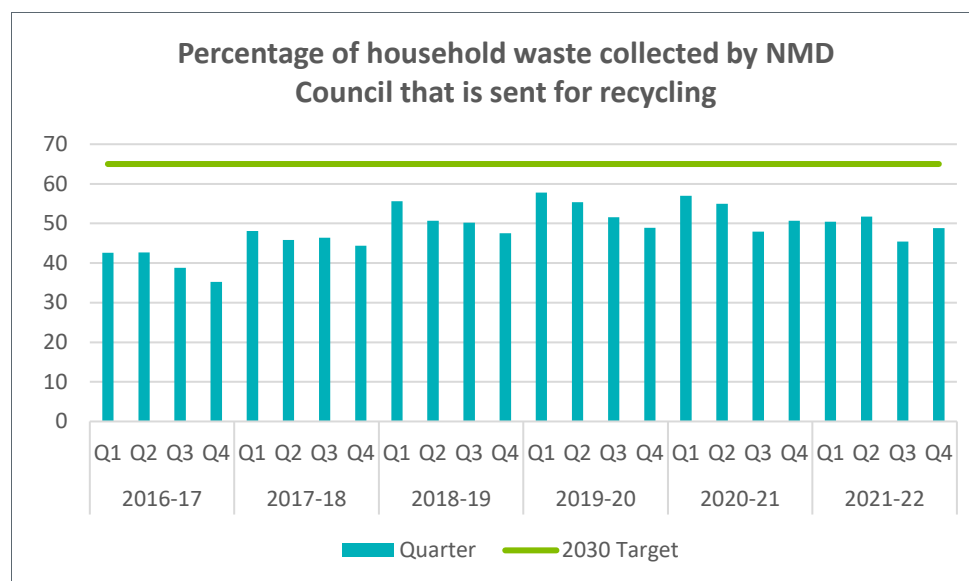
Encouraging residents to bring properly sorted surplus recyclable waste to our Household Recycling Centres.		Work is ongoing in relation to the review of Household Recycling Centres. The introduction of a permit system has been delayed due to COVID-19.
Launch the 'mobile app' to enable officers to record incidents of environmental crime across the District.		The pilot mobile app was relaunched for officers on 30 November 2021 when it was rewritten to accommodate a transition from a USA based GIS server to an EU server. Officers' records were also migrated, and the App was used until December 2021. The beta testing of this app is not yet complete.
Support local community clean ups, in line with COVID-19 guidance.		The Council supported 94 community clean ups at a range of locations across the District, including Ardglass, Newtownhamilton, Warrenpoint and Kilkeel.
Participate in the Keep NI Beautiful 'Live Here Love Here' campaign.		The Council continued to participate in the Keep NI Beautiful 'Live Here Love Here' campaign, and 18 grants, with a combined value of £13k being awarded towards local projects. Projects included the community vegetable plot in Saintfield, Murlough Community Garden, Killard Community Orchard and community clean ups in Burren and Ballyhornan.



Measure of success	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
LEAMS* score (Keep NI Beautiful Cleanliness Index)	72	64	64	64		KNIB carries out Cleaner Neighbourhoods Surveys on an annual basis. The 2021 LEAMS score for Newry, Mourne and Down again remained at 64, which is below the current Northern Ireland average of 66. This is the lowest recorded regional score since the survey began in 2012 and KNIB previously suggested 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. KNIB has not yet officially published the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Report for 2021-22 and therefore all figures are provisional.

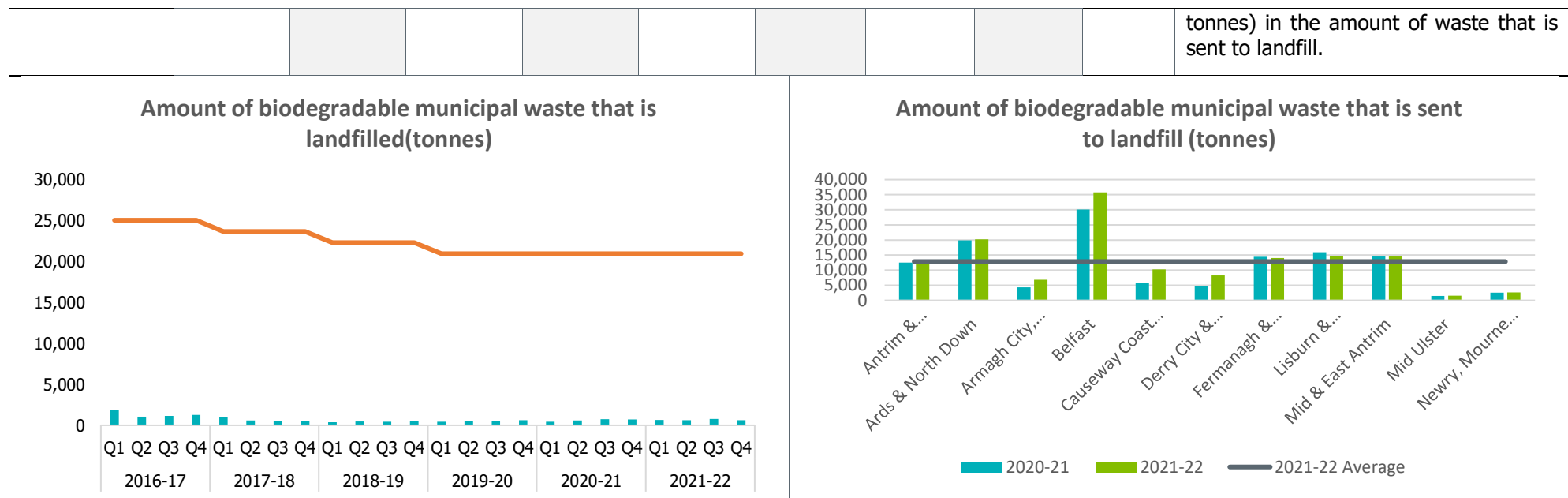
Number of fixed penalty notices issued	54	83	52	118	 	<p>Between 2020-21 and 2021-22 the number of illicit dumping incidents reported to Council decreased by 34%, from 817 to 541 incidents, whilst the number of littering and dog fouling incidents increased from 322 to 460 during this period. The decreased levels of fly tipping may be attributed to the reopening of the Household Recycling Centres from Q2 2020-21. The number of fixed penalty notices more than doubled from 52 in 2020-21 to 118 in 2021-22 which may be attributed to the lifting of restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic. 100 of the fixed penalty notices have been paid to date, accounting for 85% of the total issued.</p>
Number of fixed penalty notices paid	50	72	26 (to date)	100	 	
Number of community clean ups supported	100	94	33	94	 	<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 2021-22, the Council supported 421 clean ups across the District, including 94 during 2021-22.</p> <p>Following a significant reduction in the number of community clean ups in 2020-21 due 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, the number of clean ups reflect the 2019-20 pre-pandemic levels, with 94 clean ups supported in 2021-22.</p>
Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	27	34	24	18		<p>Since 2017-18, the Council has supported 119 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects, including 18 during 2021-22. 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>



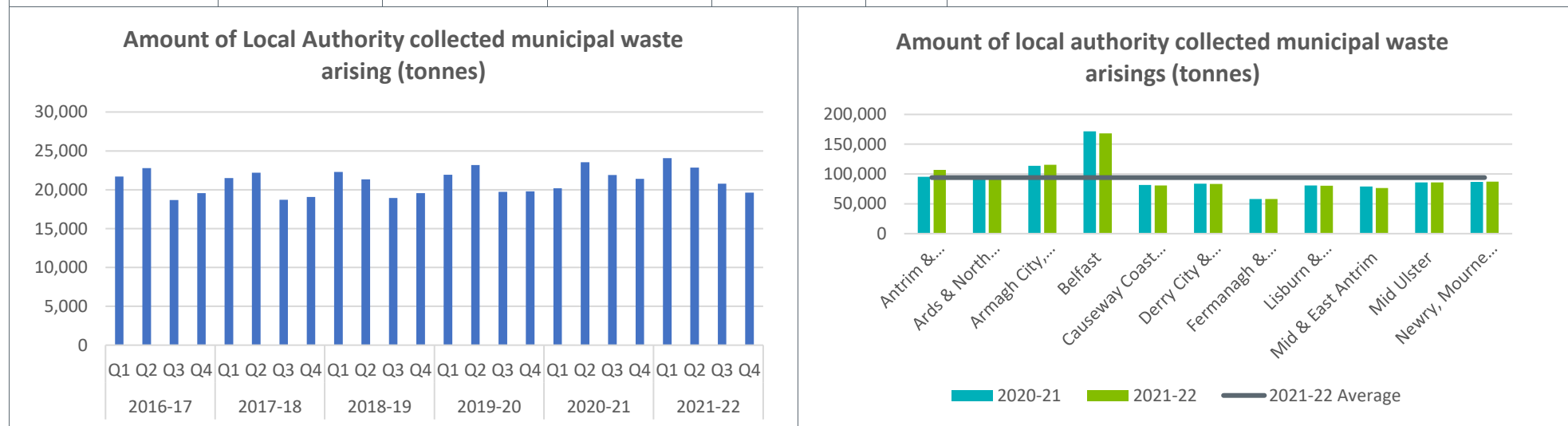
Measure of success	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		Status Trend	Explanatory note
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling	50% by 2020	51.4%	50% by 2020	53.7%	50% by 2020	51.9%	65% by 2030	49.1%	 	Since 2017-18, the Council increased the overall rate of recycling by 3%, to 49.1%. This however falls below the 2020 target of 50% and is well below the 2030 target of 65%. It is also below the 2021-22 regional average of 49.8% and ranks the Council 7/11 across Northern Ireland. Between 2020-21 and 2021-22, the overall rate of recycling in the District reduced by 2.8%. This is indicative of the regional downward trend over the past year with a 1.1% reduction in the overall rate of recycling.



Measure of success	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		Status Trend	Explanatory note
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	<22,314	1,846t	<20,954	2,131t	<20,954	2,538t	<20,954	2,685t	 	Since 2015-16, the amount of biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste that is sent to landfill reduced by 83.5%, to 2,685 tonnes, and the Council only used 12.8% of the 2019-20 Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme allowance. This falls well below the 2021-22 regional average of 12,847 tonnes and ranks Newry, Mourne and Down 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 2021-22, the Council recorded a 26% increase (554



Measure of success	Actual 2018-19	Actual 2019-20	Actual 2020-21	Actual 2021-22	Trend	Explanatory note
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	82,136t	84,610t	86,900t	87,336t	▶	Since 2017-18, the amount of local authority collected municipal waste arisings has increased by 7.2% to 87,336 tonnes, which falls below the 2021-22 regional average of 94,058 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. The increase however between 2020-21 and 2021-22 of 0.5%, is 2.2% lower than the increase experienced between 2019-20 and 2020-21.



*Local Environmental Auditing Management System (LEAMS) which is carried out by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful has yet to release the 2021-22 Cleaner Neighbourhoods Report.

**The 2021-22 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 2022-23. 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

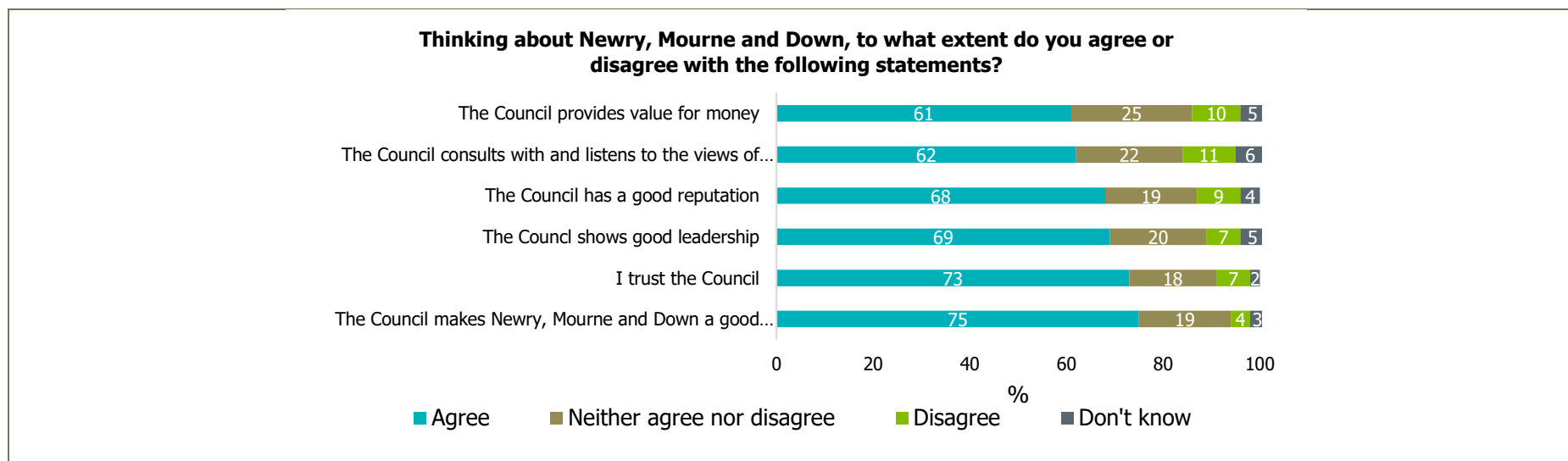
Enable and support people to engage in inclusive and diverse activities in their communities

Key action	Status	Update
Through the process of community planning provide opportunities for communities to have a voice in shaping local services and local areas.	😊	<p>The launch of Participatory Budgeting has taken place and £57k has been secured from a range of partners to deliver the programme. In total over 6,000 individuals participated in the project, and 39 groups were awarded funding to help address issues around social isolation and mental wellbeing in their community. Funded groups reported on the impact of their projects at the celebration events organised across the District.</p> <p>Through the Strategic Stakeholder Forum, 'Bang the Table' has been procured as a suitable platform to engage stakeholders and invite views on a diverse range of projects involving both statutory, community and voluntary partners. Three engagement projects have taken place with over 1,500 users registering their interest in further participation.</p>
Engage and involve partners and communities in developing the district through the implementation of the Community Plan.	😊	<p>This work is ongoing. Many Priority Subgroups have now been re-convened and revised actions which are aligned to post COVID-19 priorities have been identified. The Council has also established a Digital Poverty Working Group to address digital exclusion and Youth Voice to encourage civic participation amongst young people.</p> <p>The Recovery and Renewal Plan was published in Q1, and the Strategic Stakeholder Forum hosted an information event in June to promote the concepts contained within plan.</p>

		The Housing Needs Conference took place on 10 November 2021. Speakers included representatives from key stakeholder organisations, such as the World Economic Forum.
Develop and implement a Community Facilities Strategy.		The terms of reference have now been agreed and a consultant team has been appointed. An initial round of engagement has been undertaken with District Electoral Area (DEA) officers and a facilities survey is being finalised for circulation in Q2 2022-23.
Promote sustainable and empowered communities through the implementation of the Council Financial Assistance Scheme.		The Council remains committed to investing in the capacity of local communities through the Financial Assistance (FA) scheme. Since 2015 the Council has awarded £8.3m to 2,695 successful applicants and the success rate has improved from 44% to 69% in 2021-22. Last year 374 projects benefitted from the Financial Assistance scheme.

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%		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:
Percentage of residents who agree that the Council consults with and listens to the views of local people	62%		<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 feel that they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area	59%		<p>In August 2022, the Council commissioned a second Residents Survey to track and monitor resident perceptions about their local area, the performance of the Council and key priorities for improvement in the future. The field work for this survey is taking place between the 24 August and the 10 September 2022.</p> <p>The final results will be available to the Council at a special meeting with senior management in November 2022. Feedback from the Residents Survey</p>


				will be used to inform the development of future plans and strategies, including the Corporate Plan and Performance Improvement Plan.																										
Measure of Success	2018 Actual	2021-22 Actual	Status	Explanatory Note																										
Number and percentage of financial assistance projects funded and successfully delivered	64% of projects awarded funding	68.8%		Since 2015-16, the Council has awarded £8.3m to 2,695 successful applications through the Financial Assistance Scheme. This includes £1,543,146.83 being awarded to 374 projects across 20 thematic areas during 2021-22, with the most popular themes being 'community engagement', 'community events and festivals' and 'summer schemes'. Overall, 69% of applications received were successful with all 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? (%)</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percentage (%)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Definitely agree</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>Tend to agree</td><td>54</td></tr><tr><td>Neither agree nor disagree</td><td>13</td></tr><tr><td>Tend to disagree</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>Don't know</td><td>3</td></tr></tbody></table> <div><div><div>■ Definitely agree</div><div>■ Neither agree nor disagree</div></div><div><div>■ Tend to agree</div><div>■ Tend to disagree</div></div></div>			Response	Percentage (%)	Definitely agree	18	Tend to agree	54	Neither agree nor disagree	13	Tend to disagree	12	Don't know	3	<p>Do you feel you are able to have a say on things happening or how services are run in your local area?</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percentage (%)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Don't know</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>No never</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>No rarely</td><td>22</td></tr><tr><td>Sometimes</td><td>32</td></tr><tr><td>Yes mostly</td><td>24</td></tr><tr><td>Yes always</td><td>3</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>%</p>		Response	Percentage (%)	Don't know	8	No never	11	No rarely	22	Sometimes	32	Yes mostly	24	Yes always	3
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Performance Improvement Objective 4

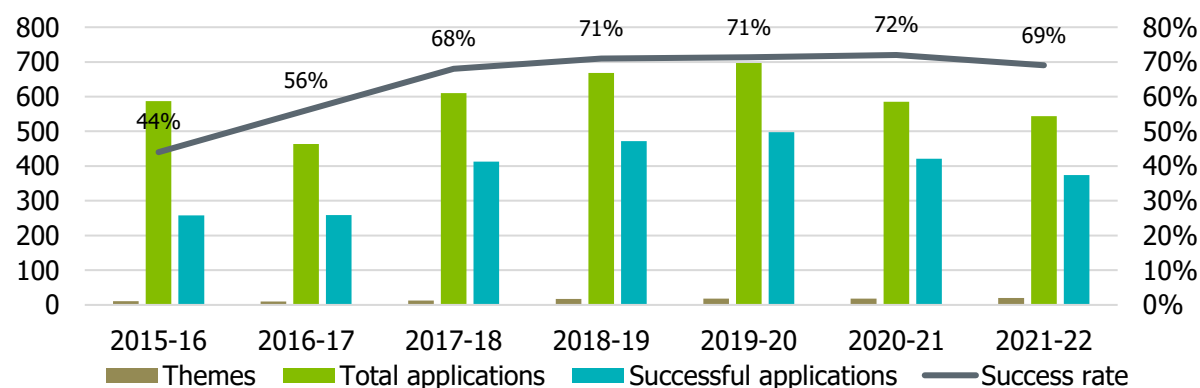
We will build the capacity of local communities through the Financial Assistance Scheme

Key action	Status	Update
Launch 3 financial assistance calls across 19 thematic areas to support the delivery of community led projects.	😊	The Council launched four financial assistance calls across 20 thematic areas and awarded £1.54m awarded to 374 projects.
Continue to promote and roll out the Electronic Grant Management System.	😊	The Council has successfully promoted the Electronic Grant Management System to applicants and all applications and claims are now received and processed through the online platform. A recent survey on the Financial Assistance Scheme revealed that 98% of applicants are satisfied with the support received from the Programmes Unit.

Deliver online training and capacity building to support local voluntary and community groups in applying for financial assistance.		During 2021-22, 140 participants took part in six capacity building sessions, over 50 views of the online training module which was published on the corporate website were recorded and many applicants benefitted from one-to-one support from the Programmes Unit and DEA Co-ordinators. Overall, there were 54,908 beneficiaries of the Financial Assistance Scheme and 36,486 volunteer hours recorded to deliver the projects funded.
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Measure of success	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	Trend	Explanatory Note
% of successful financial assistance applications	71%	71%	72%	68.8%	 	The overall success rate of applications to the Council's Financial Assistance Scheme improved from 44% in 2015-16 to 69% in 2021-22. In 2020-21, the Council introduced 'score and rank' in line with the Financial Assistance Policy. However, the score and rank process was not fully implemented in 2021-22 due to additional COVID-19 Recovery funding being made available. In 2021-22, 374 of the 544 successful applications were awarded £1,543,146.83 in total. Significant shortfalls between the amount of funding available and requested were recorded under the 'tourism covid recovery' and 'local biodiversity' themes.
% of financial assistance applications funded	71%	71%	64%	68.8%		


Financial Assistance applications received v success rate







Corporate Plan 2021-23: Self imposed performance indicators




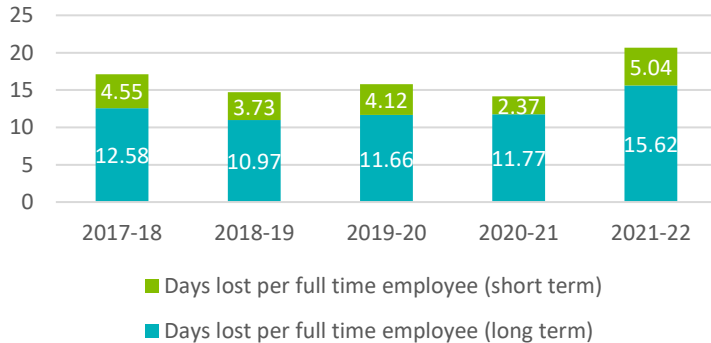
Corporate Objective

Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

Key action	Status	Update
Introduce new, efficient and innovative ways to transform and improve the way we plan, manage and deliver services.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pecos Purchase to Pay System went live on the 10 January 2022 in conjunction with the new tendering system; Multiquote. From the 1 June 2022 the former system for paying invoices was discontinued and the Pecos and Multiquote systems are now embedded within Council processes. The CMT working groups are still operational and are providing updates to the Senior Management Team on a regular basis. Some of the key milestones to date include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Customer engagement charter has been developed along with a series of broad service standards. - An Agile Working Policy was agreed with the Trade Unions and approved by Council in August 2022. - A business case is now being developed for an EDRMS system. The Council continues to support the development of a new corporate administration model. The Outline Business Case for a new performance management system has been approved. <p>The Council continues to identify and introduce new ways to transform local services.</p>

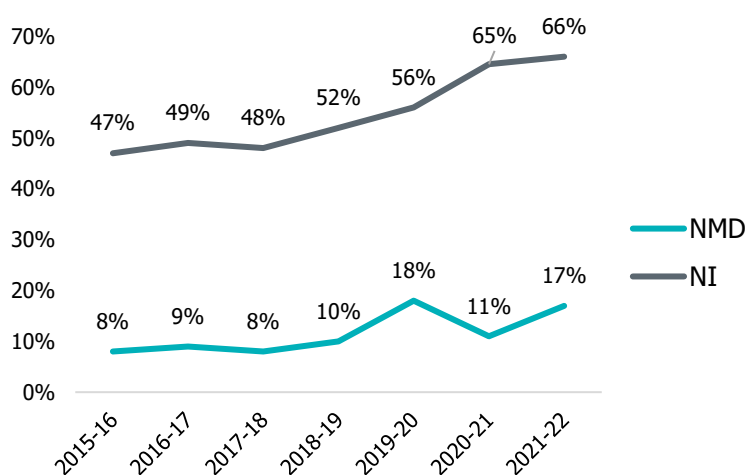
<p>Develop a robust and reliable evidence base to inform decision making, policy development and service provision.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During Q1/Q2, eleven surveys were carried out, with the results being analysed for a range of internal and external stakeholders. This includes the Parks and Beaches survey, Staff Health and Wellbeing survey and Museums survey. • A Working Group has been established to consider and scope out the requirements of the Residents Survey 2022, which is planned for September 2022, which will be used to inform the strategic direction of the organisation. • The initial review of current indicators within the Community Plan is complete and will be aligned to the indicators within the Programme for Government when it is published. <p>The Council continues to adopt an evidence based and performance led approach to decision-making, policy development and service provision.</p>
<p>Effectively manage performance and align individual contribution with corporate objectives and better outcomes for all.</p>		<p>The Council continues to mainstream and embed the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. During 2021-22, Service Plans were developed for all departments and People Perform Grow was introduced for employees at tier 4 and above. Through Service Plans and People Perform Grow, the Council is demonstrating the alignment across the hierarchy of plans in place and the significant contribution of employees in achieving the corporate objectives and better outcomes for all.</p>
<p>Support elected members in their leadership role.</p>		<p>The Council continues to support Elected Members in their leadership role, by offering training and development programmes across a range of themes, including Suicide Awareness and Prevention and Dementia Awareness. Elected Members also attended conferences organised by NILGA, National Association of Councillors and APSE.</p> <p>The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson have a designated resource within the Council to support them in fulfilling their role(s) as First Citizen(s). The Chairperson hosted 6 civic receptions and attended 60 official events across the District, including the 'Walk for Life', Civic Awards, Local Democracy week celebrations and illuminating Council buildings to recognise 'Organ Donation Week', 'Recycle Week' and 'Childhood Cancer Awareness Month'.</p>

Implement a new neighbourhood model of providing cleansing and maintenance services.		The District Cleansing review is progressing with the final Elected member workshop scheduled for beginning of October 2022 where proposals are to be reviewed and the new service model agreed for Committee approval.
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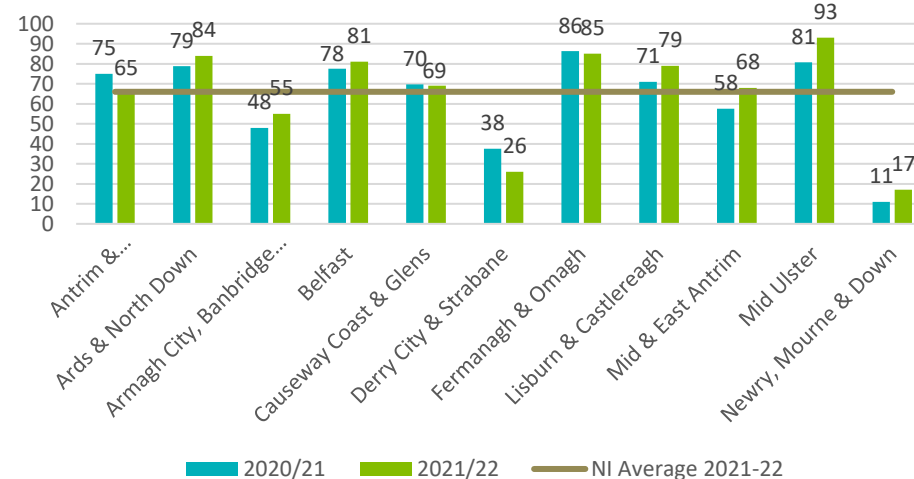
Measure of Success	Status Trend	Explanatory Note																									
Increased citizen satisfaction		<p>The 2018 Residents Survey revealed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 87% are satisfied with the Council overall 75% agree that the Council makes Newry, Mourne and Down a good place to live 73% trust the Council 61% 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 2020-21. The Council is currently progressing the implementation of the 'proposals for improvement' which were put forward by the NI Audit Office, to help improve the arrangements in place to secure continuous improvement and facilitate a performance improvement culture.																									
Level of absenteeism		<p>During 2021-22, Newry, Mourne and Down recorded 20.66 days lost per employee. This represents a significant increase from 13.55 days in 2020-21, particularly in relation to short term absence, which increased from 2.37 to 5.04 days per employee and is the highest level of short-term absence recorded since 2015-16. 42.2% of the workforce (436 employees) had no recorded absence during 2021-22, however this represents a significant decrease when compared to the 63.5% of employees with no recorded absence in 2020-21. This increase in short term absenteeism may partly be attributed to the significant rise in the number of coronavirus absences recorded in Q4 2021-22 and may also have contributed to the decrease in the number of the workforce with no recorded absence.</p>	<p>Absenteeism - Days lost per full time employee</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Long term (Days lost)</th> <th>Short term (Days lost)</th> <th>Total (Days lost)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2017-18</td> <td>12.58</td> <td>4.55</td> <td>17.13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018-19</td> <td>10.97</td> <td>3.73</td> <td>14.70</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019-20</td> <td>11.66</td> <td>4.12</td> <td>15.78</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020-21</td> <td>11.77</td> <td>2.37</td> <td>14.14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-22</td> <td>15.62</td> <td>5.04</td> <td>20.66</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>■ Days lost per full time employee (short term) ■ Days lost per full time employee (long term)</p>	Year	Long term (Days lost)	Short term (Days lost)	Total (Days lost)	2017-18	12.58	4.55	17.13	2018-19	10.97	3.73	14.70	2019-20	11.66	4.12	15.78	2020-21	11.77	2.37	14.14	2021-22	15.62	5.04	20.66
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2021-22	15.62	5.04	20.66																								

Percentage of payments paid:		<p>Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council has again made progress in the percentage of payments paid within 10 working days, increasing from 11% in 2020-21 to 17% in 2021-22. This figure is still however the lowest across all regional councils ranking NMD 11/11 across Northern Ireland. An increase has also been recorded in the number of payments made within 30 calendar days rising from 86% in 2020-21 to 89% in 2021-22. This is marginally below the NI average of 90% of invoices paid within 30 calendar days and ranks Newry, Mourne and Down 9/11 across Northern Ireland. The percentage of payments paid outside 30 days has improved, decreasing from 14% in 2020-21 to 11% in 2021-22. This is however above the regional average of 10% for payments paid outside 30 days with the Council ranked 9/11 across Northern Ireland. Although improvements have been made it should be noted that the new PECOS system which was introduced during 2021-22, has had an impact on the payment of invoices particularly during Q4 2021-22.</p>
Within 10 working days	▲	
Within 30 calendar days	▲	
Outside 30 calendar days	▲	

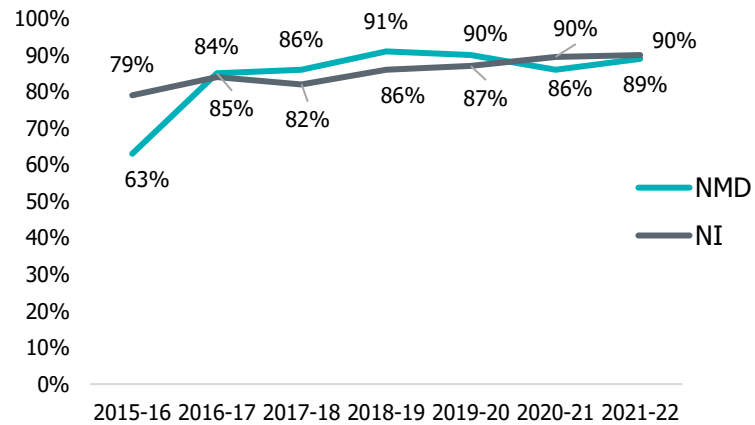
% of payments paid within 10 working days



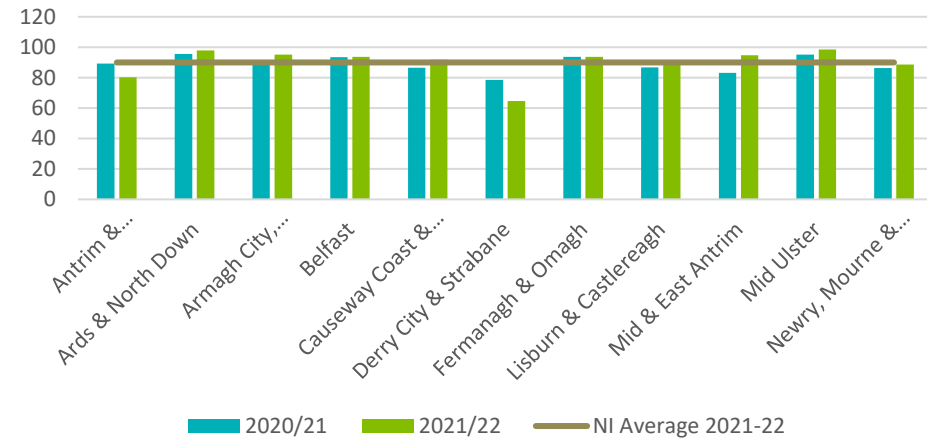
% of payments made within 10 working days



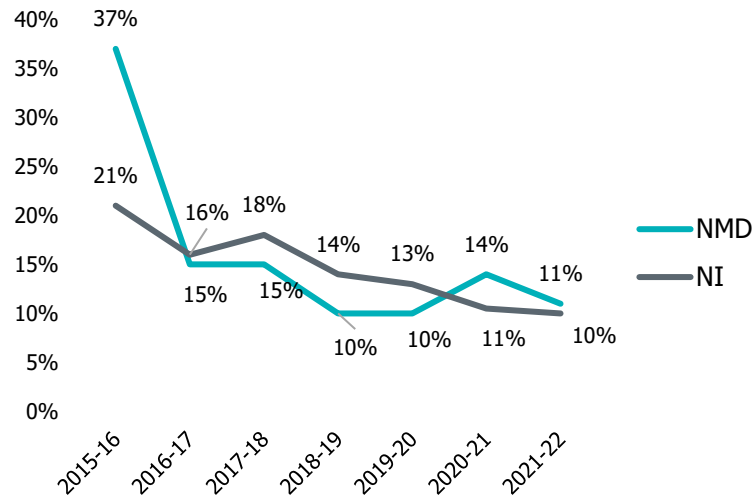
% of payments paid within 30 calendar days



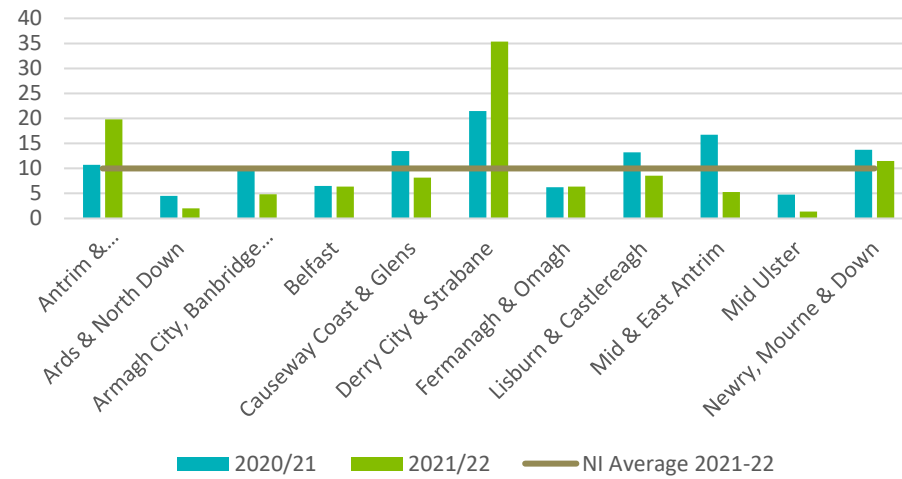
% of payments paid within 30 calendar days



% 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




Key action	Status	Update
Work with partners to implement the Community Plan and deliver better outcomes/improve the quality of life for all.		<p>As we emerged from COVID-19, the Community Coordination Hub identified 12 priority projects that aimed to help to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and promote recovery within the district. These projects included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Assistance for Community Voluntary Sector • Confidence Building Taster Sessions and Short Programmes • Slow Cooker Programme • Participatory Budgeting Project • Energy Efficiency Advice and Energy Saving Equipment • Sustainable Food Places Programme • Youth Media Project • Re-Connect Roadshow - Community Connections and Engagement Project • Connect and Engage Media Project • NMD Strategic Stakeholder Forum (SSF) Projects • Addressing Digital Poverty in NM&DDC area Project • Re-opening of Community Facilities
Support elected members in their advocacy role around key local actions.		Elected members are supported in their advocacy roles through the DEA officers who work together with their DEA fora members to identify key local actions relevant to communities and implement programmes, activities and projects that aim to benefit residents and communities.








Measure of Success	Status	Explanatory note
Compliance with the duty of community planning / monitor delivery of outcomes with partners		During 2021-22, the Council continued to comply with the statutory duty of community planning. The Community Planning Partnership met on a regular basis. The NMD Community Planning Statement of Progress was presented to the Community Planning Partnership in January 2022. An initial appraisal of indicators has

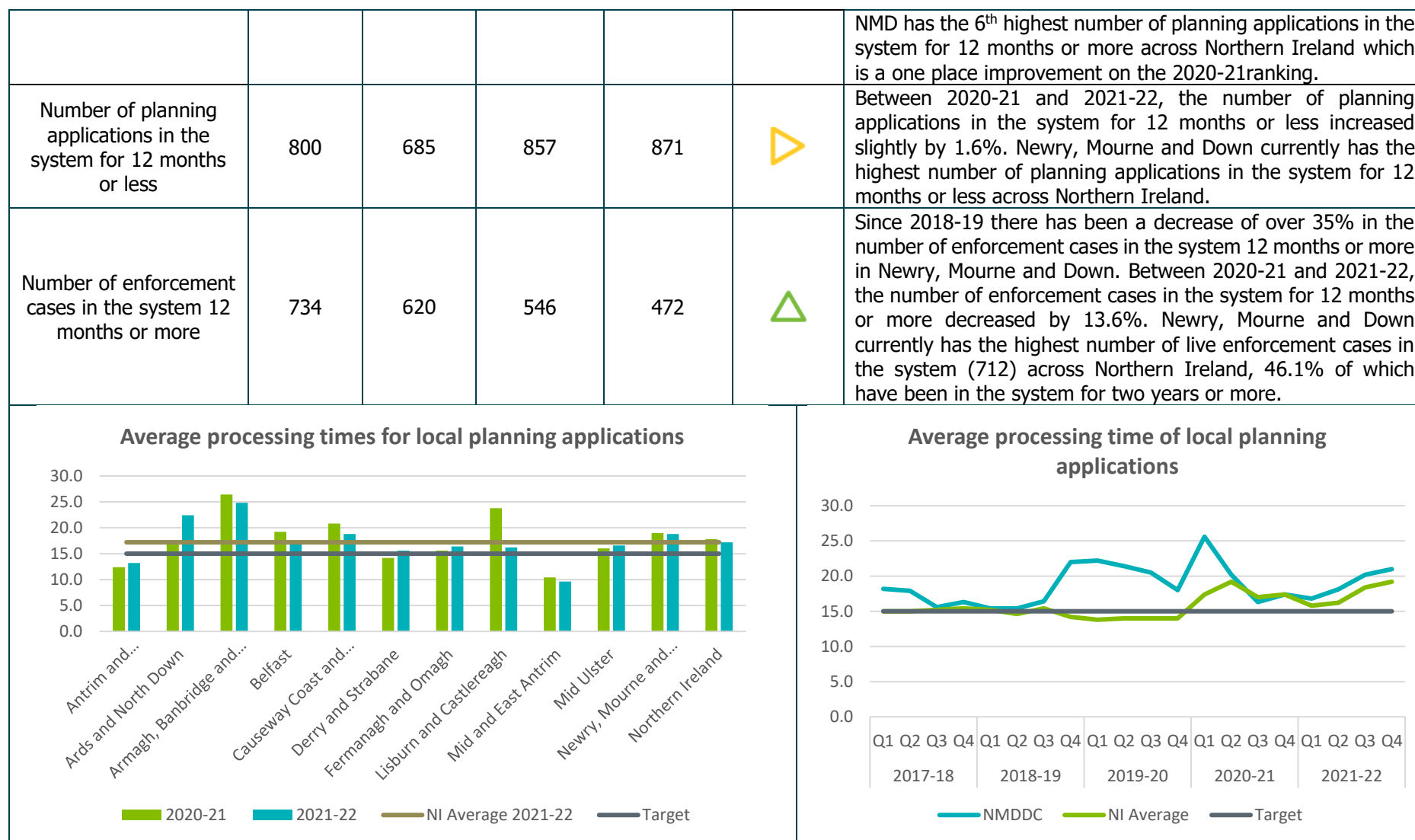
		been undertaken and the Community Plan is currently being reviewed. The procurement exercise to appoint an independent facilitator to lead this process is ongoing.
Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live		The 2018 Residents Survey revealed that 90% of residents 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

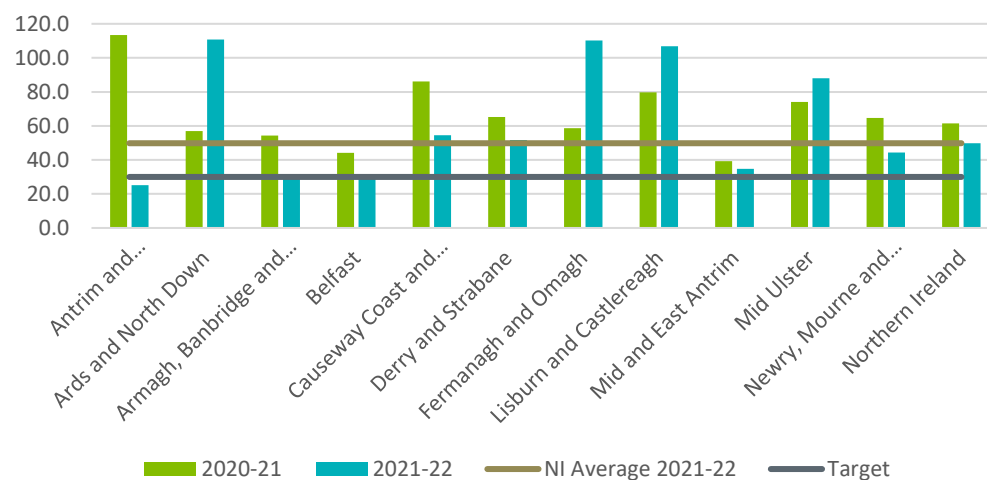
We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme

Key action	Status	Update
Reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases which have been in the system for over 12 months.		The number of live planning applications which have been in the system for 12 months or more reduced by 4.1% between 2020-21 and 2021-22 whilst the number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more decreased by over 35% during this same period. Whilst the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases in the system for over 12 months remains high the Council is committed to continuing to reduce these figures.
Work with agents and architects to improve the standard of planning applications submitted.		This work is ongoing and will be assisted with the introduction of the new regional planning portal, in autumn 2022 which will facilitate the online application process.
Support employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries'.		Continuous improvement progresses in this area and it is expected that the introduction of the new planning portal will further assist and support employees to deliver service improvements.

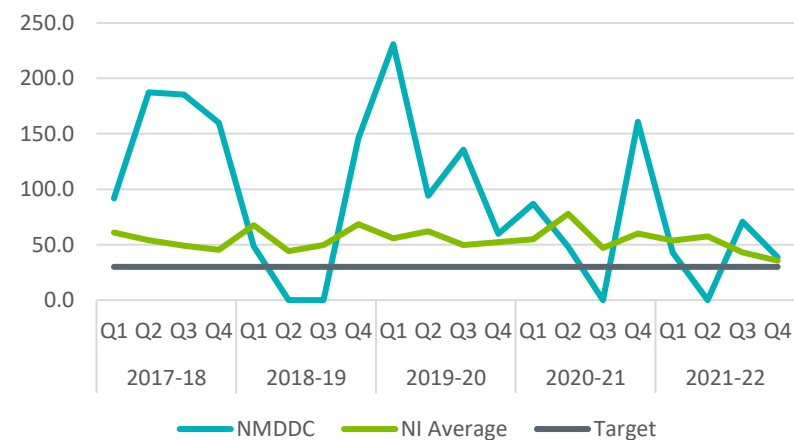
Measure of success	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	18	20.6	19	18.8	 	During 2021-22, Newry, Mourne and Down received 1,736 local planning applications which is the highest across Northern Ireland and represents a 5.5% increase when compared to 2020-21. The processing time for local planning applications decreased from 19 weeks in 2020-21 to 18.8 weeks in 2021-22 which is above the regional average of 17.2 weeks and exceeds the statutory standard of <15 weeks. Newry, Mourne and Down maintained the 34.8% of local planning applications processed within the statutory standard for 2021-22, being one of seven Councils to not record a decrease during this period. The Council is currently ranked 7/11 across Northern Ireland for processing local planning applications.
Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)	76.6	94	64.6	44.3	 	During 2021-22, Newry, Mourne and Down received 8 major planning applications, representing a decrease of four applications when compared to 2020-21. The processing time for major planning applications decreased from 64.6 weeks in 2020-21 to 44.3 weeks in 2021-22 which was the fourth highest decrease in processing times across all 11 Councils. It is also below the regional average of 49.8 weeks but still exceeds the statutory standard of <30 weeks. No major planning applications were processed within the statutory standard, ranking the Council joint 11/11 ^h across Northern Ireland.
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks	52.9%	36.2%	40.9%	48.5%	 	The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks increased from 40.9% in 2020-21 to 48.5% in 2021-22 which falls well below the regional average of 70.4% and statutory standard of 70%. However, the Council has improved its ranking from 11/11 to 10/11 across Northern Ireland for processing enforcement cases and had the 5 th highest increase in the percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks between 2020-21 and 2021-22.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	224	183	195	187		Between 2020-21 and 2021-22, the number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more decreased by 4.1%. Newry, Mourne and Down was one of only three Councils to decrease the number of planning applications in the Councils systems for 12 months or more during this period. Currently



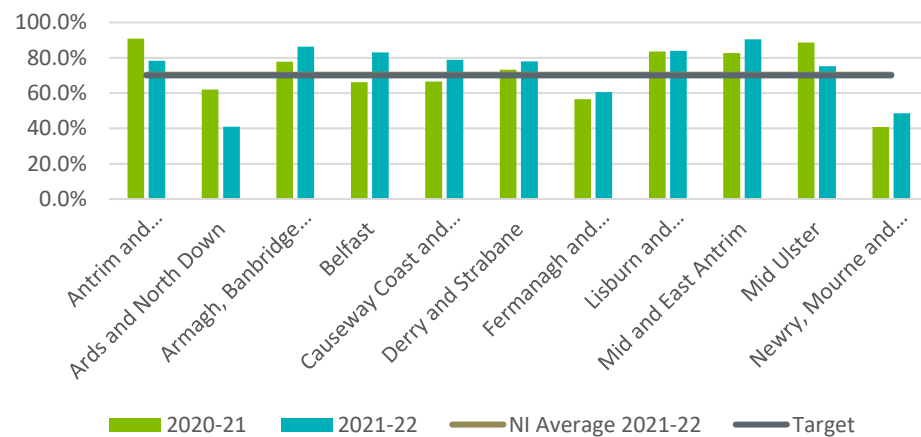
Average processing time for major planning applications



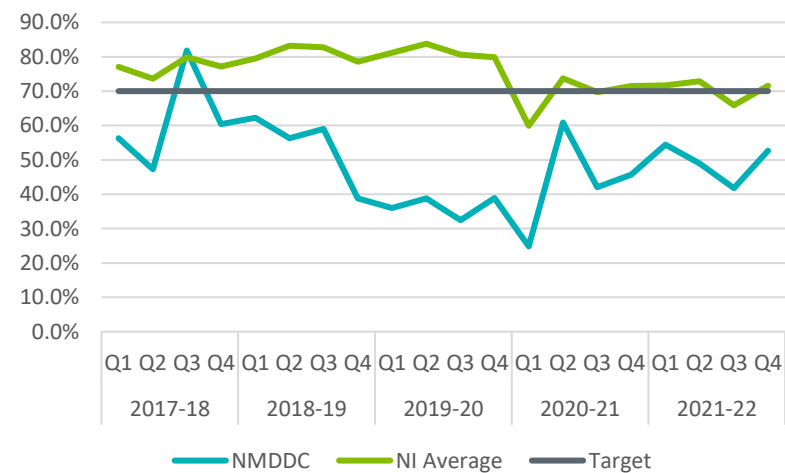
Average processing time of major planning applications



Percentage of planning enforcement cases that are processed within 39 weeks



Percentage of enforcement cases that are processed within 39 weeks



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'

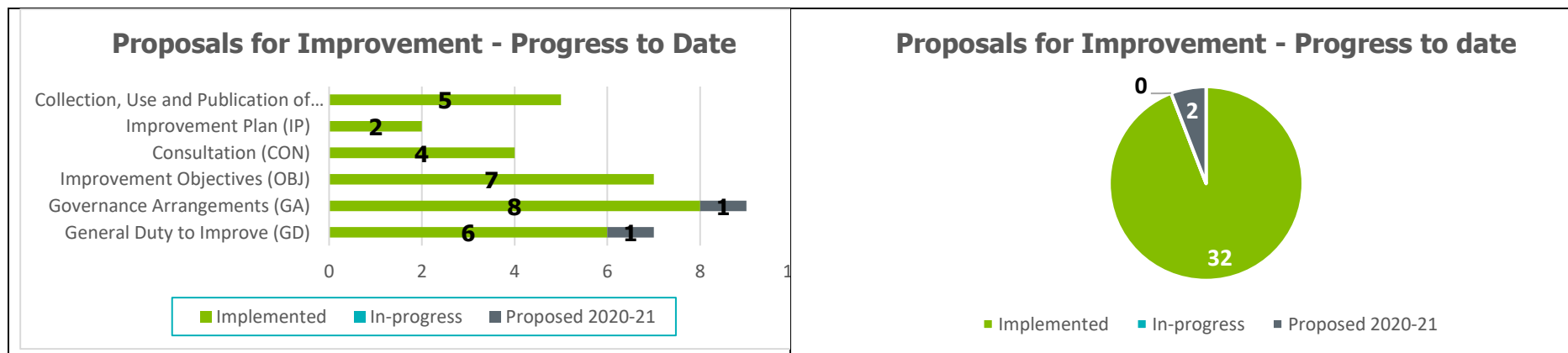
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Performance Audit and Assessments: Proposals for Improvement - Progress Report


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	😞



Theme, Proposal and Progress to Date	
THEME: General duty to improve	Status
PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENT: The Council should prioritise the development of an Outline Business Case to support the procurement of an electronic performance management system.	
<p>The Council has developed and finalised the Outline Business Case for the electronic performance management system, which was approved by the IT Projects Group in July 2022. The Outline Business Case sets out the Council's requirements to source an electronic platform for performance management, which will be led by the Head of Performance and Improvement, supported by a multi-disciplinary Working Group. The Council is currently preparing the required procurement documentation and the anticipated timescale for implementing an electronic system is around 6-9 months. In the interim, 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.</p>	
PROGRESS TO DATE	
<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, and will be updated in 2022, in line with the 4 year policy review cycle.</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>Through the Statement of Progress which was agreed at the Community Planning Partnership and published on the Council's website in Q4 2021-22, the Community Planning Partnership reviewed progress in implementing the Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and</p>	

Down. The Council is also in the process of carrying out a formal review of the Community Plan and has recently launched a public consultation and engagement programme through Speak NMD.

Corporate Plan

The implementation of the current Corporate Plan 2021-23 is well underway. The Council has also commenced preparations for the Corporate Plan 2023-27, with an agreed timeline and key milestones to achieve. The implementation of the consultation and engagement programme is well underway, and the second Residents Survey for the District is currently underway, involving a representative sample of residents across the District. The Residents Survey will be supplemented with focus groups and workshops, which will seek to engage key stakeholders in the process, particularly Elected Members, employees and the Senior and Corporate Management Teams. This robust and reliable quantitative and qualitative evidence base will be used to inform and influence the strategic objectives, key actions and measures of success within the emerging Corporate Plan.

Performance Improvement Plan

The Council published the Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23 ahead of the statutory deadline. The performance improvement objectives, supporting actions and measures of success were carried forward from 2021-22 and were updated in close liaison with officers, approved by the Senior Management Team and Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee, and subject to a public consultation process between March-May 2022.

Directorate Business Plans

Five Directorate Business Plans 2022-23 were developed and approved by the Senior Management Team and relevant Council Committee. Each Business Plan has also undertaken includes objectives, key actions and measures for success, aligned to specific corporate objectives. Each Directorate also undertook an assessment of their respective Business Plan 2021-22, which was also approved by the Senior Management Team and relevant Council Committee. Some Directorates are very proactive in engaging employees in reviewing and developing the Business Plan, organising workshops and business planning sessions.

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. Service Plans were subsequently introduced in 2021-22 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 and agreed objectives. All departments developed a Service Plan during 2021-22, and some departments, particularly the Leisure and Sport Department were very proactive in engaging all employees in the development of the 2022-23 Service Plan.

Individual Performance

During 2019-20, the Council developed 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 and was subsequently launched during 2021-22 for tier four employees and above.

People Perform Grow templates link individual performance objectives with the relevant Service Plan, in order to strengthen the cascade of corporate 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 have been introduced, through the 'PPG Tracker', to monitor progress in employee participation in People Perform Grow. Progress is reported through the Corporate Performance Dashboard on a quarterly basis.

The Corporate Performance Dashboard continues 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 2021-22 is made up of 18 performance measures, including the seven statutory performance indicators for economic development, waste management and planning. These performance measures may change on an annual basis and will continue to be aligned to specific organisational objectives, risks and areas for improvement.

THEME: Governance Arrangements

Status

PROPOSAL: The Council should consider using Internal Audit to provide assurance on the implementation of the performance management framework and specifically in relation to data collation processes and data accuracy.



The Council is working with ASM to agree the Terms of Reference for an audit of specific measures of success within the Corporate Plan 2021-23. This process will provide assurance that the necessary data collation processes are in place to ensure robust, reliable and accurate datasets are reported in the public domain, ahead of the development and publication of the new Corporate Plan 2023-27.

PROGRESS

Performance management training took place for members of the Audit Committee in January 2021, exploring the role of Elected Members in building high performing organisations. 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 Plan 2022-23.

THEME: Improvement Objectives	Status
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PROGRESS

In 2021-22, the Council adopted five performance improvement objectives, which were carried forward to 2022-23, and updated where appropriate. 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 were endorsed through the public consultation and engagement process which was carried out during Q1 2022-23. 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 2022.

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 NI Audit Office has confirmed that the performance improvement objectives are legitimate, clear, robust, deliverable and demonstrable, covering a range of Council services that relate to improving Council functions or improving services for communities.

As part of the process to redefine the current suite of performance improvement objectives, the Council reviewed the 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success' which underpin each objective, in order to ensure they remain meaningful and that their achievement can demonstrate improvement. Where possible and appropriate, baseline data for each 'measure of success' has been included in the Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23 to demonstrate, e performance trends over time and targets for improvement have also been agreed.

THEME: Consultation	
PROGRESS	
<p>The Council continues to implement a robust and inclusive consultation and engagement process in relation to the development of the annual performance improvement objectives. Overall, the 2022-23 consultation and engagement process resulted in 19 completed surveys and engagement with 94 stakeholders through the seven District Electoral Area Forums which are made up of Elected Members and independent members representing the voluntary, community and business sectors and Section 75 groups, including the Newry and Mourne Youth Council and Cedar Foundation. This consultation and engagement process was launched through the NMD Speak online platform, publicised through public notices in local newspapers and 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. The majority of consultees agreed with the proposed performance improvement objectives 2022-23.</p>	
THEME: Improvement Plan	
PROGRESS	
<p>The Council published the Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23 ahead of the statutory timescale. The Council has also published the summary document 'Our Performance Looking Back Going Forward', to provide a user friendly overview of retrospective performance during 2021-22 and the forward looking performance objectives for 2022-23.</p>	
THEME: Arrangements to Improve	
PROGRESS	
<p>The Council continues to progress, implement and embed its arrangements to achieve the objectives, key actions and measures of success within the Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan, Directorate Business Plans, Service Plans and People Perform Grow. The arrangements to deliver the performance improvement objectives continue to evolve and are supported by Objective Delivery Plans which provide a detailed overview of how the objectives and associated actions are managed, monitored and reported, under the direction of the Senior Responsible Officer.</p>	
THEME: Collection, Use and Publication of Performance Information	Status
PROGRESS	
<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 People Perform Grow. 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 currently being progressed and embedded across the organisation.</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.

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 work is ongoing 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 and prompt payments. The Councils also compares year on year performance across a broad range of performance measures within the Corporate Plan and Performance Improvement Plan.

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