

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Assessment of Performance 2022-23

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Overall Assessment of Performance 2022-23

The past year has been another challenging year for us all in the district with continued recovery from COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis affecting everyone's life, both at home and at work.

The Council has worked tirelessly to deliver 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 as we recorded over 226,000 visits to Warrenpoint Municipal Park and over 225,000 recorded visits to the Council's 10 community trails. We retained blue flag accreditation for our beaches, supported 39 community clean ups and issued more fixed penalty notices to address environmental crime.

We continued to progress and achieve a number of key priorities, in particular the Belfast Region City Deal, encompassing the Mourne Mountain Gateway project, Newry City Regeneration project 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. We recognise where we need to improve and are committed to delivering further improvements e.g., There has been a significant increase in people engaged in targeted health programmes, however there has been a slight decline in recycling, and longer processing times for local and major planning applications. We will continue to focus on what matters most to you - improving the quality of our leisure facilities and services, growing the local economy, improving the cleanliness of our District, improving our sustainability and reducing our impacts in relation to climate change, and improving the performance of our Planning Service.

As we look forward to 2023-24, 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 2022-23 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 the impact of COVID-19 during 2021-22, all of the draft performance improvement objectives 2021-22 were carried forward to 2022-23, enabling the Council to use this Assessment of Performance to further establish a baseline and trends to monitor and report progress against the majority of the 'measures of success' which underpin the performance improvement objectives 2022-23.

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

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 2022-23 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 2022-23 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.

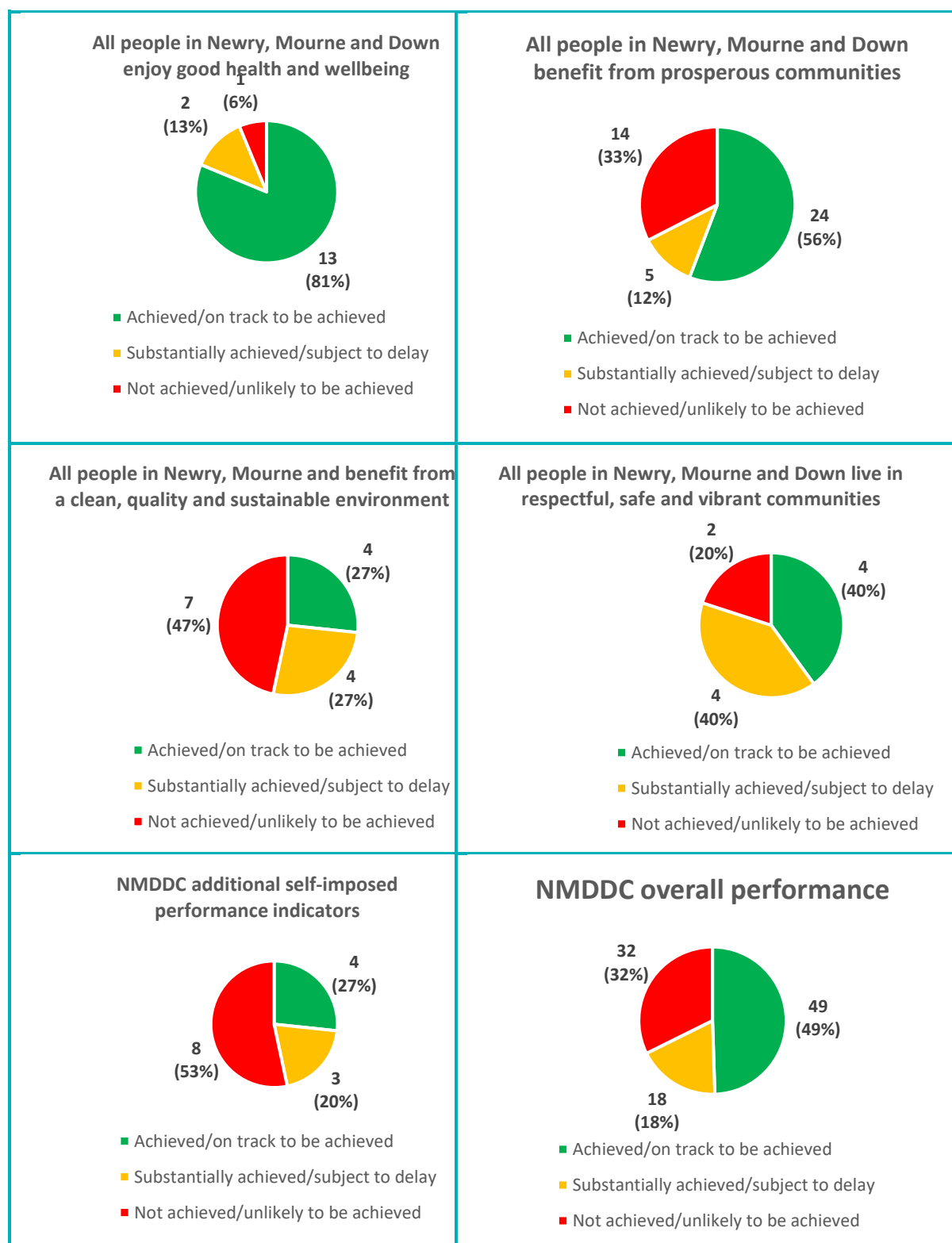
Legend

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 2022-23, 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: 182,074
Households: 68,398
7 District Electoral Areas
41 Elected Members
1,000+ employees
88% of residents are satisfied with the Council



Community

Life expectancy:
Male: 78.9 years /
Female: 82.7 years
Age Profile: 0-15 years:
22% / 65+ years: 17%
87% of residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together
100% of residents feel safe during the day, 78% of residents feel safe after dark
115 Neighbourhood Watch Schemes
18,407 food parcels delivered to vulnerable households
£9.6m 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

82% of residents feel they are in very good or good health
83% 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
225k recorded visits at community trails
226K recorded visits to Warrenpoint Municipal Park



Economy

Employment rate (age 16 to 64): 68.5
9,175 VAT Registered Businesses
23% of the population aged 16 years and over have no qualifications
187 new jobs promoted through business start activity
359 businesses supported and 1,108 mentoring days delivered through economic development programmes



















Environment

Recycling is important to 91% of residents
Top perceived problem for residents: Dog mess and fouling
Recycling rate: 49.6%
360 community clean ups supported since 2018
Second lowest level of waste to landfill across all NI Councils



A snapshot of 2022-23:

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>	79.8% increase in recorded attendances at Council leisure centres	△
	132% increase in recorded visits to Carlingford Lough Greenway	△
	A further 6% increase in recorded visits at Warrenpoint Municipal Park bringing the total recorded visits to 226,153 in 2022-23.	△
	6.6% 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 2 play parks upgraded	😊
 <p>We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs</p>	187 new jobs promoted through business start activity	😊 ▽
	12 new social enterprise businesses supported and 12 new social enterprise jobs created	😊 ▶
	347 businesses supported and 187 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>	110 fixed penalty notices issued and 91 paid	😞 ▶
	39 community clean ups supported	😞 ▽
	Decrease in the rate of recycling, to 49.6%*	😞 ▶
	Second lowest levels of waste sent to landfill across all NI Councils	😊 △
	10 'Live Here, Love Here' environmental projects supported	▽
	Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out	😊

 <p>We will build the capacity of local communities through the Financial Assistance Scheme</p>	£1.26m awarded to 366 projects across 22 thematic areas	
	67% of applications to the financial assistance scheme were successful	
	£524k awarded towards major and minor capital projects	
	49,347 volunteer hours recorded to deliver projects and 256,025 beneficiaries of the scheme	
	5 capacity building sessions delivered to 208 participants	
	99% 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 across the 11 Councils, approving the second highest number of cases regionally.	
	The processing time for local planning applications increased from 18.8 weeks in 2021-22 to 21.6 weeks in 2022-23	
	The processing time for major planning applications increased from 44.3 weeks in 2021-22 to 89 weeks in 2022-23	
	The number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more increased from 187 in 2021-22 to 228 in 2022-23	
	The number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more has increased from 472 in 2021-22 to 503 2022-23.	

*The 2022-23 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 2023-24.

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 2022-23, 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 2022-23, 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

- Councils continue to operate in a particularly challenging environment with continued focus on recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, the current cost of living crisis, impacting both on performance and the way in which services are delivered. This changing landscape and refocusing of priorities has impacted my ability to rely on past trends in councils' performance to assess the likelihood of future compliance with Part 12 of the Act. In light of this, I am unable to reach an opinion on whether the Council is likely to discharge its duties under Part 12 of the Act and act in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently during 2022-23.

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

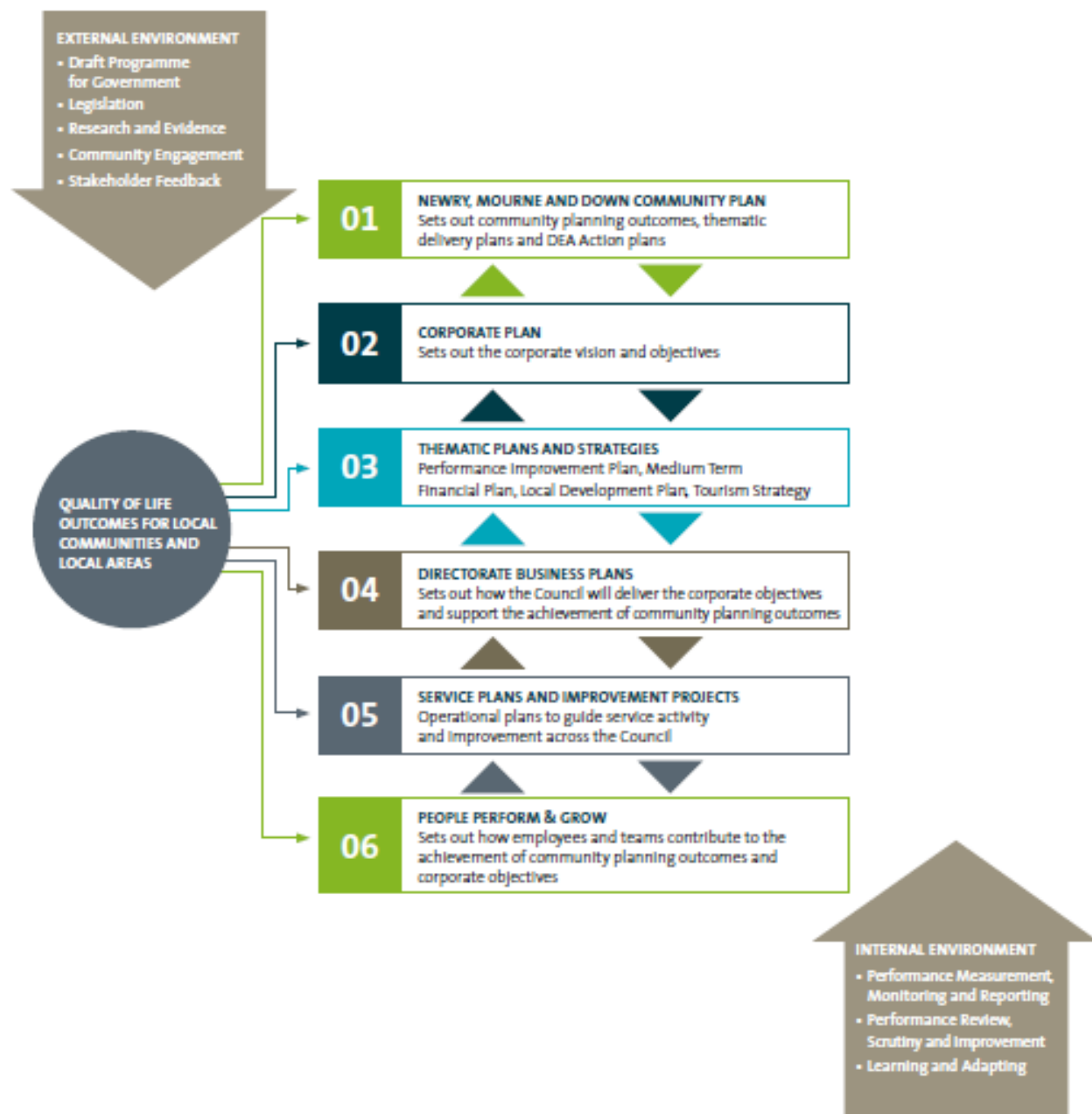
- The Council has developed and agreed integrated planning, monitoring and reporting cycles, which have been aligned to ensure everyone in the organisation is working towards shared objectives, with progress being monitored and reported on a regular basis. This integrated timeline of activity is outlined 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

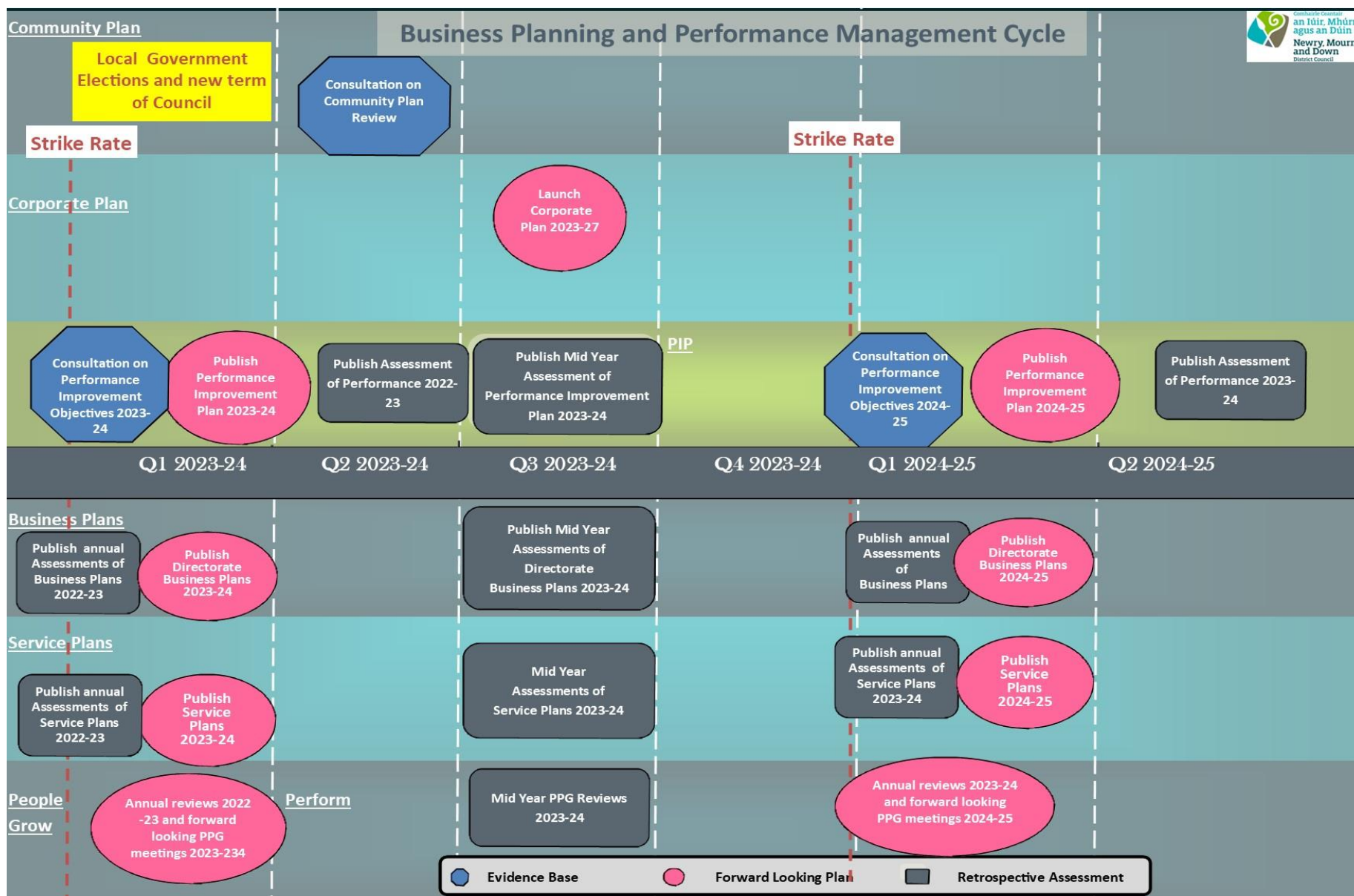
the delivery of the Performance Improvement Plan and Directorate Business Plans being monitored and reported to the Committees of Council and the Senior Management Team on a bi-annual and annual basis.

- A number of Directorates and departments also organised business and service planning sessions to engage officers in reviewing performance during 2022-23, setting direction in 2023-24 and communicating the objectives within the Corporate Plan.
- All departments produced Service Plans in 2022-23, 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 five 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.
- 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 completed 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

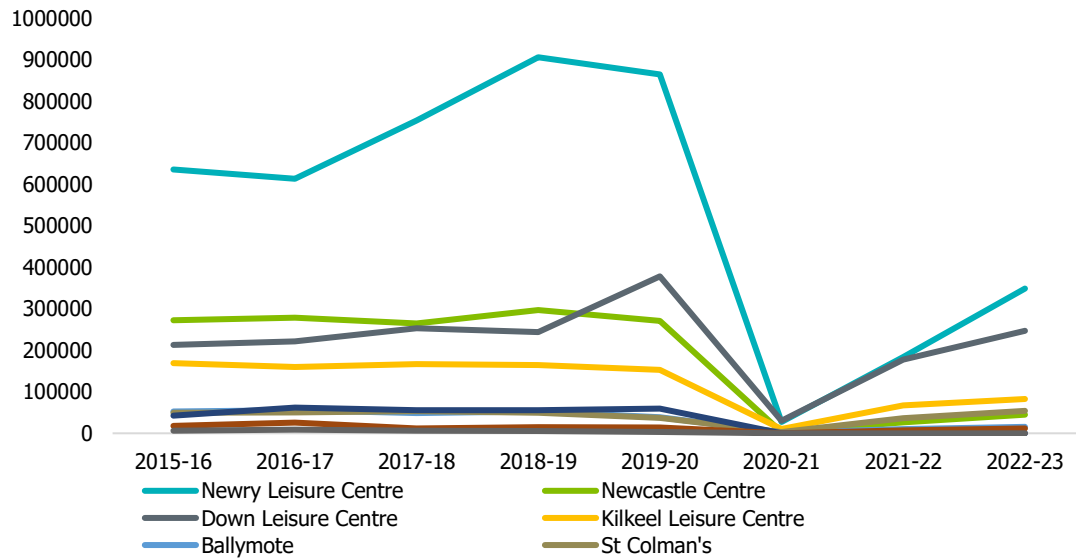
Key Action	Status	Update
Promote healthier lifestyles, including increased physical activity levels, diet and emotional wellbeing.		<p>By Q3 2022-23 all Council leisure facilities were reopened but post COVID-19 challenges, including staffing resources restricted full opening in some facilities. Where possible however, when all restrictions were lifted, Council returned to providing the full compliment of leisure services.</p> <p>The Council engaged 9,309 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 Life which provides bespoke physical activity opportunities for people who are inactive and at risk of chronic illness. During the summer months 4,370 children and young people also took part in the Councils Summer Activity Programme.</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 the commencement of a full refurbishment of Kilkeel Bowling Pavilion at an investment of £300,000. The Council also implemented the final phase of the Play Strategy 2017-22, opening two new playparks in Darragh Cross and Teconnaught with a final two upgrades at Kilmorey Park, Newry and Kitty's Road,</p>

		Kilkeel. Across the life cycle of this strategy the Council has completed 6 new play parks, 22 upgrades, 11 consolidations and 10 transformations.
Develop and implement a Sports Development and Open Spaces Strategy for the District.		<p>The Open Spaces Strategy is being aligned to the wider Planning Departments' Open Space Strategy which is a statutory requirement by all Councils to complete as part of the Local Development Plan.</p> <p>A consultant has been appointed to develop the Sports Development Strategy (now called Physical Activity, Health, Wellbeing and Sports Development strategy) with consultation and engagement being carried out in 2023-24.</p> <p>The Multi Sports Hub review was completed in 2022-23 which allowed Council to establish a capital budget to support the future development of multi sports hubs across the District.</p>

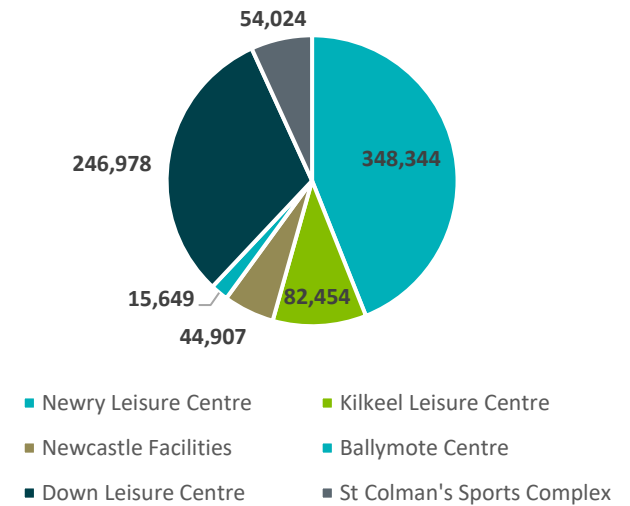
Measure of Success	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		Status Trend	Explanatory note
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes (Everybody Active 2020)	8,279	10,793	3,818	2,270	-	322	1,950	9,309	 	With the ending of the Everybody active programme in 2020, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions, participation in targeted health programmes decreased dramatically in 2021-22 to only 322 participants. This figure is also reflective of the vulnerability of those being targeted by these programmes. The lifting of all restrictions during Q1 of 2022-23 however, enabled, in particular, the 'Be Active for Life' programme to operate at full capacity which has seen an increase in participation in targeted health programmes by nearly 9,000 participants.

Attendance at free play sessions	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		Since 2016-17, 4,780 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 offered in 2021-22 or 2022-23 due to budget constraints and the restrictions that related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
	-	1,276	-	430		0	-	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 was a 494% increase in the number of attendances between 2020-21 and 2021-22. Between 2021-22 and 2022-23 the number of people using Council leisure facilities has nearly doubled, increasing by 79.8%. Whilst this remains below pre-pandemic levels by 56% it does reflect the post Covid recovery that has been taking place across the Councils leisure facilities.
	1,678,140	1,818,040	1,922,131	75,296	-	447,095	-	803,868		

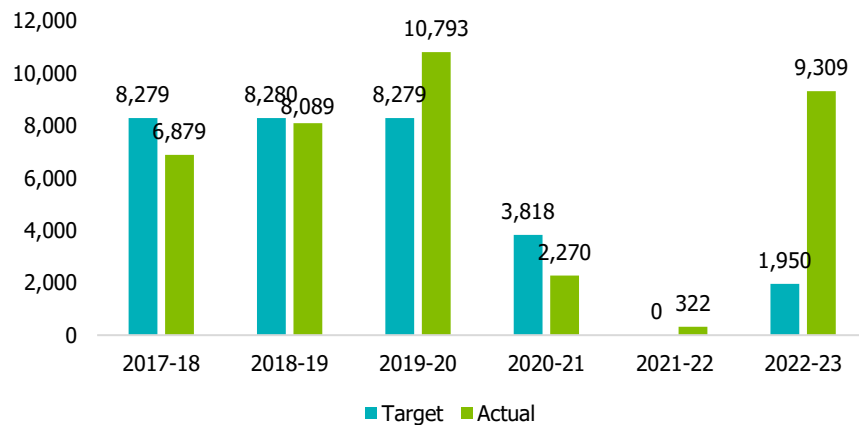
Attendances at Council leisure facilities



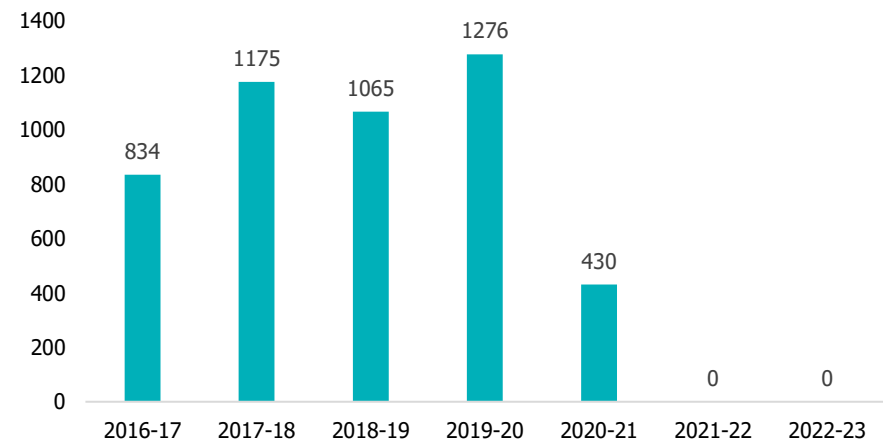
Leisure Centre Attendances 2022-23



Targeted Health Programmes










Participation in Community Play initiatives



Performance Improvement Objective 1

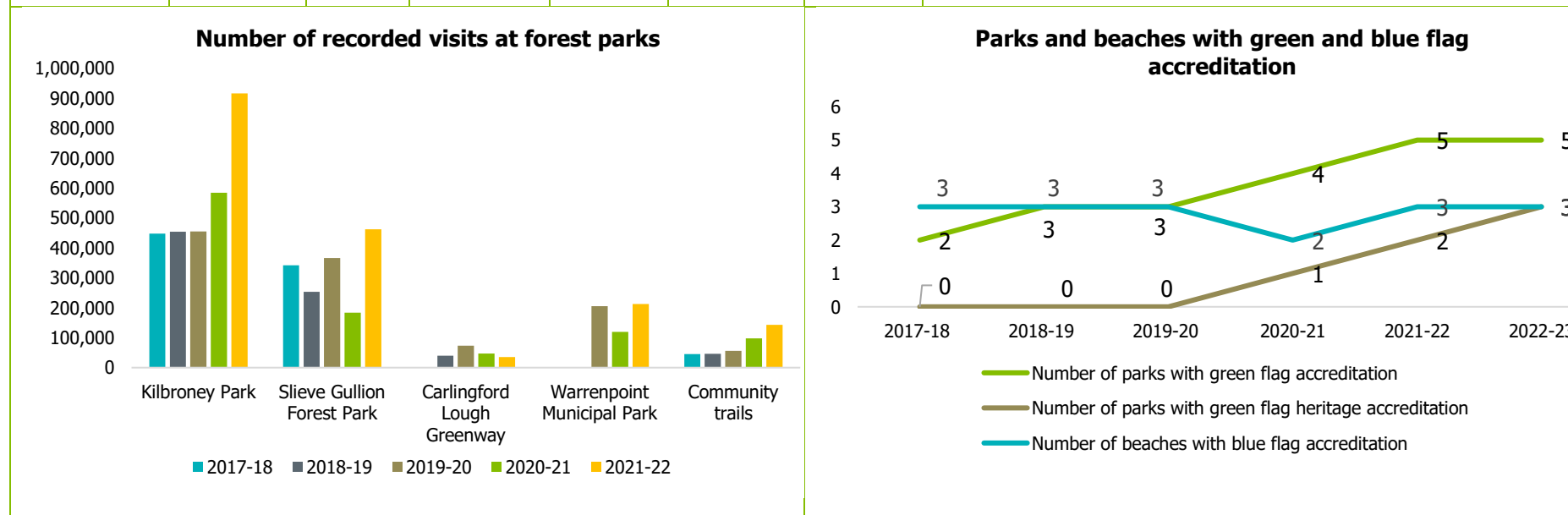
We will encourage local people to lead healthy and active lives by improving the quality of our parks and open spaces

Supporting action	Status	Update
Continue to develop the district's bid to achieve UNESCO Global Geopark designation.		The Council achieved UNESCO Global Geopark designation for Mourne, Gullion, Strangford in May 2023.
Invest in new facilities at Kilbroney Park and Rostrevor Forest, Tyrella beach Delamont Country Park and Camlough Lake.		The Fallows Phase 2 is practically complete with waymarking and interpretation currently being implemented to assist the visitor experience. Planning permission has been approved for new visitor facilities at Tyrella beach and Council will be considering financial provision to deliver this in 2024. The outdoor performance and interpretive space at Slieve Gullion Forest Park is 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 and the trails will be considered for funding opportunities. The Council upgraded the Amenity Building at the caravan/campsite at Castlewellan Forest Park with delivery of Castlewellan Heritage Lottery Fund ongoing. The funding has been secured to deliver a Recreational Hub Facility at Camlough Lake. The project development is progressing with detailed design and securing the necessary statutory approvals.
Explore options to install visitor counters at Delamont Country Park		Options are currently being explored, with procurement due to conclude in Q3 2023-24.

Retain five green flag and three green flag heritage accreditations for the Council's parks		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. The Council achieved Green Flag accreditation for Castlewellan Forest Park in 2023.
Retain blue flag accreditation for Cranfield, Murlough and Tyrella beaches.		The Council retained blue flag accreditation for Cranfield, Murlough and Tyrella beaches.
Build four new play parks and upgrade three existing play parks		The Council completed two new play parks at Darragh Cross and Teconnaught and two upgrades at Kilmorey Park, Newry and Kittys Road, Kilkeel. These were the final four projects from the Council's play strategy 2017-2022. Across the life cycle of this strategy the Council has completed 6 new play parks, 22 upgrades, 11 consolidations and 10 transformations.
Identify new community trails to develop in future years		<p>In partnership with Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI), the Council developed a prioritisation plan for community trails as well as a Beach access framework and review of sea swimming at Newcastle Harbour.</p> <p>Council secured planning permission for a new community trail at Corry Wood and an extension at Drumkeeragh Car Park along with continuing to progress 4 new community trails to shovel ready stage.</p>
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	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory note
Number of recorded visits at:							
Kilbroney Park	453,704	454,848	584,148	915,500	Data unavailable		A pilot on visitor counters across the Council's largest parks concluded with data unavailable for 2022-23. Trends however in outdoor visitors continues to grow. Options are currently being explored, with procurement for new visitor counters due to conclude in Q3 2023-24.
Slieve Gullion Forest Park	253,376	366,444	183,712	462,240	Data unavailable		
Carlingford Lough Greenway	40,219	73,138	47,005	35,021	81,279	△	During 2022-23, 81,279 visits were recorded for the Carlingford Lough Greenway. This represents a 132% increase when compared to 2021-22 and the highest numbers recorded to date.
Warrenpoint Municipal Park	-	205,126	119,600	212,694	226,153	△	During 2022-23, 226,153 visits were recorded for Warrenpoint Municipal Park. This represents a 6.3% increase when compared to 2021-22, and a 10.3% increase compared to pre-Covid figures in 2019-20.
Community trails*	46,044	57,849	96,563	211,718	225,795	😊 △	During 2022-23, the Council recorded 225,795 visits to 10 community trails with 13% recorded at Tievnadarragh and 12% at Glasswater Wood Trails. This represents an overall increase of 7% when compared to 2021-22.
Number of parks with green flag accreditation	3	3	4	5	5	😊 ▶	In 2022-23, the Council received five green flags for Kilbroney Park, Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Warrenpoint Municipal Park, Delamont Country Park and Newry Canal, including three green flag heritage accreditations for Warrenpoint Municipal Park, Newry Canal and Castlewellan Forest Park
Number of parks with green flag heritage accreditation	-	-	1	2	3	😊 △	
Number of beaches with	3	3	2	3	3	😊	The three Council run beaches of Cranfield Bay, Murlough and Tyrella were also awarded blue flag accreditation in 2022-23.

blue flag accreditation						▶	
Level of satisfaction with the Council's forest parks	-	-	-	83%	-	😊	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. A second Forest parks survey is currently being carried out and is due to conclude at the end of Q2 2023/24.
Number of new/upgraded play parks	17	9	0	3	4	△	During 2022-23, the Council built two new play parks at Darragh Cross and Teconnaught and upgraded two play parks at Kilmorey Road, Newry and Kittys Road, Kilkeel.



*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

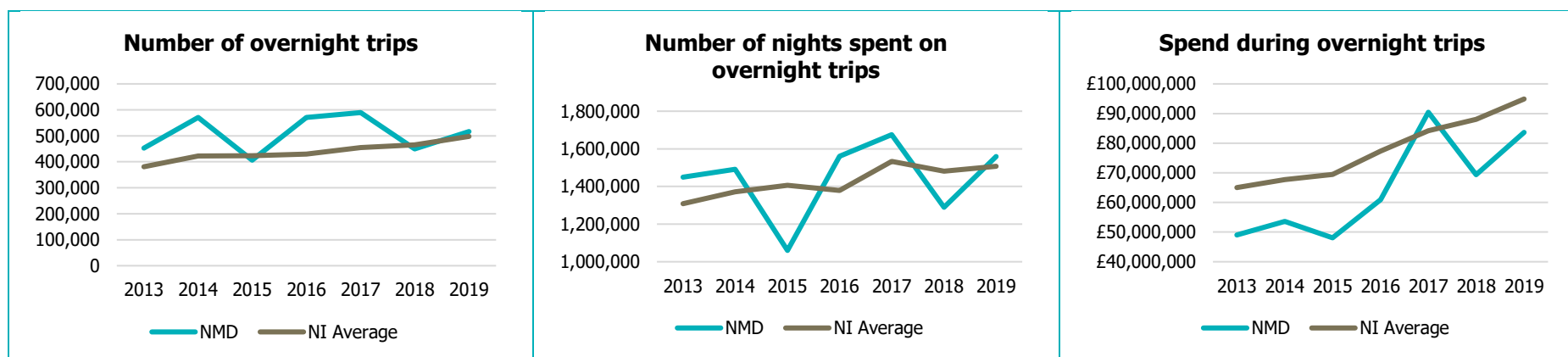
Support sustainable forms of tourism which value our environment and cultural heritage

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 completed the development of the new Tourism Strategy 2023-28, which will include a central theme of Sustainable Tourism Growth. This draft Tourism Strategy will now be issued for a 12 week consultation.</p> <p>The Council engaged in a new facilitated programme to work with the Outdoor Adventure sector and have engaged 18 businesses across the District within the Programme, which will seek to support the business and develop new visitor experiences.</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 2022 -23, 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 Castlewellan Forest Park, Delamont Country Park, Camlough Lake, and Kilbroney Forest Park. The Outline Business Case and grant funding for the Mourne Gateway project has been approved, as part of the Belfast Region City Deal appraisal process. The next stage of project development will be the development of project design and 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 2023-28. 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 has been achieved. 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.
Continue to develop the district's bid to achieve the UNESCO Global Geopark designation by summer 2021.		The Council achieved UNESCO Global Geopark designation for Mourne, Gullion, Strangford in May 2023.

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> <p>A second Forest parks survey is currently being carried out and is due to conclude at the end of Q2 2023/24.</p>
					Satisfaction with Beaches 67% (Baseline)		






*Since 2019 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 CIO Update
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 2022-23, across 4 core programmes 347 businesses were supported in their growth plans, 55 programmes/workshops delivered, 2 trade missions facilitated to Dublin and Scotland with 15 participating businesses, and 1 meet the buyer event involving 6 businesses and 60 participants.</p> <p>The expansion of our small business sector is a key priority for Council. In 2022-23, 311 businesses plans for new start-up enterprises were produced, in turn supporting the creation of 187 new start up businesses and promoting the creation of the 187 new employment positions.</p>

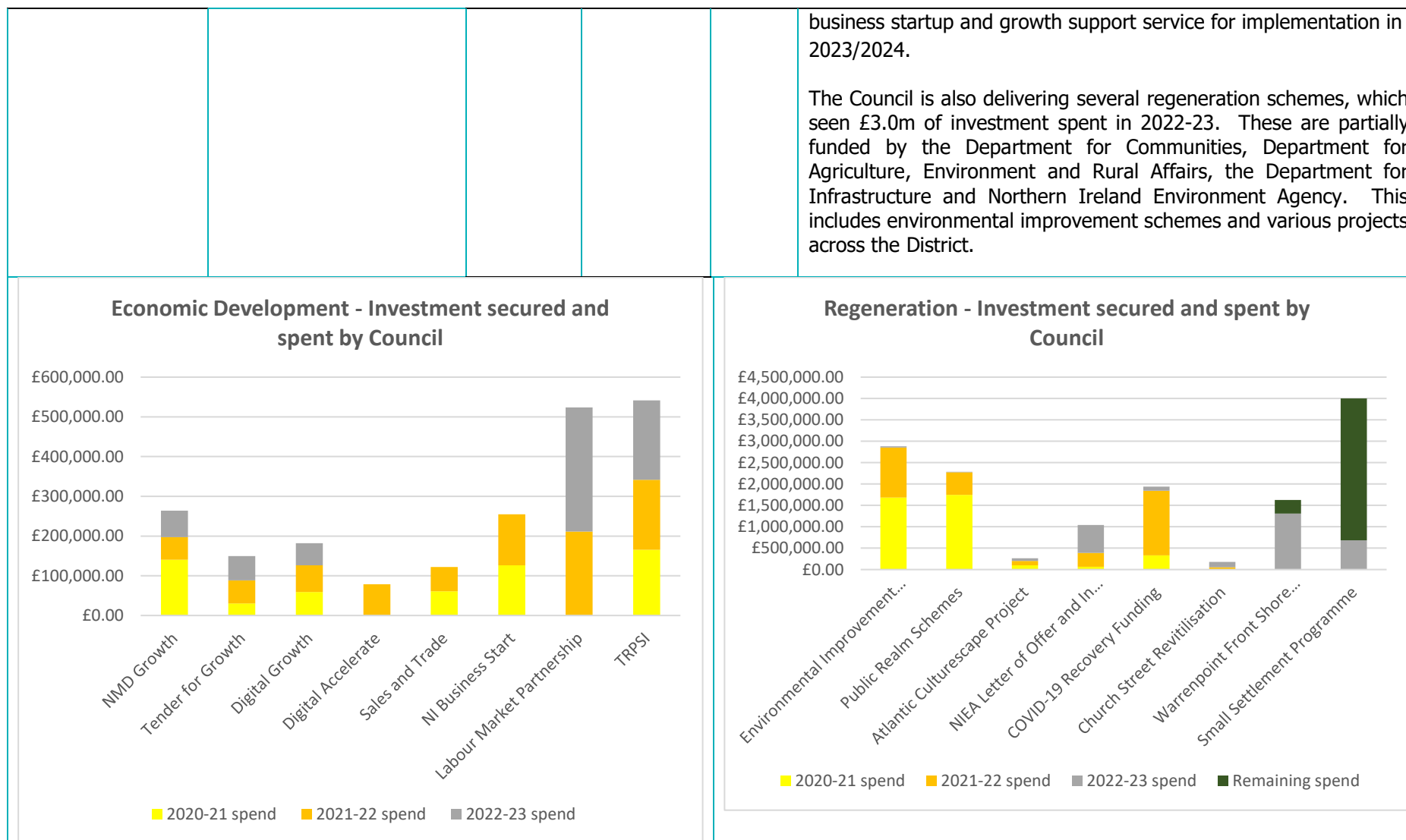
		<p>The Council secured £3.8m for investment in Smaller Settlements during 2022-23. This includes investment in four Environmental Improvement Schemes and 7 Revitalisation Schemes. A proportion of £1.3m allocated to the seven revitalisation schemes will provide financial assistance to established businesses to invest in shop front enhancements.</p> <p>Through the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2022-23 which aimed to tackle poverty and social isolation in deprived areas, the Council administered grant aid to 58 businesses to the value of £199,803.</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 delivered 24 artisan markets in Downpatrick, Newcastle, Warrenpoint and Newry with 39,360 visitors recorded across all 4 sites during 2022-23.</p> <p>In partnership with the Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency and Down Business Centre, the Council organised NMD Enterprise Week in November 2022, 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>
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 the Labour Market Partnership (LMP) in the District. Through the LMP the Council delivered a Work Start Pre-employment Programme to 55 participants; 28 of whom gained employment. Our local Enterprise Agencies were able to engage with 28 local entrepreneurs to offer wrap around mentoring support to new enterprises in the NMD area and supported 27 people into self-employment. Our transport academies have engaged with approximately 70 people and 34 have gained employment to date. Upskilling for Growth over-achieved and surpassed an initial target of 50 participants with 77 participants completing, all of whom achieved a qualification helping encourage</p>

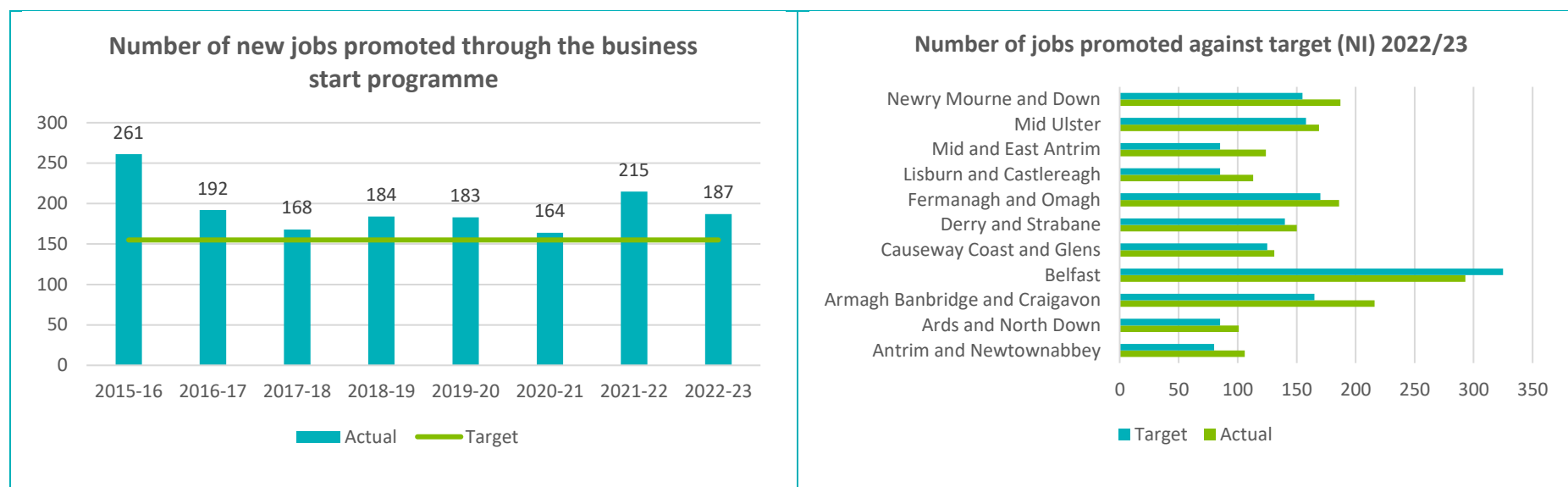
		lifelong learning of NMD residents. The Council delivered 7 employment academies through which 87 participants have been able to gain skills to enter employment and 39 have secured employment. Two job fairs were also held with 660+ attendees and over 70 employers exhibiting their vacancies in the area.
Maximise the district's location as a cross-border gateway to Great Britain, Ireland and international markets.		Council is an active player in the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC), a partnership of the 8 Councils located along the Dublin to Belfast corridor. The DBEC partnership have developed an ambitious 7 year action plan that will seek to establish the corridor as an international centre for growth, progressing opportunities in skills, infrastructure, innovation and R&D, that will position the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor as a prime investment location, enabling access to regional, national and international markets.
Secure investment in infrastructure that enables the future economic growth of the district.		<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> <p>In the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area by March 2023, 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</p>

		<p>digital transformation growth deals and SMART City projects which are currently being rolled out across Council areas.</p> <p>FFNI - Establishment of Digital Transformation Flexible Fund</p> <p>Since June 2022 FFNI has been leading on a £3.5M DTFF project for all Councils which will fund micro and small businesses with a Digital Transformation Grant £5k-£20k to fast-track Digital Transformation using emerging technologies. The DTFF Consortium is made up of the 11 local authorities, the FE Colleges, the two Universities, Digital Catapult, Catalyst, DAERA and Invest NI. The project outcomes are job creation/sustainability, new products/services and export potential.</p> <p>FFNI - Mobile Action Plan.</p> <p>The MAP NI was developed by a cross-sectoral working group which included members from central and local government who consulted with stakeholders including industry, UK Government and Ocom. Its aim is to identify issues which inhibit the rollout of mobile networks and sought to establish solutions to enable better, faster and more consistent mobile coverage throughout Northern Ireland. This plan has been in development since June 2022.</p> <p>Under MAP, FFNI Ops team are chairing the Council representation in the Northern Ireland Barrier Busting taskforce using existing FFNI Governance arrangements. FFNI has engaged with Solace to request that each council should consider the establishment of an internal working group to support the regional digital champions working group to improve mobile connectivity in district/NI.</p> <p>FFNI – DCMS Shared Rural Network</p> <p>£1 billion deal to improve poor and patchy rural 4G phone coverage was agreed in June 2022. The Shared Rural Network Consortium is made up of FFNI, EE, O2, Three and</p>
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		Vodafone, DfE, DAERA, DfE, DfI and Mobiles UK. The SRN is investing in a network of new and existing phone masts through a partnership between the mobile operators and the local/central government.
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.		<p>The Belfast Region City Deal was signed in December 2021, confirming the commitment of partners to deliver all City Deal proposals. BRCD includes five projects that will transform Newry, Mourne and Down, including a £30m investment in the Mourne Mountains Gateway project, a £93m investment in the Newry Southern Relief Road and an £8m investment in the Newry City Centre Regeneration including £3m on grade A office provision and £5m on public realm schemes, as well as Digital and Innovation projects and Skills and Employment projects.</p> <p>Development of a Regional Innovation Hub (RIH) with health/pharma sector alignment with a focus on connectivity i.e. IoT, Full Fibre, Advanced Wireless began in June 2022. The hub will act as a regional centre to allow Public and Private health sectors to work together to identify challenges and prototype potential solutions and align with other key Digital projects across NI/ROI.</p> <p>Development of SMART places applications through the Infrastructure Enabling Fund.</p> <p>Promotion and monitoring of other BRCD Digital Pillar initiatives such as the Digital Venture Fund, Challenge and Innovation Funds etc.</p>

Measure of Success	2021-22		2022-23		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 359 local businesses and created 196 jobs during 2022-23. The majority of businesses supported (37%) were delivered through the 'NMD Growth' programme and the number of jobs created (64%) through 'Tender for Growth'. These programmes have now come to the end of their 4 year cycle and are being replaced by a regional wide Entrepreneurship Support Service
	202	421	193	359	▽	
Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		Through the NI Business Start programme, the Council promoted 187 new jobs during 2022-23, 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 the target of 312 business plans by 15% and supported 215 business starts which exceeds the 187 target set by 21%.
	>155	215	>155	187	😊 ▽	
Amount of investment secured by the Council	Investment		2021-22	2022-23		During 2022-23 Newry, Mourne and Down was in receipt of funding contracts to the value of £16.5m in external funding for investment in economic development and regeneration, with the value of these contracts spanning several years. This is an increase of 57% on the value of contracts held in 2021-22. In 2022-23, £3.7m was spent in economic development and regeneration schemes across the District which is a decrease of 23% when compared to the amount of money spent in 2021-22. This is due to several projects closing in March 2023. £695k was spent against economic development programmes, six of which are partially funded through the European Regional Development Fund and Department for Economy and two programmes funded via the Department for Communities and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. The programme delivery for all programmes closed on 31 March 2023 with the exception of NI Business Start. NMDDC in partnership with the 10 Councils in Northern Ireland are collaborating on
	Economic Development - Total Value of Funding Contracts Held:		£1.8m	£2.2m	△	
	Economic Development – Annual Spend:		£837,390	£695,176	▽	
	Regeneration – Total Value of Funding Contracts Held:		£8.7m	£14.3m	△	
	Regeneration – Annual Spend:		£4.0m	£3.0m	▽	













*NI Business Start programme funding secured on 1/04/2021 for a two year cycle, which has now been extended until September 2023.

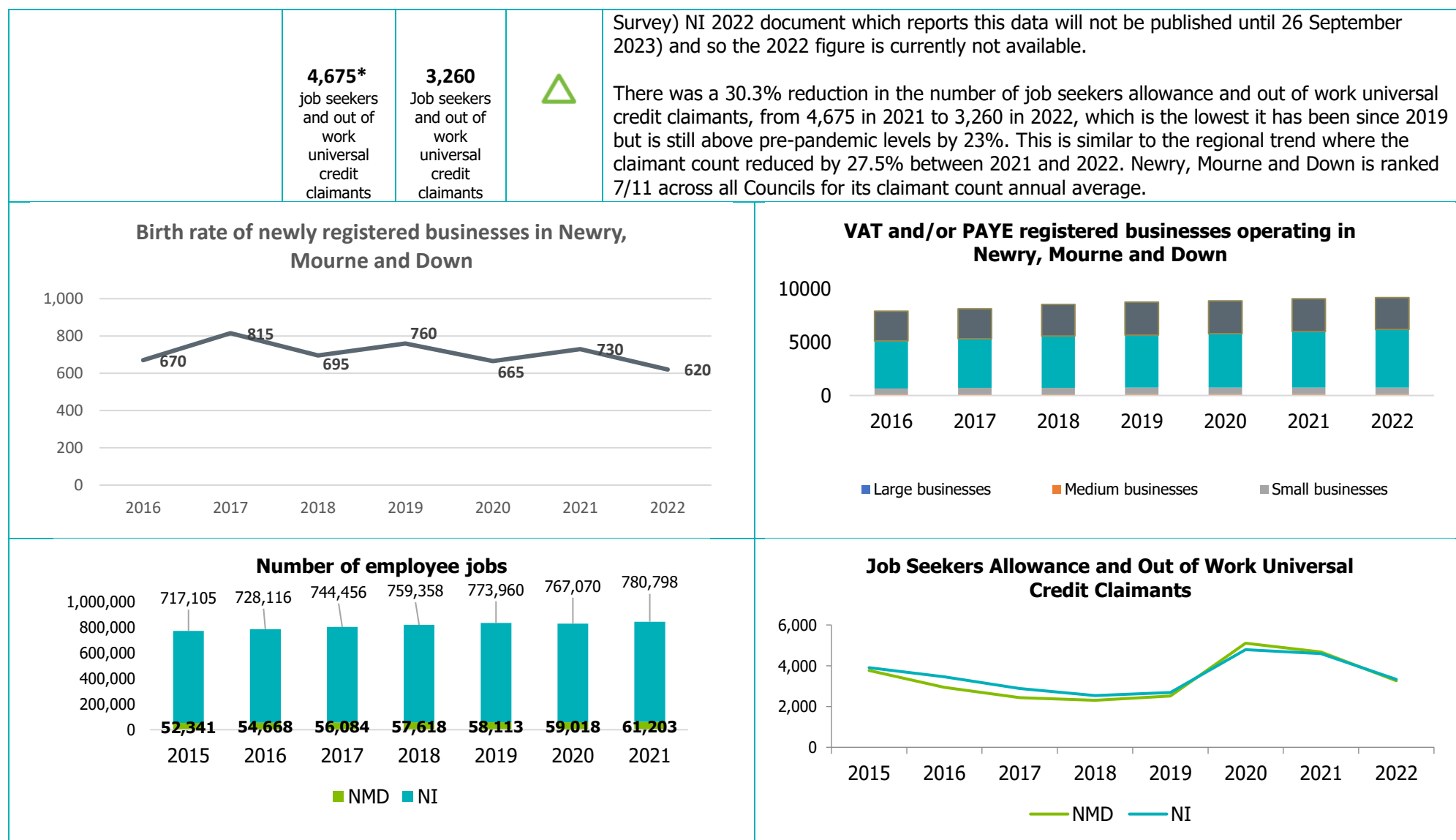
Corporate Objective

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. BRCD includes five projects that will transform Newry, Mourne and Down, including a £30m investment in the Mourne Mountains Gateway project, a £93m investment in the Newry Southern Relief Road and an £8m investment in the Newry City Centre Regeneration including £3m on grade A office provision and £5m on public realm schemes, as well as 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 final defects period for these same 7 schemes then concluded over the course of 2022-23.</p> <p>During the period 2022-23, the Council also invested £495k in Revitalisation/Shop Front schemes in Church Street, Downpatrick and Lower Hill Street, Newry.</p> <p>Following on from this investment, the Council in 2022-23 extending into 2023-24 has and is continuing to forward £4.3m investment in selected rural areas, through the implementation of four (4) Environmental Improvement Schemes, seven (7) Revitalisation Schemes, and the Make it Local communication and engagement campaign.</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 and new public realm scheme, revitalising the city centre. The scheme will also create and sustain jobs, increase visitor numbers, and stimulate the local economy. In 2022-23 both projects completed RIBA stage 3 design and submitted applications for planning approval.

Develop a car parking strategy in line with strategic regeneration development needs and sustainability.		The preparation of a tender document for new Enforcement providers commenced in October 2022, in conjunction with AECOM. This tender went out in March 2023 and the Council hope to have this process completed and a new provider appointed by Q3 2023-24.
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 went to market in autumn 2022 and closed in early 2023. Council and DfC are now continuing to meet to discuss the outcome of this process.</p> <p><u>Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) Process</u></p> <p>Downpatrick also went through the MAG process in 22-23, where Council engaged key stakeholders including Elected members, relevant government agencies, Government Departments and key strategic local stakeholders to discuss regeneration priorities for the town centre.</p> <p><u>Church Street, Public Realm</u></p> <p>As part of the Revitalisation Scheme, Council also considered concept designs for a future Environmental Improvement Scheme in Church Street, Downpatrick during 2022-23. Subject to funding from both Council and DfC this will be moved forward towards an outline design and consultation process.</p>






Measure of success	2021-22	2022-23	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. Outline Business Cases for Mourne Mountain Gateway and Newry City Centre Regeneration have been approved and a signed contract for funding with the Department for Communities for the latter has been completed. Outline Business Cases for the Southern Relief Road and 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	3	2		<p>During 2021-22, the Council completed the final 3 public realm schemes delivered under the overall Rural Development Programme (RDP) where a total of seven (7) public realm schemes were delivered in Newtownhamilton, Meigh, Hilltown, Annalong, Killyleagh, Dundrum and Ballyhornan.</p> <p>During 2022/23, the Council also completed the 'Public Realm Enhancement Scheme' across its six main urban centres and completed phase 1 of the Warrenpoint Front Shore Public Realm Scheme by April 2023.</p> <p>The Council is also now progressing plans to implement four (4) 'Small Settlement Public Realm Schemes' in Bessbrook, Castlewellan, Saintfield and Rostrevor. These are currently at the design and planning stage.</p>
Increased business growth and employment	9,045 VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses	9,175 VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses		Since 2015, the number of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses in Newry, Mourne and Down increased by 19.5%, from 7,675 in 2015 to 9,175 in 2022. This includes an increase of 1.4% between 2021 and 2022 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 was 620* in 2022, and accounts for 11% of all new business births in Northern Ireland.
	61,203 employee jobs	Data not yet available	-	Between 2015 and 2021, the number of employee jobs across Newry, Mourne and Down increased by 16.9%, from 52,341 to 61,203, which was the 3 rd highest across Northern Ireland, accounting for 7.8% of all regional employee jobs. The BRES (Business Register and Employment























*The 2022 Birth rates data is based on ONS experimental statistics as the NI Business Demography 2022 is not due to be published until January 2024 and may therefore be subject to change.

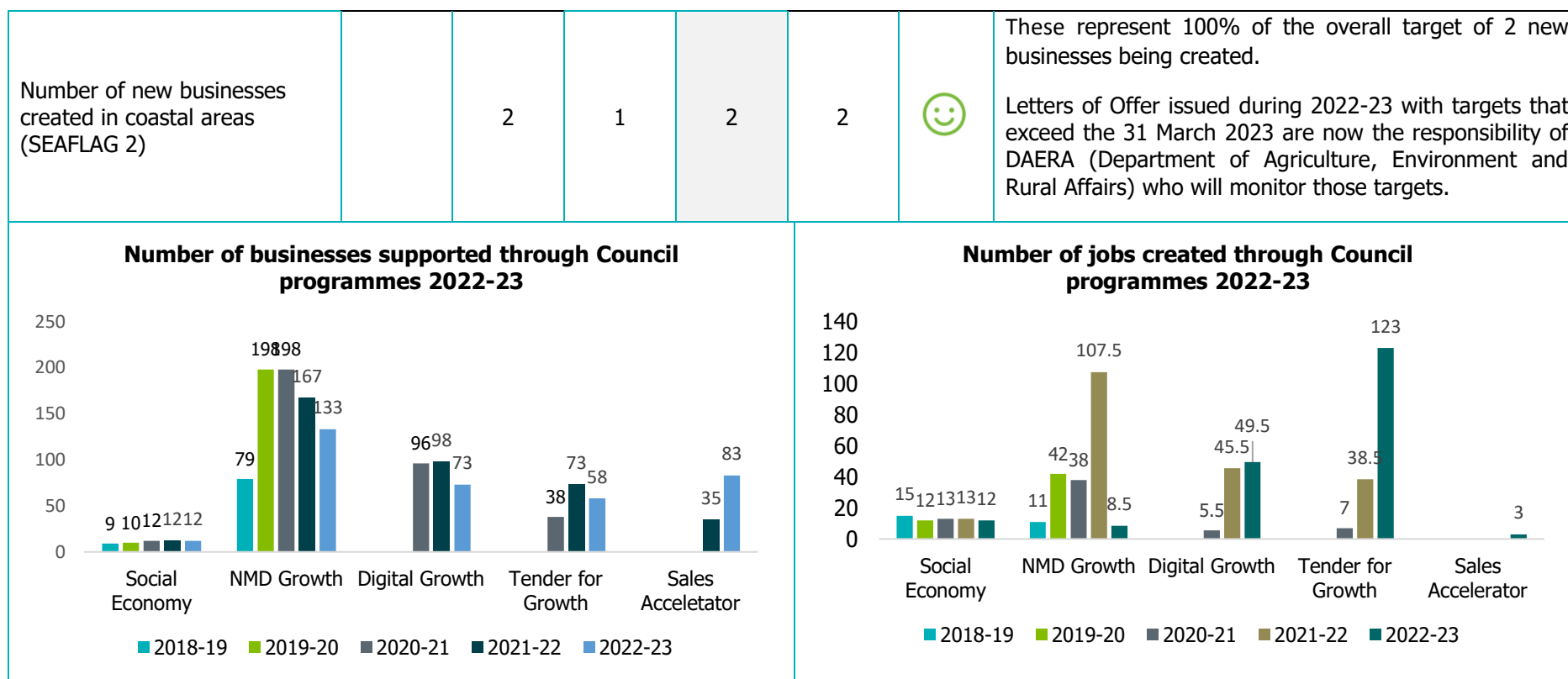
Performance Improvement Objective 2

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

Key action	Status	Update
Roll-out the NMD 'Make it Local' and 'A Place to Work' campaigns to safely stimulate footfall and revitalise our local economy		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 187 new business starts and promoting 187 new jobs, exceeding the statutory target of >155.
Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme.		The Council achieved all targets set through the Social Economy programme, supporting 12 social enterprises, delivering 195 mentoring days, assisting 52 people to gain increased skills for entering employment and creating 34 new volunteering jobs.
Support local businesses and create new jobs through the 'NMD Growth', 'Digital Growth', 'Tender for Growth', 'Sales Accelerator' and 'Digital Surge' programmes		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 347 local businesses and created 184 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 was extended until March 2023. The programme targets for the number of new jobs and businesses created in coastal areas were exceeded and the programme has now been completed with Letters of Offer issues in 2022-23 with targets that exceed 31 March 2023 being monitored by DAERA.

Measure of success	2018-19 Actual	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Number of business plans approved through NI 'Go For It'	300	298	266	358	311	 	Since 2015-16, the Council has consistently exceeded the statutory target of promoting >155 jobs through business start-up activity. 2022-23 however has seen overall performance decline compared to 2021-22, with the number of new business starts and new jobs promoted decreasing by 13%. In 2022-23, Newry, Mourne and Down ranked 3/11 for the number of jobs promoted across NI. Newry, Mourne and Down also approved 311 business plans in 2022-23 placing the Council 3/11 across NI for business plan approvals.
Number of new business starts created through NI 'Go For It'	204	203	181	215	187	 	
Number of new jobs promoted through NI 'Go For It'	184	183	164	215	187	 	
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	9	10	12	12	12	 	Since 2017-18, the Council has consistently met and exceeded the targets set for the number of new social enterprise start-ups supported and jobs created. During 2022-23, the Council supported 12 new social enterprise start-ups and 20 existing social enterprises, assisted 52 people in increasing their skills for entering employment and created 12 new social enterprise jobs, as well as 34 new volunteering jobs.
Number of social enterprise jobs created	15	12	13	13	12	 	
Number of businesses supported through 'NMD Growth'	79	198	198	167	133	 	Since 2018, the Council supported 783 local businesses through 'NMD Growth', including 133 businesses during 2022-23, exceeding the overall 2022 target set by 27%. The Council has also delivered 30 workshops, 19 thematic

Number of jobs created through 'NMD Growth'	11	42	38	107.5	8.5		programmes and 1,168 mentoring days which have supported the creation of 207 jobs, including 8.5 new jobs during 2022-23. NMD Growth Programme delivery closed on 31 March 2023.
Number of businesses supported through 'Digital Growth'	New programmes		96	98	73		Since January 2020, the Council has supported 267 local businesses through 'Digital Growth', achieving 95% of the overall 2022 target set. The Council has also delivered 18 workshops, 4 masterclasses and 628.5 mentoring days which have supported the creation of 100.5 new jobs, including 49.5 new jobs during 2022-23. Digital Growth Programme delivery closed on 31 March 2023
Number of jobs created through 'Digital Growth'			5.5	45.5	49.5		
Number of businesses supported through 'Tender for Growth'			38	73	58		Since June 2020, the Council has supported 169 local businesses through 'Tender for Growth', exceeding the overall 2022 target set. The Council has also delivered 10 workshops and 453.5 mentoring days which have supported the creation of 168.5 new jobs, including 123 new jobs during 2022-23. Tender for Growth programme delivery closed on 31 March 2023.
Number of jobs created through 'Tender for Growth'			7	38.5	123		
Number of businesses supported through 'Sales Accelerator'				35	83		Since the programme launched in September 2021 the Council has supported 118 businesses through 'Sales Accelerator', exceeding the 2022 target set by 144%. The Council has also delivered 57 workshops and 321 mentoring days which supported the creation of 3 new jobs during 2022-23. Sales Accelerator programme delivery closed on 31 March 2023.
Number of jobs created through 'Sales Accelerator'				0	3		
Number of new jobs created in coastal areas (SEAFLAG 2)	New programme	2023 Target	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual		As of the close of delivery of the SEAFLAG 2 programme on the 31 March 2023, nine new jobs had been created, exceeding the target of 5.5 new jobs. Two new businesses were also established in Ardglass and Kilkeel.
		5.5	7	9	9		










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.		A new Waste Management Strategy for Northern Ireland is being developed by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) which supports the Circular Economy Package measures. This regional strategy will then allow for each Council, including Newry, Mourne and Down to develop its own Circular Economy Plan.
Develop and implement a strategic plan for controlling environmental crime.		The Council's Education and Enforcement Plan has been delayed due to resourcing issues within the section. Once this plan has been developed it will be monitored and reported to the Sustainability and Environment Committee on a quarterly basis. The Council continues to liaise with NIEA in relation to environmental crime. Enforcement Officers are being strategically assigned to identified "hotspots" where there has been an increase in dog fouling and littering offences. However, there is an acknowledgement that recruitment of seasonal enforcement officers 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 ongoing. A revised draft plan strategy was agreed by Council in August 2023 and is currently with the Department for Infrastructure. Through the LDP working group and planning committee, work will continue to develop and bring forward papers for proposals relating to the new LDP as per the revised timetable.





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 2024.</p> <p>Newry, Mourne and Down was the lead partner for the €9 million CANN (Collaborative Action for the Natura Network) Project which sought 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 was completed in December 2022. A celebration Event took place in September 2022 to 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>Through delivery of the Ring of Gullion and Strangford and Lecale AONB Management Action plans, priority projects that have been delivered in 2022/23 to protect our biodiversity include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Delamont Landscape Restoration Plan, which saw 1000m of native hedgerow reinstated on the agricultural farmland in the country park, and the removal of non-native woodland species from 7 Ha of the ancient woodland in Delamont. • Completion of the 4-year long control program of invasive plant species in the Ring of Gullion. • Support provided to the Slieve Gullion squirrel group, by way of equipment loan and food supplies.




		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Nestbox week events held in both the Ring of Gullion and Strangford and Lecale. Providing a nest box building workshop for members of the public to attend. • Partnered with ARGUK in the 3-year Dragons in the Hills project to raise awareness of, and conserve and protect our native amphibians and reptiles across the District • Advanced moorings trial ongoing in Strangford lough to protect important blue carbon habitats – the seagrass beds. • Wildlife disturbance training and signage delivered to raise awareness of the importance of protecting our marine wildlife (seals, dolphins & birds from disturbance) This may be from jet skis and other water users, and dogs off leads. • Tyrella dune restoration project – fencing installed at the front of the dunes at Tyrella beach to protect them from further erosion, protecting this important habitat. • 10,000 native trees were given away to local landowners, schools etc. for planting across the AONB's.
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Measure of Success	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		Status Trend	Explanatory Note
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
Level of street cleanliness across the District (KNIB street cleanliness score)	-	64	-	64	-	64	-	Data unavailable		The Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) Cleaner Neighbourhoods Survey for 2022-23 was based on a reduced number of surveys of 397 transects and a reduced geographical spread which included samples from only four Council areas of which Newry, Mourne and Down was not one. Therefore a LEAMS score is unavailable for 2022-23. The regional LEAMS score for this period has increased to 72, up from 66 in 2021-22.
65% of municipal waste recycled by 2030	Target 50% by 2020	Actual 53.7%	Target 50% by 2020	Actual 51.9%	Target 50% by 2020	Actual 49.8%	Target 50% by 2020	Actual 49.6%	 	Since 2017-18, the Council increased the overall rate of recycling by 3.5% to 49.6%. This however falls just below the 2020 target of 50%. Unlike the regional trend which experienced a slight increase between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the level of recycling in NMD reduced again during 2022-23 and the Council is placed 8/11 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

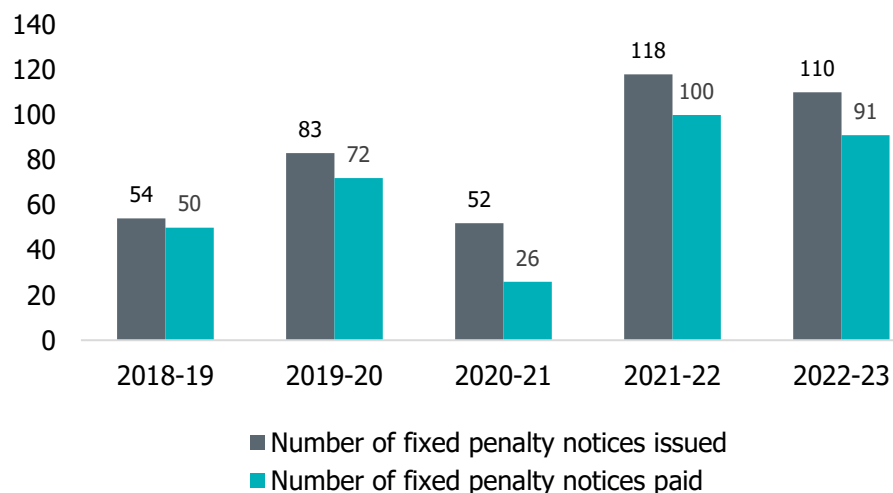
Key action	Status	Update
Address issues around littering, fly tipping and dog fouling by:		
Implementing the Enforcement Improvement Plan.		Progress in implementing the Enforcement Improvement Plan is monitored and reported to the Sustainability and Environment Committee on a quarterly basis. Key achievements to date include 40,000 dog waste bags purchased to replenish the nine dispenser units erected since December 2021 across the District. 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 August 2022, the Council developed and delivered a social media campaign to encourage responsible dog ownership. This recorded an overall reach of 21,272 and engagement of 155. 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 public awareness campaign "Take it Home" with colleagues from Louth County Council between May and June 2022, to tackle the issue of littering and illegal dumping. The campaign featured a number of 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 across Facebook and Twitter, generating a reach of 26,268 and engagement of 338.
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 website and HRC site signage has been updated to provide clear guidance to residents on how to sort surplus recyclable waste. In January 2023 a booking

		system was introduced to allow residents to access HRC sites in larger vehicles free of charge.
Launch the 'mobile app' to enable officers to record incidents of environmental crime across the District.		The pilot mobile app has been renamed as the 'NMDDC Officer Waste Reporting App V1. The app was updated in August 2022 and is currently live with a total of 42 records stored within it.
Support local community clean ups.		The Council supported 39 community clean ups at a range of locations across the District, including Newtownhamilton, Jonesborough, Grange and Cranfield, however it did not achieve its target number of clean ups during 2022-23.
Promote 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 10 grants, with a combined value of £13k were awarded towards local projects. During 2022-23 there were also 147 Adopt A Spots and 6 Healthy Ocean, Healthy Minds events, 'connecting people to blue spaces' carried out across the District.

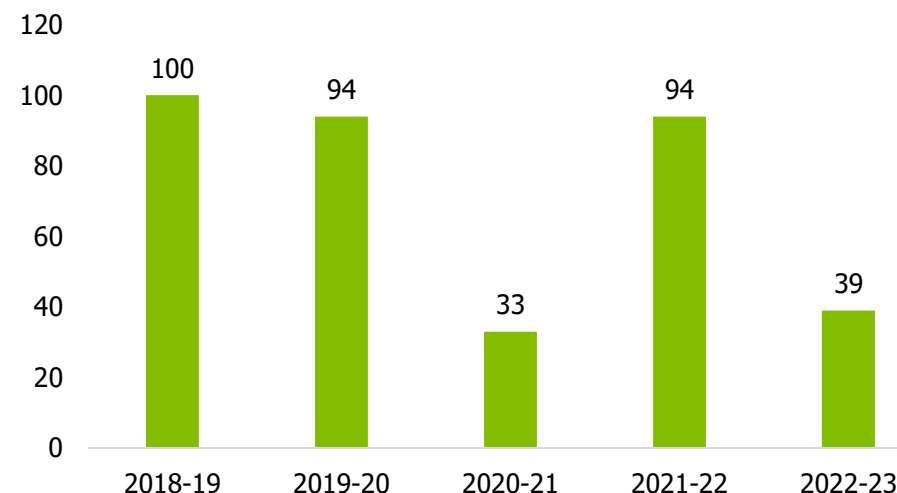
Measure of success	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
LEAMS score (Keep NI Beautiful Cleanliness Index)	64	64	64	Data unavailable		The Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) Cleaner Neighbourhoods Survey for 2022-23 was based on a reduced number of surveys of 397 transects and a reduced geographical spread which included samples from only four Council areas of which Newry, Mourne and Down was not one. Therefore, a LEAMS score is unavailable for 2022-23. The regional LEAMS score for this period has increased to 72, up from 66 in 2021-22.
Number of fixed penalty notices issued	83	52	118	110	 	Between 2021-22 and 2022-23 the number of illicit dumping incidents reported to Council increased by 6.3%, from 541 to 575 incidents, whilst the number of littering and dog fouling



Number of fixed penalty notices paid	72	26 (to date)	100	91	 	<p>incidents decreased significantly from 460 to 245 during this period, resulting in a reduction of 46.7%</p> <p>The number of fixed penalty notices decreased by 6.8% in the past year, from 118 in 2021-22 to 110 in 2022-23. 91 of the fixed penalty notices have been paid to date, accounting for 83% of the total issued.</p>
Number of community clean ups supported	94	33	94	39	 	<p>Through the Sustainability and Environment and Active and Healthy Communities Directorates, the Council actively supports clean ups which are carried out by local community groups and residents. Between 2018-19 and 2022-23, the Council supported 360 clean ups across the District, including 39 during 2022-23.</p>
Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	34	24	18	10		<p>Since 2018-19, the Council has supported 113 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects, including 10 during 2022-23. 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>

Number of fixed penalty notices issued and paid

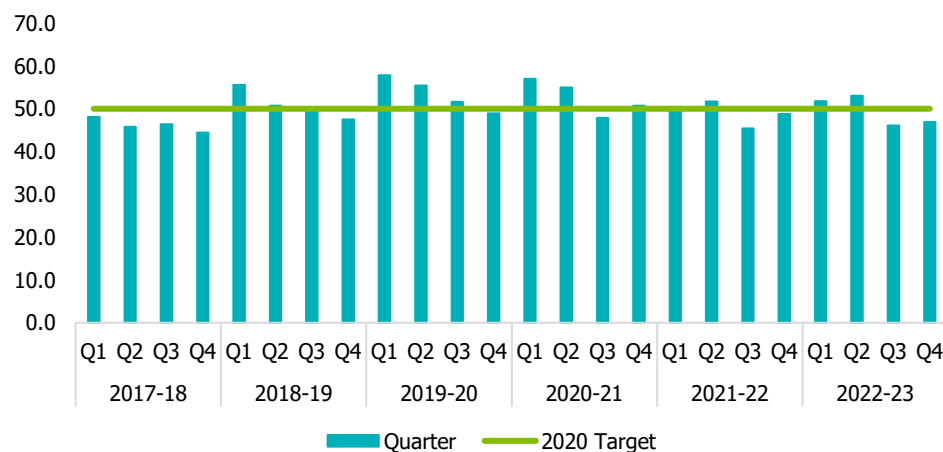


Number of community clean ups supported

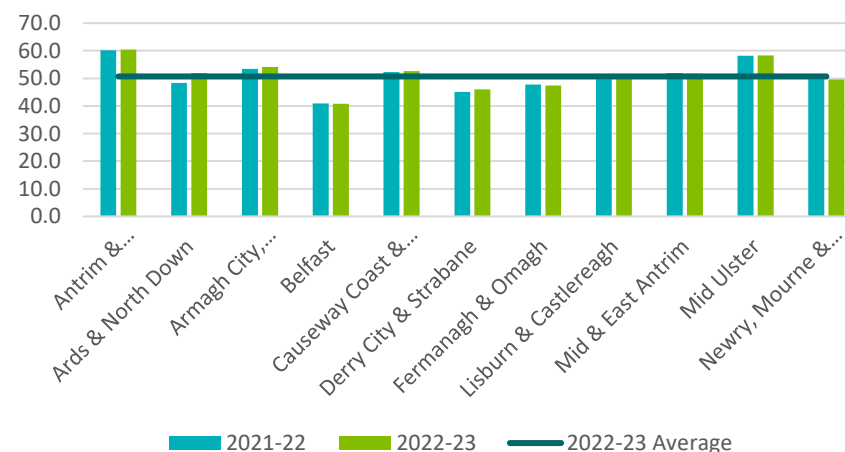




Measure of success	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		Status Trend	Explanatory note
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling	50% by 2020	53.7%	50% by 2020	51.9%	50% by 2020	49.8%	50% by 2020	49.6%	 	Since 2017-18, the Council increased the overall rate of recycling by 3.5%, to 49.6%. This however falls below the 2020 target of 50%. It is also below the 2022-23 regional average of 50.7% and ranks the Council 8/11 across Northern Ireland. Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the overall rate of recycling in the District reduced by 0.2%. This is against the regional upward trend over the past year with a 0.6% increase in the overall rate of recycling.

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

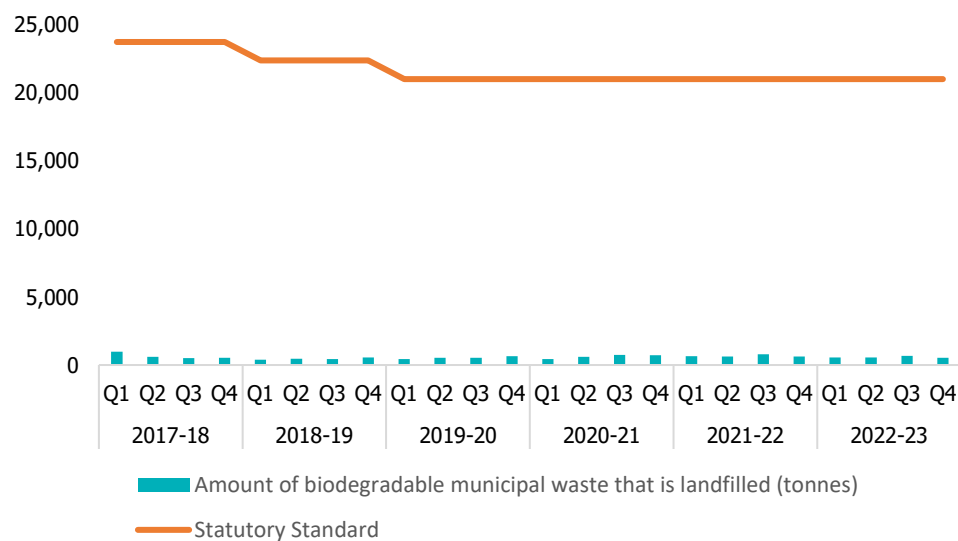


Percentage of household waste collected by Councils that is sent for recycling

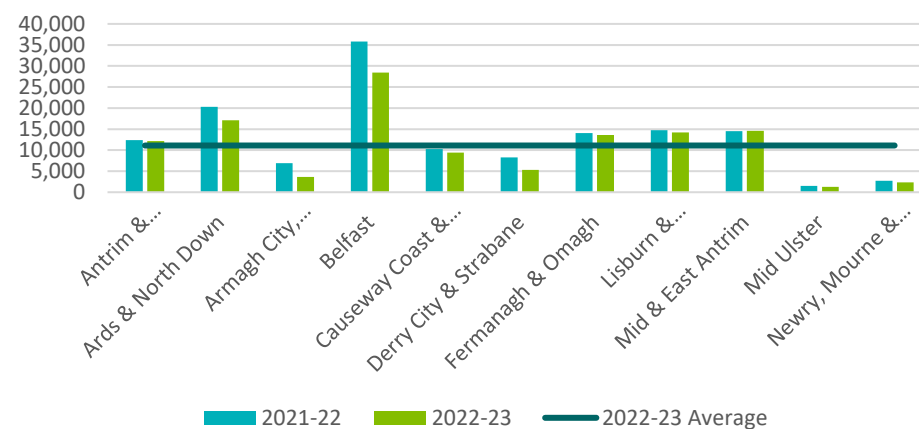


Measure of success	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		Status Trend	Explanatory note
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	<20,954	2,131t	<20,954	2,538t	<20,954	2,685t	<20,954	2,314t	 	Since 2015-16, the amount of biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste that is sent to landfill reduced by 85.8%, to 2,314 tonnes, and the Council only used 11% of the 2019-20 Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme allowance**. This falls well below the 2022-23 regional average of 11,099 tonnes and ranks Newry, Mourne and Down 2/11 across Northern Ireland. Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, Newry, Mourne and Down recorded a 13.8% decrease (371 tonnes) in the amount of waste that is sent to landfill.

Amount of biodegradable local authority municipal waste that is landfilled

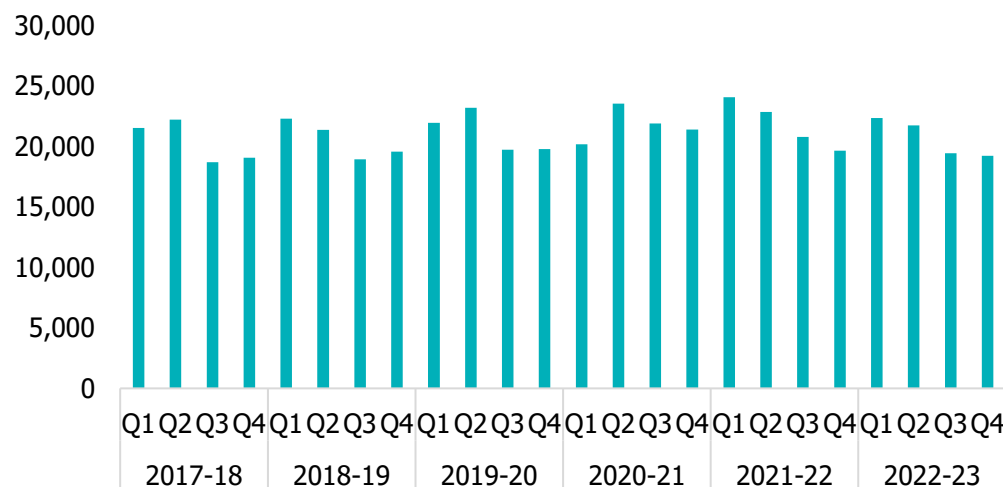


Amount of biodegradable municipal waste that is sent to landfill (tonnes)



Measure of success	Actual 2019-20	Actual 2020-21	Actual 2021-22	Actual 2022-23	Trend	Explanatory note
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	84,610t	86,900t	87,336t	82,729	△	Since 2017-18, the amount of local authority collected municipal waste arisings has increased by 1.5% to 82,729 tonnes, which falls below the 2022-23 regional average of 88,386 tonnes. Newry, Mourne and Down is currently ranked 6/11 across Northern Ireland. 2022-23 has seen the first reduction in the amount of Local Authority Collected municipal waste collected since 2019-20, with a decrease of 5.3% experienced between 2021-22 and 2022-23

Amount of local authority collected municipal waste arisings (tonnes)



Amount of Local Authority Municipal Waste Arising (tonnes)



*The 2022-23 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 2023-24. 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

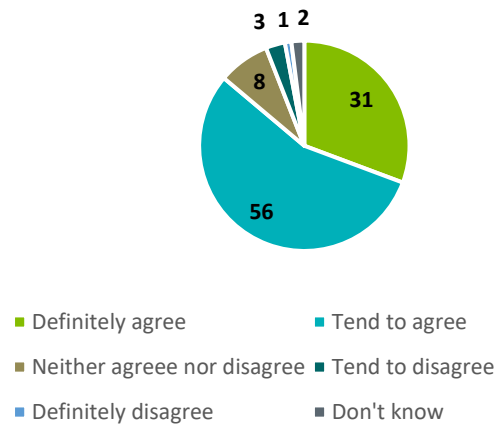
Key action	Status	Update
Through the process of community planning provide opportunities for communities to have a voice in shaping local services and local areas.	😊	<p>Following the 2021-22 Participatory Budgeting scheme, the Community Planning Partnership hosted three PB celebration events across the District in May and June 2022. These events were for groups to showcase their projects which were funded through the Participatory Budgeting online vote.</p> <p>Speak NMD, the online engagement platform provides citizens with an opportunity to engage with members of the Newry, Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership, the community and voluntary sector, and other local organisations on a range of current topics, issues and challenges facing the district.</p> <p>Currently the site has 13 live engagements across 10 projects ranging from community assets projects to economic development engagements. There are currently 610 active users of this platform (since November 2022).</p>
Engage and involve partners and communities in	😊	This work is ongoing. The Community Planning team facilitated a number of workshops to review the Community Plan. These workshops engaged all partners including the

developing the district through the implementation of the Community Plan.		Strategic Stakeholder Forum, District Electoral Area Fora, Youth Council and Older Persons Fora. Subsequent to this an internal workshop was held with Council officers. The Partnership has agreed to host a Health and Wellbeing Thematic Summit to review the health and wellbeing activity within the partnership and this is scheduled to take place in Q3 2023-24.
Develop and implement a Community Facilities Strategy.		A draft Community Facilities Strategy has now been developed and will go out for a 12 week consultation in Q2 2023-24.
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 £9.5m to 3,061 successful applicants. In 2022-23, 67% of financial assistance applicants were successful with 366 projects benefitting from the Financial Assistance scheme.

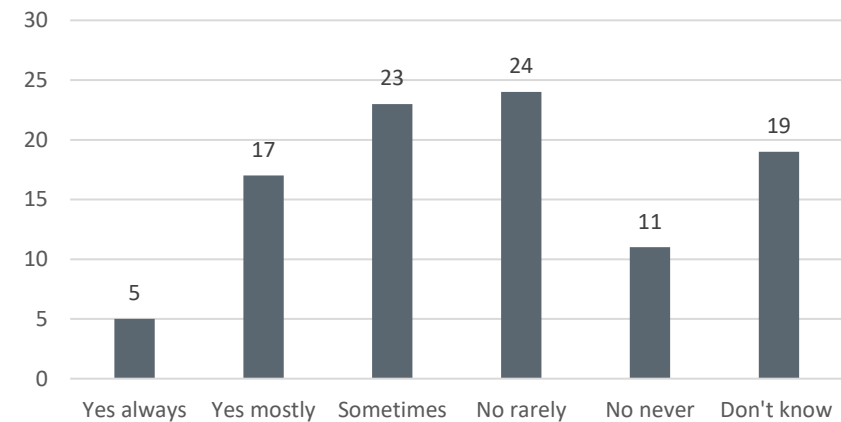
Measure of Success	2018 Actual	2022 Actual	Status	Explanatory Note
Percentage of residents who agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	72%	87%	 	In September 2018 and again in September 2022, the Council commissioned a Residents Survey to establish and track 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 were surveyed and revealed that: • 87% agree that the area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, representing a significant increase on the 2018 figure of 72%.
Percentage of residents who agree that the Council consults with and listens to the views of local people	62%	65%	 	

Percentage of residents who feel that they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area	59%	45%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65% agree that the Council consults with and listens to the views of local people, which is an increase of 3% on the 2018 figure of 62%. The percentage of residents that disagree with this statement however has increased from 11% to 13% during the four year period. • 45% feel that they can have a say on how services are delivered in their local area. This represents a significant decrease from the 59% recorded in 2018. <p>Feedback and comparative analysis from the two Residents Survey will be used to inform the development of future plans and strategies, including the Corporate Plan and Performance Improvement Plan.</p>
Measure of Success	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	Status	Explanatory Note
Number and percentage of financial assistance projects funded and successfully delivered	68.8%	59.4% (366 projects awarded with 330 successfully delivered)		Since 2015-16, the Council has awarded £9.5m to 3,061 successful applications through the Financial Assistance Scheme. This includes £1,255,092.10 being awarded to 366 projects across 22 thematic areas during 2022-23, with the most popular themes being 'community engagement', 'community events and festivals' and 'summer schemes'. Overall, 67% of applications received were successful with 59.4% awarded funding.

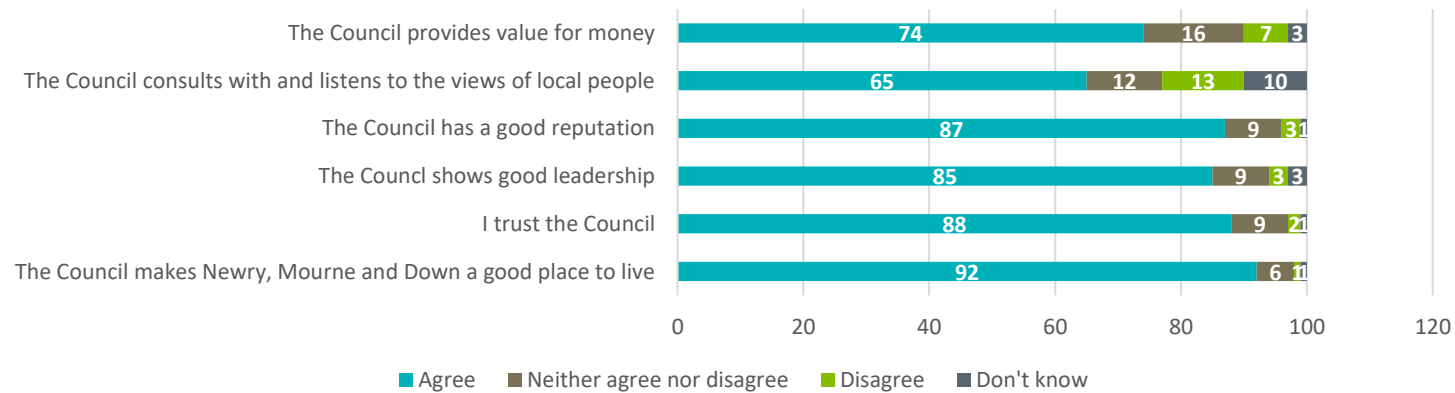
To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together? (%) (2022)



Do you feel you are able to have a say on things happening or how services are run in your local area? (%) (2022)








Thinking about Newry, Mourne and Down, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (2022)



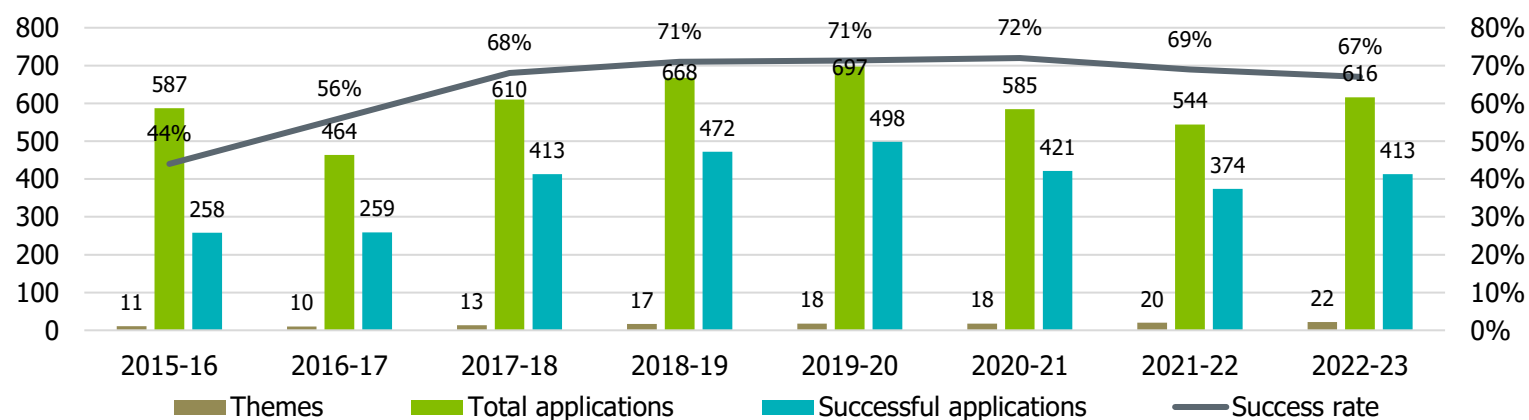
Performance Improvement Objective 4

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

Key action	Status	Update
Launch 3 financial assistance calls across a minimum of 19 thematic areas to support the delivery of community led projects.		The Council launched three financial assistance calls across 22 thematic areas and awarded £1.26m awarded to 366 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 99% 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 with an emphasis on themes with lower success rates.	 	During 2022-23, 208 participants took part in five capacity building sessions plus a further 53 participants took part in procurement training. Overall, there were 256,025 beneficiaries of the Financial Assistance Scheme and 49,347 volunteer hours recorded to deliver the projects funded.
Promote the online training module to potential applicants, including those who were unsuccessful in 2021-22.		Over 125 views of the online training module took place during 2022-23 which was published on the corporate website.

Measure of success	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	Trend	Explanatory Note
% of successful financial assistance applications	71%	72%	68.8%	67%	☹️ ▶️	The overall success rate of applications to the Council's Financial Assistance Scheme improved from 44% in 2015-16 to 67% in 2022-23. In 2022-23, 616 applications were made to the Financial Assistance scheme, of which 413 were successful. Of those, 366 applications were awarded £1,255,092.10 in total. Council implemented the 'score and rank' process during this scheme.
% of financial assistance applications funded	71%	64%	68.8%	59.4%	▶️	


Financial Assistance applications received v success rate







Corporate Plan 2021-23: Self imposed performance indicators

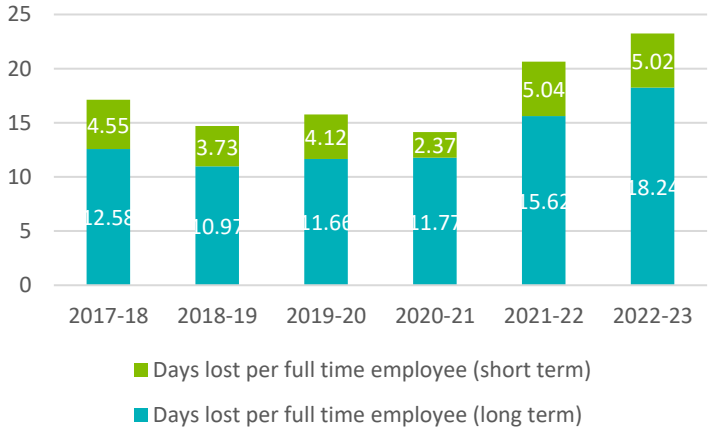
Corporate Objective

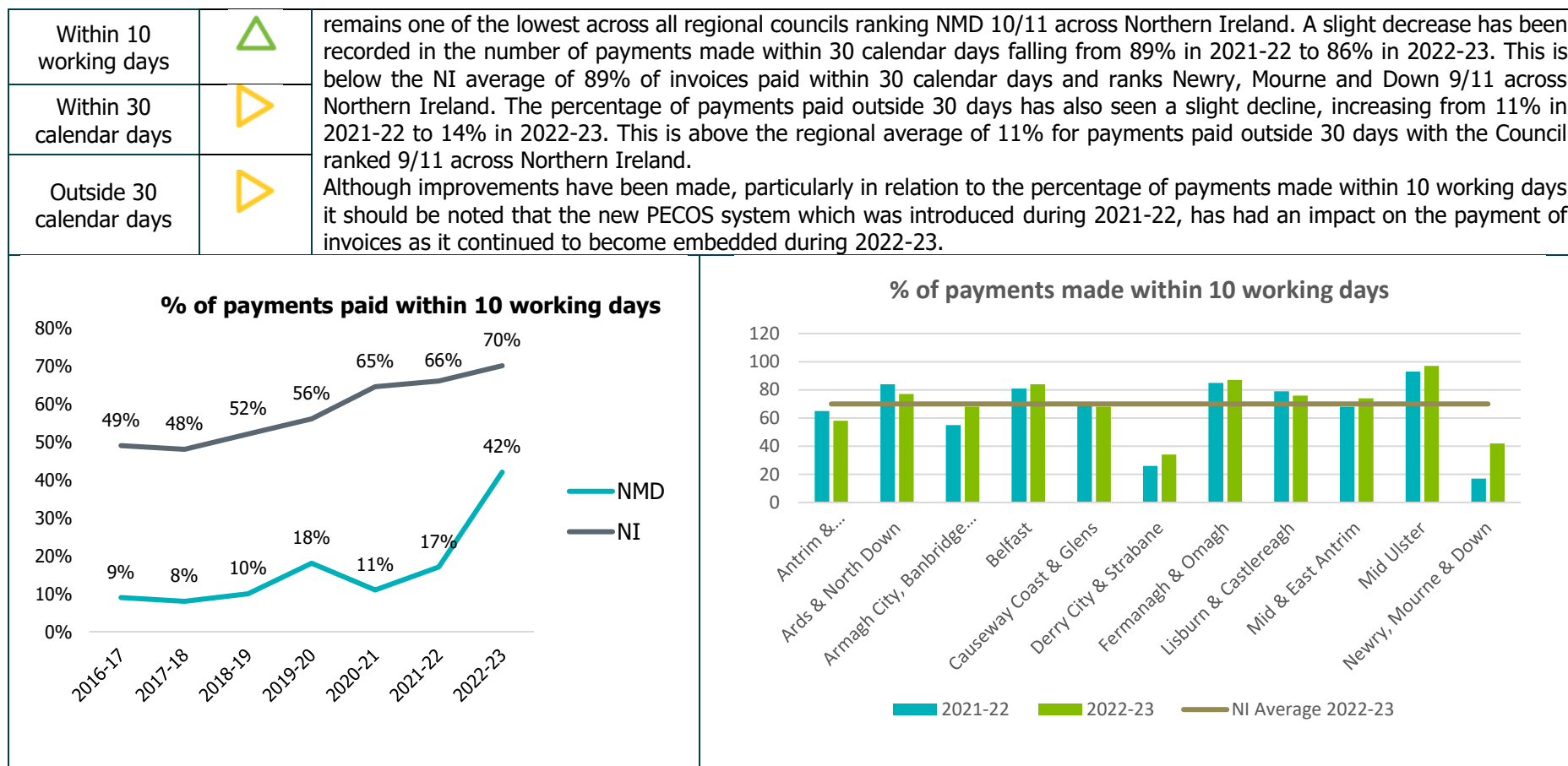
Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

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"> From the 1 June 2022 the former system for paying invoices was discontinued and the Pecos and Multiquote systems are now embedded and operational 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 came into effect in July 2022 - A business case was developed for an EDRMS system in February 2023 and has been submitted for internal consideration. A mandatory Complaints Handling Procedure developed by the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman will be implemented by Council by 1st January 2024. A Complaints Tracker has been developed by Council on Sharepoint to compliment the new Procedure. The Tracker monitors complaints from receipt to completion. It provides management information for internal and external reporting purpose. This allows officers, Councillors and the general public to map response times and volume of complaints. The statistics generated by the Tracker assist in identifying learning and service improvements.

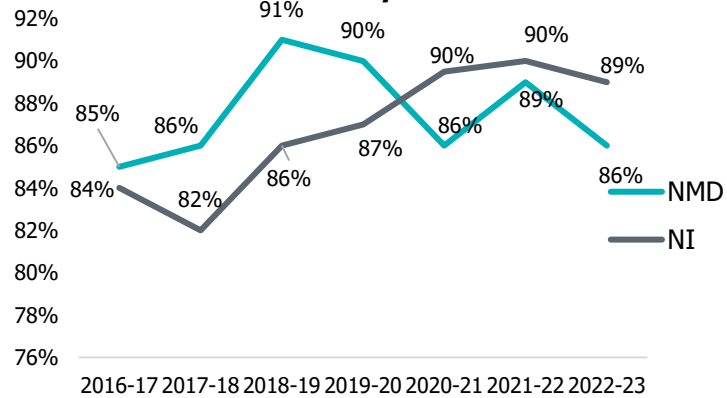
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online property certificates service is now provided by Council. A publicity campaign was carried out to promote the service which has since seen the number of solicitors signing up to the service increase from 65% to 95%. • The Council continues to support the development of a new corporate administration model. • A new performance management system was tendered for in February 2023 with an implementation date of November 2023 agreed. <p>The Council continues to identify and introduce new ways to transform local services.</p>
Develop a robust and reliable evidence base to inform decision making, policy development and service provision.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2022-23, a number of surveys were carried out, with the results being analysed for a range of internal and external stakeholders. These include the PeacePlus Residents Engagement survey, staff consultation on the new Corporate Plan including online surveys and focus groups and a museum service provision survey. • During 2022 a second comprehensive Residents Survey was conducted across the District. This survey used stratified sampling, including age, gender, geography ect. to ensure responses were representative and reflective of the Council's population. The survey sought residents views on service provision, emerging priorities within the District as well as gathering key data around health and wellbeing issues. This information will underpin the new Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan and Business and Service Plans which sets the strategic direction of the Council. • The review of current indicators within the Community Plan is complete and agreed by the Community Planning Partnership 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>
Effectively manage performance and align individual contribution		<p>The Council continues to mainstream and embed the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework. During 2022-23, Service Plans were</p>

with corporate objectives and better outcomes for all.		developed for all departments and People Perform Grow was extended to employees at tier 5 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.
Support elected members in their leadership role.		<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 34 civic receptions and attended 387 official events across the District, including Civic Awards and Civic Recognition Awards for sporting and community groups and illuminating Council buildings and mentoring groups to recognise 'Organ Donation Week', 'Recycle Week' and 'Childhood Cancer Awareness Month' as well as many others. The Chairperson also hosted a Charity Ball which raised over £20,000 of vital funds for four exceptional charities that work right at the heart of the community; including The Southern Area Hospice, Society of Saint Vincent De Paul, Suicide Down to Zero and the Simon Community.</p>
Implement a new neighbourhood model of providing cleansing and maintenance services.		A new District Cleansing service model was agreed in Q2 2022-23. A business case has been approved for additional fleet however resourcing remains an issue which has delayed the implementation of the new service model.

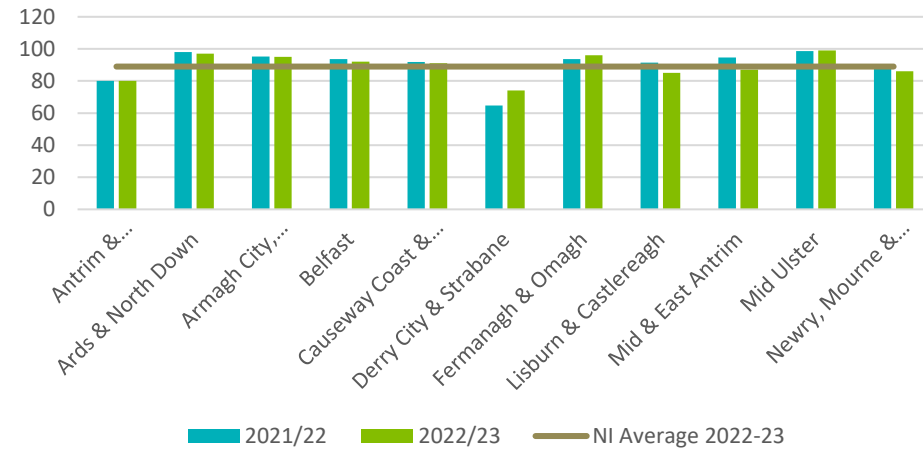
Measure of Success	Status Trend	Explanatory Note																													
Increased citizen satisfaction	😊	<p>The 2022 Residents Survey revealed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88% are satisfied with the Council overall, an increase of 1% on the 87% figure recorded in 2018. 92% agree that the Council helps to make Newry, Mourne and Down a good place to live, an increase of 17% on the 75% recorded in 2018. 88% trust the Council, an increase of 15% on the 73% recorded in 2018. 74% believe the Council provides good value for money, which is above the GB average of 51% and is an increase of 13% on the 61% recorded in 2018. 																													
Compliance with Duty of Improvement	😊	<p>The certificate of Compliance was received from the Local Government Auditor in relation to the Duty of Improvement 2021-22. 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.</p>																													
Level of absenteeism	▼	<p>During 2022-23, Newry, Mourne and Down recorded 23.26 days lost per full time employee. This represents an increase from 20.66 days in 2021-22, particularly in relation to long term absence, which increased from 15.62 to 18.24 days per employee and is the highest level of long-term absence recorded since 2015-16. Short-term absence decreased marginally from 5.04 days in 2021-22 to 5.02 days in 2022-23. 39.1% of the workforce (407 employees) had no recorded absence during 2022-23, however this represents a decrease when compared to the 42.2% of employees with no recorded absence in 2021-22. This increase in long term absenteeism may partly be attributed to the significant rise in the number of absences relating to stress, depression, anxiety, mental health and fatigue recorded in 2022-23 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>Short term (Days lost)</th> <th>Long term (Days lost)</th> <th>Total (Days lost)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2017-18</td> <td>4.55</td> <td>12.58</td> <td>17.13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018-19</td> <td>3.73</td> <td>10.97</td> <td>14.70</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019-20</td> <td>4.12</td> <td>11.66</td> <td>15.78</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020-21</td> <td>2.37</td> <td>11.77</td> <td>14.14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-22</td> <td>5.04</td> <td>15.62</td> <td>20.66</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022-23</td> <td>5.02</td> <td>18.24</td> <td>23.26</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Short term (Days lost)	Long term (Days lost)	Total (Days lost)	2017-18	4.55	12.58	17.13	2018-19	3.73	10.97	14.70	2019-20	4.12	11.66	15.78	2020-21	2.37	11.77	14.14	2021-22	5.04	15.62	20.66	2022-23	5.02	18.24	23.26
Year	Short term (Days lost)	Long term (Days lost)	Total (Days lost)																												
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2021-22	5.04	15.62	20.66																												
2022-23	5.02	18.24	23.26																												
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 has now increased to 42% in 2022-23 however it</p>																													



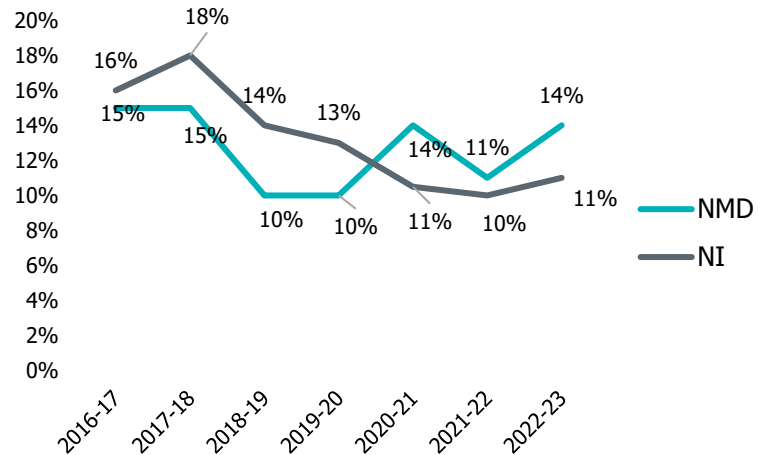
% of payments paid within 30 calendar days



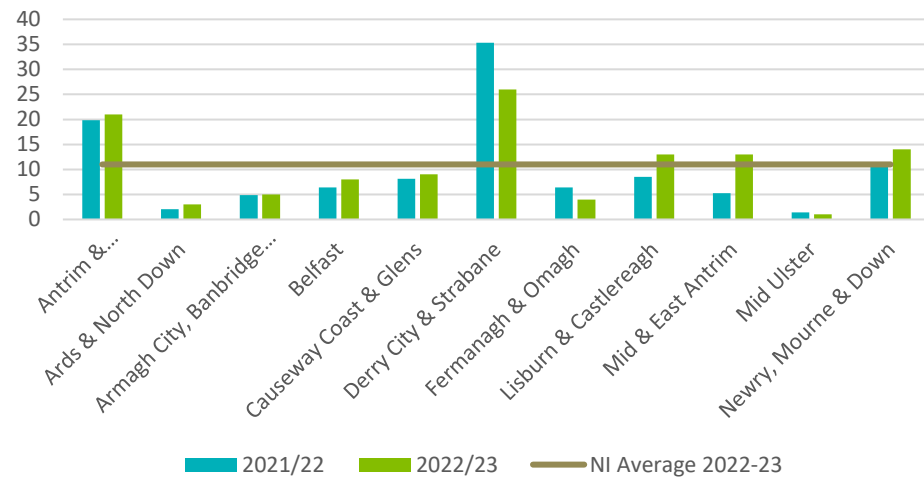
% payments paid within 30 calendar days



% payments paid outside 30 days







% 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>The Community Planning team facilitated a number of workshops to review the Community Plan. These workshops engaged all partners including the Strategic Stakeholder Forum, DEA Fora, Youth Council and Older Persons Fora. Subsequent to this an internal workshop was held with Council officers.</p> <p>The key priorities that were worked on in 2022-23 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Voice (Youth Council and Conference) • Community Support Partnerships • Sustainable Food Partnership • Labour Market Partnership <p>The Community Co-Ordination Hub and Strategic Stakeholder Forum continue to meet to address emerging social needs.</p> <p>DEA Fora has also contributed to the delivery of the Community Plan outcomes by delivering numerous cross community events and programmes, provision of warm spaces across the District, Community reimagining projects; health and wellbeing awareness raising, and representing Council at local partnerships.</p>
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 2022-23, the Council continued to comply with the statutory duty of community planning. The Community Planning Partnership met three times during the past year as well as a half day workshop in January 2023. Preparation work has begun on a Community Plan review however this has been delayed due to resourcing issues.
Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live		The 2022 Residents Survey revealed that 91% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, which is well above the GB average of 81% and is an increase of 1% on the figure recorded in the 2018 Residents Survey. 99% of residents in the Slieve Croob DEA are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared to just 59% in the Newry DEA. Older residents are also more likely to be satisfied with their local area as a place to live than younger residents. The top perceived problems identified by residents are dog mess and fouling and rubbish or litter lying around.

Performance Improvement Objective 5

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

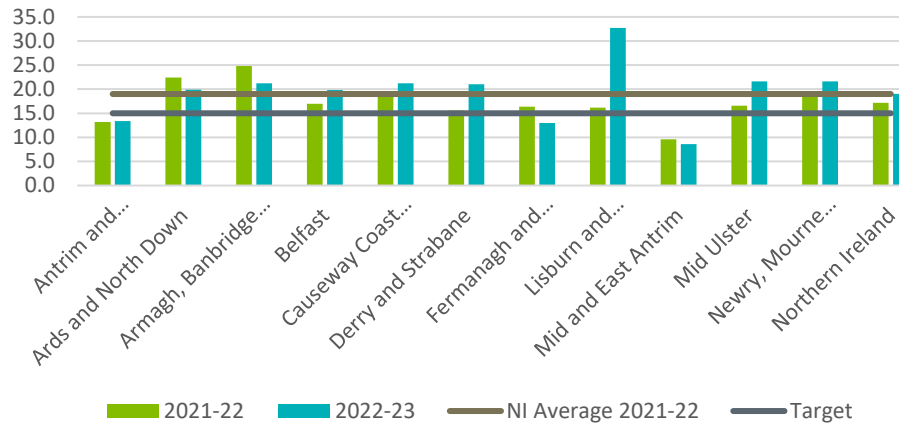
Key action	Status	Update
Reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases which have been in the system for over 12 months.		The number of live planning applications which have been in the system for 12 months or more increased by 21.9% between 2021-22 and 2022-23 and the number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more also increased, by 6.6% 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 is being assisted with the live regional planning portal which facilitates an online application process.

Support employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries'.		Continuous improvement progresses in this area and a review of departmental service structures is underway. The introduction of the new planning portal has further assisted and supported employees to deliver service improvements.
Effectively implement the new electronic planning system		The new portal is live, and Council is working with agents and architects to review and improve system performance.

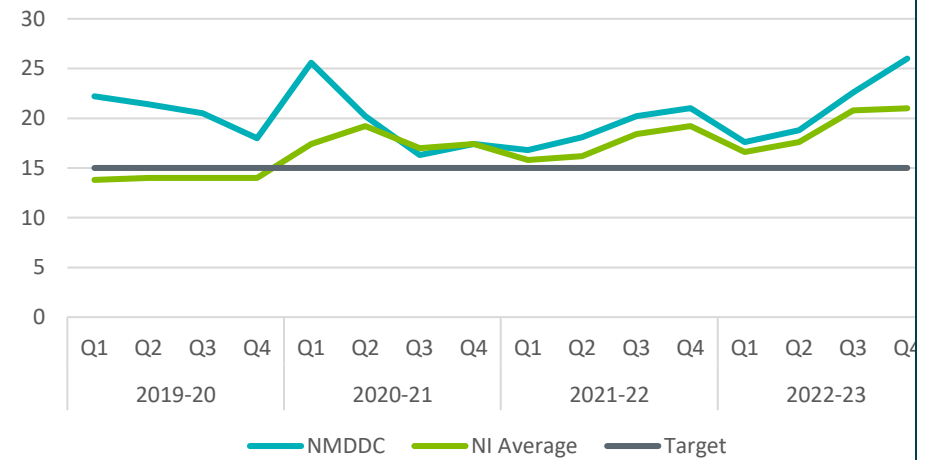
Measure of success	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	Status Trend	Explanatory Note
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	20.6	19	18.8	21.6	 	During 2022-23, Newry, Mourne and Down received 1,478 local planning applications which is the highest across Northern Ireland but represents a 15.3% decrease when compared to 2021-22. The processing time for local planning applications increased from 18.8 weeks in 2021-22 to 21.6 weeks in 2022-23 which is above the regional average of 19 weeks and exceeds the statutory standard of <15 weeks. Newry, Mourne and Down processed 28.3% of local planning applications within the statutory standard for 2022-23, a decrease of 6.5% compared to 2021-22. The Council is currently ranked joint 10/11 across Northern Ireland for processing local planning applications.
Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)	94	64.6	44.3	89.0	 	During 2022-23, Newry, Mourne and Down received 7 major planning applications, one less application when compared to 2021-22. The processing time for major planning applications increased from 44.3 weeks in 2021-22 to 89 weeks in 2022-23 which was the highest increase in processing times across all 11 Councils. It is above the regional average of 57.8 weeks and still exceeds the statutory standard of <30 weeks. 9.1% of major planning applications were processed within the statutory standard, ranking the Council 11/11 across Northern Ireland.
Percentage of planning enforcement cases	36.2%	40.9%	48.5%	Data unavailable		The number of enforcement cases concluded and corresponding processing times (statutory target) is not presented in the Northern Ireland planning statistics 2022/23 annual statistical tables. The information will be published at a later date.

progressed within 39 weeks						
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	183	195	187	228	▽	Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more increased by 21.9., from 187 in 2021-22 to 228 in 2022-23. Currently NMD has the 5 th highest number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more across Northern Ireland which is a one place improvement on the 2021-22 ranking.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less	685	857	871	934	▽	Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less increased by 7.2%. Newry, Mourne and Down currently has the highest number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less across Northern Ireland.
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more	620	546	472	503	▽	Since 2019-20 there has been a decrease of nearly 19% in the number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more in Newry, Mourne and Down. However. between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more increased by 6.6%. Newry, Mourne and Down currently has the highest number of live enforcement cases in the system (708) across Northern Ireland, 48.6% of which have been in the system for two years or more.

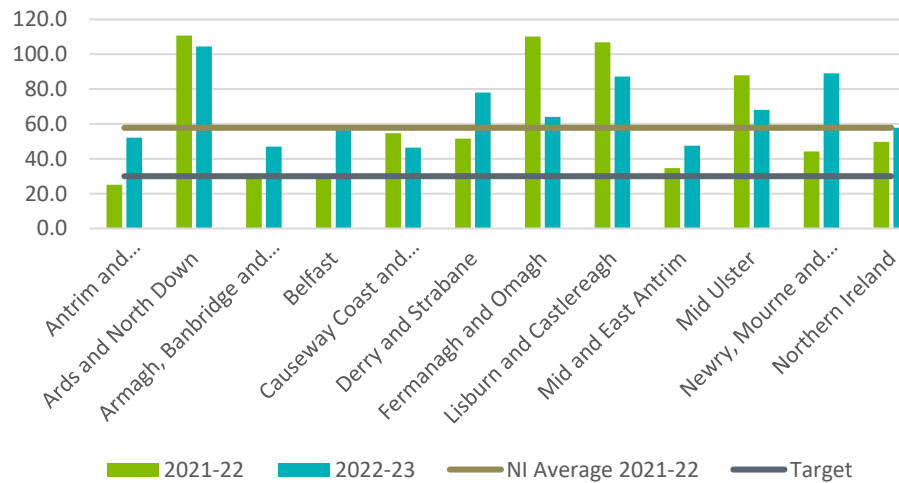
Average processing time of Local Planning Applications 2022-23



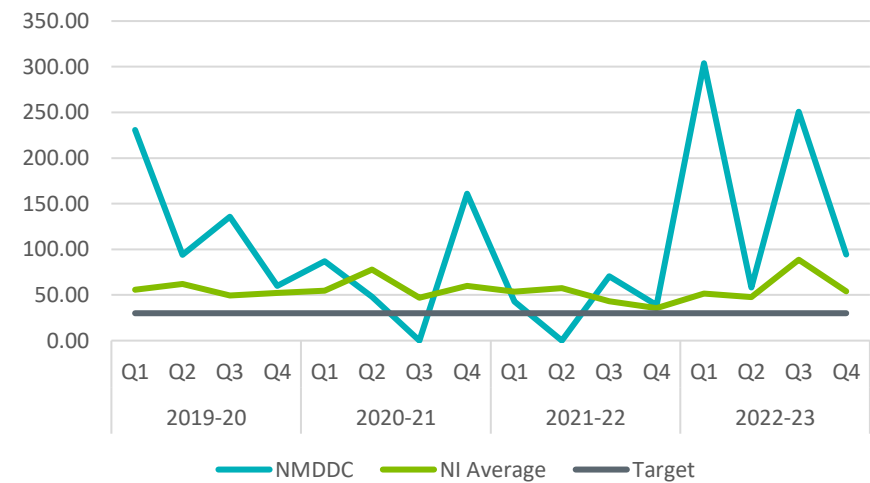
Average processing time of local planning applications

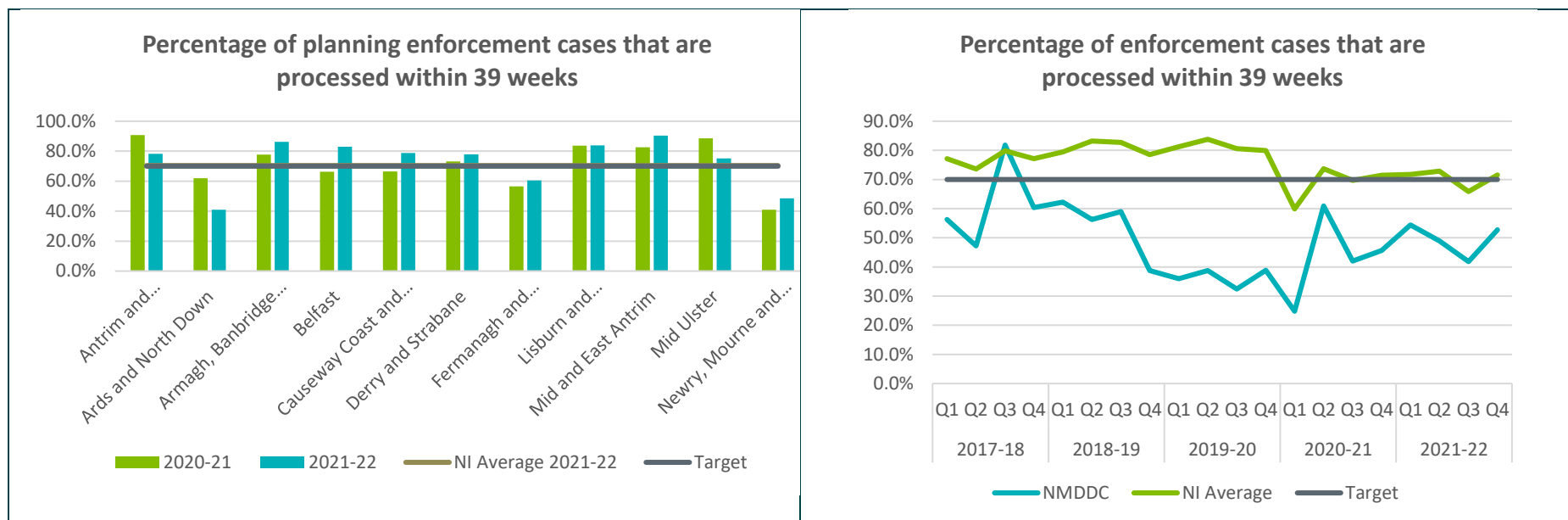


Average processing time of Major Planning Applications 2022-23



Average processing time of major planning applications





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

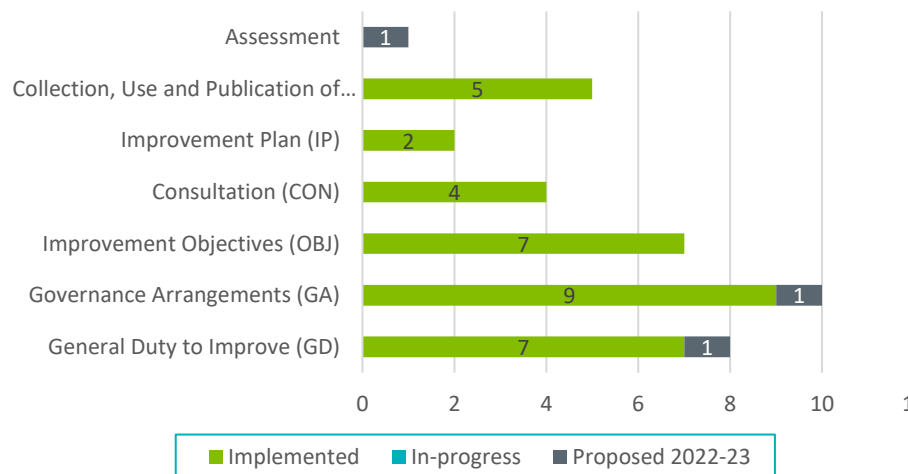
For the past five years, the Local Government Auditor has put forward 'proposals for improvement' as part of the annual Performance Audit and Assessments which are carried out by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The purpose of the 'proposals for improvement' is to support the Council in putting in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

Themes:

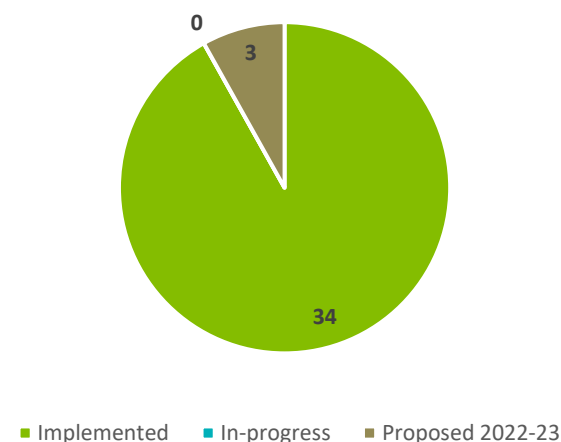
1. General duty to improve
2. Governance arrangements
3. Improvement objectives
4. Consultation
5. Improvement Plan
6. Arrangements to improve
7. Collection, use and publication of performance information

Legend	
Proposal implemented / on track to be implemented	
Proposal partially implemented / likely to be implemented	
Proposal not implemented	

Proposals for Improvement - Progress to Date



Proposals for Improvement - Progress to Date




Theme, Proposal and Progress to Date

THEME: Assessment

PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENT: Council should consider enhancing transparency of the self-assessment report by providing more detailed narrative to allow the reader to better understand how Council has determined the ratings of the trends in performance. Furthermore, where there are downward trends in performance or the Council has assessed targets are not likely to be achieved, appropriate explanations should be included as to how Council intends to address this



The Residents Survey provides robust and reliable datasets for the Council to understand and track resident perceptions of the Council and its services. It is directly aligned to and influences the content of the Corporate Plan and PIP. Best practice indicates that Residents Surveys should be carried out every 3-4 years, as resident perceptions are unlikely to change on an annual basis, and the baseline data is therefore considered 'live' for this period of time. A legend is also provided in all performance reports indicating whether a target has been achieved/partially achieved or not achieved at all and where there has been an upward or downward trend in the figures year on year.

PROGRESS TO DATE	
A second Residents survey was carried out in September 2022 which allows a comparative and trend analysis with the previous Residents Survey and provides clear transparency in how we are performing as a Council. A status and narrative is provided against every action and measure within the Assessment of Performance and where downward trends are experienced an explanation on how this has occurred is provided where possible.	
THEME: General duty to improve	Status
PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENT: An electronic performance management system would help to achieve long term continuous improvement as it would provide the basis for a more reliable system for identifying and monitoring improvements, as well as creating efficiencies in the process that could free up time to spend on value adding activities	
Following the approval of the Outline Business case for an electronic performance system by the IT Projects Group in July 2022, a paper was taken to the Senior Management Team (SMT) to seek approval of this report and the recommendation contained within it to 'To commence with a procurement process for the implementation of a performance system'. This was agreed by SMT in December 2022 and in January 2023 a tender process was initiated with a 4 year licence for the system secured in February 2023. Due to the change in ownership and new contracts, the Council's legal and compliance team have been liaising with the team in Advanced to ensure all sides are happy with the content. A date for the implementation of the system has now been agreed for November 2023. 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.	
PROGRESS TO DATE	
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 was updated in Q3 2022, in line with the 4 year policy review cycle.	
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.

Community Plan

The Community Planning team facilitated a number of workshops to review the Community Plan. These workshops engaged all partners including the Strategic Stakeholder Forum, District Electoral Area Fora, Youth Council and Older Persons Fora. Subsequent to this an internal workshop was held with Council officers. A review of the plan will be presented to the Community Planning Partnership in Q4 2023-24.

Corporate Plan

The implementation of the current Corporate Plan 2021-23 is nearing completion. The Council is finalising 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, with the second Residents Survey for the District carried out in September 2022, involving a representative sample of residents across the District. The Residents Survey was supplemented by focus groups and workshops, which engaged 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 has been 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 2023-24 ahead of the statutory deadline. Three of the performance improvement objectives, supporting actions and measures of success were carried forward from 2022-23. One of the objectives has been amended to reflect improvements achieved and where improvements are now required while another has seen significant progress and was deemed to have been delivered and has therefore been replaced. All were developed and 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 2023.

Directorate Business Plans

Five Directorate Business Plans 2023-24 were developed and approved by the Senior Management Team and relevant Council Committee. Each Business Plan also includes objectives, key actions and measures for success, aligned to specific corporate objectives.

Each Directorate also undertook an assessment of their respective Business Plan 2022-23, 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 2022-23, and some departments, particularly the Leisure and Sport Department were very proactive in engaging all employees in the development of the 2023-24 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. During 2022-23, 'People, Perform, Grow' was rolled out to employees at tier 5. 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 2022-23 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 review the performance improvement arrangements.	
The Council views the annual audit carried out by NIAO around the current Performance Management arrangements to be more than sufficient. The Council recognises the value of engaging the Internal Audit function to identify and deliver improvements, specifically those which do not necessarily fall within the scope of NIAO audit, such as around data validation and monitoring. To this end, in 2018, an Internal Audit of the APSE PI's was carried out and all recommendations were implemented, and an Internal Audit of the Corporate Plan's Performance Indicators took place in Q4 2022-23. The Council have also agreed a 4 year Internal Audit plan in April 2023 with an audit of Performance included for two of those four years with an option to increase if deemed necessary.	
PROGRESS	
The Council worked with ASM to agree the Terms of Reference for an audit of specific measures of success within the Corporate Plan 2021-23 which took place in Q4 2022-23. The audit identified a number of improvements which could be incorporated within the Council's systems in relation to the performance measures in the 2021-23 Corporate Plan which are currently being looked at and implemented where possible, however based on the information they reviewed, they considered that the existing systems in place for recording and validating data for performance measures in the 2021-23 Corporate Plan were basically sound and provided a satisfactory level of assurance regarding the effective and efficient achievement of the Council's objectives. This process provides 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 publication of the new Corporate Plan 2023-27. 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 2023-27 and Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24.	
THEME: Improvement Objectives	Status
PROGRESS	

In 2021-22, the Council adopted five performance improvement objectives, which were carried forward to 2022-23, and updated where appropriate. Three of the 2022-23 performance improvement objectives have been carried forward to 2023-24. One has changed focus to reflect current need and one has been deemed delivered and has been replaced with a new objective. 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 2023-24. 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 2023 and by the Audit Committee and Full Council in July 2023.

1. We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services.
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 improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change.
5. We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme

The NI Audit Office has confirmed that the performance improvement objectives carried over 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 2023-24, to demonstrate 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 2023-24 consultation and engagement process resulted in 123 completed surveys and engagement with 27 stakeholders through Section 75 groups, including Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice, Cedar Foundation and Newry and Mourne Older People's Forum. This consultation and engagement process was launched through the NMD Speak online platform, publicised through public notices in local newspapers and supplemented by the 764 responses to the Residents Survey in 2022, and 581 respondents and participants to the Covid-19 survey in 2020. The majority of consultees agreed with the proposed performance improvement objectives 2023-24.</p>	
THEME: Improvement Plan	
PROGRESS	
<p>The Council published the Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24 ahead of the revised statutory timescale of 30 September 2023. The Council has also published the summary document 'Our Performance Looking Back Going Forward', to provide a user friendly overview of retrospective performance during 2022-23 and the forward looking performance objectives for 2023-24.</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	
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>	
Status	

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, to 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

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

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

NMDDC Performance Improvement Objectives

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

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

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