



June 11th, 2024

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meeting to be held on Thursday, 13th June 2024 at 6:00 pm in Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre.

Committee Membership 2024-2025

Councillor T Howie **Chairperson**

Councillor C King **Deputy Chairperson**

Councillor P Byrne

Councillor W Clarke

Councillor O Hanlon

Councillor A Lewis

Councillor A Mathers

Councillor D McAteer

Councillor S O'Hare

Councillor A Quinn

Councillor H Reilly

Councillor M Rice

Councillor G Sharvin

Councillor D Taylor

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 16 May 2024

 *SPR-Action Sheet arising from 2024 05 16.pdf*

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4.0 Action Sheet arising from Special Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 30 May 2024

 *SPR-Action Sheet arising from 2024 05 30.pdf*

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5.0 To Agree Start Times for Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meetings 2024-2025

For Decision

 *SPR Dates and Times.pdf*

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For Discussion/Decision

6.0 Corporate Services Business Plan

For Decision

 *SPR Cover Report Directorate Business Plans.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 - CX Directorate Annual Assessment of Business Plan 2023-24.pdf*

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 *Appendix 2 - CS Directorate Annual Assessment of Business Plan 2023-24.pdf*

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 *Appendix 3 - Chief Executive - Corporate Services Business Plan 2024-25.pdf*

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7.0 Performance Improvement Plan 2024-2025

For Decision

 *SPR Cover Report PIP 2024-25.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 - Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 .pdf*

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 *Appendix 2 - Consultation and Engagement Report 2024-25 .pdf*

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8.0 PeacePlus Project - Theme 1.3 - Building Positive Relations

Correspondence from Foras na Gaeilge - Ulster University re PeacePlus Project - Theme 1.3 Building Positive Relations.pdf

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Appendix I - Correspondence from Foras na Gaeilge and Ulster University Consortium re PeacePlus Project - Theme 1.3 Building Positive Relations.pdf

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Items deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014

9.0 Revised Pay Protection Arrangements

For Decision

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act Northern Ireland 2014- information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

13-06-2024 SPRC Revised Pay Protection Arrangements.pdf

Not included

Appendix 1 Pay Protection Arrangements June 2024.pdf

Not included

Appendix 2 JTUS agreement to proposed changes to Pay Protection Arrangements.pdf

Not included

10.0 No 4 Daisy Hill

For Decision

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act Northern Ireland 2014- information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

No.4 Daisy Hill (Former Grills House).pdf

Not included

Appendix A TDK Recommendation.pdf

Not included

Appendix B LA07-2020-0803-O SIGNED.pdf

Not included


Appendix C NM162-G-1-22.pdf

Not included

11.0 Corporate Graphic Design and Print Management Services

For Decision

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act Northern Ireland 2014- information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 **13.06.24 SPRC Agenda Report for Graphic Design and Print Management Services.pdf** **Not included**

 **13.06.24 Business Case for Graphic Design and Print Management Services.pdf** **Not included**

FOR NOTING Items deemed to be exempt under Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014

12.0 NMDDC Response to consultation on LGSC Draft Model Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act Northern Ireland 2014- information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 **13.06.2024 SPRC LGSC Draft Disciplinary Policy Procedure.pdf** **Not included**

 **Appendix 1 Response to LGSC consultation on draft Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.pdf** **Not included**

13.0 Industrial Relations Update

For Information






This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act Northern Ireland 2014- information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 **13.06.2024 SPRC IR Update.pdf** **Not included**

14.0 Year End Management Accounts (Draft)

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act Northern Ireland 2014- information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 Management Accounts 202324 - SPR.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 1 - MA by Directorate as at 31.03.24 - Summary.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 2 - MA by Assistant Directorate at 31.03.24.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 3 - MA by Expense Code as at 31.3.24.pdf	Not included
 Appendix 4 - Payroll Report as at 31.03.24.pdf	Not included

15.0 Minutes of SFWG Working Group held 2 May 2024

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act Northern Ireland 2014- information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 SFWG Minutes - 21-05-24.pdf	Not included
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16.0 Specific Delegated Authority - Newry Leisure Centre

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act Northern Ireland 2014- information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 SPR report June 24 - Specific Delegated Authority.pdf	Not included
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ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – Thursday 14 March 2024					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken / Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet? Y/N
SPR/042/2024	Hybrid Meetings	It was agreed a report be brought back to Committee regarding the new Chamber system and the resources required to manage it.	J Kelly	Options being explored and report to be brought back to future meeting.	N
ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – Thursday 18 April 2024					
SPR/056/2024	Notice of Motion – Ethical Procurement	It was agreed that NMD Council affirms to consider a section under ethical procurement and will review the Council's tender process. It was also agreed this item remain on the action sheet until such time as new Policies were forthcoming to Committee.	J Kelly	Procurement Policy is being updated with new legislation. Report to be brought back to SP & R in due course.	N
SPR/064/2024	Proposed Lease of Lands at Lisimore Park, Crossmaglen	A report be brought to committee detailing all lands leased at a peppercorn rent, whether they are in use, and if not be added to the surplus asset register	A Patterson	Review of Council's land as part of AHC Business Plan 2024/25.	Y
ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – Thursday 16 May 2024					
SPR/075/2024	Action sheet of meeting held 18.04.2024	It was agreed to note the action sheet	J Kelly	Agreed	Y
SPR/076/2024	Notice of Motion – Projected Rates Increase C/060/2024	The following was agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">To proceed as per the Council decision to deliver the NCCR Programme of works as agreed including development of the Civic and Regional Hub at Abbey Way Newry.To note Council's decision for two offices, one in Newry and one in Downpatrick.To note the new Civic Hub in Newry provides the facilities to deliver on the needs of the Council going forward in respect of accommodation for both staff and elected members and is in line with the Council's Agile working policy.To note that an extensive site selection exercise was completed in 2019, that considered the Lidl site, and Council approved Abbey Way site as the preferred location for the Civic Hub.	C Mallon	Agreed Noted Noted Noted	Y

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note that it is anticipated that the carpark income levels at Abbey Way will not be negatively impacted. Council carries out a review of the capital projects programme at SFWG to identify whether the planned capital projects were an accurate reflection of Council's objectives, alongside the continued delivery of Newry Civic Centre. 	J Kelly	Agreed	
SPR/077/2024	Proposed Lease of Lands at Orior Park, Bessbrook	P Rooney	Agreed	Y
SPR/078/2024	Proposed renewal of lease of lands adjacent to Cloughreagh Community Centre	P Rooney	Agreed	Y
SPR/079/2024	DFI Rivers legal agreement with NMD	C Mallon	Agreed	Y
SPR/080/2024	Newry Leisure Centre	C Boyd	Agreed	Y
SPR/081/2024	IT Update	J Kelly	Noted	Y
SPR/082/2024	Newry Swimming Pool Update	A Patterson	Noted	Y
SPR/083/2024	LMP Funding update	C Mallon	Noted	Y
SPR/084/2024	Specific Delegated Authority	J Kelly	Noted	Y
SPR/085/2024	Statutory reporting – rural needs annual monitoring report for period 1 April	C Moffett	Noted	Y

	2024 – 31 March 2024					
SPR/086/2024	Statutory Reporting – Section 75 policy screening report for period Jan – Mar 2024	It was agreed to note the contents of the report	C Moffett	Noted		Y
SPR/087/2024	Annual report for the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 on requests related to naming council facilities, planting trees and to locate artworks/sculpture s on Council property.	It was agreed to note the contents of the report.	C Moffett	Noted		Y
END						

ACTION SHEET – SPECIAL STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – Thursday 30 May 2024					
Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken / Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet? Y/N
SPR/090/2024	Financial Assistance Programme	<p>The following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To note the contents of the report and that a full review of the financial assistance programme and procedures, as agreed at ERT Committee in April 2024, will be carried out when Call 2 has been closed; - The re-allocation of a portion of the existing Council's Tourism Events Programme Budget to the Tourist & Events Theme under Call 1 of the Financial Assistance Programme as set out within the officer's report; - that the Council will utilise Council budgets across each directorate to a minimum level to meet the financial shortfall of the Call 1 Financial Assistance Programme. This will be actioned in the 2024/25 year but the review of financial assistance will determine that the budget set at Rates process will be the allocation available in future years. It is noted that this will only apply to Call 1; - will write to the department for communities to ask for any support they might provide to assist the programme themes within the Financial Assistance, recognising that Newry Mourne and Down is an area of deprivation which has faced cuts in Rate Support Grant in recent years; - officers will table a report at SPR Committee on the implications across Directorates. 	<p>C Mallon</p> <p>C Mallon</p> <p>M Ward</p> <p>Democratic Services</p> <p>J Kelly</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Communication issued.</p> <p>Report to be tabled at SPR Committee in due course.</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>N</p>
SPR/091/2024	Single Tender Action Approval	It was agreed to approve the single tender action as detailed within the officer's report	S Murphy	Actioned	Y

STRATEGY, POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date	Time	Location
13 June 2024	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
15 August 2024	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
12 September 2024	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
17 October 2024	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
14 November 2024	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
12 December 2025	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
23 January 2025	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
13 February 2025	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
13 March 2025	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
17 April 2025	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre
15 May 2025	6.00 pm	Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre

Report to:	Strategy Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	13 June 2024
Subject:	Directorate Business Plans
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Marie Ward – Chief Executive Josephine Kelly – Director: Corporate Services
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Marie Ward – Chief Executive Josephine Kelly – Director: Corporate Services

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	X	For noting only	
1.0			Purpose and Background
1.1			<p>Directorate Business Plans provide an overview of planned activity for the year ahead, and contribute to the delivery of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and other key plans and strategies. They form an essential part of the Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, which demonstrates how corporate objectives are cascaded across the organisation and provides assurance that they are being delivered.</p> <p>As Directorate Business Plans are directly aligned to the achievement of the Corporate Plan, they remain fairly high level, and do not necessarily capture the core, business as usual activity that is undertaken by individual departments. Alternatively, they provide an insight into the key, overarching objectives, supporting actions and measures of success for each Directorate in the year ahead, whilst setting the context for the development of departmental Service Plans which are operational in nature.</p>
2.0			Key issues
2.1			<p>Assessment of Directorate Business Plans 2023-24</p> <p>In order to improve transparency and accountability, and facilitate a performance led approach to business planning, each Directorate has undertaken an assessment of their Business Plan 2023-24. These assessments provide an overview of the performance of each Directorate and have been used to influence the development of the 2024-25 Business Plans. This exercise is an important part of the Council's statutory responsibility to strengthen the way performance is monitored, reviewed and reported across the organisation.</p> <p>The assessment of the Chief Executive's Business Plan and Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2023-24 are attached at Appendices 1 and 2.</p>
2.2			<p>Directorate Business Plan 2024-25</p> <p>Directorate Business Plans 2024-25 outline the key objectives, actions and measures each Directorate will work towards and are aligned to the objectives within the Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27. Directorate Business Plans 2024-25 are also now aligned to the new organisational structure following completion of the planning for the future process which has led to the merger of the Chief Executive and Corporate Services business plans. Going forward therefore there will now be 4 Directorate Business Plans.</p>

	The Chief Executive – Corporate Services Business Plan and Corporate Services Business Plan 2024-25 is attached at Appendix 3.
2.3	It should be noted that further improvements to the business planning process are underway across the Council, particularly in relation to cascading corporate objectives in a meaningful way to employees through the introduction and roll-out of Service Plans and People Perform Grow. This process seeks to improve the use of performance measures at all levels of the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and create a clear 'line of sight' between the work of individuals, teams and departments, and how they contribute to the achievement of Directorate Business Plans and the Corporate Plan.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To consider and agree the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of the Chief Executive's Business Plan and Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2023-24 Chief Executive – Corporate Services Business Plan 2024-25
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	There are no financial resources implications within this report.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p>

	<p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> Consultation not required.</p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	Appendices
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 1 – Assessment of the Chief Executive’s Business Plan 2023-24 • Appendix 2 – Assessment of the Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2023-24 • Appendix 3 – Chief Executive – Corporate Services Business Plan 2024-25
8.0	Background Documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorate Business Plans 2023-24 • Assessments of Directorate Business Plans 2022-23

Chief Executive's Department

Annual Assessment Business Plan 2023-24

Introduction

This report provides an overview of progress in delivering the Business Plan 2023-24 for the Chief Executive's Department across the following service areas:

- Business Transformation
- Evidence and Research
- Community Planning
- Democratic Services

The delivery of the Chief Executive's Departmental Business Plan 2023-24 supports the achievement of all community planning outcomes and corporate objectives, specifically the corporate objectives outlined below. Performance has also been tracked using the legend below.

Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement





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





Legend



Status	
	Target or objective achieved / on track to be achieved
	Target or objective partially achieved / likely to be achieved / subject to delay
	Target or objective not achieved / unlikely to be achieved





Chief Executive's Department


Key Office Objectives / Actions
<p>Community Planning – Work with partners to lead the implementation of the Community Plan and deliver better outcomes for local people.</p> <p>Evidence and Research – Develop a robust and reliable evidence base to underpin and inform future decision-making and policy development processes.</p> <p>Democratic Services – Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council.</p>






Community Planning			
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
Work with partners to lead the implementation of the Community Plan and deliver better outcomes for local people	Advocate with others for the benefit of all people of the district		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Support the Strategic Stakeholder Forum in progressing priority projects including social supermarkets, hardship funds distribution and asylum seeker provision.	Q1 onwards		NMD Social Supermarket and will launch was delivered in 2023, with hardship fund scheme delivered in 2023/24 financial year
Facilitate three Community Planning Partnership Board meetings	Q1 onwards		Community Planning Partnership Board meetings held in June and September 2023 and January 2024.
Progress and review agreed actions within the community planning priority subgroups and identify future workstreams	Q1 onwards		The Thematic summit for Health & Wellbeing (October 2023) identified a number of priority areas under this theme. A working group has been established to take forward actions to address these priorities
Ensure representation of the Council and CPP at the Integrated Care Systems pilot within the Southern HSCT area.	Q1 onwards		Community Planning manager has represented Council throughout the pilot which has been extended until January 2024.

In collaboration with the Department for Communities, facilitate the 'People and Place' review for the District	Q1 onwards		Council continue to support DfC in their review activity, including facilitating liaison with the Strategic Stakeholder Forum
Facilitate the Thematic Summit for the Health and Wellbeing theme of the Community Plan.	Q3		Thematic Summit for the Health and Wellbeing was held in October 2023, with over 100 delegates from Statutory and community voluntary sector partners
Prepare, progress and publish the Community Planning review and 2023 Statement of Progress.	Q4		Review of indicators and measures has been agreed by the CP Partnership, with the Statement of progress being completed in January 2024
Work with Community Planning partners to progress the development and implementation of further Participatory Budgeting projects across the District	Q4		A Participatory Budgeting workshop is planned for Q2 2024.





Evidence and Research			
OBJECTIVE Develop a robust and reliable evidence base to underpin and inform future decision-making and policy development processes	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Provide Geographic Information System (GIS) and data analytics support across the organisation	Q1 onwards		Number of data analytics projects supported including for planning, economic development and community planning
Work with internal departments to develop service specific GIS applications to support service delivery	Q1 onwards		Number of service specific condition collector app GIS launched this year including a litter bin survey app.

Facilitate effective stakeholder consultation and engagement through online surveys and the NMD Citizens Panel	Q1 onwards		Surveys conducted on parks and beaches satisfaction, museum services, tourism strategy, good relations provision and corporate plan. Speak NMD utilised for Irish Language Strategy, Disability Action Plan, Equality Action Plan and Performance Improvement Plan
Update the evidence base documentation that underpin evidence based decision making such as: - Health Inequalities - Socio economic needs of people in rural areas. Key findings (NMDDC) census 2021.	Q1 onwards		Delayed until 2024/25
Prepare indicator update for the 2023 Community Plan Statement of Progress	Q3		This process is completed, all recommendations accepted by CPP
Develop a series of project scorecards for internal and community planning projects	Q3 - Q4		Update on all indicator data included in 2024 Statement of progress, further scorecards will be complete in 2024/25

Democratic Services			
OBJECTIVE Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Advocate with others for the benefit of all people of the district		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Provide administrative and governance support to the Council, Standing Committees, PCSP/Policing Committee and ad-hoc Working Groups	Q1 onwards		The Council continues to provide administrative and governance support to the monthly meetings of Council and its Standing Committees, as well as the quarterly meetings of the Audit Committee. Action sheets

			for each meeting are instrumental in monitoring and tracking progress in implementing Council decisions. Since March 2024 Council has reverted to in-person meetings due to a change in legislation.
Organise the annual meeting of the Council and manage the appointment to positions of responsibility for the Council and Committees	Q1		The annual meeting of the Council took place in June 2023, following the Local Government Elections and Elected Members have been appointed to designated positions of responsibility for 2023-24, as well as the first term of Council in relation to political party representation.
Organise and publish the programme of Council and Committee meetings	Q1		The programme of Committee meetings for 2023-24 has been organised, agreed and published on the corporate website.
Organise an induction, training and capacity building programme to support Elected Members in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities, including e-learning, Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Decision Time, Safeguarding, Data Protection and Performance Management	Q1		Following the Local Government Election, induction training was provided to newly Elected Members in Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Data Protection and Safeguarding. Elected Members are receiving reminders from Democratic Services regarding ongoing cyber security training.
Commence preparations to re-attain the Elected Development Charter for NMDDC	Q2 – Q4		Preparations have begun with Party Representatives taking a lead role in pushing forward to re-attain the Elected Member Development Charter.
Support the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson in carrying out their role(s) as First Citizen(s)	Q1 onwards		The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson have a designated resource within the Council to support them in fulfilling their role(s) as

			First Citizen(s). To date, the Chairperson has hosted 21 civic receptions and attended 180 official events across the District.
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Measures of Success			
Measure	Actual	Status	Explanation
Compliance with the statutory Duty of Improvement			
Compliance with the statutory Duty of Community Planning			
The number of events hosted on behalf of the Chairperson	21		Since June 23 the Chairperson has hosted 21 events, including visits to the Council chambers from local schoolchildren in Newry and Downpatrick and hosted a very successful Awards evening.
The number of official events attended by the Chairperson/Vice Chairperson	180		The Chairperson attended 180 official events across the District. These included Community Festivals, Coffee Mornings, YAFTAs, Eco-schools, Vintage Shows and events organised across the District following the devastating flooding. The Chairperson illuminated Council buildings to recognise 'NHS 75 th Birthday', 'Alzheimer's Foundation' and 'Baby Loss Awareness Week'.

Corporate Services

Annual Assessment Business Plan 2023-24

Introduction

This report provides an overview of progress in delivering the Corporate Services Business Plan 2023-24 across the following service areas:

- Finance, including Procurement and Performance
- Human Resources, including Safeguarding
- Corporate Planning and Policy, including Communications and Marketing
- Administration, including Legal Services, Compliance and Registration Services
- Information Technology
- Estates and Capital projects, including Health and Safety and Emergency Planning

The delivery of the Corporate Services Business Plan 2023-24 supports the achievement of all corporate objectives, particularly the following corporate objectives, and performance has been tracked using the legend below.

Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

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


Enhance, protect and promote our environment







Legend


Status	
	Target or objective achieved / on track to be achieved
	Target or objective partially achieved / likely to be achieved / subject to delay
	Target or objective not achieved / unlikely to be achieved







Directorate objectives, supporting actions and measures of success






Key Office Objectives / Actions
Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a Corporate Compliance Service Deliver a Corporate Business Support Service and Registration Service Provide a Corporate Legal Support Service
Corporate Planning and Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a Corporate Planning and Corporate Policy function, including statutory duty compliance and Irish Language Provide a corporate Communications and Marketing service including digital communications
Estates and Capital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adequate Emergency Planning and response Provide appropriate Health and Safety and Insurance provision Provide strategic asset strategy for Council
Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide and efficient finance function Ensure appropriate risk management arrangements in place Provide an effective procurement service Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements.
HR and Safeguarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to mitigate existing and emerging safeguarding risks, for both Council & Citizens Provide a professional HR service all employment matters, including employee relations, resourcing and development Contribute to the further development of future workforce skills
IT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a highly available, accessible, and secure IT environment to support Council services.








Administration			
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
Provide a Corporate Compliance Service	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Review and update the Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedure (COIPP) including implementing a new monitoring and evaluation process.	Q1 -Q4		Completed. Approved and adopted COIPP published on Councils website



Review and update the Gifts and Hospitality Policy and Procedure (G&HPP) including implementing a new monitoring and evaluation process.	Q1 -Q4		Action not completed due to additional work pressures, performing dual role and staff absences.
Ensure SPRC receive an updated Access to Information and Records Management Policy and Procedure by their respective review dates.	Q1 -Q4		Completed. Approved and adopted ATIPP and RMPP published on Councils website
OBJECTIVE Deliver a Corporate Business Support Service and Registration Services	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Design and implement service standards for all activities delivered by the corporate business support service	Q2		Absence of key staff has delayed this work into the 2024/25 corporate planning year.
Provide improved corporate Complaints Management through implementation of and support for the NIPSO Model Complaints Handling Procedure	Q3		MCHP introduced in January 2024. Tracker in place and complaints reports being regularly produced.
OBJECTIVE Provide a Corporate Legal Support Service	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Complete a Retention and Disposal review of historical legal files extracting information which requires to be retained (R/BS and store review)	Q4		This is an onerous and time consuming task as essentially the Legal Team have to consider contents of all files in store. Extensive progress has been made but this has not yet completed due to a depleted team and additional work constraints.
Work with Evidence Section to ensure all relevant Council assets are included on the ARC GIS system	Q1 -Q4		Considerable progress has been made but this is not yet complete due to reduction in staff members and prioritising essential legal work.





In line with Council's Digital First policy move as far as possible to electronic files versus paper-based files.	Q1 -Q4		Files are currently opened electronically and paper-based. The absence of a suitable case management system will delay any move away from the requirement for paper-based files for legal work . The paper files are currently essential for work practices in Legal.
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Corporate Planning and Policy			
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
Provide a corporate planning and policy service	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Development of the Corporate Plan 2023-2027	Q3		Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2027 prepared for consideration. Further to agreement at SPR meeting a 12-week public consultation was initiated in Q4.
Ensure Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties compliance	Q4		Ongoing statutory duties compliance undertaken during the reporting period.
Review Corporate Consultation and Engagement Framework	Q4		Not achieved by Q4 but to be carried into 2024-2025 directorate and service plans.
Development of Equality Action Plan 2023-2027	Q2		Finalised Equality Action Plan 2023-2027 agreed at Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee on 14 September 2023.
Development of Disability Action Plan 2023-2027	Q2		Finalised Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 agreed at Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee on 14 September 2023.
Development of Community Wealth Building Action Plan	Q2		Draft Community Wealth Building Action Plan prepared. It has been agreed that CWB will be a cross-cutting theme within directorate and service plans.



Development of Irish Language Strategy 2023-2027	Q2		Finalised Irish Language Strategy 2024 -2027 agreed at Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee on 16 November 2023.
Review Irish Language Bursary Scheme	Q3		Considered and discussed at Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group on 7 November 2023.
OBJECTIVE Provide a corporate Communications and Marketing service	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Provide a Press Office service to include raising awareness of Council corporate priorities, services, facilities and responding to media enquiries across local, regional, national and special media	Q1 -Q4		454 media enquiries responded to in accordance with Media Policy. 173 press releases issued to local, regional and national press and posted on the corporate social media channels and website.
Continue to manage, deliver and develop the Council's corporate social media channels	Q1 -Q4		1,514,332 recorded visits (hits) to the Council's corporate website. 73,666 public / stakeholder users registered to corporate social media (Facebook likes, X/Twitter followers). 2,474 social media notifications to the public / stakeholder users via corporate social media (eg posts, tweets etc)
Contribute to work on the development of a new corporate website with regards to content management (when required)	Q1 - Q4		Awaiting corporate direction on next steps.
Renew ESPO Framework for Advertising Solutions	Q3		Completed Q3. New ESPO Framework implemented December 2023.



Award tender for Media Monitoring Services	Q2		Completed Q2. New contract awarded September 2023.
Review, update and implement Year 2 of Corporate Digital Communications Action Plan 2022-2024	Q1 – Q4		Ongoing implementation.
Develop a new Digital Advertising Staff Toolkit	Q1 – Q4		Completed in Q3.
Finalise NMDDC Emergency Communications Plan (ECP)	Q2		Completed in Q3.
Establish the Roving Reporter approach as an integral resource in the C/M Service Plan	Q3		Completed in Q3.
Develop a calendar of significant PR and digital opportunities to support the Chairperson 2023/2024	Q1 – Q4		Development and implementation in partnership with Democratic Services section.
Support the Chief Executive's Office in the development and delivery of signature projects 2023/2024	Q1 – Q4		Development and implementation in partnership with SMT.



Estates and Capital			
OBJECTIVE Provide adequate Emergency Planning and Response	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Enhance, protect and promote our environment		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Update of the Council Emergency Plan following review of JESIP Doctrine, including training of staff and elected members. Dependent on SMT/CMT structures in place	Q3		Completed
Ensure debrief of emergencies/ incidents (internally & externally) as appropriate to capture learning – within 6 weeks of end of response phase.	Q1 -Q4		Completed




Including - SMT/ CMT/ EPIG/ LG Resilience/ Statutory Agencies			
OBJECTIVE Provide adequate Health & Safety and Insurance provision	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Enhance, protect and promote our environment		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Review of current H&S Policy and communication to staff to accurately reflect mechanisms for effective consultation & communication (governance & operational)	Q3		Ongoing consultation with Trade Unions to get Policy finalised.
Proactive investigation and review of reported employee lost-time accidents working with relevant line manager and escalation of issues to SMT/CMT as required.	Q1 – Q4		Completed
Continue to contribute to the library of e-learning H&S modules available for staff in line with Corporate H&S Training Framework/ Matrix – in conjunction with Learning & Development Staff (HR). SHEP request direct access to update content	Q1- Q4		Completed
OBJECTIVE Provide strategic Estate Management and Capital Project support to Council	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Enhance, protect and promote our environment		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Deliver approved capital projects through design, procurement and delivery stages and provide regular and updated reports to departments	Q1 - Q4		Completed. Monthly report to SMT on progress.
Advise and assist departments in the identification of projects for	Q1 – Q4		Completed.








consideration for inclusion in the capital programme, including advising of projected costs, programme, risks and procurement strategy.			
Continuation with the identification and disposal of all surplus assets, including the direct liaison with directorates and external organisations	Q1 – Q4		Completed. Regular reports have been provided to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.








Human Resources			
OBJECTIVE Provide a professional HR service on all employment matters, including employee relations, resourcing and development and safeguarding.	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Continue to embed People Perform Grow across all services, supported by training and support to managers, employees and teams.	Q1 - Q4		A variety of training initiatives and programmes have taken place throughout the year to embed People Perform and Grow. This has included mandatory workshops were successful, 87% of the target audience attended and feedback was excellent and 12 'PPG Roadshows' reaching 300 employees.
In conjunction with the recognised trade unions, review existing industrial relations structures, with a view to developing revised arrangements as required.	Q2 - Q4		Independent third party engaged and work in progress to develop an industrial relations framework following MS & TUS agreement on 28 February 2024.
Finalisation for approval of the Outline Business case for HR Systems and review of existing HR Processes with stakeholder input	Q3 - Q4		An OBC has been drafted and is nearing completion.

In conjunction with the Equality and Evidence & Research Teams, work with key stakeholders across the organisation to develop Affirmative Action measures to examine opportunities to promote NMDDC as an equal opportunities' employer.	Q1-Q4		Work ongoing in this area.
Implementation of Tier 3 PFF management structures.	Q2 – Q3		Tier 3 PFF management structures in place. Work continues to fill 2 remaining posts.
Support and protect everyone in our District from harm by working in partnership with other bodies, to implement and promote broader prevention measures, thereby continuing to mitigate existing and emerging safeguarding risks, for both Council & Citizens.	Q1 – Q4		

Information Technology			
OBJECTIVE Provide a highly available, and secure IT environment to support Council services	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Replace the Council's Computing Platform to improve its stability and resilience and operate it as a firm foundation to support future business requirements.	Q4		Complete
Continue to develop and test response plans and capabilities in line with CAF (Cyber Assessment Framework) and other relevant standards.	Q1 – Q4		On-going. Full test due to compete in May 2024

Continue to increase user awareness and resilience through the provision of training, advice and testing.	Q1 - Q4		Complete and on-going
OBJECTIVE Provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Continue implementation of IT Transformation Programme	Q1 – Q4		Complete and on-going
Support IT change associated with non-IT projects	Q1 –		Complete and on-going





Finance			
OBJECTIVE Provide an efficient finance function	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
P2P Procedures (as per IA report) – including Bank Details verification	Q3		Work is ongoing, included within 2024/25 Business plan
Training on PECOS – recap and for new staff	Q3		Training will be provided once new guide is developed, included within the 2024/25 Business Plan
Account Receivable Procedures including TW (as per IA report)	Q2		Completed
Review of Payroll Process (standarisation off both sites)	Q3		Work is ongoing, included within 2024/25 Business plan
Payslips on CINTRA	Q3		Some payslips have now moved to CINTRA, consultation ongoing to transfer all payslips. Included within 2024/25 Business plan
New Capital Procedure – Business Cases and financial management	Q1		Completed. Presented to SFWG and now effective
Quarterly Capital Management Reports detailing spend	Q1		Completed. Presented to SMT as part of quarter 3 Management Accounts.
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		

Ensure appropriate risk management arrangements are in place	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Review of Whistleblowing / Raising Concerns procedures	Q3		Draft completed, to be approved at the July 2024 Audit Committee. Included within 2024/25 Business plan
Review of Fraud Response Plan	Q3		Completed, approved at the May 2024 Audit Committee
Fraud Risk Assessment to be completed	Q2		Included within 2024/25 Business plan
Training for new Audit Committee Members	Q2		Completed, Training provided by NILGOSC on behalf of all Councils in September 2023.
OBJECTIVE	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
Provide an effective procurement service	Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement		
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Procurement policy to be updated to create an interim policy document pending full review upon implementation of new procurement legislation.	Q4		Included within the 2024/25 Business Plan. Procurement Policy to be updated in its entirety when the new Procurement Legislation is introduced in October 2023.
Procurement team to receive official training on new legislative framework prior to its implementation.	Q4		Included within the 2024/25 Business Plan. Training budget has been set aside and supplier arranged to train procurement team ahead of the new legislation. There has been a delay in the introduction of the new legislation.
Continue to update and maintain Contract Register but make the Contract Register an internal resource available to all staff in the 'R' drive.	Q2		Completed. A single central Contracts Register with up to date and accurate information has already established and the Procurement Team are responsible for updating it. The Contract Register has been made available for all staff to access since June 2023.

Continue to monitor developments regarding Social Value in Procurement and move to implementation once legally practicable	Ongoing		Completed. A notice of motion has also been considered and an update will be brought back to the SP&R Committee in 2024/25.
Develop a MultiQuote quick guide for staff and host a virtual training session	Q3		Completed. MultiQuote quick guide now included within the central drive.
Explore options to enhance visibility of Council tender processes, for example through working with Elcom to enable MultiQuote competitions to be advertised on E-tenders NI and E-tenders.ie.	Q4		Work is ongoing and tenders in the first instance will be published on our social media channels. Further work is to be completed in relation to E-Tenders.
Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements		ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN	
		Provide accessible, high quality and integrated services through continuous improvement	
Action	Timescale	Status	Progress
Prepare and publish the Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24	Q1		The draft performance improvement objectives were endorsed through the public consultation and engagement process and published in the Performance Improvement Plan, which was made available on the corporate website before 30 September 2023, in line with the amended statutory timescale for 2023-24.
Prepare and publish the Assessment of Performance 2022-23	Q2		The Assessment of Performance 2022-23 provides an overview of progress against the 'measures of success' in the Corporate Plan 2021-23 and Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23, and was published before 30 September 2023, in line with the statutory timescale. The

			summary document entitled 'Our Performance Looking Back, Going Forward' was also published on the corporate website.
Facilitate the Performance Audit and Assessment and implement the 'proposals for improvement' put forward by the Local Government Auditor	Q2 – Q3		Following the Performance Audit and Assessments, the NI Audit Office has issued both the 2022-23 S95 report. The Council continues to comply with the statutory Duty of Improvement and implement the proposals for improvement.
Develop the 2024-25 performance improvement objectives, in line with the Corporate Plan	Q3 – Q4		The draft performance improvement objectives 2024-25 have been developed however the public consultation was not launched until mid April with this engagement process due to be completed by the 31 May 2024.
Strengthen the alignment across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and co-ordinate the business and service planning process	Q1 onwards		The alignment across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework continues to strengthen through the Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plan, Directorate Business Plans, Service Plans and People Perform Grow, which enables teams and employees to identify their contribution to achieving strategic outcomes and objectives.
Implement the new electronic Performance Management System and embed the system through training of relevant officers	Q1 – Q2		The new electronic performance has progressed and the data upload has been complete with training scheduled for Q1 2024/25

Measures of Success				
Measure	Target	Actual	Status	Explanation

Administration: 95% of responses to requests for information provided within statutory timeframe	95%	97%		
Finance: Pay 90% of invoices to suppliers within 30 days	90%	95%		95% of all invoices were paid within the 30 day period.
IT: 97.5% System "UP" Time	97.5%	99%	↑	
HR: People, Perform, Grow rolled out across the organisation	N/A			
Estates and Capital Projects: 90% of staff to receive training on the new Health & Safety Policy	90%			H&S Policy has yet to be finalised. Consultation ongoing with the Trade Unions.
Corporate Planning and Policy: 90% of media requests for information responded to within agreed timeframes	90%	91%		454 media enquiries received. Response timeframes are appropriate to the nature of the request eg: operational – provide clarification, comment or update on subject matter to meet with daily/weekly publications; or detailed response – requiring access to information held on file, historical information etc. to meet with ICO guidance.

Chief Executive / Corporate Services Directorate

Annual Business Plan 2024-25



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

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1.0 Introduction

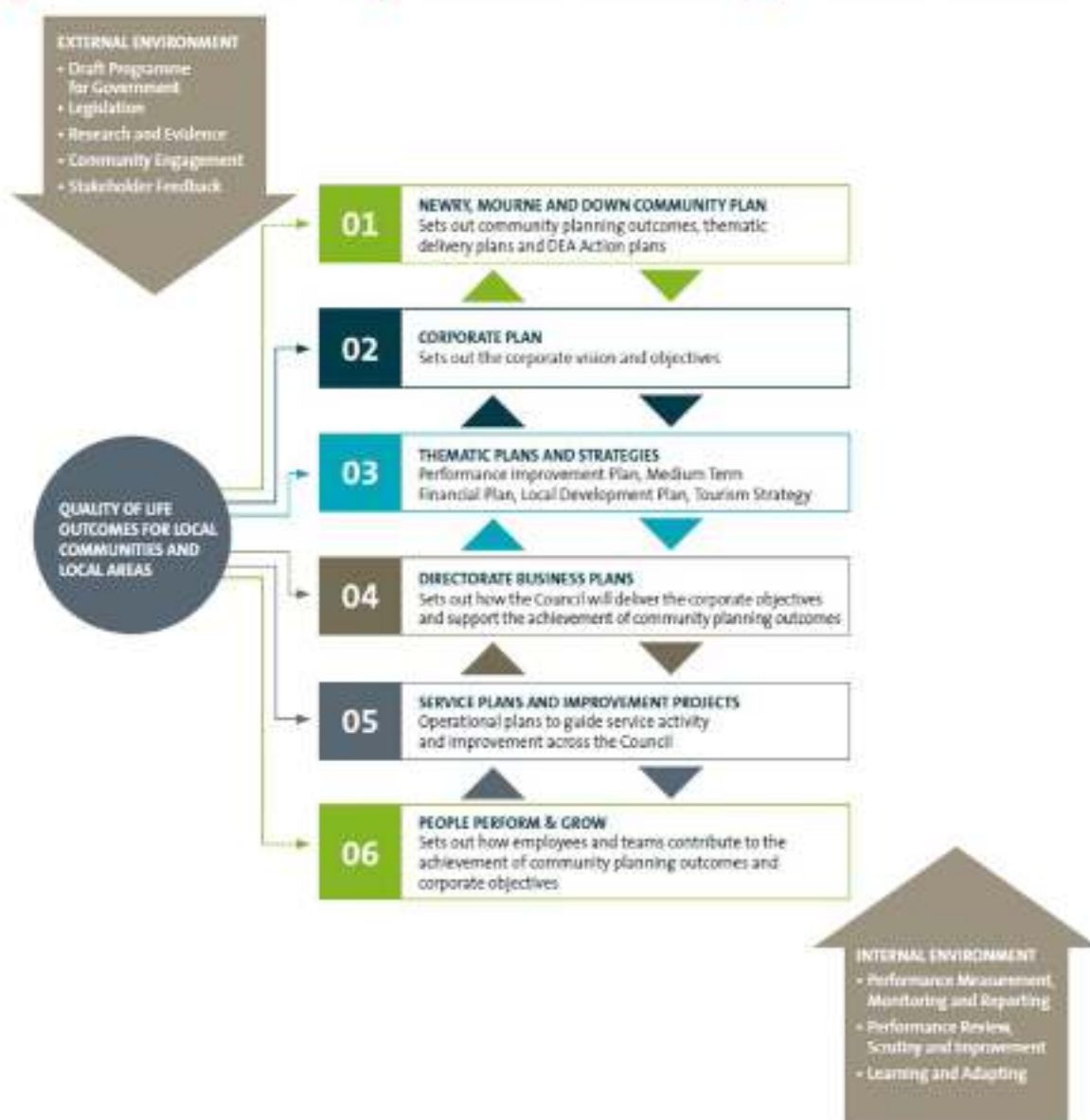
- 1.1 The Chief Executive / Corporate Services Directorate is responsible for supporting the organisation to achieve the strategic objectives as set out in the Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27. The Directorate is responsible for the overall management of the Council's staff, finances and elected members and plays a key role in providing professional advice and guidance to support and improve the services provided. The Directorate provides services directly to the public through corporate communications and marketing, as well as providing registration, digital and telephony, emergency advice and customer services.
- 1.2 The core responsibilities of the Department are:
 - **Finance, including Performance**
 - **Human Resources, including Safeguarding**
 - **Corporate Planning and Policy**
 - **Communications and Marketing**
 - **Information Technology**
 - **Administration, including Legal Services, Compliance and Registration Services**
 - **Estates and Capital projects, including Procurement**
 - **Democratic Services**

2.0 Background and Context

- 2.1 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan is developed within the context of the Community Plan and draft Corporate Plan 2024-27 and Performance Improvement Plan. The Community Plan sets out the long-term outcomes for the District, based on the needs and aspirations of local people. The draft Corporate Plan sets out the key strategic objectives for the Council between 2024-27, and how it will contribute to achieving the community planning outcomes. The Performance Improvement Plan highlights the improvements stakeholders can expect to see through the annual performance improvement objectives, which are clearly aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives
- 2.2 The Community Plan and Corporate Plan are cross cutting and strategic in nature. They guide all activity within the organisation, as well as the subsequent allocation of resources, and sit within a hierarchy of plans, as outlined in the 'Business Planning and Performance Management Framework' (Figure 1).
- 2.3 The Business Planning and Performance Management Framework drives and provides assurance that the Council is delivering its corporate vision and priorities, whilst securing continuous improvement in the exercise of functions. It provides a mechanism to join up and cascade the various plans and strategies across the organisation, demonstrating how employees

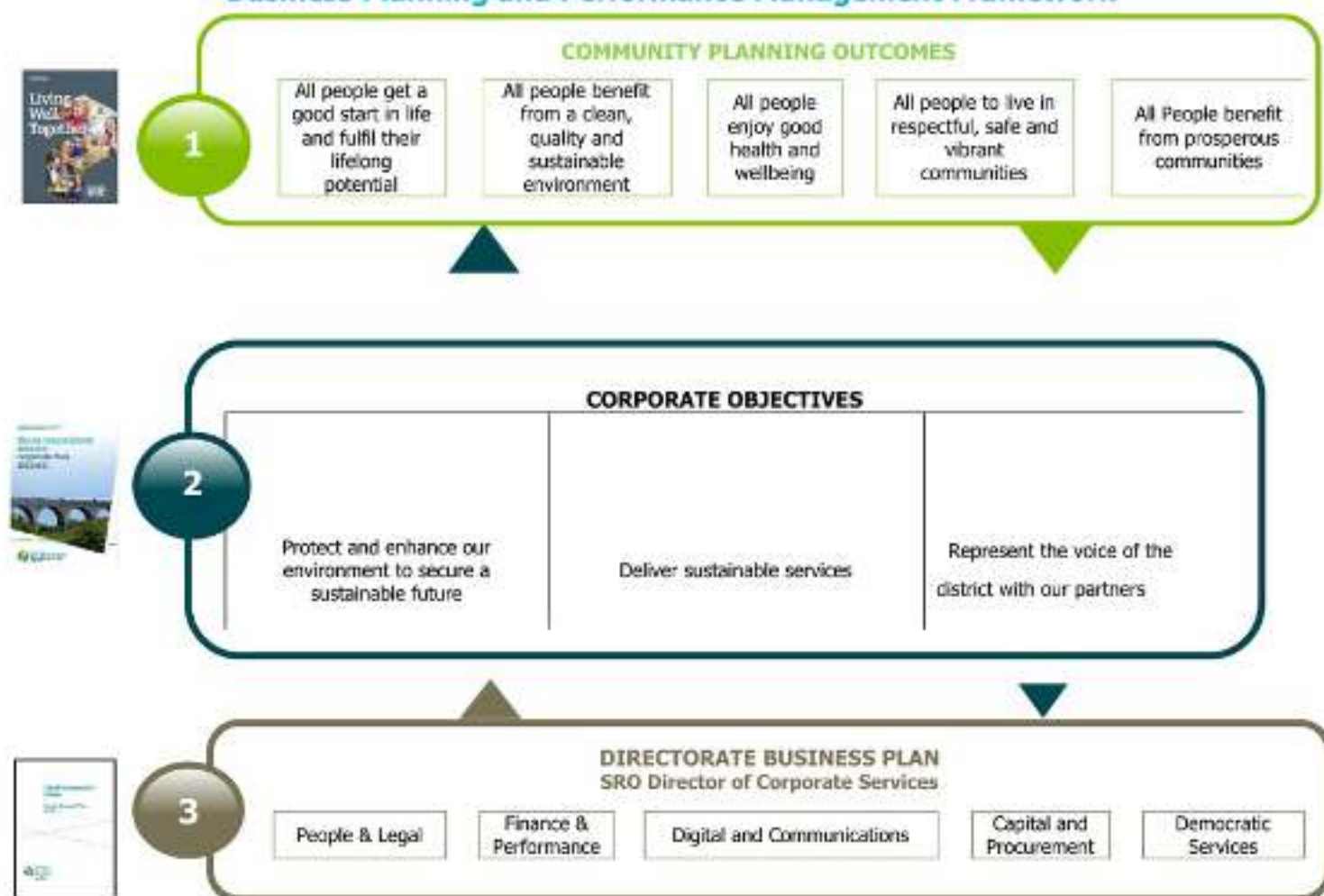
contribute to achieving community planning outcomes and corporate priorities, for the ultimate benefit of the citizens we serve.

Figure 1: Business Planning and Performance Management Framework



- 2.4 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan provides an overview of the key operational activities for the coming year. These activities are explicitly linked to corporate objectives and coupled with 'business as usual' service delivery, provide clear direction for all employees within the Directorate (Figure 2). Directorate Business Plans are supported by Service Plans and the 'People Perform and Grow' initiative.
- 2.5 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan is published annually and is the basis upon which performance is managed and reviewed by full Council, the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Senior Management Team.

Figure 2: Chief Executive/Corporate Services Alignment across the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework



3.0 Purpose and Values

3.1 Purpose

3.1.1 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Directorate's primary purpose is to provide the resources and support required to the organisation to enable delivery of the strategic (corporate) outcomes for the Council. As a result, the bulk of Directorate activity is aligned with the Council's strategic objective:

- Deliver Sustainable Services

3.1.2 However, there are other important Council strategic objectives where the Directorate makes a significant contribution in supporting the achievements of the objectives. Further, more detailed information is provided in Sections 5.0 (Corporate Services Supporting Actions 2024-25) and 6.0 (Performance) of this Plan.

3.1 Values

3.1.1 The Department adheres to the Council's values which are outlined in the draft Corporate Plan 2024-27:

	What This Means
Respect	We will demonstrate respect for all people in our attitudes, behaviours and working relationships.
Transparency	We will be transparent in how we make decisions.
Excellence	We will take pride in our work and be passionate about the standards we strive to achieve.
Integrity	We want the people of our district to trust us to do the right thing.
Accountability	We will be accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. We will be accountable for how we plan for and use resources responsibly.

3.2.2 In accordance with the Section 75 requirements of the Northern Ireland Act (1998), the Chief Executive/Corporate Services Department is committed to carrying out its functions having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard for the desirability to promote good relations. All new and revised policies, procedures and programmes of work will be subject to an equality screening and rural needs impact assessment (where appropriate).

4.0 Challenges and Opportunities

- 4.1 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Directorate was established in December 2014, as part of the organisational design of the new Council, to centralise the management of a number of existing Council functions as well as support new powers which were transferred to the Council on the 1 April 2015. From 1 April 2017, the functional areas of Corporate Planning and Policy, and Estates and Capital Projects have become part of the Corporate Services Directorate. For the purposes of efficiency, democratic services under the Chief Executives department is now reported through the Chief Executive/Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan.
- 4.2 The Directorate continues to develop in line with organisational change. Over the course of this financial year, the Directorate will continue to develop and embed the necessary corporate frameworks, policies, processes and systems to deliver strategic improvement across the organisation, specifically in the areas of human resources, finance, communications and information technology.

- 4.3 The various (internal and external) challenges and opportunities for the Directorate are summarised as follows:

External Environment

- **Financial Planning:** Establishing the necessary financial plans within which Members' priorities for the District will be delivered.
- **Legislation and Regulations:** Ensuring legislative compliance with a range of legislation including S75 NI Act, Rural Needs Act.
- **Corporate Planning and Policy:** Establishing the necessary corporate planning and policy frameworks within which Members priorities for the District will be delivered and statutory obligations met, and we communicate effectively.

Internal Environment

- **Management:** Successfully establishing the Directorate in terms of its structure, governance and internal processes and increased responsibilities.
- **Resources:** Identifying and securing the financial and non-financial resources needed for the Directorate to successfully develop.
- **Estate Planning and Asset Management:** Successfully developing and implementing the necessary frameworks, policies and processes to support the effective and efficient management of the Council's Estate.
- **Transformation & Efficiencies:** Successfully developing and implementing transformational change that drives out the efficiencies and improvements that both Members and the public demand.
- **Information Management:** Ensuring adequate policies and procedures are in place to effectively manage our information in accordance with legislative requirements.
- **Information Technology:** Establishing robust information technology infrastructure to support business transformation.
- **Compliance:** Establishing the necessary policies and procedures and monitoring arrangements to ensure corporate legislative compliance in respect of key statutory obligations, including Equality, Disability, Rural Needs, Employment and Procurement legislation.
- **Risk Management:** Managing potential risks and opportunities in achieving the key actions outlined in the CS/CX Business Plan by adhering to the Corporate Risk Management Policy and reviewing the CS/CX Risk Register on a quarterly basis.
- **Performance Management:** Managing Council performance, highlighting areas of high-performance, identifying areas for intervention, developing a performance led approach to business and service planning and facilitating the development of a performance improvement culture.
- **Corporate Communications and Marketing:** Developing and delivering relevant communications activities, aligned to the corporate strategic priorities and agreed approach, ensuring staff, members, residents and other stakeholders are kept well informed about the work of the Council and other

relevant activities in the district, in an appropriate, accessible and engaging manner.

5.0 Cross-Cutting Themes and Actions

There are a number of cross cutting actions aligned to the Community Planning Partnership priorities, Community Wealth Building and Sustainability and Climate Change that span across all Directorates and contribute to the fulfillment of Directorate Objectives, Corporate Objectives and ultimately Community Planning Outcomes.

Officers should indicate where their actions are contributing to the fulfillment of CPP, CWB or SCC actions by putting the relevant acronym in the column.

These actions should be identified in liaison with the relevant officers (CPP – Alan Beggs; CWB – Colin Moffett; SCC – Conor Sage) and relevant annual assessments of service plans forwarded to the above officers.

Acronym	Themes
CWB	Community Wealth Building
CPP	Community Planning Partnership priorities
SCC	Sustainability and Climate Change

Community Planning Partnership Priorities

While all actions will contribute to the delivery of the Community Plan, some actions may be considered appropriate to be contained within the Community Planning Partnership Priorities.

Relevant priorities should:

- Align to the outcomes of the Community Plan
- Involve collaborative working across statutory and community voluntary sector partners for both design and delivery.
- Report through the Community Planning Structures
- Measure and report impacts and outcomes

Community Wealth Building

Community Wealth Building is an approach to the way that economies function, retaining more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people.

Key actions in relation to CWB should deliver on the 5 recommendations and sub-recommendations contained within the CLES/DTNI report – Newry, Mourne and Down pioneering the potential of community wealth building.

Sustainability and Climate Change

Sustainability and the climate change emergency continues to be a key driver of Council with the key objective of improving the lives and livelihoods of the people who live and work here. Approval to develop a Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy was agreed in June 2023.

6.0 Directorate Objectives and Supporting Actions

Key Office Objectives / Actions

People & Legal –

Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations.

Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations.

Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.

Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery. Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities.

Provide efficient and professional HR services ensuring compliant integrated and sustainable services for all stakeholders that meet the corporate priorities and contractual obligations of the Council.

Finance and Performance -

Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations.

Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making.

Support the development of a performance culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements across Council

Digital and Communications -

Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service

Provide a highly available, accessible and secure Information Technology environment to support Council services

To provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated and compliant for all stakeholders that meet the corporate objectives.

Capital and Procurement –

Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.

Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives.

Democratic Services –

Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council

People & Legal			
Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations.	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Deliver sustainable services		
Action		Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Review and update current Retention and Disposal practices across Council, implementing methods to manage the review, retention and disposal of records.		Q1 – Q4	SSC
Review and update the Corporate Privacy Notice to help everyone understand how Council processes personal data		Q1 – Q4	
Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations.	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Deliver sustainable services		
Action		Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Embed NIPSO policies, procedures and monitoring arrangements to ensure compliance with NIPSOs statutory Model Complaints Handling Procedure.		Q1 – Q4	
Deliver a Professional Registration Service providing quality customer service standards for the delivery of births, deaths and marriages.		Q1 – Q4	
Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Deliver sustainable services		

Action		Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Complete a Retention and Disposal review of historical legal files extracting information which requires to be retained (R/BS and store review)		Q4	SCC
Work with Evidence Section to ensure all relevant Council assets are included on the ARC GIS system.		Q1 – Q4	
In line with Council's 'Digital First' approach move as far as possible to electronic files versus paper-based files		Q1 – Q4	SCC
Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery.	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Deliver sustainable services		
Action		Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
To finalise NMDDC Corporate Plan 2024-2027		Q2	
Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties implementation		Q1 – Q4	
Progress the use of the Irish language in civic life		Q1 – Q4	
Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities.	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Deliver sustainable services		
Action		Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Development of a Leadership Charter demonstrating our core values and an implementation action plan for roll out		Q1 – Q4	

Review statutory and mandatory training for the organisation, identifying key timelines	Q1 -Q2	
Refresh, Rebrand and Relaunch the eLearning portal	Q1 – Q2	
Continue to support Directorates to implement PPG for all staff across the organisation	Q1 – Q4	
Provide efficient and professional HR services ensuring compliant integrated and sustainable services for all stakeholders that meet the corporate priorities and contractual obligations of the Council.	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN	
	Deliver sustainable services	
Action	Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Development and implement a recruitment plan Q3	Q3	
Support Directorates to ensure staff absence is effectively managed to ensure appropriate and timely support for staff Q1-Q4	Q1 – Q4	
Develop an Industrial Relations Framework and agree a workplan with Joint Trade Union Side Q2	Q2	
Procure new systems and develop a project plan for new ways of working and efficient use of resources Q4	Q4	

Review and analyse current employment data and develop KPIs Q2-Q4	Q2 – Q4	
Identify ways to increase the number of people from disadvantaged communities who are employed by council Q2-Q4	Q2 – Q4	CWB
Finance and Performance		
Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations.	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN	
	Deliver sustainable services	
Action	Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Commence Payroll Service Review	Q2	
Standardisation of Payroll Procedures	Q4	
New Expense Management system to be introduced	Q2	
All Payslips to communicated electronically, were possible	Q4	
P2P Procedures to be updated (PECOS) and working procedures to be developed	Q3	
Accounts Receivable Procedures to be finalised, including Debt Recovery	Q2	
Commence service review of General Finance/Accounts	Q4	
Review of Finance System – Possibility of Contract Management Project/Item Code	Q2	
Review and update Financial Regulations of Council	Q4	
Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements		
	Deliver sustainable services	

are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making.			
Action		Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Review and update of Whistleblowing / Raising Concern Procedure		Q2	
Review and update Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan		Q1	
E-Learning Governance Training for Staff/Members		Q4	
Fraud Risk Assessment to be completed for Council		Q3	
Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Deliver sustainable services		
Action		Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Implementation of a new electronic Performance Management System throughout Council and embed the system through training of relevant officers		Q2	
Strengthen the alignment across Business Planning, Community Planning and Performance Management Framework and coordinate the business and service planning process		Ongoing	
Digital and Communications			
Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Deliver sustainable services		

Action		Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Finalise the structures of the Digital and Communications Department		Q3 – Q4	
Support the development and implementation of the Council's Digital Transformation Projects		Q1 – Q4	SCC
Review and update Corporate Communications Strategy and Action Plan 2025 – 2027		Q2 – Q3	
Support the communications and marketing of principle projects within the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027 (p23)		Q1 – Q4	
Progress Tenders for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photography/Videography • Graphic Design 		Q2 – Q4	
Provide a highly available, accessible and secure Information Technology environment to support Council services	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Deliver sustainable services		
Action		Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Wide Area Network (WAN) Replace existing Wide Area Network, perimeter security and remote worker systems		Q2	
Cyber risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continually develop incident response plans • Continue to bolster cyber security and recovery arrangements • Seek appropriate Cyber accreditation 		Q1- Q4	
Upgrade virtual server Operating Systems		Q1 – Q4	
Implement Privileged Access Management System		Q1 – Q4	
Plan and prepare to migrate client devices to Windows 11		Q2 – Q4	

To provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated and compliant for all stakeholders that meet the corporate objectives.	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Deliver sustainable services		
Action		Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Finalise and seek approval of the new Digital Strategy		Q1 – Q2	
Establish and implement a governance structure for Digital (including IT)		Q1 – Q4	
Prioritisation of IT Projects and Target Completion Dates		Q1 – Q4	
Capital and Procurement			
Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future		
Action		Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Deliver approved Capital projects through design, procurement and delivery stages providing regular updates and reports to directorates, project boards and committees.		Q1 – Q4	CWB SCC
Advise and assist departments in the identification of projects for consideration in the capital programme, including advising of project feasibility, costs, programme risks informing decision making and funding applications.		Q1 – Q4	CWB

Continuation with the identification and disposal of council surplus assets, including the direct liaison with directorates, legals and external organisations.		Q1 – Q4	CWB SCC
Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives.	ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN		
	Deliver sustainable services		
Action		Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme
Ensure In-depth training on new Procurement Act 2023 for Procurement team is completed before legislation comes into effect including Certified E-learning from cabinet office and Procurement law workshops. Promote Knowledge Drops corporately to enhance awareness of new legislation.		Q1 – Q4	
Increasing supplier outreach through attendance at Meet the Buyer type events and premarket engagement.		Q1 – Q4	SCC CWB
Enhancing visibility of NMDDC Tender opportunities in the marketplace through social media campaign.		Q4	SCC CWB
Develop new Procurement Policy. Once training on new legislation is complete overhaul the Procurement Policy to incorporate all the changes into NMDDC processes and supporting documentation.		Q2	CWB SCC
Develop new Contract Management Procedure		Q2	
Democratic Services			
		ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PLAN	

Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council	Represent the voice of the district with our partners		
Action	Timescale	Cross-Cutting Theme	
Provision of comprehensive administrative and governance support to Council, Standing Committees and ad hoc Working Groups	Q1 onwards	CPP	
<p>Organisation of Annual Meeting of the Council and manage the appointment to positions of responsibility for the Council and Committees</p> <p>Organise and publish the programme of Council and Committee meetings</p>	Q1	CPP	
Develop Elected Member Development induction, training and capacity building programme to support Elected Members in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.	Q1 onwards	CPP	
Develop pathway towards the reattainment the Elected Member Development Charter	Q4	CPP	
Support the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson in carrying out their role(s) as First Citizen(s)	Q1 onwards	CPP	

7.0 Performance

- 7.1 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services performs a key role in leading the development of robust and meaningful performance measures at all levels across the organisation. This exercise will also identify additional, suitable performance measures for the Corporate Services/Chief Executive Directorate.
- 7.2 In addition to managing and monitoring financial and human resources, the following performance measures will be monitored during 2024-25:

Measures of Success	
People & Legal	95% of responses to FOI/EIR/DP requests for information provided within statutory timeframes People Perform Grow, rolled out across the organisation Agreed Corporate Plan 2024-2027 (Yes / No) Corporate Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties compliance (Yes / No)
Finance & Performance	Pay 90% of invoices to suppliers within 30 days Compliance with the Statutory of Improvement Unqualified financial audit opinion Unqualified performance audit opinion
Digital & Communications	97.5% System "UP" Time 90% of media requests for information responded to within the agreed timeframes
Capital & Procurement	Capital projects programme and budget in line with agreed parameters and Council policy. Achieving outline planning permission on 75% of the surplus assets prior to disposal. Procurement policy fully implemented.
Democratic Services	The number of events hosted on behalf of the Chairperson / Vice Chairperson The number of official events attended by the Chairperson / Vice Chairperson

Chief Executive/ Corporate Services Plans and Strategies

- 7.3 The Chief Executive/Corporate Services Directorate is responsible for leading the development, implementation and review of the following plans and strategies, which influence the work of the Office and Council:
- Medium Term Financial Plan
 - Treasury Management Strategy
 - Equality Action Plan
 - Disability Action Plan
 - Irish Language Strategy
 - Corporate Communications Strategy
 - Corporate Digital Communications Strategy

- Information Technology Strategy
- Digital Transformation Strategy
- Estates and Asset Management Strategy
- Performance Improvement Plan
- Business Planning and Performance Management Framework
- Performance Improvement Policy
- Constitution

8.0 Organisation and Office Structure

- 8.1 Chief Executive/Corporate Services is one of five Directorates, which together, comprise the Management structure of the Council.

9.0 Financial Information

Net estimated expenditure (2024-25)	
People & Legal	£2,867,256
Finance & Performance	£1,317,899
Digital & Communications	£2,228,653
Capital & Procurement	£687,254
Democratic Services	£1,583,941
TOTAL: Corporate Services/Chief Executive (including payroll)	£8,685,003

10.0 Governance Arrangements

- 10.1 Reviewing performance and reporting progress to Elected Members and other key stakeholders facilitates transparency, accountability and improvement in everything the Council does. The political and organisational governance arrangements to develop, monitor and report the Council's progress in implementing the Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan are outlined below, and are supplemented by regular reviews by the Director of Corporate Services and her team. The governance arrangements the Council has put in place to deliver continuous improvement are also subject an annual audit and assessment by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Figure 4: Governance Arrangements

Full Council

- Ratification of Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan
- Ratification of annual and bi-annual reviews Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan

Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee / Audit Committee

- Scrutiny and challenge around the Duty of Improvement
- Provide assurance that performance management arrangements are robust and effective

Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee

- Consideration, scrutiny and approval of Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan
- Consideration, scrutiny and approval of the annual and bi-annual reviews of Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan

Senior Management Team

- Development, consideration and approval of Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan
- Development, consideration and approval of the annual and bi-annual reviews of Chief Executive/Corporate Services Business Plan

Ag freastal ar an Dún agus Ard Mhacha Theas Serving Down and South Armagh

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Newry BT35 8DJ

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Downpatrick Office
Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road

Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

Report to:	Strategy Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	13 June 2024
Subject:	Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director of Finance and Performance
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Catherine Hughes – Head of Performance and Improvement (Acting)

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	X	For noting only	
1.0			Purpose and Background
1.1			The purpose of this report is to recommend the final version of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25. This plan is supported by the Consultation and Engagement Report 2024-25 and Delivery Plans which have been developed for each Performance Improvement Objective 2024-25.
1.2			Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 sets out a General Duty of Improvement for local government, whereby all District Councils are required to put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. Each financial year, Councils are required to set performance improvement objectives for the services they provide. The guidance states that performance improvement is more than quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or in the internal effectiveness of an organisation. Improvement should focus on activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for communities.
1.3			The Performance Improvement Plan is a key strategic document which drives all improvement activity across the organisation. It features within the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and is directly aligned to the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and Directorate Business Plans.
2.0			Key issues
2.1			<p>In accordance with statutory requirements, the Council is required to publish the Performance Improvement Plan by 30 June 2024.</p> <p>The Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24 is attached at Appendix 1, and includes the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance improvement objectives 2024-25 • Statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management • Self imposed performance indicators, as outlined in the draft Corporate Plan 2024-27
			Public Consultation and Engagement 2024-25
2.2			<p>The development of the performance improvement objectives 2024-25 is based on a robust and reliable evidence base which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 764 responses to the Residents Survey (September 2022)

	<p>This was supplemented by a six week public consultation and engagement process around the proposed performance improvement objectives 2024-25, which took place between 19 April – 31 May 2024 with pre-engagement consultation also carried out and consisted of the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48 responses to the survey on the draft performance improvement objectives, published through the Speak NMD platform • Engagement with 111 stakeholders through the Newry DEA Forum, Downpatrick DEA Forum, Crotlieve DEA Forum, Rowallane DEA Forum, Slieve Croob DEA Forum, Slieve Gullion DEA Forum, Cedar Foundation and Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice <p>Overall, the feedback from the consultation and engagement process revealed widespread support for the proposed performance improvement objectives, as outlined in Appendix 2.</p>
	Objective Delivery Plans 2024-25
2.4	Delivery plans for each performance improvement objective have been developed, as outlined in Appendix 3 . They seek to demonstrate how the Council will manage the effective delivery of each objective, in terms of resources, risk management and governance arrangements. These plans are a 'work in progress' and will be reviewed and updated on a continuous basis to support the delivery of each performance improvement objective.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>To consider and agree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 (including the five performance improvement objectives), Consultation and Engagement Report 2024-25 and Objective Delivery Plans 2024-25. • That the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 is published before 30 June 2024, ahead of full Council ratification, in order to meet the statutory deadline.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	There are no financial resource implications within this report.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

	<p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> At the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meeting in April 2024, it was agreed to implement a six week consultation and engagement process, in order to meet the statutory deadline of 30 June 2024 for publishing the Performance Improvement Plan.</p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	Appendices
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 1 – Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 • Appendix 2 – Consultation and Engagement Report 2024-25 • Appendix 3 – Objective Delivery Plans 2024-25
8.0	Background Documents
	Performance Improvement Plans 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24

Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25



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

**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

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An Cathaoirleach
Chairperson
Councillor Pete Byrne



An
Príomhfheidhmeannach
Chief Executive
Marie Ward

Foreword

Welcome to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25. Once again, having listened to our communities, we are delighted to include two amended objectives to this year's plan which we feel will benefit both our people and place. As we continue to focus on the continued revitalisation of our district we can look back and be proud of our achievements.

The Council worked determinedly to deliver services and implement the performance improvement objectives, particularly in the face of serious adverse issues such as the flooding that caused such damage to our District.

Our residents and visitors continued to embrace their health and wellbeing with nearly 769,000 paid attendances at our leisure centres and over 260,000 recorded visits at our 10 community trails across the district. We supported 19 community clean ups and issued fixed penalty notices to address environmental crime than in the district.

Through our economic development programmes, we supported 363 local businesses and social enterprises and helped to create 104 local jobs. We continued to embed the new electronic planning

system to improve current processing times.

However, whilst much has been achieved, there is still more to do to make Newry, Mourne and Down a great place to live, work, visit and invest in. Through this year's performance improvement objectives, we will continue to focus on what matters most to you - improving the quality of our leisure facilities and services, contributing to the growth of the local economy, improving the cleanliness of our District, improving our sustainability by reducing our impacts in relation to climate change and improving the performance of our Planning Service.

We remain committed to working closely with communities and partners to deliver high quality, efficient and effective services and are confident that the Council will continue to improve the quality of life for all local communities and build a District we can all be proud of.

Introduction

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

The performance improvement objectives do not describe every improvement the Council plans to make during 2024-25. Alternatively, they provide an overview of how the Council will address the issues which matter most to local communities. The Performance Improvement Plan outlines the Council's objectives for improvement, how performance will be measured and what positive outcomes stakeholders can expect as a result of improvement activity. It represents the Council's commitment to achieving continuous improvement in the delivery of key services.

Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-25

- 1. We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services**
- 2. We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation**
- 3. We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents**
- 4. We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change**
- 5. We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme**

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

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



Performance Improvement Objective 1

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

Why this matters

You told us that:

- One of the top priorities for improving your local area was 'Improving people's health and wellbeing (and reducing health inequalities)
- 17% of our residents are not active for a single day each week.
- The third most important health and wellbeing opportunity you would like to see more of was 'physical activity opportunities such as leisure centres, gyms and sports facilities'
- Between 2018 and 2022 there has been an increase in the number of residents satisfied with the leisure centres across the District, however residents did comment on issues such as the need for modernisation and improving cleanliness
- 85% of respondents to our 2023-24 survey agreed with this objective

We know that keeping fit and active can help improve a person's health and wellbeing both physically and mentally and the provision of leisure facilities is key to achieving this. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council plays a key role in helping local communities to live long and healthy lives. The Council remains committed to promoting physical, mental and emotional well-being and encouraging residents to make healthy and informed lifestyle choices and as part of this we need to always be striving to improve our leisure facilities and offerings.

Looking Back: What we did in 2023-24



769,000 paid attendances across the 6 leisure facilities



Recorded 263,364 visits across a total of 10 community trails.



9,923 memberships across the indoor leisure facilities



Progressed a number of new build and/or upgraded capital projects including Kilkeel Bowling Pavilion and Play Park signage



10,805 people participating in targeted health programmes

Looking Forward: What we will do in 2024-25

- Increase the number of paid attendances at indoor leisure facilities.
- Continue to deliver a range of targeted, sustainable health programmes to encourage participation in physical activity.
- Progress the leisure projects agreed within the Capital Programme
- Maintain the number of recorded visits to Community Trails.
- Work towards Leisure-Safe Accreditation for all indoor leisure facilities

How we will measure success	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	Status Trend	2024-25 Target
Number of paid attendances recorded at:					😊	
Newry Leisure Centre	27,253	183,224	307,153	331,546	△	850,000
Down Leisure Centre	30,199	177,496	246,978	259,473	△	
Kilkeel Leisure Centre	10,367	66,987	69,797	63,811	▽	
St. Colmans Sports Complex	2,945	36,717	54,024	58,491	△	
Newcastle Centre & Tropicana Outdoor Swimming Complex	2,778	33,801	25,517	27,765	△	
Ballymote Sports and Wellbeing Centre	1,754	10,309	15,365	27,756	△	
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes	2,270*	322*	9,309	10,805	△	20,000
Number of young people participating in targeted youth health and wellbeing initiatives	New measure		19,365	17,226	😞 ▽	15,000
Number of leisure centre memberships	New Measure		9,534	9,923	😊 △	10,000
Number of capital leisure projects progressed	New Measure			3	-	Not set
Number of recorded visits at community trails	96,563	211,718	225,795	263,364	😊 △	265,000
What you will see by March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">850,000 paid attendances at our six leisure centres by end of 2024-25Increase in the number of people participating in targeted health programmes to 20,000.Increase in the number of memberships being taken out to 10,000.265,000 recorded visits to community trails.A number of new build and/or upgraded capital leisure projects progressed.Leisure-Safe Accreditation being worked towards for all indoor leisure facilities.					
Alignment						
Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District.					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We all enjoy long, healthy, active livesPeople want to live, work and visit here					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service quality	Service Availability	Fairness		
Responsible Officer	Director: Active and Healthy Communities					

Performance Improvement Objective 2

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

Why this matters

You told us that:

- 'Improving skills, employability and job prospects' was your top priority for improving the local area in the 2022 residents survey
- 'Supporting local businesses, attracting investment and jobs' is in your top three priorities for improvement
- Investment to grow the economy, create jobs and attract tourists is the most important form of investment
- 81% of respondents to our 2023-24 survey agreed with this objective

Newry, Mourne and Down has recorded increases in the number of VAT/PAYE registered businesses, employee jobs and the birth rate of new businesses in the past year. When compared to 2020, the claimant count for unemployment benefit has also reduced but remains above pre-pandemic levels.

Continuing to support and grow the economy of Newry, Mourne and Down remains a key priority for the Council. In the first six months of this year the Council created 69 new business starts as well as promoting 77 new jobs through business start activity.

On the 13 November 2023, 'Go Succeed' launched across all Councils replacing all other Economic Development programmes including 'Go For It' which ceased implementation on the 30 September 2023. 'Go Succeed' is the new go-to source for free expert business advice focusing on the three pillars of starting, growing and scaling your business or business idea.

Looking Back:

What we did in 2023-24



90 new business starts created and 90 new jobs promoted through business start-up activity



12 new social enterprise start-ups supported and 14 new social enterprise jobs created



351 businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions



'Make it Local' campaign delivered to stimulate footfall and the re-opening of businesses across the District



Looking Forward:

What we will do in 2024-25
















- Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme and 'Go Succeed'
- Engage individuals in pre-start activity
- Support the establishment of new businesses through the 'Go Succeed' Programme
- Support the growth of existing businesses and creation of new jobs through the 'Go Succeed' Programme
- Continue to create opportunities for employability and skills through implementation of the LMP Action Plan.








How we will measure success	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	Status Trend	2024-25 Target
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	12	12	12	12		12
Number of social enterprise jobs created	14	13	12	14		12
Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity	New measure				-	712
Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	266	358	361	150*		361
Number of jobs promoted via business start-up activity	199.5	215	155	90*		170
Number of new enterprises created as a result of support	181	215	195	90*		195
Number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions	327	373	220	351*		220
What you will see by March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">361 business plans created for Start-Up businesses and employer enterprisesOver 700 participants engaged across all Go Succeed activitySupport provided to 220 existing businesses to progress growth and scaling ambitions170 new jobs promoted via business start-up activity.12 social enterprise start-ups supported and 12 social enterprise jobs createdMore support for new and established local businesses and more employment opportunities across the DistrictContinue to ensure the District becomes more economically active and prosperous					
Alignment						
Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Support the continued growth and development of our local economy					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Everyone can reach their potentialOur economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon neutralPeople want to live, work and visit here					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service quality		Service availability		Innovation
Responsible Officer	Director: Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism					

*Updated 'Go Succeed' programme target for the number of jobs promoted in Newry Mourne and Down: 170. An amendment to the standard set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 is awaiting legislative passage and approval. NIESS commenced in November 2023, this is a new business start-up, early entry, and business growth service across NI. The delivery was delayed due to procurement, development of a CRM etc. The service is fully functional from March 2024. Business plans have not been validated by NMDDC, data is with BCC.

Performance Improvement Objective 3

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

Why this matters	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog mess and dog fouling and rubbish or litter lying around are your top two perceived problems in your local area • 6% of the residents surveyed were dissatisfied with the cleansing service provided by the Council. • 91% of residents said recycling is important to them, an increase of 5% on the 2018 residents survey figure. • 83% of respondents to our 2023-24 survey agreed with this objective <p>Since 2019-20, the LEAMS* score for the District has remained at 64, which falls below the current regional average of 72. Issues around street cleanliness continue to escalate largely as a result of the increased number of illicit dumping, littering and dog fouling incidents reported to the Council.</p> <p>In order to improve the overall cleanliness of the District, the Council is currently reviewing cleansing operations to design a more effective model of service provision. The Council also remains committed to collaborating with partner organisations and local communities to promote responsible dog ownership, address issues around littering and illicit dumping and generate local pride in having a cleaner, greener District for everyone to enjoy.</p>										
Looking Back: What we did in 2023-24	<table> <tr> <td data-bbox="450 1200 529 1256"></td><td data-bbox="529 1200 1428 1256">Issued 25 fixed penalty notices, 19 of which were paid</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="450 1256 529 1312"></td><td data-bbox="529 1256 1428 1312">Supported 19 community clean-ups</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="450 1312 529 1379"></td><td data-bbox="529 1312 1428 1379">9 environmental projects funded through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' Scheme</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="450 1379 529 1447"></td><td data-bbox="529 1379 1428 1447">Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="450 1447 529 1514"></td><td data-bbox="529 1447 1428 1514">Increase in the rate of recycling, to 50.9%</td></tr> </table>		Issued 25 fixed penalty notices, 19 of which were paid		Supported 19 community clean-ups		9 environmental projects funded through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' Scheme		Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out		Increase in the rate of recycling, to 50.9%
	Issued 25 fixed penalty notices, 19 of which were paid										
	Supported 19 community clean-ups										
	9 environmental projects funded through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' Scheme										
	Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out										
	Increase in the rate of recycling, to 50.9%										
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2024-25	<p>Address issues around littering, illicit dumping and dog fouling by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to implement the Enforcement Improvement Plan • Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity and social media campaigns • Working with Louth County Council to raise awareness of the impact of littering and illicit dumping along the border area • Encouraging residents to bring properly sorted surplus recyclable waste to our Household Recycling Centres • Supporting local community clean ups • Implementation of a Paint Re-Use Scheme at 7 Household Recycling Centres throughout the district. <p>Work in partnership with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission surveys to monitor street cleanliness and identify emerging issues and hotspots 										

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promote the 'Live Here Love Here' campaignsEncourage community groups to 'Adopt a Spot'Highlight the impact of littering on the marine environment					
How we will measure success	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	Status Trend	2024-25 Target
LEAMS score (Keep NI Beautiful Cleanliness Index)	64	64	-	-	-	65
Number of fixed penalty notices issued	52	118	110	25		120
Number of fixed penalty notices paid	26	100	91	19		96
Percentage of community clean up requests supported	33	94	39	19		To support 90% of requests
Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	24	18	10	9		No target
The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling	51.9%	49.1%	49.6%	50.9% (Q1-Q3)		50%by 2020
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	2,538t	2,685t	2,319t	874t (Q1-Q3)		<20,954 tonnes (2019-20)
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	86,900t	87,336t	82,842t	64,644t (Q1-Q3)		No target
What you will see by March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase in the number of fixed penalty notices issued.Responsible dog ownership and reduced levels of dog fouling, littering and illicit dumpingImproved opportunities to report littering, dog fouling and illicit dumpingReduction in the disposal of paint from our Household Recycling Centre sites.Opportunities to engage in community clean upsA cleaner, greener District, with improved civic and community pride					
Alignment						
Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service availability	Innovation		Sustainability	
Responsible Officer	Director: Sustainability and Environment					
















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




**The Q1-Q3 2023-24 data for the statutory waste management performance indicators remains provisional and will be finalised when the year-end data is validated and published by DAERA.

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

Performance Improvement Objective 4







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





Why this matters	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing waste, reducing climate change, investing in renewable energy etc. was important to you. Green technology skills were the second most important training support needed to improve the growth of resident employability. 91% of residents said recycling is important to them, an increase of 5% on the 2018 residents survey figure. 79% of respondents to our 2023-24 survey agreed with this objective <p>Our climate is changing, and we need to prepare. Greenhouse gas emissions cause the Earth's atmosphere to hold more radiation from the sun which increases the overall temperature of the planet. This change in temperature is altering our climate and causing one of the greatest threats of our time. In October 2019 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council declared a 'Climate Emergency'.</p> <p>NMDDC is acutely aware of how intrinsic sustainability and care of our district is to its future. Within our new Council structure, a Sustainability Department has been created. This is led by a dedicated Assistant Director with responsibility for issues such as Energy, Council Fleet, Facilities Maintenance and Biodiversity.</p> <p>Environmental sustainability has become a key objective in the development of our capital projects, providing economic growth for the region in an inclusive and sustainable way. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council aims to embed the ethos of sustainability throughout its operations and to provide leadership for the community.</p> <p>The Council also forms part of the Local Government Climate Action Network which is helping to deliver the NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme. This network will enable us to collaborate with other Councils and relevant statutory partners to develop a strategic approach for climate action.</p>										
Looking Back: What we did in 2023-24	<table> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1581 491 1648"></td><td data-bbox="491 1581 1391 1648">Installed 5 drinking water fountains across the District</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1648 491 1715"></td><td data-bbox="491 1648 1391 1715">Planted 2,800 trees across the District</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1715 491 1783"></td><td data-bbox="491 1715 1391 1783">Progressed the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1783 491 1850"></td><td data-bbox="491 1783 1391 1850">Progressed the development of a Biodiversity Strategy</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1850 491 1917"></td><td data-bbox="491 1850 1391 1917">Continued the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan</td></tr> </table>		Installed 5 drinking water fountains across the District		Planted 2,800 trees across the District		Progressed the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy		Progressed the development of a Biodiversity Strategy		Continued the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan
	Installed 5 drinking water fountains across the District										
	Planted 2,800 trees across the District										
	Progressed the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy										
	Progressed the development of a Biodiversity Strategy										
	Continued the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan										
Looking Forward:	Address issues around climate change and sustainability by:										

What we will do in 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Completing the draft climate change and sustainable development strategy ready for consultation, review, approval and then publication.Publishing the Council's Climate Change Adaptation PlanImplementing the newly published biodiversity strategy 2023-30Continuing to implement the Council's Tree StrategySupporting the continued implementation of new Electric Vehicle (EV) charging pointsUndertaking a baseline assessment of the Council's carbon footprint and renewable energy outputContinuing to implement the Council's fleet replacement programme					
How we will measure success	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	Status Trend	2024-25 Target
Carbon footprint of Council estate	To be established				-	-
Renewable energy generation	New measure – To be established				-	-
Energy Consumption baseline	New measure – To be established				-	-
Percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years	New measure			75%		85%
Number of vehicles within the Council fleet that have an alternative fuel source	New measure			1		10
Number of trees planted on Council managed estate	New measure			2,800	-	2,800
Number of Council supported EV charging points	New measure			20		18
What you will see by March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Publication of the Council's Climate Change and Sustainable Development strategyPublication of the Council's Climate Change Adaptation PlanImplementation of the new Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2023-2030)New trees plantedCarbon footprint of Council estate establishedRenewable energy baseline of Council establishedEnergy consumption of Council buildings establishedIncrease in the percentage of younger, less polluting vehicles within the Council fleetNew electric vehicles ordered for use within the Council fleet.					
Alignment						
Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Efficiency	Innovation	Sustainability		
Responsible Officer	Director: Sustainability and Environment					

Performance Improvement Objective 5

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

Why this matters	<p>Delivering a more efficient and effective Planning Service for customers is a key priority for improvement for the Council. Planning plays a significant role in promoting sustainable development, regeneration, economic prosperity, investment and job creation for present and future generations of our District. 83% of respondents to our 2023-24 survey also agreed with this objective.</p> <p>The implementation of the Planning Service Improvement Programme is well underway with a new planning portal launched in December 2022 allowing customers to submit applications online and track live planning applications. Work continues to address issues with the new portal and support staff accordingly. Engagement remains ongoing around the development of the enforcement modules.</p> <p>Staff retention and recruitment has proved challenging and following 7 recruitment exercises since 2022 the planning team across all functions still remains understaffed as per agreed structures. This had had a significant impact on targets and performance. This remains a priority for Council and Senior Management with ongoing review and monitoring.</p> <p>The Council has not yet achieved the statutory standards for 2023-24, but we remain committed to delivering further improvements and providing a high-quality service to all customers.</p>					
Looking Back: What we did between April-December 2023	<div>  51.7% of live enforcement cases in the system longer than 2 years, which is above the regional average of 36.9% </div> <div>  Average processing time of 29.8 weeks for local planning applications, which is above the regional average of 20.4 weeks </div> <div>  Average processing time of 421 weeks for major planning applications, which is below the regional average of 44.2 weeks </div> <div>  Received 986 local planning applications, which is the second highest across Northern Ireland </div>					
Looking Forward: What we will do in 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases which have been in the system for over 12 months • Work with agents and architects to improve the standard of planning applications submitted • Support employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries' • Effectively implement the new electronic planning system 					
How we will measure success	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 (Q1-Q3) Actual	Status Trend	2024-25 Target
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	19	18.3	18.2	29.8	 	<15 weeks

Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)	64.6	49.8	67.4	421		<30 weeks
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks	40.9%	46.9%	51.7%	-	-	70%
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more**	187	187	228	312		150
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less**	788	825	793	1,130		700
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more**	551	486	483	592		450
What you will see by March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A more efficient and effective planning service• Improved processing times for local and major planning applications• Improved processing times for planning enforcement cases• Reduction in the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases in the system• An empowered and motivated workforce• Increased confidence in the Planning system• Sustainable development and regeneration of the District					
Alignment						
Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver sustainable services					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People want to live, work and visit here					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service availability	Service quality	Efficiency		
Responsible Officer	Director: Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism					

*The statistics due to be published for Q3 in March were withdrawn to allow more time to fully develop the data extracts from the new planning portal. Annual planning figures will be validated by the Department for Infrastructure and published through the Annual Report 2022-23.

**The 2023-24 targets have been carried forward from 2022-23.

Strategic Alignment

Performance Improvement Objective	Corporate Objective(s)	Community Planning Outcome(s)	Duty of Improvement
We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services	Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing	Strategic effectiveness Service quality Service availability Fairness
We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation	Support the continued growth and development of our local economy	All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	Strategic effectiveness Service quality Service availability Innovation
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future	All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment	Strategic effectiveness Service availability Innovation Sustainability
We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future	All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment	Strategic Effectiveness Efficiency Innovation Sustainability
We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	Deliver sustainable services	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	Strategic effectiveness Service availability Service quality Efficiency

Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards

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

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

Ref	Statutory Performance Indicator	Annual Standard
Economic Development		
ED1	The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity	>155 170* (updated target)
Planning		
P1	The average processing time of major planning applications	<30 weeks
P2	The average processing time of local planning applications	<15 weeks
P3	The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks	70%
Waste Management		
W1	The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse)	50% by 2020
W2	The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	<20,954 tonnes (2019-20 target)
W3	The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	85,500 tonnes

*Updated 'Go Succeed' programme target for the number of jobs promoted in Newry Mourne and Down; 170. An amendment to the standard set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 is awaiting legislative passage and approval.

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

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

Self Imposed Performance Indicators

The Council has identified the following draft self imposed performance indicators to measure progress in delivering the Draft Corporate Plan 2024 - 27.

Draft Corporate Objective	Draft Measure of Success
Support the continued growth and development of our local economy	Number of jobs created and businesses supported through Council programmes
	Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity
	Amount of investment secured and distributed by Council
Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district	Number of people participating in targeted health programmes
	Number of attendances at Council indoor leisure facilities
	Number of users of community trails
Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future	Level of street cleanliness across the District (Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Street Cleanliness Index)
	Level of compliance with Sustainable Development Duty
	Percentage of waste recycled
	Percentage of EV charging points
Support regenerative tourism opportunities which promote our culture, heritage and environment	Level of visitor spend
	Number of overnight stays
	Level of visitor satisfaction
	Number of visitors to Council's Arts Centres and Museums
Empowering communities to play an active part in civic life	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 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 of financial assistance projects funded.
	Number of people accessing the Ethnic Minority Support Office services
Develop and revitalise our district	Number of BRCD projects delivered.
	Number of small settlement schemes delivered.
	Number of new/upgraded public conveniences.
Deliver sustainable services	Level of citizen satisfaction.
	Compliance with the Duty of Improvement.

Represent the voice of the District with our partners	Number of users registered to Council corporate social media channels.
	Number of visits to Council's corporate website.
	Compliance with the Duty of Community Planning
	Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
	Number of training events provided to elected members

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

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

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

Identifying the Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-25

Three of the five performance improvement objectives 2024-25 have been carried forward from 2023-24, as they remain relevant and meaningful. While two have been amended. The economy based objective has been amended to better reflect the link to the new draft corporate objective it supports, as well as the new economic programme 'Go Succeed' which is now in place. The environment objective has also been amended to include the promotion of recycling which is a priority of the Department and a key measure of success. They have been developed, reviewed and updated in close liaison with Elected Members, Senior Management Team, Corporate Management Team and employees across the organisation. Each objective is underpinned by a suite of 'supporting actions', 'measures of success' and outcomes for stakeholders. They are clearly aligned to the Community Plan and Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27, as well as other regional and local plans, particularly the Council's Business Plans which have been developed by each Directorate. These plans influence and guide the overall direction of travel for the organisation.

- Draft Programme for Government
- Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down 2017-2030, Priority Action Areas and District Electoral Area (DEA) Action Plans
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27
- Thematic plans and strategies, including the IT Strategy and Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy
- Annual Directorate Business Plans 2024-25

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

- The Northern Ireland Audit Office Audit and Assessment Reports and 'proposals for improvement', which are currently being progressed
- The Assessment of Performance 2022-23, including progress against performance improvement objectives, measures of success within the Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27 and statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management.

The reasons for objectives being carried forward and/or amended are detailed in the table below:

PIO's - 2023-24		PIO's 2024-25		Progress / Rationale	Status Proposed
PIO 1: We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services		PIO 1: We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services		<p>During 2023-24 progress was made against a number of key actions under this objective including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in the number of paid attendances at Council's 6 main leisure centres.• Increase in the number of people participating in targeted health programmes .• Increase in the number of recorded visits at community trails.• However, there is still improvements to be made and the 2022 residents survey ranked 'Improving people's health and wellbeing (and reducing health inequalities) as a high priority for improving the local area.	Retain This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2024-25.
PIO 2: We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs		PIO 2: We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation		<p>During 2023-24 progress was limited as the NI 'Go For It' programme ceased in September 2023 and the new replacement programme 'Go Succeed' only launched in November 2023.</p> <p>As there are new measures and areas of focus within this new programme it was felt that this objective should be amended. Furthermore, the amended objective improves alignment to the draft corporate objective it supports.</p> <p>The 2022 residents survey ranked 'improving skills, employability, and job prospects' and 'supporting local businesses, attracting investment and jobs' as the 1st and 3rd highest priorities for improving the local area.</p>	Amend This performance improvement objective to be amended for 2024-25.

<p>PIO 3: We will improve the cleanliness of our district by addressing littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling incidents</p>	<p>PIO 3: We will improve the cleanliness of our district by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling incidents</p>	<p>During 2023-24 progress was made against some key actions under this objective including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity campaigns and dog licences• Working with neighbouring County Council's on the border to raise awareness of the impact of fly-tipping along the border area. <p>However, improvement is still needed in a number of areas.</p> <p>As the recycling rate is a key measure of success of this objective which continuously needs to improve, it was suggested through the consultation that it should be included within the wording of the objective itself and this was agreed by Council.</p> <p>The 2022 residents survey ranked 'dog mess and fouling' and rubbish or littering lying around' as the top two perceived problems in their local areas by residents.</p>	<p>Amend This performance improvement objective to be amended for 2024-25</p>
<p>PIO 4: We will improve our sustainability by reducing our impacts in relation to climate change</p>	<p>PIO 4: We will improve our sustainability by reducing our impacts in relation to climate change</p>	<p>During 2023-24, in its first year as a performance objective some progress was made against a number of key actions and measures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progressing the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy• Planting 2,800 trees across the District• Exceeded the target for the percentage of Council's fleet younger than 8 years.	<p>Retain This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2024-25</p>

However, more improvement is still needed. The number of Council vehicles with an alternative fuel source needs to increase and a number of baselines need to be established in relation to the Council’s carbon footprint and energy consumption.

PIO 5: We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme.	PIO 5: We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	<p>During 2023-24 progress continued to be made against a number of key actions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working with agents and architects to improve the standard of planning applications submitted.• Implementation of the new electronic planning system. <p>However, much improvement is still required as the statutory standards for the average processing times of major and local planning applications and enforcement cases is still not being met and has increased in some instances.</p>	Retain This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2024-25
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Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down

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

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

The Community Plan sets out the following five positive outcomes:

Our Outcomes

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



Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27

The Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27 sets out the following mission statement and eight strategic objectives:

Council Mission Statement

'To deliver sustainable services and empower our communities through transparent governance and collaboration'

Council Strategic Objectives

 <p>Support the continued growth and development of our local economy</p>	 <p>Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district</p>
 <p>Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future</p>	 <p>Support regenerative tourism opportunities which promote our culture, heritage and environment</p>
 <p>Empowering communities to play an active part in civic life</p>	 <p>Develop and revitalise our district</p>
 <p>Deliver sustainable services</p>	 <p>Represent the voice of the district with our partners</p>

Alignment with the Strategic Aspects of Improvement

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

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

The table below outlines how Newry, Mourne and Down District Council’s performance improvement objectives 2024-25 are aligned with the seven specified aspects of improvement:

Performance Improvement Objective	Seven Aspects of Improvement						
	Strategic Effectiveness	Service Quality	Service Availability	Fairness	Sustainability	Efficiency	Innovation
We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services	✓	✓	✓	✓			
We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation	✓	✓	✓				✓
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and reducing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling	✓		✓		✓		✓
We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change	✓				✓	✓	✓
We will improve the average processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the recommendations from the Planning Service Review	✓	✓	✓			✓	

- The Council has also assessed the performance improvement objectives against the following criteria, and considers them to be:
- Legitimate
 - Clear
 - Robust
 - Deliverable
 - Demonstrable

Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment

In accordance with the Section 75 requirements of the Northern Ireland Act (1998), whereby the Council must carry out its functions having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard for the desirability to promote good relations, the Performance Improvement Plan has been subject to an equality screening. The outcome of the equality screening process determined that the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 is not subject to an equality impact assessment, with no mitigating measures required.

In accordance with the Rural Needs Act Northern Ireland (2016), the Council has given due regard to rural needs by carrying out a Rural Needs Impact Assessment of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25.

Consultation and Engagement

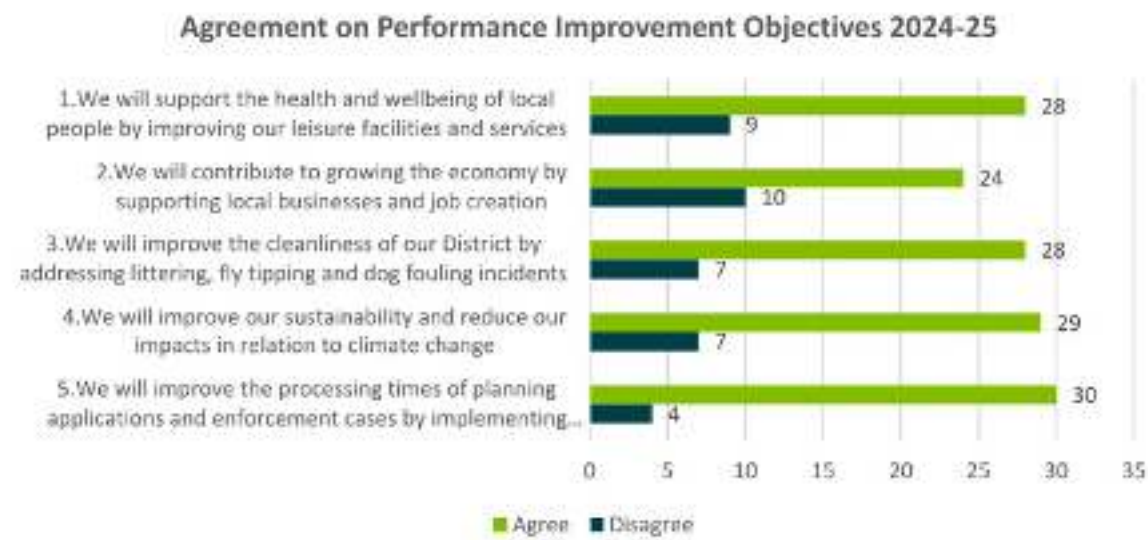
The Council is committed to listening to local people and taking on board their views. Since 2017, the Council has carried out extensive consultation and engagement, inviting key stakeholders, including Elected Members, residents, local businesses and community planning partners to put forward their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

This year again, the Council used the Speak NMD platform to host the consultation and engagement process. As a dedicated online space, which is facilitated through the Newry, Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership, Speak NMD enables residents to participate in local consultation and engagement activities and have their say on the issues and decisions which have an impact on their local area. Through Speak NMD, an electronic survey in relation to the draft performance improvement objectives 2024-25 was published and promoted. The consultation and engagement process was promoted further through the Council's website and social media channels and circulated to key internal and external stakeholders.

The overall consultation and engagement process resulted in 48 completed surveys and engagement with 111 stakeholders through the Newry DEA Forum, Downpatrick DEA Forum, Crotlieve DEA Forum, Slieve Croob DEA Forum, Slieve Gullion DEA Forum, Rowallane DEA Forum, Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice and the Cedar Foundation. These responses have been supplemented by the input of 764 respondents to the Residents Survey in 2022.

Electronic documentation, survey on the draft performance improvement objectives 2024-25 on the Speak NMD platform.	Survey: 48 responses
Engagement with the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 75 groups, including the Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice and the Cedar Foundation 	37 consultees
Engagement with : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 DEA's across the District 	74 members
Residents Survey (September 2022)	764 respondents

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



The areas for improvement and issues raised through the overall consultation and engagement processes are clearly aligned to the five performance improvement objectives 2024-25, and will be addressed through the Performance Improvement Plan, and as part of the Council’s business planning process.

Achieving Continuous Improvement

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

What this means:	
Respect	We will demonstrate respect for all people in our attitudes, behaviours and working relationships.
Transparency	We will be transparent in how we make decisions.
Excellence	We will take pride in our work and be passionate about the standards we strive to achieve.
Integrity	We want the people of our district to trust us to do the right thing.
Accountability	We will be accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. We will be accountable for how we plan and use resources sustainably.

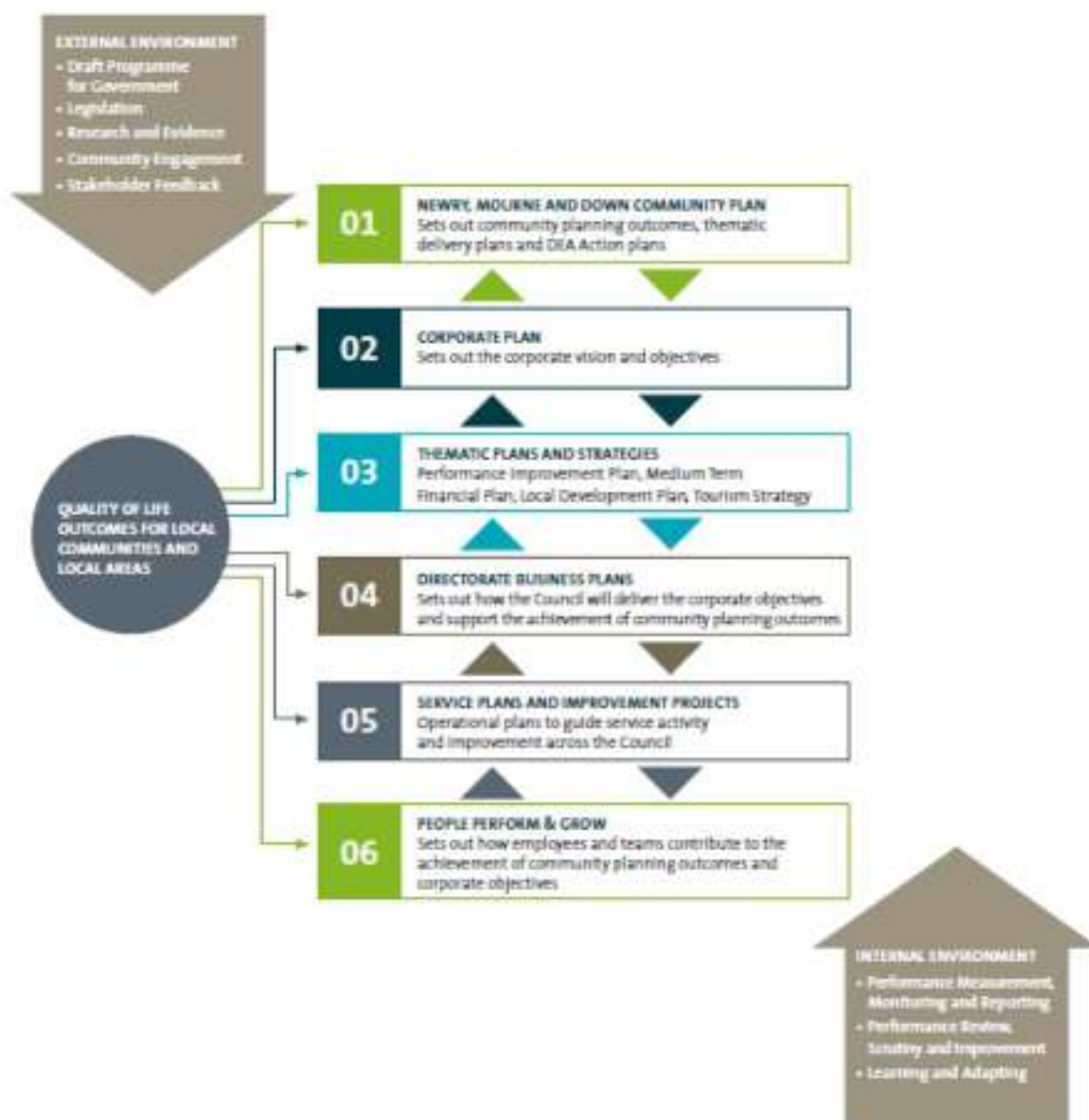
The Council has put in place a number of frameworks and systems to drive forward continuous improvement and facilitate a performance improvement culture. These include the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, Policy Development Framework, Equality Scheme, Governance Framework and Risk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

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

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

Business Planning and Performance Management Framework

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



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

During 2024-25, the Council will continue to progress and mainstream the development, implementation and review of Service Plans and roll out of Individual Performance (People Perform Grow), both of which seek to demonstrate the 'line of sight' between the work of employees and how they contribute to the achievement of community planning outcomes and corporate objectives.

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

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

Community Plan	The Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down sets out the long-term vision for improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the District. Developed in collaboration with partners across the statutory, business and voluntary sectors, the Community Plan is underpinned by Priority Actions Areas and seven DEA Action Plans, which seek to deliver the five community planning outcomes at a local level. Progress in implementing the Community Plan is reviewed on a biennial basis.
Corporate Plan	The Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27 sets out the proposed vision, values and strategic objectives for the Council. Each strategic objective is underpinned by 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success'. Progress in delivering the Corporate Plan is reported annually through the Assessment of Performance.
Thematic Plans and Strategies	The Council has put in place a number of Thematic Plans and Strategies to support the implementation of the Community Plan and Corporate Plan, including the Performance Improvement Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan and Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy. These plans provide the strategic context for multiple programmes of work across the organisation.
Directorate Business Plans	Business Plans are developed annually to demonstrate how Directorates contribute to the achievement of community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and performance improvement objectives. Directorate Business Plans include suites of key performance measures to measure progress and drive continuous improvement, with performance being monitored and reviewed bi-annually by the relevant Committee.
Service Plans and Improvement Projects	Service Plans and Improvement Projects are operational and set out the direction for service areas across the Council. They outline how each service contributes to the delivery of community planning outcomes, corporate objectives and performance improvement objectives, include

	key performance measures and provide a mechanism to manage performance consistently across the organisation.
People Perform Grow	The Council recognises the significant role employees play in contributing to the achievement of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Thematic Plans and Strategies, Directorate Business Plans and Service Plans. People Perform Grow demonstrates the link between the work of employees and how they contribute to the achievement of key plans and strategies, as well as the outcomes experienced by local communities.

The Business Planning and Performance Management Framework is complemented by the integrated cycle of activity outlined in the diagram below.

Governance Arrangements

Reviewing performance and reporting progress to Elected Members and other key stakeholders is very important, as it facilitates transparency, accountability and improvement in everything the Council does. The governance arrangements to develop, monitor, report and review the Council's progress in implementing the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 are outlined below:



The Council must publish an Assessment of Performance by 30 September 2024 which will provide an overview of how the Council has performed during 2023-24. The Assessment of Performance will be published on the Council's website and is supplemented by the Mid Year Progress Report for the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25.

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

How to Propose New Performance Improvement Objectives

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Newry, Mourne and Down District Council welcomes your ongoing feedback on the performance improvement objectives 2024-25, as well as any suggestions you may have on how services can be improved in the future.

The Council can be contacted in the following ways:

In writing: Catherine Hughes
Head of Performance and Improvement (Acting)
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O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry
Co Down
BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 0300 013 2233

Email: performance@nmandd.org

Ag freastal ar an Dún agus Ard Mhacha Theas Serving Down and South Armagh

0330 137 4000 (Council)
council@nmandd.org
www.newrymournedown.org

Oifig an Iúir
Newry Office
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry BT35 8DJ

Oifig Dhún Pádraig
Downpatrick Office
Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road
Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Consultation and Engagement Report on the Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-25



Introduction

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 sets out a General Duty of Improvement, whereby all District Councils must put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions and set performance improvement objectives for each financial year. Each Council also has a statutory duty to consult key stakeholders on the proposed performance improvement objectives.

The five draft performance improvement objectives were considered and approved by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in April 2024. This was followed by an extensive consultation and engagement process which encouraged key stakeholders, including residents, Elected Members and partner organisations to have their say on the proposed performance improvement objectives.

This report provides an overview of the consultation and engagement methodology and an analysis of the responses which were received.

Consultation and Engagement Activity

Between 19 April – 31 May 2024, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council carried out a six week consultation and engagement process with key stakeholders on the draft performance improvement objectives 2024-25, with pre-engagement consultation also carried out through the following mechanisms:

- Electronic survey and documentation on the Speak NMD platform, which was promoted through the Council's website and social media channels
- Public Notices in local newspapers
- Engagement with the following stakeholders:
 - Newry DEA
 - Crotlieve DEA
 - Slieve Gullion DEA
 - Slieve Croob DEA
 - Downpatrick DEA
 - Rowallane DEA
 - Newry and Mourne and Down Youth Voice
 - Cedar Foundation

This process was further supplemented by the consultation and engagement which was carried out to support the development of the Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27.

- Residents Survey (September 2022)
- Consultation and engagement on the Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27 (March – May 2024)
- Consultation and engagement on the draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2023-24

Analysis Methodology

A total of 48 surveys were received in response to the consultation and engagement on the Council's draft performance improvement objectives 2024-25. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the draft performance improvement objectives and if they had any comments to make regarding each objective. Respondents were also asked to put forward their suggested priorities for future improvement.

In carrying out the quantitative and qualitative consultation and engagement, a structured process was used to capture responses around each of the five draft performance improvement objectives 2024-25. This was supplemented by an engagement process with 111 key stakeholders, as outlined below:

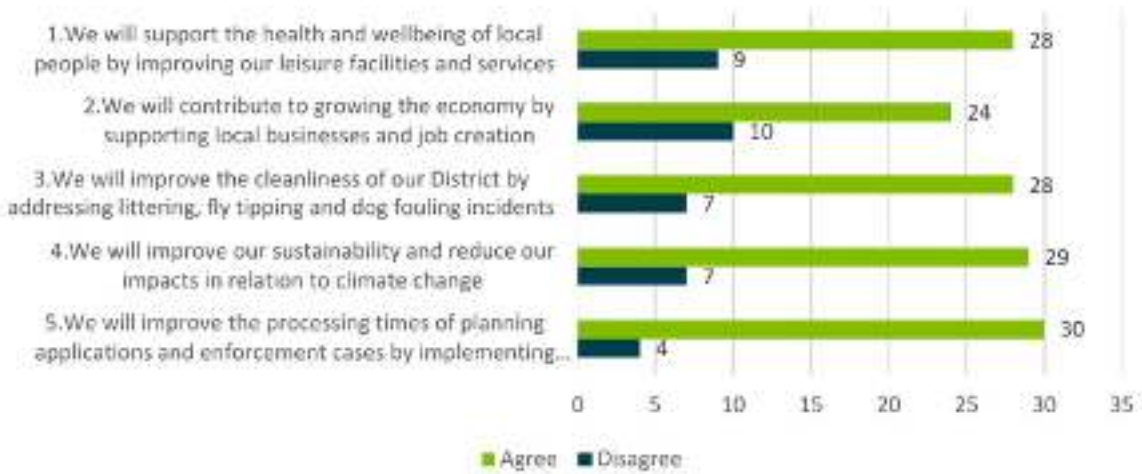
Consultation and Engagement	Details
Newry DEA Forum	14 participants – 28 March 2024
Downpatrick DEA Forum	13 participants – 09 April 2024
Rowallane DEA Forum	12 participants – 10 April 2024
Crothlieve DEA Forum	9 participants – 16 April 2024
Slieve Gullion DEA Forum	14 participants – 16 April 2024
Slieve Croob DEA Forum	12 participants – 23 April 2024
Newry and Mourne and Down Youth Voice – Newry Office	18 participants – 16 April 2024
Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice – Newcastle Office	12 participants – 07 May 2024
Cedar Foundation User Forum	7 participants - 07 May 2024
Residents Survey (September 2022)	764 residents aged 16+ with quotas applied for age, gender, social class and District Electoral Area

Consultation and Engagement Findings

Analysis of Findings

Responses to the draft performance improvement objectives 2024-25 have been received from residents, elected members, local community organisations, statutory organisations and others including those that work in and visit the district. There has been a positive response to the five proposed performance improvement objectives, with the majority of respondents agreeing with each objective.

Agreement on Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-25

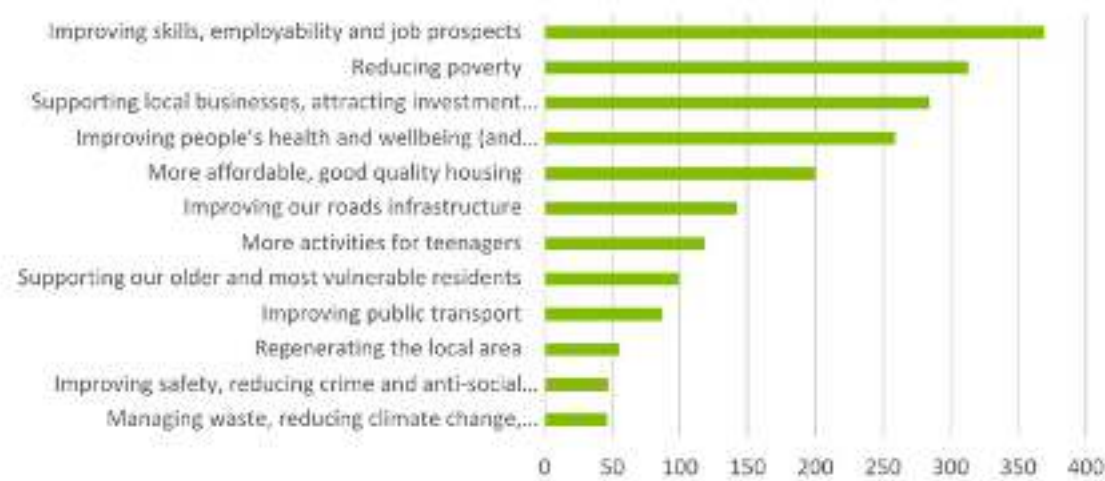


Residents Survey (2022)

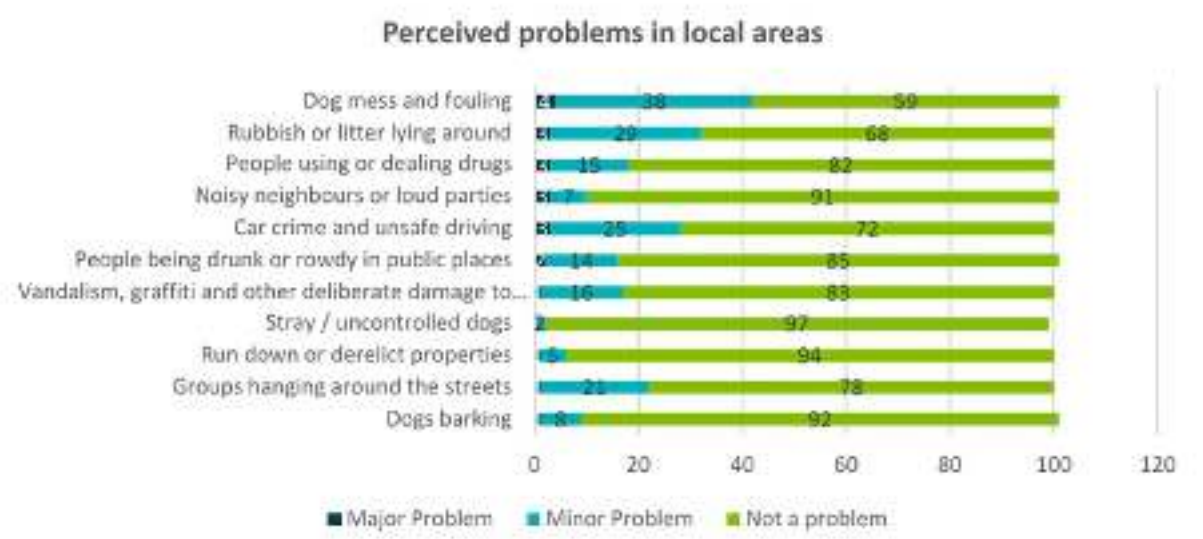
These findings are further endorsed by the results of the Residents Survey which indicate that the performance improvement objectives broadly address the top improvements identified to make somewhere a good place to live.

- The local economy, health and wellbeing, housing, infrastructure, public transport, protecting the environment, climate change and managing waste are amongst the top priorities for improvement.
- Supporting communities, educational provision, accessible leisure centres, accessible arts centres/theatres and museums and opportunities for volunteering are amongst the lesser priorities for improvement.

Top priorities for Improving the local area



These findings are further reinforced by the fact that residents identify dog mess and littering as the top perceived problems in the local area.



You Said, We Did - Overview of Consultation Feedback

Performance Improvement Objectives

An analysis of the consultation and engagement findings indicates that the issues raised will be addressed through the proposed 2024-25 performance improvement objectives, 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success', or as part of the Council's business planning process. An overview of the amendments and revisions that have been made to the performance improvement objectives, throughout the consultation and engagement process are highlighted below.

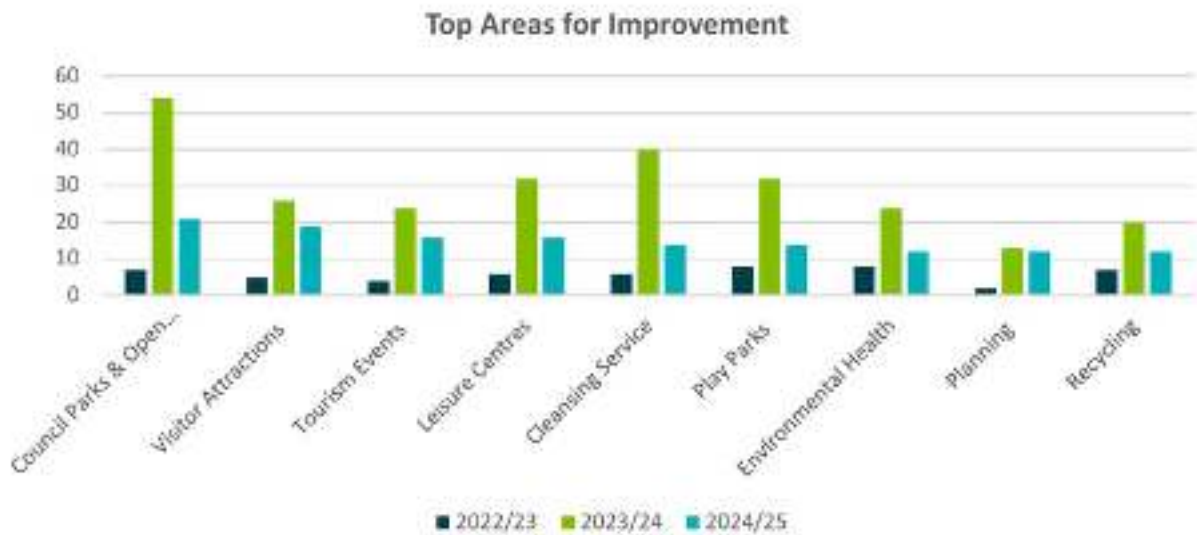
	You Said	We Listened	We Did
We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services	'One of the proposals is "Maintain the number of recorded visits to Community Trails". There is currently not even a list of the names of Community Trails in the district on the Council website, never mind a map of where they are.'	The full list of Community trails is available on the Council's 'Be Active' app under Outdoor Leisure.	

			Revised the 2023-24 figure for community trails based on updated year end data which has also led to a revised target for 2024-25.
We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation			Figures for economic development programmes have been revised to reflect 2023-24 actual figures.
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	<p>The wording of this objective should also include 'continue to promote recycling and' so that it reads: 'We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents'</p> <p>'More promotion on live here love here campaign to inform and raise</p>		<p>Figures for fixed penalty notices issued and paid have been revised to reflect 2023-24 actual figures.</p> <p>Based on this suggestion and other feedback in support of recycling Council agree with the change and the objective now reads: 'We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents'</p>

	awareness of the pros of recycling'		
We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change			Revised the 2023-24 figure for the percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years based on updated year end data which has also led to a revised target for 2024-25.
We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme			

Suggested Areas for Improvement

As part of the survey, and similar to previous years, respondents were asked to put forward their suggested areas for improvement. 'Council parks and open spaces', 'Visitor Attractions, 'Tourism Events' and 'Leisure Centres' are the top priorities for improvement in 2024-25.



Next Steps

Based on the feedback obtained through the consultation and engagement process, as well as the ongoing developmental work around each performance improvement objective 2024-25, there has been an amendment to the wording of one of the objectives as well as some minor amendments to the 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success', as outlined in the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25.

The Consultation and Engagement report will be published on the Council's website by 30 June 2024, alongside the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25. It will also be circulated to key stakeholders to support the business planning process.

A summary of the consultation and engagement feedback is provided below along with the full list of comments made.

Summary of Consultation and Engagement Feedback

Performance Improvement Objective 1

- Better maintenance of leisure centres is needed as they are often closed or things are broken/not in use
- More health and leisure activities should be offered and at more affordable prices
- Newry needs the park developed
- More investment in Newcastle but the support for the gondola project is not there
- Residents and visitors should not be charged into the forest parks
- More work needs to be done on playing pitches
- More information needs to be provided on community trails
- More emphasis needs to be places on Arts, Heritage and Culture across the District

Performance Improvement Objective 2

- Car parking charges and lack of spaces is adversely affecting the city and the ability to shop local
- More promotion of Council jobs, more job fairs looking at training and apprenticeships
- More awareness and visibility for the new 'Go Succeed' Programme
- Too many derelict buildings and city centre run down

Performance Improvement Objective 3

- Dog fouling and littering are still major issues across the District and it is felt that they are getting worse
- Fly tipping and fly posting are also issues that should be better addressed
- More enforcement and awareness campaigns are needed
- More cleansing needs to be done across the District

Performance Improvement Objective 4

- More trees need to be planted
- More EV charging points needed
- Improving our recycling and opening times of HRC's
- Supporting sustainable tourism
- More awareness of our carbon footprint and measures to reduce it
- The impact of flooding across the District

Performance Improvement Objective 5

- Not enough planning enforcement
- Planning applications take far too long
- More staff needed

Other comments

- People of the District are not listened to.
- Council needs to be more accountable and transparent
- More emphasis needed on the creative sector – Arts, Heritage and Tourism
- More work needed to improve the biodiversity of the District

Other improvements

- Improved governance, accountability and transparency
- Newry City Park
- Construction of the new theatre and development of a theatre and arts programme
- More cleansing, more enforcement of dog fouling, littering and fly posting
- Restoring Newry Canal

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Full List of Consultation and Engagement Feedback

Performance Improvement Objective 1

Cedar Foundation

- Council property – leisure centre, handles on doors, no maintenance....allan keys for doors to open automatically.
- Water gushing out of ceiling over squash courts..
- Concrete issue?
- Newry leisure centre- not being cleaned properly, cleaning down of equipment not enforced
- Free for over 60's in Newry
- 60+ package
- Make offers more accessible
- What progress is happening with Newcastle Centre? What are they doing with Tropicana? Will it be open for the summer season? Will there be parking at the new facility?
- No busy bus to take you into the town centre.
- Where are the 10 community trails? Are they advertised on the website, are they prominent? Easy to access?
- What progress is made with the Albert Basin?
- They do deserve wage rises.

NMD Speak Website

- Its a waste of time doing these as you don't listen and take on opinions.
- Since 2015 this Council has ensured that access to sports pitches and playing fields has been curtailed. Places where residents had free access like footballs pitches have been fenced off and residents locked out just because they don't want to join a sporting organisation. This has disproportionately affect those with learning difficulties, mental and physical disabilities.
- Introduce more visible health activities to Newry City Centre. Water based activities on the Canal, lead safe running groups on laps of the city
- Newcastle currently doesn't have a leisure centre.
- Invest in an all year round leisure and entertainment centre in Newcastle instead of wasting millions in the gondola project which is not supported by the vast majority of rate payers to who. you are accountable
- Newcastle needs a all year round, modern, fit for purpose leisure centre, not a vanity project such as the gondola

I agree that you should but you haven't to date. Your leisure facilities are an embarrassment. One mediocre facility between Newry and Downpatrick and Newry is not even functioning. Your services are a disgrace and a joke. Let's talk about car parking charges to Kilbroney and throughout the district. Kilbroney purchase agreement stated no charges to the park. Please tell M Ward. We would rather you met in your existing council offices

and put money into better services for the community. Restore the baths in Warenpoint and Newcastle. Forget the gondola - yes we know who is paying for most of it and we still don't want it. Stick it in the Silent Valley where a more industrial look would be appropriate.

- The District has little or no help for young autistic adults. Although this may be more for the Dept. of Health, the Council should be more active. For example, the Council could be reaching out and offering jobs for Autistic young people. I have a son with AS and if we lived any where else in the Province more help would be available
- How will you do it exactly? The pool is plagued with problems with tiles lifting and hydraulic failures. Seems shoddy materials used in the first place? This is a reoccurring problem especially with maintenance with the council. The new leisure centre is built and within months the building shows signs of wear and tear. You don't seem to prioritise maintenance along with your projects. This isn't good enough.
- Provision of frequent opportunities to sit down, eg on suitably sized and placed concrete seats, encourages less fit people to walk and enjoy a more active life in parks, forests, woodlands etc..
- The facilities are either not in use or closed and the cost of the facilities are too expensive
- By charging people into parks such as Kilbroney and the likes will deter people from using these parks, times are harder now than they have ever been for people and charging for entrance into local places where people can enjoy the beauty of our country and get exercise at the same time is just wrong. Newry swimming pool closed for up to 6 months is a bit disappointment for a lot of people as well.
- The Vision as part of the draft Dept for the Economy (DfE) Tourism Strategy - 10 Year Plan (Nov 2023) is to establish Northern Ireland as a year-round world class destination, which is renowned for its authentic experiences, landscape, heritage and culture and which benefits communities, the economy and the environment, with sustainability at its core.
- This could be improved immensely by expediting the development of the Albert Basin as a public park with good facilities. Also the amount of time the swimming pool is out of commission is unacceptable. Lastly the closing of the Arts Centre before any planning has been approved and the Town Hall in the future underlines how little Arts and Culture are valued by the Council. Whatever events were being held in these venues was always poorly advertised by the council. If they had developed and publicised events well in advance for people and had a proper booking system then you could understand the need for a new civic theatre but the fact that the current facilities are so poorly managed doesn't instil much hope that a new premises would improve things.
- But shared funds and effort equally across the district the Down area has been left behind with all funds going towards the Newry and Mourne area
- One of the proposals is "Maintain the number of recorded visits to Community Trails". There is currently not even a list of the names of

Community Trails in the district on the Council website, never mind a map of where they are. I would suggest the attendences might be higher if the Council bothered to do such an elementary thing as tell people where the trails are.

- Objective 1 should also include the support of LOCALS health and wellbeing by improving our playing facilities such as the playing pitches in Kilbroney Park. Local residents are being let down by the lack of changing and playing facilities, especially the youth in the local area who are having to go to the toilet in the ditches of Kilbroney Park if they choose to play in the playing pitches of Kilbroney Park. A serious incident could occur if this matter isn't addressed sooner rather than later. The pitches also require a much needed upgrade which the locals have been crying out for a number of years now.
- Charging into Forrest parks does not meet this objective as residents, particularly those on low incomes will find it difficult to access the parks. This does not promote or support health and wellbeing.
- More collaboration with schools to encourage students to partake in any leisure activities.
- Leisure facilities closed often for maintenance work does not support the health and wellbeing of residents.
- Mental health has taken a serious decline since COVID-19 pandemic. Health and Wellbeing activities should be increased, more affordable and more accessible for all,
- Fund more mental health services/facilities.
- Increase PR for these services across the district to reach a wider audience, link in with schools.
- Campaign to promote and normalise counselling services for young people.
- Reduce the payment of leisure facilities for all people as the pass is too expensive.
- More support for young people with additional needs to access leisure activities.
- Priority should be given to the construction of the Newry City Park. The absence of a city park when there is an ideal site available is a glaring hole in the provision of leisure facilities in the city.
- Newry pool still not open. No running / walking track for residents
- There is no mention in this section of how the arts and cultural events are to be developed. These can play a vital part in improving and maintaining mental health. What objectives do you have for the provision of arts and cultural events in urban and rural settings?
- As a Newcastle resident it is very disappointing to me to see that the removal of part of the Newcastle Centre complex (including the auditorium) has not been followed up by plans to build new facilities as a replacement. Instead, the cleared building site has been covered in tarmac. With regard to promoting physical wellbeing - the Centre could do with considerable expansion of the gym facilities, which are too confined in a small building. Local residents do not have many options in gym membership if they do not want to or cannot afford to pay for

expensive hotel gym memberships. We should not have to travel to Downpatrick for much better council gym and well-being facilities - they should be in Newcastle too. The town does not really have a heated swimming pool, given that the Tropicana is open air. As I recall at the time the Tropicana Pool was offered it was either that or nothing, but in this climate an enclosed facility is what is needed for use year round.

- The provision of the new children's play park on Downs Road is welcome. The Island's Park play area is in a nice location, but could do with updating the play equipment.

Performance Improvement Objective 2

Cedar Foundation

- Rates relief....for new businesses?
- City centre -no life – a complex with office spaces housing all different businesses – granite exchange
- Use of derelict buildings in city centres...diversification of businesses for young people.
- Parking is massive problem...discourages people...not enough blue badge parking. Should be a window of free parking during busy times to make sure people continue to come to city centre. More council car parks. Very restricted.
- Council should have a recruitment process for people which haven't achieved the required grades...apprenticeships. How do they get employment?
- Council scheme with people with skills and not just qualifications. Provide learning if they don't have the grades.
- Council have a hub for growing people and businesses.
- Underused facilities – Newry market...businesses come and trade, having it open more.
- More difficult to 'shop local' with car parking issues and most machines don't take cards and people don't have change.

NMD Speak Website

- You don't listen to views . You just have to look at the main streets in any of the towns and see that you are failing.
- So increasing rates is supporting businesses. Introducing paid parking your car parks is reinvigorating businesses in town centres? Engaging with chamber of commerce does not mean engaging with all businesses.
- There are a lot of unused premises that pull down the business activity. They should be converted into houses for city centre living
- As above. Having an all year modern leisure centre will meet these objectives

- As above
 - How?
 - Don't have a strong opinion on this
 - Need to give opportunities to businesses who could work with the Council to improve the events on offer. e.g. no catering available for those groups who work hard to provide floats and entertainment in this years St. Patrick Parade in Downpatrick.
 - I am not much the wiser from reading these this proposal as to what it actually means. I have a suspicion it means giving tax payers' cash to non-viable businesses. There's also no consideration of the sustainability of these businesses, which is diametrically at odds with Objective 4.
 - More awareness needed for the go successful programme.
- b. More support in schools to work with young people on social enterprise and jobs.
- c. More advertisements of jobs posted online and using other platforms.
- d. Increase in events like job fairs to support people getting into employment.
- e. More support for small businesses for example decrease in rates and grants funding schemes advertised better for new and emerging businesses.
- f. Support local businesses with growth to increase the number of jobs they can provide for people.
- Newry City desperately needs new investment to bring life back to the city centre's local businesses. Beautiful old buildings are falling into complete disrepair and empty shop windows do not attract return visitors. Rather than spending vast sums of ratepayers' money on an exceptionally unpopular new council building, that money should be directed to upgrade existing buildings and to encourage more businesses to set up shop in Newry town centre. Given Newry's exceptional location on the Dublin/Belfast Economic Corridor and the planned increase in the train service between the two cities, now is the exact moment the council should be focusing its attention on making Newry an attractive stop-over city rather than a hasty drive-through.
 - Support the growth of jobs in the arts and cultural sectors
 - With regard to the Council's idea of continually growing the economy, there seems to be a lack of consideration given to the quality of life of local residents, particularly with regard to tourism in Newcastle. Whilst it is understandable that local businesses need to make a profit to remain in business, there also needs to be consideration given to the difficulties that traffic congestion and crowding that visitors cause has on local residents. The Council should put the welfare of the rate-paying residents first, and not allow the town to become so gridlocked during part of the tourism season that local people struggle to get around or in and out of their own town. The Council might need to consider ways to control the levels of tourist traffic, as other popular places around the world have had to do. Also, the Council generally seems to be very much in favour of the so-called Gondola project, as a new attraction to bring yet more visitors to our area. Apart from the unforgivable scarring of our unique and beautiful view of the Mourne that this would inevitably cause and human damage to the mountain

environment, the additional traffic it would bring would also add further to the town's congestion. On another issue, our region has needed a bypass at Ballynahinch for years, both for smoother travel of residents and commercial vehicles heading to and from the Belfast/Lisburn areas. Almost unbelievably, the bypass was under consideration as far back as the 1970s. It needs to be delivered by the Dept of Infrastructure as soon as possible, if not sooner!

Performance Improvement Objective 3

Cedar Foundation

- Recycling – staff not recycling at sports centre, no separate recycling bin...Newry leisure centre.
- They should be billed for the clean up as well as the fine and the administration.
- HRC's not allowing trailers in to dump the stuff...what rules are there around HRC's?
- Not enough dog fouling bins. Bins left overflowing. Frequency of bins being lifted is not enough.
- Should fines be greater?
- How much are the fines?
- More owner responsibility.
- More enforcement and awareness.
- People afraid to shop people that their dog has fouled.
- Educational starts in school about dog fouling and pet ownership.
- Vaping should be banned indoors...the bus centre in Newry is bad.
- Proper disposal of waste...more campaigns about that.
- Council giving mixed messages regarding recycling and general waste.
- Bulky collection service – up to 5/6 items £12. Waiting time for collection is far too long...constant ringing to get it collected, it took 3 months. This can cause fly-tipping. Why have the service if it is not working correctly.
- Chewing gum...pavements in awful condition.
- More cleansing to be done, especially in Newcastle.
- Footpaths slippery when rains – Chinese granite -

NMD Speak Website

- The dog fouling and litter has got worse. If you want to end it make sure all dogs are chipped and take in DNA testing
- History shows this is nonsense. You produced a report which opposed DNA testing for dog fouling when other councils trialled it. Instead you chose stencils signage and invisible enforcement.
- I thought a motion was passed to encourage people to litter pick on a particular day. Like most motion it's passed and then forgotten about.

- You must have zero tolerance of fly posting. Those posting the posters should be asked to remove them or a penalty applied. Banner should be removed from safety railing as they impede the view of motorists and pedestrians.
- You should remove graffiti from walls in the city.
- You should have a phone number where residents can easily report rubbish and you should issue a tracking number so those who report rubbish can track the action.
- Every day I see examples of rubbish in the city but the council does not seem to see it.
- You simply do nothing about these issues. No enforcement. Lip service only
- Lip service only to date
- Your PR campaign and socials are terrible. The signage is shocking. The entire district of covered with ridiculous business advertising signs which are a horrific welcome to the area. Get a taskforce to go out early morning with a van and remove them from railings, lampposts etc. The towns in this area are dumping grounds for business signs. As for fly tipping - better access to dumps and recycling open evenings when people are actually off work.
- The waste bins provided in Newcastle are unsuitable, especially in the summer months and holiday weekends. They are always overflowing during these times. They are open, so seagulls and crows are able to take the contents out, and scatter around the prom and streets. Rats are often seen running around the prom, especially at night. Either larger, enclosed bins should be provided or else increase the emptying regime.
- Build up of seaweed on shore along prom should be dealt with. It is allowed to lie for weeks/months and during this time rots thus attracting flies and smells awful.
- Newcastle is Northern Ireland's premier holiday destination. The Council should acknowledge this and spend more money and resources to ensure it is kept clean.
- Dog Fouling is a major issue in towns and rural areas across the district, I live in a rural country location and rubbish is a major issue-could the council organise more community clean ups and provide litter pickers and rubbish collections from across the district?
- While there seems to be a program to ensure that urban areas are improved there is still a major problem with all of the above items in rural areas. More education is needed to show people the detrimental affects these issues have on the environment, tourism and ultimately the employment opportunities in their own local communities.
- We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents
- Your household recycling hours are inaccessible to most working people because nearly all their opening hours are only during times when people with dayjobs are at work. You should consider more evening and weekend opening.

- Every report I made to the Council of flytipping around my local roads just seemed to be ignored, with no reply and no action taken. This is absolutely hopeless and I would be pleased to see this improved.
- My local (rural) roads do not seem to have any litter picking provided whatsoever despite being in an alleged Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Many of the verges look like landfill.
- I would like to see weekly recycling collections, rather than fortnightly.
- a. Higher level of enforcement needs implemented for fining regarding dog fouling and littering.
- b. More environmental projects (restoration projects).
- c. More encouragement and community engagement for local beach cleanups and litter picking.
- d. More awareness raising of the impact of littering, fly tipping and dog fouling and the consequences.
- e. Should be aiming higher for % household waste collection for recycling.
- f. More promotion on live here love here campaign to inform and raise awareness of the pros of recycling.
- g. More waste bins in the streets and well sign posted so people are aware they are there.
- h. More maintenance required on Newry Canal.
- i. Research into other ways to dispose of rubbish.
- j. Provide groups with small pots of funding to conduct community cleanups.
- k. Provide free bulky rubbish collections within communities once a quarter to help tackle fly tipping.
 - This is part of the council's remit already. Should not be given 'objective' status.
 - Dog fouling is disgusting! Not he tying any better
 - Include the removal of fly posting as an objective and follow up with action to recover the cost of removal from those who fly post. Removal of graffiti from surfaces should be a priority. Dog fouling on Warrenpoint promenade is terrible. We have teams of blue and red coats and their role should include reporting rubbish when spotted. Removal of rubbish from Newry river through the city centre should be a priority. The tunnels linking Newry City to North Street and Abbey Yard should be cleaned on a daily basis and webcams installed to discourage vandalism or replace with aerial walkways.
 - Include the additional wording in red to Objective 3 so that it reads: **'We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents.'**
 - The work of Council employees who empty bins in Newcastle town centre each morning is commendable, as is generally the current reliability of the weekly bin collections. I also appreciate the Council's efforts in providing flower beds and plants to enhance the appearance of Newcastle promenade etc. With regard to dog fowling, it has been good to see the signage advising of fines to those who do not clear up after their pets. As

a dog owner myself, it is annoying to see dog fouling that owners have not cleared up in public areas, especially if children etc are around. However I think more could be done to encourage people to do the right thing. I once suggested that a bin be sited in the Marguerite Park area of Newcastle, but was advised that no new bins would be sited for this purpose, and indeed the dog waste bins that did exist in the town would not be replaced when they finally fell into disrepair. I find that kind of attitude at cross purposes with a serious aim to prevent dog fouling.

Performance Improvement Objective 4

CEDAR Foundation

- Cut down trees in Derryleckagh playing fields?
- 80 trees is not enough...there should be more.
- No toilets, not enough public toilets. Disabled access limited.
- If there are toilets they are not clean.
- People would not use the public drinking water fountains. How much did they cost and where does the water come from? Is there maintenance for it?
- More trees to be planted.

NMd Speak Website

- No signs of this working I am sure that the current over paid management is not capable of doing it.
- Tell that to the businesses flooded in Newry and Downpatrick. Did the council ever question the flood alleviation schemes which cut down trees to put up walls.
- Also ignoring planning advice regarding areas of flooding cannot continue. Building on floodplains is madness.
- Encourage walking in the city.
- Improve the quality of the North Street Car Park
- How does the gondola nobody wants fit in with this???
- all other objectives have an aim and then an additional phrase starting "by... "why is there no by for this objective how can it be smart if there is no mention in the objective about how we are going to do this? This is probably the hardest objective to attain, but made even harder if we don't know what we are going to do to attain it!
- This is vital in terms of addressing adverse weather and its impacts on local communities-look at the devastation caused by flooding in Downpatrick and Newry-would like to see tangible initiatives from Council on how they can work with Government Depts to put in protections for adverse weather.

- This should be a No. 1 priority of - not only the Council but all all organisations, communities etc. If the last year's weather has taught us anything we need to do all we can to limit the affects of climate change. How many electric vehicles are in the Council's fleet? I know charging points have been installed in Leisure Centres and other Council facilities but many of these are not accessible for long periods at weekends and evenings when these facilities are closed. Also - how efficient are boiler systems and electrical installations throughout Council facilities?
 - By promoting Green Economy opportunities, savings and infrastructure we will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change.
 - The Gateway gondola and quarry centre plan is incompatible with this and should be changed to sustainable alternatives. I am happy to be contacted to discuss this.
 - Targets must be set and implemented
 - Do we even have an electric bus in Newry yet?
 - Again, included in the DfE touism strategy is the objective support a greener and more sustainable economy:
 - â€¢ Support the tourism sector to become more sustainable through an annual increase in participation in a tourism specific Sustainability
 - Accreditation scheme.
 - â€¢ Improve regional dispersal and seasonal growth of the tourist offering to enhance Northern Ireland as a competitive all year-round tourist destination.
 - â€¢ Support tourism businesses towards becoming carbon neutral. Tourism NI is very active in this space and has been running a series of webinars, seminars and toolkits on sustainable tourism and which are open to tourism businesses in the NMD area.
 - Please report on how much of recycle waste collected by the council is actually recycled. Longer opening hours at amenity recycling sites. More information on where recycle any items, whether through charities or other means. Recycling give back scheme for plastic bottles etc. Food companies held liable for litter waste to encourage their consumers to dispose of receptacles in a responsible manner.
 - the Down area has been left behind with all funds going towards the Newry and Mourne area
 - Only planting 80 trees in a year is embarrassingly low. The Council should be planting orders of magnitude more. I would suggest schemes that allow residents to sponsor trees on their local streets.
 - I could count the number of EV charging points in a 15 mile radius from me on the fingers of one hand. Every village should have one and every carpark should have several.
 - Research into new ways to dispose of rubbish.
- b. Promote walking/cycling to work schemes to reduce carbon emissions from cars.
- c. Research and investment into more renewable energy sources for the district.

- d. Plant more trees throughout the district than the small number achieved in the last financial year.
- e. Promote the use of more energy saving devices to be used in homes and businesses across the district.
- f. Introduce schemes to support and promote the use of electric vehicles for example a grant scheme to support the purchase of an electric car.
- g. More awareness of the districts Carbon Footprint and a real effort made to reduce our emissions.
- h. Improved maintenance on public walkways around areas of natural beauty.
- i. Free refill dispensers for drinking watering placed throughout the district.
- j. Support youth and community groups with tree planting initiatives.
- k. Add more flowers around the district.
- l. Council is negligent towards the districts Carbon Footprint.
 - Include the additional wording in red to Objective 3 so that it reads: '**By promoting Green Economy opportunities, savings and infrastructure we will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change.**'
 - I appreciate the steps taken to the car park layout to discourage the meeting and antisocial behaviour of the modified car owners in Donard Park. The noise (and pollution) they cause is unacceptable, and begs the question how they manage to pass an MOT, which checks vehicle emissions.

Performance Improvement Objective 5

CEDAR Foundation

- Apprenticeships for planning.
- Bridge over fathom – will stop tall ships? Make the bridge open?
- Canal – totally under used.
- Signage on footpaths by cafes.. for visual impaired.

NMD Speak Website

- The planning is not fit for purpose. There is no area plan . Planning does not stick to their own rules and developers get what they want. Greed is the purpose and our whole area loses out. Houses and apartments built everywhere with no updates in infrastructure communities or health facilities.
- Don't see any visible enforcement department when it comes to unauthorised large scale land clearances. There have been 2 incidences of

this and nothing has been done. There appears to be a lack of consistency with enforcement and unwilling to take on some cases.

- I don't think the planning can be improved. Far too many decisions are overturned by the planning committee.
- People don't object because it's futile when you can't employ a planning agent or solicitor
- The length of time taken for major applications is far too long at 467 weeks!
- Long overdue
- Long overdue
- No more housing development in Annalong until water infrastructure modernised. Planners have already ruined the historic harbour area by allowing apartments to be built destroying the picturesque village. Should hang their heads in shame. Environmental vandalism
- In Scotland all applications are approved within twelve weeks. Your planning department should be as effective as other councils throughout the UK and Scotland. If it is not it is your fault. Sort out the management and manage it correctly. I hope people start to take legal action against you for inefficiency and not meeting targets. Your ineffectiveness keeps families out of homes. For goodness sake better architecture, more environmentally friendly and modern. No more horrific 90s bungalows.
- Too many applications being approved in Annalong harbour/Marine Park area. Small village being ruined, & seems not suitable for all the proposed developments
- Bringing down the processing times is essential-this is going to be vital to encourage more inward investment and job creation in our district as it could be off putting to developers/businesses wishing to invest or build in our district.
- Council need to employ staff in planning office asap. They also need clear guidelines on approvals and plans in place for replacements to cover anyone off on leave or ill so it does not cause delays in individual cases. Clear guidelines in simple English need to be published on planning rules and guidelines with further guidance for people who need in depth knowledge. A map of various planning zones within the district should be published and areas where disused or vacant properties are highlighted so can be used and developed in the time of shortage in housing and large commercial space and premises.
- Planning staff are ignored and the amount of staff leaving because they get no backing is a disgrace. They feel as if they are the forgotten staff. Need better management as staff morale is at an all time low
- I would like to see something about addressing disused and vacant properties, something to spark regeneration a sense of civic pride.
- The stats back to 2020 just show your service is getting worse. I don't see you explain any reasons as to why it's so bad or what specifically you intend to do to fix it.
- Current waiting time is unacceptable.

b. Council did not achieve last year's objectives; drastic improvements need to be seen.

c. More investment needs placed into planning services within council with new hires to the service to improve waiting times.

d. Targets are not realistic, with last year's targets being like the previous years and they were not met.

- Why is it taking so long to get the planning for the new theatre approved?
- From the performance figures quoted in the Council documentation for planning application times, it would appear that improvements need to be made.
- Current planning legislation (NI Planning Order 2015) also seems to be in need of updating. For example - how was the giant Mourne Eye observation ferris wheel allowed to be sited so close to residential property in Newcastle. In some cases home owners who were most affected by the installation were not written to when planning was under consideration because they were just outside the distance stipulated. This legislation does not take into account the great height of this type of structure.

Other comments

- Yes a new board of directors with imagination and new councillors that are willing to work for the betterment of the whole community.
- To be honest it's pointless suggesting anything as the senior management have consistently shown total disregard for public consultations. There is a severe lack of accountability, transparency and good governance. Eg everything in closed session and lack of minutes to follow up on.
- Consult and engage those directly impacted by any decision, get their agreement before progressing, demonstrate you have listened and reacted accordingly
- There is no mention of developing the creative sector in the plan
- Look at the arts programme produced for the Marketplace Theatre in Armagh and produce a similar one for Newry.
- Include an arts development programme
- Ensure your team have a process in place to ensure they don't miss out any bin collections. The service is currently very disappointing
- Listen to the people of this area. Stop forging through with vanity projects and start to make a real difference to people's lives. Leisure centre and swimming pools in every big town as a bare minimum. A greenway between Warrnpoint and Rostrevor on the shore.
- We will work to improve the biodiversity of the district and the ecosystem services that this biodiversity supports, we will do this by being an example in managing all our land holdings for biodiversity and educating other land

owners in how to do this. Measures for success will be ha of land managed for biodiversity, length of hedgerow planted and managed, number of native provenance trees planted and managed, amount of land rewilded.

- Is there a Marine/Harbour development strategy for the district-swimmers and other water users would benefit from new infrastructure and facilities at Newcastle which needs investment badly and it will lead to better opportunities for local businesses and encourage visitors to the district.
- Keep giving grant aid to community groups to enhance their facilities.
- See above
- To halt decline in biodiversity and show greater range and abundance of priority and other species.
- Protect old trees, water courses and heathland
- Surveys will show effective action.
- Stop charging the people for parking
- Making Newry and Mourne an outstanding model for saving the planet
- No - Thank You
- Annual poll on how the voters think the council is doing. do they agree with specific actions taken by the council e.g. civic centre, council offices, Albert basin, etc. There is a feeling of being unheard and unlistened to by voters. There also feels like no recourse if things are wrong. Clear charter publicised on waiting times and how to complain if not adhered to. Further information on the organisation that the council can be held accountable to such as The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and what they can actually do.
- Show equal share of investment across the district and not discriminating against certain areas
- the Down area has been left behind with all funds going towards the Newry and Mourne area
- I would like to see the Newry Canal returned to navigability. I think that would coincide excellently with our strategy of 'regenerative tourism'.
- See response to Objective 1 - Performance Improvement Objective(s) "should also include the support of LOCALS health and wellbeing by improving our playing facilities such as the playing pitches in Kilbroney Park. Local residents are being let down by the lack of changing and playing facilities, especially the youth in the local area who are having to go to the toilet in the ditches of Kilbroney Park if they choose to play in the playing pitches of Kilbroney Park. A serious incident could occur if this matter isn't addressed sooner rather than later. The pitches also require a much needed upgrade which the locals have been crying out for a number of years now.
- Supporting actions should be attendance of councilors to community events to provide updates to the local community seeking information on progress.
- Measures of success should be a survey of the community on the level of satisfaction of the outcome of the proposed improvement. The survey should be issued after 6 months of the proposal regardless of completion before being reissued at completion. There should also be a measure in place to determine the number of community meetings each councillor

attended or refused, along with any meetings that were cancelled due to non-attendance of councillors.

- More transparency in council decision-making and governance; better tourist information and promotion
- Zero fly posting in Newry City Centre. Number of fines issued for fly posting
- Zero Graffiti on surfaces in town and city centres and in rural surfaces.
- A commitment to the needs of rate-paying residents over those of visitors to the area

Other improvements

- City Park, Wall art and repaint run down areas of the city
- You need to start again with a page and Newry personal. We have to get away from closed mind and listen to people. Cut the wages of directors put better infrastructure
- Get away from making the rich richer and get equality for everyone.
- Transparency
- Governance
- Accountability
- Regenerate run down areas. And scrap the civic hub nonsense.
- Complete the construction of the New Theatre
- Hold planning department to a twelve week turnaround. There is simply no excuse for applications sitting dormant for years. Fine the department for every time they fail to meet the deadline or sort out the management of it. It is an embarrassment.
- In Newcastle, the parks in town are shocking. The mini-golf is a joke. The park beside the tennis courts is a wilderness. The car park beside the boating pond is filled with camper vans. And the island park needs a proper tidy up. Again, this is the main holiday destination in NI. These parks should be places for people to sit, have picnics etc. However, the grass is not cut often enough, and when it is, the mown grass is not lifted. Dogs are allowed to run free, so fouling is a problem. There are no nice trees, or flowering shrubs or flower beds - nothing attractive about them. The beds formed on the road on way into town are much nicer.
- provision of more park and ride, park and stride, park and share to encourage active travel and reduction of car miles. these facilities should also be landscaped and planted with native tree species to provide future shade. Provision and planting of many street trees to improve air quality, shade, shelter, health of citizens and to improve overall sustainability of our towns.
- Is there a Marine/Harbour development strategy for the district-swimmers and other water users would benefit from new infrastructure and facilities

at Newcastle which needs investment badly and it will lead to better opportunities for local businesses and encourage visitors to the district.

- I often wonder what tourists think when they come to our town. My in-laws who are not from here are always so disappointed at the volume of litter in our glorious countryside, the potholes on the road, the lack of cycling paths. The dead look about the town centre. In the village they live in the weekends are bursting full of family activities in the village square with the cleaners on mass collecting rubbish and power hosing the streets after every event. There is always something to look forward to, an event in the seasonal calendar. Make more out of our Farmers market, take it to the city centre and add pop up street food etc etc. Use the space for the night time economy. Have plays and bands etc etc.
- I do think the council are good at putting on events and we do make use of them but maybe also take into account inclusion for neurodiversity and allocate resources to making the events suitable for all.
- To develop a continuous signposted network of walking and cycling paths for active healthy lifestyles.
- To support work to remedy erosion of popular walking routes in the Mournes.
- To replace the gondola plan with genuine gateways to the Mournes with low level connecting paths
- Build our towns park
- Get a park built, it sickens me when I go to places like Moira, Lisburn, Lurgan to name only a couple within 30mins travel that they have these beautiful parks and Newry has absolutely nothing. Some people do not have access to cars and this park will be a blessing for everyone to enjoy. (if it's ever built)
- The main priority should be listening to the people as it feels like the council workers are not accountable to the voters and can make their own decisions. The amount of closed doors committee meetings enhances the feeling of backroom deals and people excluded. Transparency is key and answering the questions on issues of opposition reasoning put to council about why particular decisions are made can make them understand policies.
- Remember that its not all about newry!
- the Down area has been left behind with all funds going towards the Newry and Mourne area
- If I had to pick one thing it would be restoring the Newry Canal to navigation. This would be a wonderful amenity asset to the Mourne, Strangford & Gullion Global Geopark. It would be a far more sensible, environmentally friendly and financially sustainable thing to spend Belfast Region City Deal cash on that that silly cable-car up Slieve Donard idea.
- Remove all political and advertising posters from property
- Improvement of the Kilbroney Park playing pitches and upgrade the play park.
- Make use of Newry market open spaces . Picnic benches along the canal.

- An theatre and arts programme similar in scale to the Marketplace Theatre in Armagh.
- Reopen the Newry Canal from Carlingford Lough to Portadown to encourage Tourism and the development of the villages along the route. Keep the river through the city centre free from rubbish. Provide summer music along the Newry Canal
- A commitment to greater accountability to the people . The lack of communication about the decision to no longer stage the Festival of Flight in Newcastle, and the way the Gondola proposal has been dealt with thus far suggests that greater transparency is needed.

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Objective Delivery Plans 2024-25

Delivery Plans have been developed to demonstrate the arrangements which have been put in place to support the effective implementation of each performance improvement objective. They provide an overview of:

- Responsible Officers
- Alignment with the Community Plan and Draft Corporate Plan
- Governance arrangements for the Performance Improvement Plan
- Meeting the seven legislative criteria
- 'Supporting actions' and 'measures of success'
- Links to existing plans and strategies
- Resources
- Governance arrangements

In recognition of the dynamic nature of the information included within the Objective Delivery Plans, they should be considered as a 'work in progress', subject to change to a continuous basis.

Performance Improvement Objective 1

We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services				
Responsible Officers	Director: Activity and Healthy Communities Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport			
Link to Community Plan	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing		Link to Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District
Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.Annual Assessment of Performance to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.			
Meeting the legislative criteria	<p>Strategic Effectiveness: Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives. Achieving this objective will deliver real benefits and outcomes for local communities and other key stakeholders.</p> <p>Service Quality: The quality of services will continue to improve through the planned increase in the number and variety of classes being offered, as well as health promotions taking place.</p> <p>Service Availability: The continued progression and delivery of Council leisure projects will improve access to and availability of key leisure services and contribute towards the improvement of people's health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Fairness: Includes opportunities for people across Section 75 categories to access the Council's leisure centres.</p>			
What we are going to do				
Supporting Action	Link to existing Plan/Strategy	Measures of Success	Resources	Governance Arrangements
Progress the leisure projects agreed within the capital programme	AHC Business Plan 2024-25 Capital Works Programme	The number of new build and/or upgraded capital projects progressed in 2024-25	Amount agreed under the capital plan.	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan 2024-25 Ongoing monitoring of projects within the Capital Plan
Increase the number of paid attendances at indoor leisure facilities	AHC Business Plan 2024-25	Target set at 850,000 across the 6 leisure sites for 2024-25	Within the resources of the AHC Directorate	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan 2024-25
				Assistant Director Healthy Living Assistant Director Capital and Procurement
				Assistant Director Healthy Living

					Head of Indoor Leisure
Continue to deliver a range of targeted, sustainable health programmes to encourage participation in physical activity.	AHC Business Plan 2024-25	Target of 20,000 people to be participating in targeted health programmes	In partnership with the Southern and South Eastern Health Trusts	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan 2024-25 Reporting back to Health Trusts	Assistant Director Healthy Living Head of Indoor Leisure Sports Development Officer
Increase the number of young people participating in targeted youth health and wellbeing initiatives such as seasonal activity programmes and £1 summer promotions	AHC Business and Service Plans 2024-25	Target of 15,000 young people participating in targeted youth health and wellbeing initiatives	Within the resources of the AHC Directorate	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan 2024-25	Assistant Director Healthy Living Head of Indoor Leisure
Maintain the number of recorded visits to the Council's community trails	AHC Business Plan 2024-25	Number of recorded visits in 2024-25: 1. Saul GAC - 2018/19, Downpatrick. 2. Ballymahinch Rugby Club - 2018/19, Rowallane. 3. Drumkeeragh Forest - 2019/20, Slieve Croob. 4. Trevenadarragh Forest - 2019/20 Slieve Croob. 5. Seaford Plantation & Corry Wood - 2019/20, Slieve Croob. 6. Daisy Hill Wood 2020/21, Newry. 7. Aughrim Hill 2020/21, Mourmes.	2024-25 SLA with ORNI: Going to committee in June	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan 2024-25 Community Trail Management and Prioritisation Framework	Assistant Director: Healthy Living Head of Outdoor Leisure

		8. Glendestha Forest Trail, Forkhill, 2021/22, Slieve Gullion. 9. Lough Park/Windmill Hill Trail, Ballymalinch 2021/22, Rowallane 10. Tieveenadarragh Forest Car Park, 2021/22, Slieve Croob.		
Work towards Leisure-Safe Accreditation for all indoor leisure facilities	AHC Business Plan 2024-25 Leisure and Sport Service Plan	Leisure-Safe Accreditation achieved	Within the resources of the AHC Directorate	Assistant Director: Healthy Living Head of Indoor Leisure
Risks		Risk Management		
Leisure facilities do not achieve the projected paid attendance levels		Actions to Mitigate Risks		
Targeted groups do not engage in physical activity programmes		Targeted promotional and publicity campaigns including online campaigns are being carried out. Programmes are managed, monitored and publicised effectively across the District.		
Capital Projects do not go ahead		Budgets have been set to include the leisure centre capital projects.		

Performance Improvement Objective 2

We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation				
Senior Responsible Officer	Director: Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Assistant Director: Economy, Growth and Tourism			
Link to Community Plan	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	Link to Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	Support the continued growth and development of our local economy	
Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.Annual Assessment of Performance to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.			
Meeting the legislative criteria	Strategic Effectiveness: Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives, and will deliver tangible benefits to citizens, local businesses and social enterprises. Service Quality: The quality of services available to businesses and stakeholders will improve through the broad range of economic development programmes available. Service Availability: The continued roll-out of programmes to businesses, social enterprises and fishing dependent communities will improve access to and availability of key services, as well as the overall quality of life in the District. Innovation: Implicit within this objective are innovative, forward looking ways to promote / create new jobs and support businesses / social enterprises across the District.			
What we are going to do				
Supporting Action	Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy	Measures of Success	Resources	Governance Arrangements
Support the creation of new businesses, support existing businesses and promote new jobs through the new 'Go Succeed' programme	Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activities	NMD contribution: £168k	Monthly meetings of the regional Management Team
	Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2020-25	Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	Regional programme led by Belfast City Council	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan 2024-25
	ERT Business Plan 2024-25	Number of new jobs promoted through business start-up activity		Assistant Director: Economy, Growth and Tourism Head of Regeneration and Business Development

Performance Improvement Objective 3

We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling				
Senior Responsible Officer	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Directors: Environment / Sustainability			
Link to Community Plan	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	Link to Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future	
Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee• Annual Assessment of Performance to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee			
Meeting the legislative criteria	Strategic Effectiveness: Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives and will deliver real benefits and outcomes to local citizens. Service Availability: The availability of key services will improve, through support for community led initiatives and access to funding through 'Live Here Love Here' campaigns. Innovation: The Council has introduced innovative ways to improve civic and community pride across the District, as evidenced through support for Community Clean ups, Enforcement Improvement Plan, continued engagement with Keep NI Beautiful and the development of mobile apps to report and record environmental crime, identify emerging issues and address 'hotspots' across the District. Sustainability: Initiatives to encourage public participation in key campaigns, promote responsible dog ownership and reduce levels of littering, fly tipping and dog fouling will empower residents and support the delivery of a more sustainable service and cleaner District in the future.			
What we are going to do				
Supporting Action	Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy	Measure of Success	Resources	Governance Arrangements
Address issues around littering, fly tipping and dog fouling by:	Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	LEAMS score (Keep NI Beautiful Cleanliness Index)		Annual and bi-annual assessments of the Sustainability and Environment
Implementing the Enforcement Improvement Plan	Enforcement Action Plan	Number of fixed penalty notices issued (littering and dog fouling)	Within existing resources	Directorate Business Plan 2024-25
Promoting responsible dog ownership through	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plan 2024-25			Ongoing assessments of the Dog Fouling Strategy and
				Assistant Director: Environment Head of Waste Processing Head of Waste Management

<p>publicity and social media campaigns</p> <p>Working with Louth County Council to raise awareness of the impact of fly tipping along the border area</p> <p>Encouraging residents to bring properly sorted surplus recyclable waste to our Household Recycling Centres</p>		<p>Number of fixed penalty notices paid (littering and dog fouling)</p> <p>The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling</p> <p>The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled</p> <p>The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings</p>		Enforcement Action Plan	
<p>Implementation of a Paint Re-Use Scheme at 7 Household Recycling Centres throughout the district</p>	SE Directorate Business Plan 2024-25	<p>Reduction in the disposal of paint from our Household Recycling Centre sites.</p>	Within existing resources	<p>Annual and bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan 2024-25</p>	<p>Assistant Director: Environment</p> <p>Head of Waste Processing</p>
<p>Support local community clean ups, Participate in the Keep NI Beautiful 'Live Here Love Here' campaign</p> <p>Encourage community groups to 'Adopt a Spot'</p>	<p>Sustainability & Directorate Business Plan 2024-25</p>	<p>Number of community clean ups supported</p> <p>Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects</p> <p>Number of community groups to 'Adopt a Spot'</p>	Within existing resources	<p>Annual and bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan 2024-25</p>	<p>Assistant Director: Sustainability</p>

Commission surveys to monitor street cleanliness and identify emerging issues and hotspots	SE Directorate Business Plan 2024-25	Surveys commissioned	Within existing resources	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan 2024-25	Assistant Director: Environment Head of Waste Processing
Highlight the impact of littering on the marine environment		Work commenced in relation to littering and the marine environment			
Risk Management					
Risks		Actions to Mitigate Against Risks			
Stakeholders do not get involved in community clean up's and 'Live Here Love Here' campaigns		All initiatives are promoted and publicised across the District, through social media, website, liaison with Council employees and word of mouth.			
Failure to improve the level of street cleanliness and reduce the level of littering, dog fouling and fly tipping		The Council has a number of initiatives in place to encourage civic pride in the local area, promote responsible dog ownership, report littering and use enforcement action.			
Failure to achieve the statutory targets for waste management		Programmes are in place to increase the rate of recycling and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.			

Performance Improvement Objective 4

We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change				
Senior Responsible Officer	Director: Sustainability and Environment			
Link to Community Plan	Assistant Director: Sustainability	Link to Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future	
Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee			
Meeting the legislative criteria	<p>Strategic Effectiveness: Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives and will deliver real benefits and outcomes to citizens.</p> <p>Efficiency: The procurement and availability of younger, less polluting cars as well as cars with alternative fuel sources will provide a more efficient and effective service to our customers as well as working towards protecting our environment.</p> <p>Innovation: Innovative mechanisms to allow more people access electric cars by providing more electric charging points will hopefully assist in the increase of cars with alternative fuel sources</p> <p>Sustainability: Implementing the Council's fleet replacement programme to ensure younger, less polluting cars as well as cars with alternative fuel sources are within our fleet which allows for the delivery of a more sustainable service across the District.</p>			
What we are going to do				
Supporting Action	Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy	Measure of Success	Resources	Governance Arrangements Responsible Officers

Continue the implementation of the Council's Fleet Replacement Program	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2024-25	% of Council fleet younger than 8 years Number of cars in Council fleet with alternative fuel source	Within existing resources	Annual and Bi-annual assessment of the SE Directorate Business Plans 2024-25 Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Director: Sustainability
Publication of the following strategies and plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change and sustainable development strategy Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy 2023-28 Climate Change Adaptation Plan 	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2024-25	All strategies and plans published		Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan 2024-25 Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Director: Sustainability
Undertaking a baseline of the Council's carbon footprint		Baseline established		Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan 2024-25 Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Director: Sustainability

Undertake a baseline of the Council's energy consumption		Baseline established		Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan 2024-25	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Director: Sustainability
Establishing a baseline of current renewable energy generation by Council sites		Baseline established		Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan 2024-25	Director: Sustainability and Environment Assistant Director: Sustainability
Continuing the implementation of the Council's Tree Strategy	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plans 2024-25	Number of trees planted on Council managed estate	Working with external partners as well as within existing resources	Annual and Bi-annual assessments of the SE Directorate Business Plan 2024-25 Reports considered and approved by the SE Committee	Assistant Director: Sustainability
Risk Management					
Risks		Actions to Mitigate Against Risks			
Delivery issues with vehicles ordered		Getting approval for vehicles in time and ordering early to mitigate against time delays on delivery			
Trees not taking root and dying		Planting the whips and trees at the appropriate time for the best results and maintaining care throughout the planting process			
Too many plans and strategies to be complete and not getting done on time		Timetabling the process and adding additional resources when required.			
Carbon footprint and energy baselines not established		Having approval in place to procure services and researching service providers to ensure the work is able to be carried out within agreed timeframes			

Performance Improvement Objective 5

We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme				
Senior Responsible Officer	Director: Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Assistant Director: Regeneration Chief Planner			
Link to Community Plan	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	Link to Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	Deliver sustainable services	
Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit CommitteeAnnual Assessment of Performance 2023-24 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee			
Meeting the legislative criteria	<p>Strategic Effectiveness: Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives and will deliver real benefits to citizens.</p> <p>Service Quality: The implementation of the Planning Service Improvement Programme and the new planning portal has, and will continue to improve the quality of the service provided by reducing the processing times of applications.</p> <p>Service Availability: Improved availability of the Planning Service, focused on reducing processing times, will contribute to the sustainable development of Newry, Mourne and Down.</p> <p>Efficiency: The purpose of the Planning Service Improvement Programme is to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the service, by seeking to make better use of the resources available.</p>			
What we are going to do				
Supporting Action	Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy	Measure of Success	Resources	Governance Arrangements
Reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases which have been in the system for over 12 months	ERT Business Plan 2024-25	Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	Within existing resources	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan 2024-25
		Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)		
Work with agents and architects to improve the standard of		Percentage of planning enforcement cases		Assistant Director: Regeneration

planning applications submitted Support employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries'		progressed within 39 weeks Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more Number of planning applications in the system for less than 12 months Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more			
Continued implementation of the new electronic planning system	ERT Business Plan 2024-25	Successful implementation of all modules	Within existing resources	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan 2024-25	Assistant Director: Regeneration
Risks		Risks Management			
Failure to meet the statutory performance standards for processing planning applications, enforcement cases. The Council does not reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases in the system		Actions to Mitigate the Risks			
		The Planning Service Improvement Programme outlines the key areas for improvement, with progress being monitored and reported on a regular basis. The Planning Service Improvement Programme outlines the key areas for improvement, with progress being monitored and reported on a regular basis.			

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	13 June 2024
Subject:	Correspondence from Foras na Gaeilge / Ulster University re PeacePlus Project - Theme 1.3 Building Positive Relations
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy Louise Smith, Irish Language Unit Manager Suzanne Rice, Corporate Policy & Equality Officer

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	X	For noting only	
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to seek approval in principle for Council to participate as an Associate Partner in a PeacePlus project under Theme 1.3 Building Positive Relations with a consortium which includes Ulster University, Foras na Gaeilge, The Ulster Scots Agency, East Belfast Mission, Comhaltas Uladh, University of the Highlands and Islands and Galway University.</p> <p>The overall aim of the project is to improve relations in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland by promoting mutual respect for Irish and Ulster Scots language and heritage and improving the capacity of local authorities to deal sensitively with language and culture issues. This will be a four-year project running from January 2025 - December 2028.</p> <p>Specifically, Council as an Associate Partner would work with the consortium to develop a bespoke Continuous Professional Development course for council employees. This CPD course will focus on raising awareness of basic facts relating to Irish and Ulster Scots and on providing council staff with the know-how to deal sensitively with language and culture issues.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	<p>Development of a bespoke Continuous Professional Development course for council employees is in line with Positive Action 1.3 of the Council's Irish Language Strategy 2024-2027.</p> <p>In addition, the project will also advance the aims of the TBUC Strategy and the New Decade New Approach deal of 2020 in a meaningful way and complement the legislative aims of the Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022.</p>

3.0	Recommendations
3.1	Council to agree in principle to be an Associate Partner of a Foras na Gaeilge / Ulster University Consortium PeacePlus project under Theme 1.3 Building Positive Relations.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Resource implications will relate to Officer time participating as an Associate Partner.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>

6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	Appendices
	Appendix I: Correspondence from Foras na Gaeilge / Ulster University Consortium re PeacePlus Project - Theme 1.3 Building Positive Relations
8.0	Background Documents



A chara,
(*English below)

MAIDIR LE: Tionscadal PeacePlus - Téama 1.3 Caidreamh Dearfach a Thógáil

Táimid ag scríobh chugat mar chuibhreannas tionscadail (sonraí thíos) atá ag obair ar iarratas ar mhaoiniú chuig an chlár PeacePlus. Tá d'aidhm ag ár dtionscadal caidreamh pobail a fheabhsú i dTuaisceart Éireann agus i gcontaetha na teorann in Éirinn trí chóimheas a chur chun cinn ar theanga agus oidhreacht na Gaeilge agus na hUltaise. Tionscadal ceithre bliana a bheidh ann ar siúl ó Eanáir 2025 go Nollaig 2028.

Díreoidh an tionscadal ar thrí phríomhghníomhaíocht ar son caidreamh dearfach a thógáil:

- (1) Ceardlanna plé ag leibhéal an phobail a eagrú le rannpháirtithe ó gach cuid den phobal.
- (2) Acmhainn údarás áitiúil déileáil go tuisceanach le saincheisteanna teanga agus cultúir a fheabhsú.
- (3) Daoine óga a mhealladh go gníomhach le hoidhreacht chomhroinnte dhúchasach Thuaisceart Éireann agus réigiún na teorann a phlé.

Ba mhaith linn cuireadh a thabhairt do do chomhairle a bheith inár dtionscadal mar Chomhpháirtí Comhlach agus ligean dúinn a bheith ag obair libh i nGníomhaíocht 2. Is é ár smaoineamh chun an obair seo a thabhairt chun cinn ná cúrsa saincheaptha san Fhorbairt Ghairmiúil Leanúnach a fhorbairt d'fhostaithe comhairle. Díreoidh an cúrsa FGL seo ar fheasacht a ardú ar bhunfhiricí a bhaineann leis an Ghaeilge agus leis an Ultais agus ar an tsaineolas a thabhairt do bhaill foirne comhairlí le plé go tuisceanach le saincheisteanna teanga agus cultúir. Cuirfidh sé in iúl áit na Gaeilge agus na hUltaise i dTuaisceart Éireann i gcoinne mhórchúlra cultúrtha Phoblacht na hÉireann agus na hAlban. I gcomhar leis an chúrsa FGL, ba mhaith linn a bheith ag obair le hoifigigh dheachaidrimh do chomhairle chun prótacail a fhorbairt le tacú le saoránaigh ar mian leo cumarsáid a dhéanamh le foireann na comhairle trí mheán na Gaeilge nó na hUltaise. Bheadh na prótacail seo ina gcosaint d'fhoireann na comhairle ó mhasla a thabhairt i ngan fhios do bhaill den phobal, agus dá réir chosnódh siad baill den phobal óna mhothú go bhfuil siad scoite amach agus iad ag plé lena gcomhairle.



Cuirfidh an tionscadal chun cinn aidhmeanna na Straitéise T:BUC, agus shocrú an Ré Nua, Cur Chuige Nua ar bhealach fiúntach. Tá an tionscadal tráthúil chomh maith nó tá sé ag teacht le haidhmeanna reachtúla an Achta um Fhéiniúlacht agus Teanga (Tuaisceart Éireann) 2022 (*Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act*).

Bheimis buíoch dá gcuirfeá in iúl i bprionsabal más mian le do chomhairle páirt a ghlacadh sa tionscadal mholta seo. Ba bhreá linn an deis an tionscadal a phlé ar bhealach níos mionsonraithe ag am a d'fhóirfeadh duit.

Is muidne le meas,

Caoimhín Ó Dónaill
Ollscoil Uladh
c.odonaili@ulster.ac.uk

Pól Deeds
Foras na Gaeilge
pdeeds@forasnagaeilge.ie

N.B. I gcuibhreannas an tionscadail tá: Ollscoil Uladh, Foras na Gaeilge, Gníomhaireacht na hUltaise, Misean Bhéal Feirste Thoir, Comhaltas Uladh, Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean agus Ollscoil na Gaillimhe.



A chara,

RE: PeacePlus Project - Theme 1.3 Building Positive Relations

We are writing to you as a project consortium (details below) working on a funding application to the PeacePlus programme. Our project aims to improve community relations in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland by promoting mutual respect for Irish and Ulster Scots language and heritage. This will be a four year project running from January 2025 - December 2028.

The project will focus on three main activities for building positive relations:

- (1) Organising community level discussion workshops with participants from all sections of society.
- (2) Improving the capacity of local authorities to deal sensitively with language and culture issues.
- (3) Actively engaging young people in discussing the shared, indigenous heritage of Northern Ireland and the border region.

We would like to invite your council to join our project as an Associate Partner and to allow us to work with you on Activity 2. Our idea for progressing this work is to develop a bespoke Continuous Professional Development course for council employees. This CPD course will focus on raising awareness of basic facts relating to Irish and Ulster Scots and on providing council staff with the know-how to deal sensitively with language and culture issues. It will articulate the place of Irish and Ulster Scots in Northern Ireland against the wider cultural backdrop of ROI and Scotland. In conjunction with the CPD course, we would like to work with your council's good relations officers to develop protocols for supporting citizens who wish to communicate with council staff through the medium of Irish or Ulster Scots. These protocols would serve to protect council staff from unwittingly causing offence to members of the public, and in turn protect members of the public from feeling alienated when dealing with their council.

The project will advance the aims of the T:BUC Strategy, and the New Decade New Approach deal in a meaningful way. The project is also timely as it accords with the legislative aims of the 2022 Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act.



We would be grateful if you could indicate in principle if your council would like to participate in this proposed project. We would relish the opportunity to discuss the project in more detail at a time convenient to you.

Yours sincerely,

Caoimhín Ó Dónaill
 Ulster University
c.odonaill@ulster.ac.uk

Pól Deeds
 Foras na Gaeilge
pdeeds@forasnagaeilge.ie

N.B. The project consortium includes: Ulster University, Foras na Gaeilge, The Ulster Scots Agency, East Belfast Mission, Comhaltas Uladh, University of the Highlands and Islands and Galway University.