

November 11th, 2025

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Thursday, 13th November 2025 at 6:00 pm** in **Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre.**

Committee Membership 2025-26

Councillor O Hanlon **Chairperson**

Councillor D McAteer **Deputy Chairperson**

Councillor P Byrne

Councillor C Enright

Councillor M Hearty

Councillor R Howell

Councillor T Howie

Councillor A King

Councillor C King

Councillor A Lewis

Councillor A Mathers

Councillor S O'Hare

Councillor H Reilly

Councillor M Rice

Councillor D Taylor

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held 16 October 2025

 *SPR-Action Sheet arising from 2025 10 16.pdf*

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For Discussion/Decision

4.0 Mid-Year Assessments of Chief Executive and Corporate Services Directorate Business Plans

 *SPR Cover Report Mid Year Assessment of Business Plans 2025-26.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 - CX-CS Mid Year Assessment Business Plan 2025-26.pdf*

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5.0 Mid-year assessment- Performance Improvement

 *SPR Cover Report Mid Year Progress Report PIP 2025-26.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 - PIP Mid Year Progress Report April-September 2025.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

6.0 Renewal of Microsoft Enterprise Agreement

For Approval

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

 *Microsoft EA Renewal Paper 2026 v3.pdf*

Not included

7.0 Health Cash Plan

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

 *2025.11.13 SPRC Health CashPlan.pdf*

Not included

8.0 Lease arrangements - Delamont Country Park Caravan Park

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

📄 *SPR 13 Nov 2025 Renewal of Lease for Caravan Park at Delamont Country Park.pdf V2.pdf* **Not included**

📄 *Delamont Caravan Park - Lease with Caravan Club.pdf* **Not included**

9.0 Accessibility Proposal

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

📄 *Report re AccessAble proposal.pdf* **Not included**

10.0 Mini-Digi Hub Project Bessbrook

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

📄 *SPR - MiniDigiHubProjectBessbrook Community Centre - Procurement.pdf* **Not included**

Items deemed to be exempt under paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014

11.0 Recruitment Director: Corporate Services

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraphs 3&4 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business and Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a government department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council. The public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

📄 *2025.11.13 Director recruitment report to SPRC.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 Exempt Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Minutes 5 Sept 2025

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

 ***Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Mtg - 05.09.2025.pdf*** ***Not included***

13.0 Management Accounts - Quarter 2

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

 ***Management Accounts Q2 202526 -final.pdf*** ***Not included***

 ***Appendix 1 - Mgt Accs by Directorate for period ending 30 Sept 2025.pdf*** ***Not included***

 ***Appendix 2 - Mgt Accs by Assistant Directorate for period ending 30 Sept 2025.pdf*** ***Not included***

 ***Appendix 3 - Mgt Accs by Expense Code for period ending 30 Sept 2025.pdf*** ***Not included***

 ***Appendix 4 - Payroll report for period ending 30 Sept 2025.pdf*** ***Not included***

14.0 Minutes of SFWG Meeting held on 4 November 2025

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

 ***SFWG Minutes - 04.11.2025.pdf*** ***Not included***

15.0 SUB-0772-2025 - Letter from Department for Communities

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

 ***SUB-0772-2025 - Letter to Council Chief Executives - FUTURE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION - Copy.pdf*** ***Not included***

16.0 Officer report on Correspondence from Consulate General of United States of America dated 2 June 2025 re: 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence

📎 *Officer report on Correspondence from Consulate General of United States of America dated 2 June 2025 re 250th anniversary of th.pdf*

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📎 *Appendix I - Correspondence from Consulate General USA 2-6-25.pdf*

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17.0 Attendance at NI Amenity Council AGM

Recommendation from Party Reps to allow attendance by Elected Member to attend NI Amenity Council AGM

Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Cllr Callum Bowsie

Mr Caolain Boyd

Cllr Jim Brennan

Mr Gerard Byrne

Cllr Pete Byrne

Cllr Philip Campbell

Cllr William Clarke

Cllr Laura Devlin

Ms Louise Dillon

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Killian Feehan

Cllr Doire Finn

Ms Joanne Fleming

Cllr Conor Galbraith

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Cllr Valerie Harte

Cllr Martin Hearty

Cllr Roisin Howell

Cllr Tierna Howie

Ms Catherine Hughes

Ms Marina Hughes

Cllr Jonathan Jackson

Joanne/Noelle Johnston

Cllr Geraldine Kearns

Miss Veronica Keegan

Mrs Josephine Kelly

Cllr Aurla King

Cllr Cathal King

Cllr Mickey Larkin

Cllr David Lee-Surginor

Cllr Alan Lewis

Cllr Oonagh Magennis

Mr Conor Mallon

Cllr Aidan Mathers

Cllr Declan McAteer

Ms Carol McClean

Cllr Leeanne McEvoy

Jonathan McGibbon

Mr Colin Moffett

Cllr Kate Murphy
.....
Cllr Selina Murphy
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Cllr Declan Murphy
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Cllr Siobhan O'Hare
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Mr Andy Patterson
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Cllr Áine Quinn
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Cllr Henry Reilly
.....
Cllr Michael Rice
.....
Ms Alison Robb
.....
Mr Peter Rooney
.....
Cllr Michael Ruane
.....
Mr Conor Sage
.....
Cllr David Taylor
.....
Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly
.....
Ms Sinead Trainor
.....
Cllr Jill Truesdale
.....
Mrs Marie Ward
.....
Mr Conor Woods
.....
Cllr Helena Young
.....

<u>Minute Ref</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Actions taken / progress to date</u>	<u>Remove from Action Sheet? Y/N</u>
<u>ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) –</u>					
<u>Thursday 14 August 2025</u>					
SPR/135/2025	Business Case – Residual Waste Contract	It was agreed that the requested rates per tonnage be brought back before Members as discussed.	S Murphy	New rates not available until Procurement Process completed.	N
<u>ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) –</u>					
<u>Thursday 16 October 2025</u>					
SPR/163/2025	Action Sheet of meeting held 11/09/25	It was agreed to note the action sheet.	J Kelly	Agreed	Y
SPR/164/2025	Annual Complaint Handling Report	It was agreed to approve the Annual Complaint Handling Report for publication.	C McClean	Agreed	Y
SPR/165/2025	Council's Approach to Developing Ulster Scots	It was agreed to establish an Ulster Scots Ulster British Working Group, the title of which, along with the Terms of Reference would, be agreed at the first meeting of the Working Group.	C McClean	Agreed	Y
SPR/166/2025	SRA Allowances	It was agreed to retain the current position of allocating any outstanding SRAs among those positions that receive SRA positions.	M Ward	Agreed	Y
SPR/167/2025	Reserves Policy	It was agreed to approve the reserves policy	J Kelly	Agreed	Y
SPR/168/2025	Proposed upgrade of EV Charge points at Councils car parks.	It was agreed to approve the leasing of the areas outlined in red on the maps contained within Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the Officer's Report for the purposes of upgrading the EV charge-points for the term outlined and the proposed rent as detailed within the report.	C Sage	Agreed	Y
SPR/169/2025	Higher Level Apprenticeship – Planning	It was agreed that this Council participate in the Planning Apprenticeship programme and seek to recruit an Apprentice as per the timeline outlined within the Officer's Report and that an update be brought to SP&R in due course.	J McGilly	Recruitment will commence 6/7 November with advertisements etc. Shortlist and interviews Nov & December	N
SPR/170/2025	Newcastle Centre – Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) Appointment	It was agreed to approve the appointment of the Integrated Consultancy Team to progress the delivery of a new leisure centre on the Newcastle Centre site following the recent procurement exercise.	A Patterson	Agreed	Y
SPR/171/2025	Down Leisure Centre Capital Works	It was agreed to procure and appoint a suitable supplier for delivery of the works at Down Leisure Centre as detailed within the Officer's Report, with	A Patterson	Agreed	Y

		<p>the budget requirement added to Council's Capital Programme.</p> <p>It was also agreed that the required information be shared with Members prior to ratification at full Council.</p>			
SPR/172/2025	Meigh Community Centre Capital Works	It was agreed to procure and appoint a suitable supplier for delivery of the works at Meigh Community Centre as detailed within the Officer's Report, with the budget requirement added to Council's Capital Programme.	A Patterson	Agreed	Y
SPR/173/2025	Lease of Ropewalk Pitch, Wells Lane, Newry	It was agreed to enter into a lease with the Group noted within the Officer's Report in respect of the lands for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent, subject to Departmental and NI Housing Executive Consent.	C McClean	Agreed	Y
SPR/174/2025	Proposed Lease at Lough Park, Ballynahinch, for NIEN Substation	It was agreed to enter into a lease with NI Electricity Networks in respect of the portion of lands outlined in red on the map attached to the officer's report for a term of 99 years, subject to the market value premium. It was also agreed to enter into the associated wayleaves required in respect of the substation, subject to NI Electricity Networks reimbursing Council for the valuation costs.	C McClean	Agreed	Y
SPR/175/2025	Proposed Lease of Playing fields, Dundalk Road, Newtownhamilton	<p>The following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To enter into a lease with the club noted in the officer's report for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent, subject to Departmental Consent. •To enter into such deeds as are required to rectify the title to the lands. 	C McClean	Agreed	Y
SPR/176/2025	Request to Purchase Land adjacent to Canal	It was agreed to sell the lands to the party identified within the Officer's Report for the market value.	C McClean	Agreed	Y
SPR/177/2025	NILGA Subscriptions 25/26	It was agreed to note the annual NILGA Subscription 25/26	M Ward	Agreed	Y
SPR/178/2025	Specific Delegated Function	It was agreed to note that delegation has been exercised by the Chief Executive regarding a HR matter in the best interests of the Council and is being reported in accordance with 3.1.11 of the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Officers.	M Ward	Agreed	Y

SPR/179/2025	SFWG Action Sheet of 7/10/25	It was agreed to note the action sheet	J Kelly	Agreed	Y
SPR/180/2025	Statutory Reporting Period: Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly report for July-Sept 25	It was agreed to note the section 75 quality screening report	C McClean	Agreed	Y
SPR/181/2025	Womens Working Group Action Sheet of 2/10/25	It was agreed to note the action sheet	J Kelly	Agreed	Y
SPR/182/2025	NILGA Guide to Digital Connectivity	It was agreed to note the documents	J Kelly	Agreed	Y

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	13 November 2025
Subject:	Mid Year Assessments of Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2025-26
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

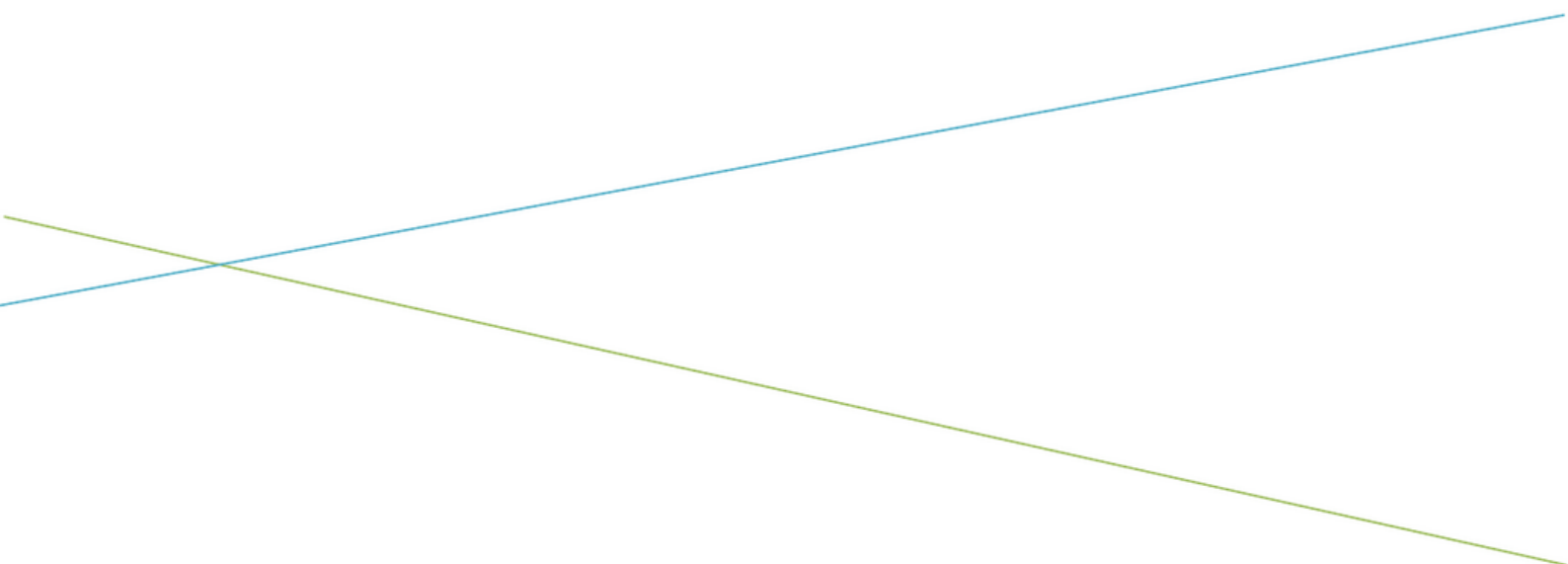
Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	X	For noting only	
1.0	Purpose and Background		
1.1	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.		
2.0	Key issues		
2.1	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 2025-26, to provide an overview of progress between April-September 2025. This exercise forms an important part of the Council's statutory responsibility to strengthen the way performance is monitored, reviewed and reported across the organisation.		
2.2	The Mid Year Assessment of the Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan is outlined at Appendix 1.		
3.0	Recommendations		
3.1	<p>To consider and agree the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid Year Assessment of the Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2025-26 		
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 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	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
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	<p>Appendices</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 1 – Mid Year Assessment of the Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2025-26
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p>
	<p>Directorate Business Plans 2025-26</p>

Chief Executive / Corporate Services

Mid-Year Assessment Business Plan 2025-26





Introduction

This report provides an overview of progress in delivering the Chief Executive - Corporate Services Business Plan 2025-26 between April-September 2025, across the following service areas:

- **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**




The delivery of the Chief Executive - Corporate Services Business Plan 2025-26 supports the achievement of all corporate objectives, particularly the following corporate objectives, and performance has been tracked using the legend below.

Deliver Sustainable Services

Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future

Represent the voice of the district with our partners

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
<p>Legal and People – 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.</p> <p>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</p> <p>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, ensuring adherence to good governance and alignment with corporate objectives.</p> <p>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 and legislative requirements.</p> <p>Democratic Services – Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council Provide support for Project Delivery at a Corporate Level</p>

Corporate Services			
CXS1 : Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations			
95% of responses to FOI/EIR/DP requests for information provided within statutory timeframes	Target	95%	95%
	Actual	100% * 1	—
Notes: 1 There has been a greater than 95% ICO performance criteria			
Continue to review and update current Retention and Disposal practices across Council, implementing methods to manage the review, retention and disposal of records. (SCC)	Target		
	Progress	Green	—
Continue to review and update the Corporate Privacy Notice to help everyone understand how Council processes personal data	Target		
	Progress	—	

CXS2 : Provide an efficient and professional Customer Services and Registration function meeting statutory obligations.			
Continue to deliver a Professional Registration Service providing quality customer service standards for the delivery of births, deaths and marriages.	Target		
	Progress	Green	—
Continue to embed NIPSO policies, procedures and monitoring arrangements to ensure compliance with NIPSOs statutory Model Complaints Handling Procedure.	Target		
	Progress	Green	—

CXS3 : Provide efficient and professional Legal Services to meet statutory and contractual objectives.			
Continue to review Retention and disposal of historical legal files extracting information which requires to be retained. (SCC) (Q4)	Target	<div></div>	
	Progress	<div>—</div>	
Continue to work with Evidence Section to ensure all relevant Council assets are included on the ARC GIS system.	Target	<div></div>	<div></div>
	Progress	<div>Green</div>	<div>—</div>
In line with Council's 'Digital First' approach continue to minimise physical paper and progress towards electronic files versus paper-based files where possible (SCC)	Target	<div></div>	<div></div>
	Progress	<div>Green</div>	<div>—</div>

CXS4 : Effective policy making, policy implementation, policy review and service delivery.			
Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties implementation	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div>—</div>
Notes:	<p>1 Ongoing action in relation to implementation of Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan which included nine policy equality screenings and twelve rural needs impact assessments completed during the half-yearly reporting period and policy reviews (specific Corporate Policy Section Policies namely the Bilingualism Policy, Policy on Naming Council facilities, Policy on new Artworks/Sculptures on Council property and the Policy on requests to plant a tree on Council property were reviewed during the reporting period). All policy owners were emailed on 12 August 2025 advising of policies to be reviewed by the end of the 2025-2026 financial year.</p>		
Progress the use of the Irish language in civic life	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div>—</div>
Notes:	<p>1 Ongoing implementation of Irish Language Strategy which included review of the Bilingualism Policy, managing Irish Language Bursary Scheme, verification of two projects funded through the Irish Language financial assistance theme, undertaking Irish Language translations, and six-monthly report on progress tabled for consideration at the Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group meeting on 17 September 2025.</p>		
Corporate Section 75, Disability and Rural Needs statutory duties compliance	<div>Target</div> <div>Actual</div>	<div>Yes</div> <div>Yes</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div>—</div>
Notes:	<p>1 Five-year review completed and report and revised Equality Scheme considered at Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 12 June 2025. Five-year review report and revised Equality Scheme forwarded to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 22 July 2025. Council's Equality Consultees emailed and advised the five-year review had been undertaken. Report and revised Equality Scheme is available for download from Council website. Quarterly Policy Screening reports for January - March 2025 and April - June 2025 tabled for noting at Strategy, Policy and Equality meetings held on 17 April 2025 and 14 August 2025 respectively. Quarterly Policy Screening reports and equality screenings are available on website for download. Council's equality consultees were emailed advising the Quarterly Policy Screening Report can be accessed from the Council website. NMDDC Annual Progress Report on implementation of both the Section 75 and Disability Duties for the period 2024-2025 noted at 14 August 2025 Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and forwarded to Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 21 August 2025. NMDDC Annual Monitoring Report on the implementation of the Rural Needs Act for period 2024-2025 noted at 15 May 2025 Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and forwarded to DAERA on 16 June 2025.</p>		

CXS5 : Contribute to the continuous development of the workforce we need to deliver corporate priorities			
Continue to support Directorates to implement PPG for all staff across the organisation	Target		
	Progress	Green	—
Continue to develop a Leadership Charter demonstrating our core values and an implementation action plan for roll out	Target		
	Progress	Green	—
Review statutory and mandatory training for the organisation, identifying key timelines	Target		
	Progress	Green	
Refresh, Rebrand and Relaunch the eLearning portal	Target		
	Progress	Green	
People Perform Grow, rolled out across the organisation	Target		
	Progress	Green	—

CXS6 : 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.			
Support Directorates to ensure staff absence is effectively managed to ensure appropriate and timely support for staff	Target		
	Progress	Green	—
Continue to develop an Industrial Relations Framework and agree a workplan with Joint Trade Union Side	Target		
	Progress	—	
Procure new systems and develop a project plan for new ways of working and efficient use of resources	Target		
	Progress	—	
Continue to review and analyse current employment data and develop KPIs	Target		
	Progress	Green	—
Continue to identify ways to increase the number of people from disadvantaged communities who are employed by council (CWB)	Target		
	Progress	Green	—
Implement and maintain a recruitment plan	Target		
	Progress	—	

CXS7 : Provide a professional and efficient finance service to deliver integrated sustainable services to meet our statutory and contractual obligations.			
Pay 90% of invoices to suppliers within 30 days (CWB)	<div>Target</div> <div>Actual</div>	<div>90%</div> <div>90%</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div>90%</div> <div>—</div>
Notes: 1 average of 90% across first 2 quarters. details published on the Council Website			
Unqualified financial audit opinion (Q4)	<div>Target</div> <div>Actual</div>	<div>Yes</div> <div>Yes</div> <div>* 1</div>	
Notes: 1 https://www.newrymournedown.org/media/uploads/statement_of_accounts_nmdmc_year_ended_31_march_2025.pdf Unqualified Audit Opinion for the 2024/25 Financial Statements, provided in September 2025.			
Standardisation of Payroll Procedures Q4	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>		<div>—</div>
Payslips to be communicated electronically, where possible	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>		<div>—</div>
Accounts Receivable Procedures to be finalised, including Debt Recovery and Newry BID (Q4)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>		<div>—</div>
Commence service review of General Finance/Accounts Q4	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>		<div>—</div>
Review and update Financial Regulations of Council Q4	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>		<div>—</div>
Business Case to be developed and approved for new Finance Solution and procurement to be progressed (Q4)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>		<div>—</div>

CXS8 : Ensure appropriate governance, audit and risk management arrangements are in place to ensure openness and transparency, while aiding decision making.		
Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment (Q4)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div>to be completed in January 2026</div> <div>—</div>
NIAO Effective Audit and Risk Assurance Committees best practice guides templates to be completed	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div>completed</div> <div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>
Notes: 1 Tabled at the May 2025 Audit Committee - see attached.		
Audit Module to be embedded and all recommendations to be uploaded as reports are finalised.	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div>completed</div> <div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>
Notes: 1 All 2024/25 Audits now uploaded and historic audits. Officers are updating progress and progress updates are brought quarterly to Audit Committee to inform Members of Progress.		

CXS9 : Support the development of a performance improvement culture by embedding effective performance management arrangements			
Compliance with statutory Duty of Improvement	Target	<div></div>	
	Actual	<div>—</div>	
Continue to strengthen the alignment across Business Planning, Community Planning and Performance Management Framework and coordinate the business and service planning process	Target	<div></div>	<div></div>
	Progress	<div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div>—</div>
	Notes:	1 Presented on performance and business planning at the SMT/CMT Business Planning Day held in April. Assisted and advised on the development of Directorate Business Plans. Attended a number of Department Business Planning Days, presenting on the Council's Business Planning and Performance Management Framework and assisting in the Business Planning process. The Head of Performance continues to coordinate and embed the business and service planning process.	
Unqualified performance audit opinion	Target	<div></div>	
	Actual	<div>—</div>	

CXS10 : Provide accessible and sustainable corporate Communications and Marketing service			
90% of media requests for information responded to within the agreed Procedures	<div>Target</div> <div>Actual</div>	<div>90%</div> <div>97%</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>
Notes:		1 Target met.	
Review and assessment of the corporate website, including Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to inform future requirements. (Q4)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>	
Review of Media Policy and Procedures. (Q4)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>	
Review of Social Media and Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures. (Q4)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>	
Support the communications and marketing of principle projects within the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027 (Newry City Centre Regeneration, Downpatrick Regeneration, Belfast Region City Deal Projects, Warrenpoint Health and Wellbeing Centre, Local Development Plan Strategy and organisational transformation and delivery of sustainable services	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>
Notes:		1 Ongoing support provided by the Communications Team.	

CXS11 : Provide a highly available, accessible and secure Information Technology environment to support Council services			
97.5% System "UP" Time	Target	97.5%	97.5%
	Actual	100%	—
Procure SOC/SIEM/XDR Cyber Security Service	Target		
	Progress	Green * 1	
Notes:		1 Service procured and in implementation phase.	
Progress the User Access Management Action Plan (Q3)	Target		
	Progress	Green * 1	
Notes:		1 Progressing to target.	
Undertake Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) baseline assessment and develop action plan to begin journey to compliance (Q4)	Target		
	Progress	—	

Develop a new IT Policy Suite in line with audit recommendations following CAF guidelines (Q3)	Target		
	Progress	—	
Procure IT Equipment for Technology Refresh Project (Q4)	Target		
	Progress	—	
4 Targeted Cyber Security Training Modules in Year	Target	2	4
	Actual	6	—
4 Targeted Phishing Simulations in Year	Target	2	4
	Actual	3	—
4 Services with established Teams/SharePoint Data and Collaboration Repositories	Target	2	4
	Actual	2	—
3 Facilitated M365 User Clinics	Target	1	3
	Actual	0	—
		*1	
Notes:		1 Focus has been on the development of appropriate policy and procedures.	

CXS12 : Provide technical input and support to digital transformation projects to help deliver services that are sustainable, integrated, and compliant for all stakeholders, ensuring adherence to good governance and alignment with corporate objectives.			
Progress the implementation of the Departmental Structural Changes (Phase 1) (Q4)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>	
Progress approved IT Transformation Programme Projects	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>
	Notes:	<p>1 Progress of approved IT Transformation Programme projects reviewed and advanced through two ITPG Working Group meetings (1 April & 22 July), ensuring adherence to established governance and oversight requirements.</p>	
Advise and assist Departments in the identification of projects for consideration in the Digital Transformation Programme	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>
	Notes:	<p>1 Ongoing support is provided to Departments in identifying and shaping projects for inclusion in the Digital Transformation Programme, including the development of Project Proposals for CMT consideration and the preparation of Project Mandates and Business Cases for submission to the ITPG.</p>	
Identify Policy gaps in relation to Digital Transformation (Q4)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>	

CXS13 : Deliver the Strategic Capital Plan & Estate Management Strategy to assist with the development and revitalisation of our district.			
Deliver approved Capital projects through design, procurement and delivery stages providing regular updates and reports to directorates, project boards and committees. (CWB) (SCC)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div>—</div>
Notes:	1 Regular Monthly reporting to SMT. Strategic projects in accordance with governance arrangements and Terms of Reference have monthly reporting at Project Boards & Programme boards to internal officers, members and external oversight bodies and funders.		
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 (CWB)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div>—</div>
Notes:	1 Capital Project department advise & assist other directorates in the identification of viable projects and assisting with business case development, financial assistance assessment of projects in programmes unit, and cost reporting throughout all stages of the project lifecycle.		
Continuation with the identification and disposal of council surplus assets, including the direct liaison with directorates, legals and external organisations. (CWB) (SCC)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div>—</div>
Notes:	1 Ongoing. The Surplus Assets register will be brought to SFWG in November for review by members and decisions where required. Estates team actively managing the planning applications, transfer, sale and disposals in accordance with council policies and the D1 process.		
Capital projects programme and budget in line with agreed parameters and Council policy.	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div>—</div>
Notes:	1 All projects are delivered in accordance with approved budgets and parameters. Any overspend or additional budget required is brought back to members for their review and approval as decision makers.		

CXS14 : Provide an effective procurement service to support council, including promoting and underpinning council sustainability & social value objectives			
Procurement policy fully implemented	Target		
	Progress	Green	—
		* 1	
Notes: 1 Procurement Policy updated and ratified at October Council meeting			
To undertake in-depth training on the Procurement Act 2023	Target		
	Progress	Green	—
		* 1	
Notes: 1 Ensured In-depth training on new Procurement Act 2023 for Procurement team was completed before legislation came into effect including Certified E-learning from cabinet office and Procurement law workshops. Promote Knowledge Drops corporately to enhance awareness of new legislation. Three Cohorts of approx 60 staff have completed the 2 days CIPS Masterclass in UK Public Procurement. This was delivered by a Procurement expert and covered in depth training on the new Procurement Act and the Changes in legislation. Further training can be delivered as required.			
Increasing supplier outreach through attendance at Meet the Buyer type events and premarket engagement. (CWB) (SCC)	Target		
	Progress	—	
Enhancing visibility of NMDDC Tender opportunities in the marketplace through social media campaign. (Q4) (CWB) (SCC)	Target		
	Progress	—	
In line with the revised Procurement Policy, develop updated procedures and review systems. (CWB) (SCC)	Target		
	Progress	Green	—
		* 1	
Notes: 1 New Procurement & Contract Management Procedures completed. Contracts Register has been reviewed and updated and is reported on internally. Meetings have been held internally with IT Dept. on migrating Contracts Register onto SharePoint and hosting this on dedicated Procurement Intranet System.			

Democratic Services			
CXS15 : Support the decision making and political governance structures of the Council			
The number of events hosted on behalf of the Chairperson / Vice Chairperson	<div>Target</div> <div>Actual</div>	<div>10</div> <div>10</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>
Notes: 1 Chairperson has hosted youth groups, schools and various other organisations			
The number of official events attended by the Chairperson / Vice Chairperson	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div>100</div> <div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>
Notes: 1 Chairperson, Deputy or other Committee Chairs deputising attended 143 events up to 30 September 2025			
Establish a Corporate Support Role on behalf of all Directorates across Council (CPP)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>
Notes: 1 We have developed initial frameworks and guidance to ensure the role can effectively support cross-departmental projects, improve communication, and provide consistent advice and assistance to Council teams. Consultation has been undertaken with relevant staff to ensure the role aligns with operational requirements and supports the Council's Corporate Plan priorities			
To digitally transform the operations of Democratic Services by adopting modern, secure, and accessible technologies (Q3)	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>Amber</div> <div>* 1</div>	
Notes: 1 Ongoing process throughout the year. Have been involved in Microsoft 365 project meetings to discover new ways of working			

Chief Executive			
CXS16 : Provide support for Project Delivery at a Corporate Level			
Progress the delivery of the project assigned	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div>30th September Phase 1</div> <div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>
Ensure the project delivery complies with Council's Governance arrangements	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>
Notes: 1 Complete			
Ensure projects are delivered within agreed budgets and timelines	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>
Notes: 1 Targeted timeline reached. Delivered within agreed budget.			
Liaise with all departments to ensure collaborative approach for corporate projects	<div>Target</div> <div>Progress</div>	<div></div> <div>Green</div> <div>* 1</div>	<div></div> <div>—</div>
Notes: 1 All departments consulted throughout the project period.			

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	13 November 2025
Subject:	Mid Year Assessment - Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Catherine Hughes – Acting Head of Performance and Improvement

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>Through the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 and Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, the Council makes a commitment to monitor, review and report performance on a regular basis.</p> <p>This report provides an overview of the Council's progress in implementing the performance improvement objectives between April-September 2025. Where possible, performance has been tracked against the targets set within the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.</p>		
2.0	Key issues		
2.1	<p>A significant number of 'supporting actions' and 'measures of success' within the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 are on track to be achieved. However, progress against the following has been limited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a decrease in the rate of recycling and in increase in the tonnage of biodegradable waste sent to landfill. • The statutory standards for processing local and major planning applications were not achieved. Whilst performance for local planning applications decreased there was an improvement in the processing time for major planning applications and enforcement. 		
2.2	<p>It should be noted that the information contained within this report may be subject to change when the results are verified, validated and reported through the annual Assessment of Performance which will be published by 30 September 2026.</p>		
3.0	Recommendations		
3.1	<p>To consider and agree the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Year Assessment of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 		
4.0	Resource implications		
4.1	<p>There are no financial resource implications within this report.</p>		
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	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
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	<p>Appendices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 1 – Mid Year Assessment - Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p> <p>Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26</p>

Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26

Mid Year Assessment



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

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Introduction

This report provides an overview of the Council’s progress in implementing the performance improvement objectives between April-September 2025. Where possible, performance has been tracked against the targets set within the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.

Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26

- We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our local 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 addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents**
- We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change**
- We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme**

Legend

Status		Legend	
	Target or objective achieved / on track to be achieved		Performance has improved since Q1/Q2 2024-25
	Target or objective partially achieved / likely to be achieved / subject to delay		Performance is similar to Q1/Q2 2024-25
	Target or objective not achieved / unlikely to be achieved		Performance has declined since Q1/Q2 2024-25

- It should be noted that:
- For the statutory performance indicators for economic development, planning and waste management, performance has been compared to the same period in 2024-25.
 - The information contained within this report may be subject to change when the results are verified, validated and reported through the annual Assessment of Performance which will be published by 30 September 2025.

Progress at a glance

Performance Improvement Objective	Progress	Status Trend
We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our local facilities and services	472,721 paid attendances recorded across the six Council Leisure Centres	 
	5 play parks upgraded	
	10,824 leisure centre memberships recorded	 
	16,384 people participating in targeted health programmes	 
	£225,000 in financial assistance funding allocated to sporting clubs across the District	
We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses job creation	113 new jobs promoted through business start activity	 
	7 new social enterprises supported, and 6 new social enterprise jobs created	 
	189 business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	 
	160 businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions	 
	81 new enterprises created as a result of support.	 
We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents	17 fixed penalty notices issued and 14 paid	 
	100% of community clean up requests supported	
	£15k awarded towards 10 environmental projects through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' scheme	
	Decrease in the rate of recycling	 
	Decrease in the amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	
We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change	Carbon footprint of Council estate baselined from 2024-25 data establishing a footprint of 5,246 tCO2e	
	1 vehicle within the Council fleet currently has an alternative fuel source. Orders are due to be placed for 13No small electric vans.	 
	89 trees planted on the Council managed estate	 
	19 EV charging points currently installed across the Council estate with a further 18 due to be installed through the ORCs scheme	
	76% of Council fleet younger than 8 years	 
We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme	The average processing time for local planning applications increased to 46.1 weeks	 
	The average processing time for major planning applications decreased to 54.4 weeks	 
	The percentage of planning enforcement cases progresses within 39 weeks increased to 74.0%	 
	Decrease in the number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	 
	Increase in the number of enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more	 

Performance Improvement Objective 1













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










Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Active and Healthy Communities

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2025-26, the Council:

- Ran a comprehensive summer activity programme across the District during July and August.
- Continued to work with the capital estates team on progressing the design for Jennings Park. Planning application has been submitted.
- Successful re-opening of Newry Pool.
- Completed the Play Strategy review with 5 play parks now open.
- Sports capital financial assistance call was opened and completed in Q1/Q2.
- Continued to work towards Leisure-safe accreditation with a new list compiled by Disability NI and a works programme scheduled for the next 6 months.
- Appointed an external provider and agreed a customer survey questionnaire for the mystery shopper programme to be completed in Q3.

Measure of Success	2025-26		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1/Q2 Actual		
Number of paid attendances at:	757,500	482,251	 	In the first six months of 2025-26 there were a total of 482,251 paid attendances recorded across the six leisure centres in the District. This represents an increase of 46% compared to the figure recorded for the same period last year which can be attributed to the re-opening of the pool at Newry Leisure Centre. The highest number was recorded in Newry Leisure Centre accounting for 54% of the total paid attendances recorded.
Newry Leisure Centre	335,000	258,292	 	
Down Leisure Centre	275,000	136,402	 	
Kilkeel Leisure Centre	15,000	21,208	 	
St. Colmans Sports Complex	68,700	34,798	 	
Newcastle Centre & Tropicana Outdoor Swimming Complex	27,800	12,488	 	

Ballymote Sports & Wellbeing Centre	36,000	19,063	 	
Number of people participating in targeted health programmes	22,000	16,384	 	During Q1 & Q2 of 2025-26 participation in targeted health programmes reached 16,384 which is 75% of the annual target. This figure also represents a 75% increase on the figure recorded for the same period last year.
Value of Financial Assistance Funding allocated to clubs	£225,000	£225,000		Financial assistance completed including major and minor options. 31 clubs and 6 facilities benefitted from this assistance.
Number of leisure centre memberships	10,100	10,824	 	A total of 10,824 leisure centre memberships were recorded by the end of Q2 2025-26 which is an increase of 17.4% when compared to the 9,217 memberships recorded at the end of Q2 2024-25
Number of capital leisure projects progressed	2	2		Projects complete for Donard Park, Dunleath and Dundrum Changing Rooms. Kilkeel Leisure Centre has now closed, and works are in progress. Jennings Park work is now progressing.
Number of play parks upgraded	2	5		5 Play parks all complete in Year 1. Granite View, Mullaghbawn, Scrogg Road, Ardglass and Belleek. Year 2 & 3 works have commenced.

Performance Improvement Objective 2









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




Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2025-26, the Council:

- Engagement with Local Economic Partnership and key stakeholders on the development of a range of interventions that will be delivered up to March 2028 focusing on increasing productivity.
- Received approval from DfC for 2025-27 Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Action Plan, LMP meetings and Schools to Industry meetings continue.
- LMP Get Work Ready pre-employment programme launched with 27 participants enrolled.
- LMP HGV Employment Academy launched with 32 participants enrolled.
- Employment Pathway Job Fair event on 19th June with 50 employers; 16 support organisations; and 388 attendees, over 450 jobs were on offer and 63% of attendees were aged 19-44.
- Continued to support the startup and growth of Social Enterprises in NMD.
- Delivered Go Succeed Start and Grow pillars.
- Supported DTFF implementation.
- Delivered a range of Make it Local campaigns to support "Giant Adventures"
- Continued to support artisan traders via artisan markets held monthly in Downpatrick, Newcastle and Warrenpoint.

Measure of success	2025-26		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1/Q2 Actual		
Number of social enterprise start-ups supported	12	7	 	7 new social enterprise start-ups engaged, achieving 58% of the annual target.
Number of social enterprise jobs created	12	6	 	6 new social enterprise jobs created, achieving 50% of the annual target.
Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activity	712	555	 	Between April and September 2025, 555 people registered for the Go Succeed Programme achieving 78% of the annual target. These registrations were across three pillars of: Engage: 289 Foundation: 83 Growth: 183
Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises	289	189	 	189 Business Plans approved, achieving 65% of the annual target. These include: 158 Business Plans and 31 Enterprise Action Plans.

Number of new enterprises created as a result of support	119	81		372 start-ups registered for 'Go Succeed' between April and September 2025. This has resulted in 81 new startups created, achieving 68% of the annual target.
Number of new jobs promoted through business start-up activity NI 'Go Succeed' (statutory performance indicator)	173	113*		113 jobs created based on the multiplier of 0.6 as per DfE. 189 Business Plans approved, these include: 158 Business Plans and 31 Enterprise Action Plans. This accounts for 65% of the annual target
Number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions	220	160		160 businesses received 1-2-1 diagnostic support achieving 73% of the annual target. Mentoring is allocated depending on growth ambitions i.e. 10 hours. 15 hours and 21 hours. Average support is 15 hours

*The 2025/26 mid year figure is a draft number to be finalised following monitoring and verification of data by Go Succeed lead 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







Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Sustainability and Environment

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2025-26, the Council:

- Received 481 service requests for incidents of illicit dumping, fly tipping and dog fouling, an increase of 30% compared to the 371 incidents recorded for the same period last year.
- Issued 17 fixed penalty notices (14 of which have been paid). Overall, 82.4% of fixed penalty notices have been paid to date.
- Assisted 17 voluntary organisations, community groups, sports associations, schools and individuals with community clean ups across the District.
- Supported the NI 'Live Here Love Here' scheme, through which £14,822 was awarded towards 10 environmental projects including monthly nature clubs, organic gardening, community food growing initiatives and making village public spaces greener.
- Recorded a decrease in the rate of recycling and an increase in the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill.
- Recorded a decrease in the amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings

Measure of success	2025-26 Target	Q1/Q2 Actual	Status	Explanatory note
Number of fixed penalty notices issued (littering, fly tipping and dog fouling)	100	17	 	The Council issued 17 fixed penalty notices, achieving 17% of the annual target. To date, 14 of the fixed penalty notices have been paid. FPN's not paid will be referred for legal action with a higher penalty likely to apply. It should be noted that there does remain a number of vacant posts within the section.
Number of fixed penalty notices paid (littering, fly tipping and dog fouling)	80	14	 	
Percentage of fixed penalty notices issued that are paid	80%	82.4%		Overall, 82.4% of fixed penalty notices issued during the first six months of 2025-26 have been paid.
Percentage of community clean up requests supported	90%	100%		The Council assisted with 17 community clean ups between April and September 2025, providing support to all requests from the community.

Number of 'Live Here Love Here' environmental projects	No target	10		A total of 10 environmental projects across Newry, Mourne and Down received funding totalling nearly £15K through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' small grants scheme.
The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	55% by 2025	Q1 Actual	 	In Q1 2025-26, the 2025 target of 55% has not been achieved with the rate of recycling recorded as 50.5% for Newry, Mourne and Down. This falls below the regional average of 54.0% and the Council is currently ranked 10/11 across Northern Ireland. When compared to Q1 2024-25, this represents a decrease of 2.0% in the rate of recycling, from 52.5% to 50.5%.
		50.5%		
The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	<20,954 tonnes (2019-20)	148	 	During Q1 2024-25, the Council sent 148 tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste to landfill which was the fifth lowest across Northern Ireland and has only used 0.7% of the NILAS* allowance. When compared to Q1 2024-25, the amount of biodegradable waste that was sent to landfill increased by 190%, from 51 tonnes.
The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	No target	22,914		During Q1 2025-26, the Council collected 22,914 tonnes of municipal waste arising which was the fourth highest across Northern Ireland. When compared to Q1 2024-25, the amount of local authority collected municipal waste arisings decreased by 1.4%, from 23,250 tonnes to 22,914 tonnes. This decrease is greater than the 0.8% decrease experienced at the regional level.

*NILAS: Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme.

Performance Improvement Objective 4




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








Senior Responsible Officer: Director of Sustainability & Environment

Progress:

During Q1 and Q2 2025-26, the Council:

- Completed the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy in draft which was presented to elected members at the SE Working group in September 2025. Approval to be sought at SE Committee in October 2025 for launch of public consultation.
- Climate Mitigation report (which includes carbon baseline reporting) currently being finalised for submission to DAERA by 31 October 2025.
- Progressed the action plan contained within the Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2024-30)
- Continued to implement the Fleet Replacement Programme. Fleet modernisation will deliver a significant reduction in CO2 emissions particularly with the procurement of 13 no. electric battery vehicles by the Council before the end of 2025-26.
- Work has commenced on the Climate Adaptation Report which is due to be submitted to DAERA by 31 March 2026.

Measure of Success	2025-26 Target	Q1/Q2 Actual	Status	Explanatory note
Carbon footprint of Council Estate	No Target	5,246 tCO2e		The Baseline Emissions Footprint for Newry Mourne and Down is 5,246 tCO2e (Tonnes of CO2 equivalent) This baseline was established using information from 2024-25.
Renewable Energy generation	No Target	154,684 kWh		The Council has 21 Solar PV sites across the District. The Baseline figure for Generation of renewable energy is 154,684 kWh which is currently how much renewable electricity we produce from our solar systems.
Energy Consumption Baseline	No Target	Electricity - 4,584,089 kWh Mains Gas - 4,996,992 kWh Heating Oil (Kerosene) -		The Baseline energy usage which was established using 2024-25 data is as follows: Electricity - 4,584,089 kWh Mains Gas - 4,996,992 kWh Heating Oil (Kerosene) - 449,723 litres Fleet Use (Diesel) - 837,901 litres Fleet Use (Unleaded Petrol) - 4,995 litres

		449,723 litres Fleet Use (Diesel) - 837,901 litres Fleet Use (Unleaded Petrol) - 4,995 litres		
Percentage of Council fleet younger than 8 years	85%	76%	 	76% of the Council's fleet is younger than 8 years and is an increase of 6% when compared to the 70% recorded for the same period last year.
Number of vehicles within the Council fleet that have an alternative fuel source	10	1	 	Approval has been granted for the replacement of a proportion of existing small and medium sized diesel vans with electric vehicles. Orders are now due to be placed for 13No small/medium electric vans. Procurement is in progress for Council fleet charging infrastructure.
Number of trees planted on Council managed estate	2,800	89	 	89 trees have been planted across the District during Q1 & Q2. In general, the planting season takes place during Q3 & Q4, and planting will start largely from November onwards.
Number of Council supported EV charging points	18	19		Council currently supports 19 EV charging points across its estate. Another 18 are due to be installed as part of the ORCS (On street residential charge point scheme) which should be completed by 31 March 2026.

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 of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism

Progress:

During Q1 2025-26, the Council:

- Received 271 planning applications in total which is the second highest across Northern Ireland.
- The Council decided on 252 applications in Q1 2025-26, which is the third highest across Northern Ireland. 213 local planning applications were approved, resulting in an approval rate of 84.5%, which is below the Northern Ireland average of 94.5%.
- Processed 2.3% of local planning applications within the statutory standard of <15 weeks, which is below the regional average of 42.9%. This represents a decrease of 0.5% when compared to the 2.8% of applications processed within <15 weeks during Q1 2024-25.
- Received 4 major planning applications, decided on and approved 2 applications. In Q1 2025-26, 0% of major planning applications were processed within the statutory standard of <30 weeks which is below the current regional average of 51.5%. This represents a decrease of 25% compared to the 25% of applications processed within <30 weeks in Q1 2024-25.
- Opened 83 enforcement cases which is the third highest across NI with 50 cases concluded. As of 30 June 2025, the Council had 833 planning enforcement cases in the system, which is by far, the highest across Northern Ireland.
- Launched the Draft Plan Strategy in Q2 2025-26

Measure of Success	2025-26		Status	Explanatory note
	Target	Q1 Actual		
Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks) <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	<15 weeks	46.1 weeks	 	During Q1 2025-26, the average processing time for local planning applications was 46.1 weeks which is above the regional average of 19.8 weeks. When compared to Q1 2024-25, this represents an increase of 3.1 weeks for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks) <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	<30 weeks	54.4 weeks	 	During Q1 2025-26, the average processing time for major planning applications was 54.4 weeks which is above the regional average of 30.0 weeks. When compared to Q1 2024-25 however, this represents a

				decrease of 64.1 weeks for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks <i>(statutory performance indicator)</i>	70%	74.0%		During Q1 2025-26, the percentage of cases concluded within 39 weeks was 74.0% which is above the regional average of 73.2%. When compared to Q1 2024-25, this represents an increase of 27.2% for Newry, Mourne and Down.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or more	170	473		As of 30 June 2025, Newry, Mourne and Down had 473 planning applications in the system for 12 months or more. This represents an increase of 65 applications when compared to March 2025 and 118 applications when compared to 30 June 2024. A reduction of 303 applications is required to achieve the target.
Number of planning applications in the system for 12 months or less	870	1,054		As of 30 June 2025, Newry, Mourne and Down had 1,054 planning applications in the system for 12 months or less. This represents a decrease of 64 applications when compared to 31 March 2025 and a decrease of 29 applications when compared to 30 June 2024. A reduction of 184 applications is required to achieve the target.
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more	580	610		As of 30 June 2025, Newry, Mourne and Down had 610 enforcement cases in the system for 12 months or more. This represents an increase of 36 cases when compared to 31 March 2025 and an increase of 41 cases when compared to 30 June 2024. A reduction of 30 cases is required to achieve the target.

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	13 November 2025
Subject:	Officer report on Correspondence from Consulate General of United States of America dated 2 June 2025 re: 250 th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Carol McClean, Assistant Director Legal and People
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy Suzanne Rice, Corporate Policy and Equality Officer

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

For decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>Correspondence from Consulate General of United States of America dated 2 June 2025 re: 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was considered at the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group meeting on 8 October 2025.</p> <p>At the meeting, Officers advised Alan Freeburn, Council's Museum and Heritage Services Manager's had advised that a talk or small exhibition could be organised to recognise the date.</p> <p>Following discussion on ideas for potential collaboration around the anniversary and how Council could acknowledge this anniversary the consensus of Members present was to support this approach.</p>
	Key issues
2.1	Not applicable.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To note the Correspondence from Consulate General of United States of America re: 250 th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence has been considered and discussed at the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group on 8 October 2025, and that the consensus of Members present was to support the Museum and Heritage Services section organising a talk of small exhibition to acknowledge this anniversary.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Resource implications associated with the organisation of a talk or small exhibition.
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	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
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	<p>Appendices</p>

	Appendix I: Correspondence from Consulate General of United States of America dated 2 June 2025 re: 250 th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence
8.0	Background Documents



**CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Belfast, Northern Ireland

June 2, 2025

Ms. Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry
BT35 8DJ



Dear Ms.Ward,

As you may be aware, 2026 will mark a significant anniversary for the United States.


Adopted on July 4, 1776, our Declaration of Independence outlined the principles on which our nation was founded and it remains our nation's most cherished symbol of liberty.

As we commence our 250th celebrations, I am cognizant of the profoundly important role that emigrants from these shores played in our nation's founding. As Consul General in Northern Ireland, it has been fascinating to discover that almost every corner of this region has a unique connection to our shared history.

I hope to meet with you in early fall under the auspices of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives where ideas for potential collaboration around this anniversary can be discussed. Before that, my colleague Peter McKittrick will reach out to determine an appropriate working level contact in your Council for preliminary discussions.

We look forward to engaging with you over the coming months.

Sincerely,


 James Applegate
 Consul General