

July 25th, 2024

## **Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the Audit Committee Meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 31st July 2024** at **2:00 pm** in **Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre.**

### **Committee Membership 2024-2025**

Ms Brona Slevin Independent **Chairperson**

Councillor C Bowsie

Councillor L Devlin

Councillor O Hanlon

Councillor T Howie

Councillor C King

Councillor A Mathers

Councillor S O'Hare

Councillor A Quinn

Councillor G Sharvin

Councillor J Tinnelly

# Agenda

## 1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

## 2.0 Declarations of Interest

## 3.0 Action Sheet arising from Audit Committee Meeting held on 23 May 2024

*For Approval*

📄 3 - Audit Committee Action Sheet 2024\_05\_23.pdf

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## 4.0 Audit Committee Annual Report 2023/24

*For Information*

📄 4 - Cover Rpt AC Annual Report 2023-24.pdf

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📄 4 - Appendix 1 - Chairpersons Annual Report 2023-24.pdf

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### Corporate Services (OPEN SESSION)

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## 5.0 Corporate Risk Register– S&E Directorate Risk Register also to be tabled

*For Approval*

📄 5 - Corporate Risk Register July 2024.pdf

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📄 5 - Appendix 1 - CRR Overview - July 2024.pdf

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📄 5 - Appendix 2 - CRR - July 2024.pdf

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📄 5 - Appendix 3 - S&E Overview - July 2024.pdf

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📄 5 - Appendix 4 - S&E Directorate RR - July 2024.pdf

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## 6.0 Prompt Payments

*For Information*

📄 6 - Prompt Payments Report Q1 - 202425.pdf

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## 7.0 NMDDC Assurance Framework and Code of Governance

*For Approval*





📄 7 - Assurance Framework and Code of Governance 2024.pdf

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## **Performance (OPEN SESSION)**

### **8.0 Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25**




*For Information*

	<b>8 - Audit Committee Cover Report PIP 2024-25.pdf</b>	<b>Page 82</b>
	<b>8 - Appendix 1 Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25.pdf</b>	<b>Page 85</b>
	<b>8 - Appendix 2 - Consultation and Engagement Report 2024-25.pdf</b>	<b>Page 121</b>
	<b>8 - Appendix 3 - Draft Objective Delivery Plans 2024-25.pdf</b>	<b>Page 132</b>

## **Corporate Services (CLOSED SESSION)**

### **9.0 2023/24 Unaudited Accounts and Annual Governance Statement**

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.

	<b>9 - Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts 202324.pdf</b>	<b>Not included</b>
	<b>9 - Appendix 1 - NMDDC Draft Accounts 202324 - signed.pdf</b>	<b>Not included</b>
	<b>9 - Appendix 2 - LG 05 24 Accounts Direction to District Councils 2023-24.pdf</b>	<b>Not included</b>

### **10.0 Procurement Action Plans**

*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.

To follow.

### **11.0 Update on Fraud and Whistleblowing (including raising concerns policy)**

*For Approval*

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.

 **11 - Fraud and Raising Concerns update revised.pdf**

**Not included**

 **11 - Appendix 1 - Fraud and Raising Concerns Register.pdf**

**Not included**

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### ***Internal Audit (CLOSED SESSION)***

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## **12.0 ASM Summary Report**

*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.


 **12 - NMDDC Summary report - July 2024 to Audit Committee.pdf**

**Not included**

## **13.0 Internal Audit Plan 2024/25**

*For Approval*

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 - 202424 NMDDC IA Plan - proposed change July 2024.pdf**

**Not included**



# Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews  
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Cllr Callum Bowsie  
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Mr Caolain Boyd  
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Fionnuala Branagh  
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Mr Stephen Brannigan (NIAO)  
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Cllr Jim Brennan  
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Cllr Pete Byrne  
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Mr Gerard Byrne  
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Cllr Philip Campbell  
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Cllr William Clarke  
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Edel Cosgrove  
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Cllr Laura Devlin  
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Ms Louise Dillon  
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Ms Kathy Doey (NIAO)  
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Cllr Cadogan Enright  
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Cllr Killian Feehan  
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Cllr Doire Finn  
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Cllr Aoife Finnegan  
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Cllr Conor Galbraith  
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Cllr Mark Gibbons  
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Christine Hagan (ASM)  
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Cllr Oonagh Hanlon  
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Cllr Glyn Hanna  
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Cllr Valerie Harte  
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Cllr Roisin Howell  
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Cllr Tierna Howie  
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Ms Catherine Hughes  
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Cllr Jonathan Jackson  
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Cllr Geraldine Kearns  
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Miss Veronica Keegan  
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Mrs Josephine Kelly  
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Mrs Sheila Kieran  
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Cllr Cathal King  
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Cllr Mickey Larkin  
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Cllr David Lee-Surginor  
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Cllr Alan Lewis  
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Cllr Oonagh Magennis  
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Mr Conor Mallon  
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Cllr Aidan Mathers  
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Cllr Declan McAteer  
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Cllr Leeanne McEvoy  
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Maureen/Joanne Morgan/Johnston  
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Cllr Declan Murphy  
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Sinead Murphy  
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Cllr Kate Murphy  
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Cllr Selina 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  
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Cllr Michael Rice  
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Cllr Michael Ruane  
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Cllr Gareth Sharvin  
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Ms Brona Slevin (Audit)  
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Donna Starkey  
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Nicola Stranney  
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Sarah Taggart  
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Cllr David Taylor  
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Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly  
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Cllr Jill Truesdale  
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Mr Seamus Wade (NIAO)  
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Mrs Marie Ward  
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Cllr Helena Young  
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**AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING****TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2023****Actions arising from Audit Committee Meeting – 22 September 2023**

<b>Minute Ref</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Lead officer</b>	<b>Action taken / progress to date</b>	<b>Remove from action sheet Y/N</b>
<b>AC/070/2023</b>	Audit Committee Training	It was agreed to note the update in relation to Audit Committee training and Members were encouraged to attend the NILGA/NIAO facilitated session on 06 October 2023 at 12.30pm	<b>G Byrne</b>	<b>Noted</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>End</b>					

**AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING****THURSDAY 23 MAY 2024****Actions arising from Audit Committee Meeting – 23 May 2024**

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead officer	Action taken / progress to date	Remove from action sheet Y/N
AC/030/2024	Action sheet of Audit Committee meeting held 01.02.2024	It was agreed to note the action sheet	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/031/2024	To agree dates and start times for 2024/25	It was agreed to approve the dates and start times for 2024/25	J Kelly	Approved	Y
AC/032/2024	Audit Committee Terms of Reference	It was agreed to approve the TOR and note the timetable for the year ahead	G Byrne	Approved	Y
AC/033/2024	Audit Committee Self-Assessment	It was agreed to approve the contents of the report.  It was agreed that Management consider and outline the ways the committee added value to the organisation.	J Kelly  J Kelly	Approved	N
AC/034/2024	Update of Members Interests	It was agreed to note the 6-month review report	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/035/2024	Annual Assessment of Chairperson's Performance	It was agreed to note the assessment of the Chairperson's performance	G Byrne	Noted	Y

AC/036/2024	Corporate Risk Register – CS Risk Register	<p>It was agreed to approve the updates to the Corporate Risk Register highlighted within the summary at Appendix 1. Full Corporate Risk Register can be evidenced at Appendix 2.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the revised CS Directorate Risk Register summary at Appendix 3 and detailed CS Risk Register at Appendix 4</p> <p>It was agreed that SMT would be taking account of the risks identified in the ASM report within the next updated Risk Register</p>	<p>J Kelly</p> <p>J Kelly</p>	<p>Approved</p> <p>SMT discussed the two limited IA reports and further detail has been incorporated into CR2. There is a separate Directorate Risk on Procurement (Corporate Services) and statutory and legislative requirements in Council Facilities (Sustainability and Environment).</p>	Y
AC/037/2024	Prompt Payments	it was agreed to note the Quarter 4 Prompt Payment Statistics	G Byrne	Noted	Y
AC/038/2024	Draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2024/25	<p>It was agreed to note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The five-point draft performance objectives 2024-25, as outlined in Appendix 1.</li> <li>• The proposed approach and timetable for publishing the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25, as outlined in Appendix 2, including approval to commence the consultation and engagement process on 19 April 2024</li> </ul>	G Byrne	Noted	Y
AC/039/2024	Update on audit recommendations, to include risk profile	It was agreed to note the update in relation to legacy audit recommendations	E Cosgrove	Noted	Y
AC/040/2024	Direct award Contracts	it was agreed to note the Q4 update in relation to Single Tender Actions with an action plan to be brought to the September Audit Committee Meeting	C Boyd	Noted	Y

AC/041/2024	Procurement Action Plans	It was agreed to note the update in relation to the Procurement Action Plans for each Directorate.	C Boyd	Noted	
AC/042/2024	Update on Fraud and Whistleblowing (including NFI)	<p>it was agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the update in relation to Fraud and Raising Concerns cases which have been detailed at Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report.</li> <li>• Note the National Fraud Initiative matches testing, with an update being brought to the July Committee in relation to the recouping the duplicate payments.</li> <li>• Note the progress on actions arising from the NIAO Internal Fraud Risk self-assessment.</li> <li>• Approve the revisions to the Fraud Policy and the Fraud Response Plan at Appendix 2 and 3 of the Officer's Report.</li> </ul> <p>It was also agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, that a report be brought to SP&amp;R Committee regarding an issue with a repayment under the Covid-19 Revitalisation Scheme.</p>	G Byrne          J Kelly	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>To be Brought to August 2024 SP&amp;R Committee</p>	Y
AC/043/2024	Update on Kilbroney Pitches	It was agreed to that the matter was closed and that no further independent audit services are engaged on this issue.	J Kelly	Agreed	Y
AC/044/2024	Planning Update	It was agreed to note the contents of the report, and that Officers continue to table quarterly reports to update Members on progress or otherwise against actions as contained within the Officer's Report	C Mallon	Noted	Y

AC/046/2024	Letter to NIAO re NCCR	<p>it was agreed to note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to the complaint correspondence to be issued shortly after the Audit Committee</li> <li>• The Notice of Motion was discussed at SPR on 16 May 2024 and after a full debate, it was agreed that the Project should continue in line with the Outline Business Case and also in line with the other recommendations made at the SPR as noted in the officer's report.</li> <li>• When the Full Business Case is completed for the Newry City Centre Regeneration Project, the updated projected capital costs will go to the Programme Board, the SPR Committee and then to full Council for approval.</li> </ul>	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/047/2024	Audit Strategy	It was agreed to note the contents of the Audit Strategy for 2023-24.	J Kelly	Noted	Y
AC/048/2024	ASM Summary Report	<p>It was agreed to approve the ASM Summary Report.</p> <p>It was also agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, that the recommendations contained with the ASM Summary Report regarding Planning – Review of Overturned Decisions be tabled at Party Reps Forum.</p>	C Hagan  C Mallon	Approved  Agreed	Y
AC/049/2024	ASM Annual Assurance Report	It was agreed to approve the ASM Annual Assurance Report	C Hagan	Approved	Y

AC/050/2024	Internal Audit Plan	It was agreed to approve the Internal Audit Plan	C Hagan	Approved	Y
AC/051/2024	Absence Management Review	It was agreed to note the report	C Hagan	Noted	Y
AC/052/2024	Contracts Management Review	It was agreed to note the report	C Hagan	Noted	Y
AC/053/2024	NMDDC Compliance Checking – facilities review	It was agreed to note the report	C Hagan	Noted	Y
AC/054/2024	Labour Market Partnership Review	It was agreed to note the report	C Hagan	Noted	Y
AC/055/2024	Planning – review of overturned decisions	It was agreed to note the report	C Hagan	Noted	Y
END					



<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Audit Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	31 July 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Audit Committee Annual Report 2023-24</b>
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Brona Slevin Independent Chair of Audit Committee
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Brona Slevin Independent Chair of Audit Committee

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

<b>For decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>For noting only</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Members are asked to consider and approve the contents of this report prior to Reporting to Council.

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>  The Annual Report summarises the key activities and highlights any key issues arising throughout the year. This Report will inform the Governance Statement contained within the Council's Annual Accounts.
<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>  The Annual Report of the Newry Mourne and Down Audit Committee for 2023-24 is attached.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>  Members are asked to consider and approve the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2023-24.  The approved Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2023-24 to be reported to Council.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>  None.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i>

	It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.2	<p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></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><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></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><b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b></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><b>Appendices</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Audit Committee Annual Report for 2023-24</p>
8.0	<p><b>Background Documents</b></p>

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**Newry, Mourne and Down District Council**  
**Audit Committee**  
**Annual Report for 2023/2024**

## **1. Overview**

1.1 This Annual Report provides an overview of the Audit Committee activities for the Financial Year 2023/24 and demonstrates how the Committee has met its key responsibilities.

1.2 The Audit Committee met on five occasions during the year; on 04 July 2023, 21 September 2023, 1 February 2024, Special Audit Committee 26 February 2024 and 23 May 2024. A programme of work had been agreed by the Audit Committee and was allocated over the schedule of meetings during the year.

1.3 The role of the Audit Committee is to support the Chief Executive (Accounting Officer) and Council by reviewing the comprehensiveness and reliability of assurances on governance, risk management, the control environment and the integrity of the financial statements.

## **2. Attendance**

2.1 Members' attendance at committee meetings were as follows:

<b>ATTENDANCE NARRATIVE – AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETINGS (July 2023 – May 2024)</b>							
<b>COUNCILLOR NAME</b>	<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE 4 July 2023</b>		<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE 21 September 2023</b>	<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE 1 February 2024</b>	<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE 26 February 2024</b>	<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE 23 May 2024</b>	<b>TOTAL Meetings Attended</b>
<b>Indp Chair Ms B Slevin</b>	√		√	√	√	√	<b>5/5</b>
<b>Cllr C Bowsie</b>	√		√	√	√		<b>4/5</b>
<b>Cllr J Brennan</b>	√		√		√	√	<b>4/5</b>
<b>Cllr L Devlin</b>			√	√	√		<b>3/5</b>
<b>Cllr T Howie (nee Kelly)</b>	√		√	√		√	<b>4/5</b>
<b>Cllr M Gibbons</b>							<b>0/5</b>
<b>Cllr O Hanlon</b>	√		√	√	√	√	<b>5/5</b>
<b>Cllr C King</b>	√		√			√	<b>3/5</b>
<b>Cllr S O’ Hare</b>	√		√	√		√	<b>4/5</b>
<b>Cllr G Sharvin</b>	√		√	√	√	√	<b>5/5</b>
<b>Cllr A Quinn</b>			√	√			<b>2/5</b>

2.2 Ms Brona Slevin was appointed as an Independent Member of the Audit Committee in March 2019 and in accordance with the Committee’s terms of reference took up the role of Chairperson in July 2019. The appointment has been extended to July 2024.

2.3 The Audit Committee meetings requires the attendance of the Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services and the Internal Auditors. The Assistant Director of Finance and Performance and NIAO representatives also usually attend and the Senior Management Team and other Senior Officers attend by invitation.

### 3. Performance Evaluation

3.1 In accordance with best practice, the Audit Committee self-assessed its performance against the CIPFA's Self Assessment of Good Practice during the year which found it to be performing at a high level. The results were presented to the meeting on 23 May 2024. The Committee agreed the following actions/recommendations to build further effectiveness:

- (a) As in prior years political parties to be asked to give consideration to appointing Elected Members for a term greater than one year where possible which will enable knowledge and skills to be built up in this area. Generally there is little change in the Audit Committee make up which shows the Council is committed to keeping the experience and knowledge of Members on the Audit Committee.
- (b) training for all Members on the Audit Committee to be progressed.
- (c) Officers continue to strive to ensure Internal Audit reports are completed and reported on a timely basis to the Audit Committee.
- (d) Officers continue to strive to ensure that all papers are provided on a timely basis to Democratic Services so that papers are issued in compliance with standing orders so that Members have sufficient time to review them

Members will see from consideration of CIPFA's checklist that the following requires further work which would add to the effectiveness of the Committee:

- (e) The Terms of Reference will be revised in May 2024 and brought to the Audit Committee for approval to include reference to the Assurance Framework and the Ethical Framework
- (f) The Audit Committee should consider how it adds value to the organisation and seek to consider other ways to do this in the future. Officers have been asked to bring forward any possible ideas

Members can take reassurance from the number of good practice questions that have been answered 'yes' demonstrating that the Audit Committee is following best practice and operating effectively.

3.2 An appraisal of the Chairperson performance was also completed by the Assistant Director of Finance and Performance with Councillor Sharvin and Councillor Hanlon and it was agreed that the Chair carried out their role very effectively.

#### **4. Terms of Reference**

4.1 A review of the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference was undertaken and approved by Council on 5 March 2019 as part of the review of the terms of references of all Committees of Council. The Audit Committee noted the approved Terms of Reference at its meeting on 15 April 2019. The Audit Committee's Terms of Reference was again approved at the Audit Committee Meeting in July 2020, in April 2021, April 2022, April 2023 and May 2024.

#### **5. 2022/23 Financial Statements and External Audit**

5.1 The Council's Audited Financial Statements for 2022/23 including the Annual Governance Statement were reviewed by the Audit Committee on 21 September 2023. The Committee also reviewed the draft Report to Those Charged With Governance.

5.2 The Audit Committee was pleased to note that the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) had certified the financial Statements with an unqualified audit Opinion and the Audit Committee approved the Accounts for signing.

5.3 The Audit Committee noted the contents of the final Report To Those Charged With Governance with management responses and the Annual Audit Letter at its meeting on 01 February 2024.

#### **6. Risk Management**

6.1 The Committee welcomed the continued good progress made by Officers on Risk Management and the structure put in place to ensure ownership and management of risk at all levels of the organisation.

6.2 The Council has a Corporate Risk Register which identifies the key corporate level risks faced, and to be managed. Each corporate risk is linked to specific priorities set out by the Council in its Corporate Plan. The Corporate Risk Register and mitigating actions are scrutinised at each Audit Committee meeting. Risk management is also a standing agenda item at monthly meetings of the SMT.

6.3 There were 12 corporate risks on the Corporate Risk Register at May 2024 and the corporate risks with the highest residual scores (shown in brackets) were as follows:

- CR. 01 Failure to deliver the capital investment programme for the District (20)
  - CR.02 Non-compliance with legislative requirements, including procurement (20)
  - CR. 03 Failure to effectively manage waste (20)
  - CR. 04 Failure to provide robust and timely planning decisions (16)
  - CR.05 Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements (16)
- plan for the future and deliver efficiencies and improvement (16)



CR. 07 Failure to implement an economic development programme to regenerate the District and attract inward investment due to financial uncertainties caused by the current economic and political climate, including the Windsor Framework (16)

CR. 08 Failure to manage sickness absence resulting in delays and an inability to deliver Council services (20)

CR. 09 Risk that Council does not adequately react to the Economic Shocks facing the district, therefore failing in its objectives to regenerate and build a prosperous district due to the inability of Council to be financially sustainable in the long term (20)

CR. 10 Failure to effectively plan for and manage a cyber security attack (20)

CR. 11 Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery (15)

CR. 12 Insufficient staff resources to deliver Council services in an effective and efficient manner (16)

## 7. Internal Audit

7.1 ASM Limited were reappointed after a tender exercise which commenced in February 2023. As per the signed and sealed contract, the maximum term is 4 years (2 years plus the option of two 1-year extensions).

7.2 From the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24, 8 Internal Audit Reports were reported to the Audit Committee during the year, 7 of which received a satisfactory assurance rating. One service area, Community Centres – compliance with building checklist, received a limited assurance rating. A review of grant funding applications to DfC was also completed.

7.3 All of the Internal Audit assurance work as detailed in the final Internal Audit Plan 2023/24, as approved by the Audit Committee, was completed.

7.4 ASM, the Council's Internal Auditors, raised significant control issues in their Annual Report dated 21 May 2024. ASM stated that the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards ("PSIAS") requires that they bring to the Council's attention those significant control issues which may be relevant to the preparation of the Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2024. On this basis, they highlighted

- a) the limited assurance provided in the review of Contract Management
- b) the limited assurance provided in the review of Compliance checking – facilities review (focusing on fire risk, asbestos and legionella compliance checking)
- c) the "red" rated recommendations included within their Advisory review of Planning – review of overturned decisions
- d) the PSIAS (2600 – Communicating the Acceptance of Risks) require attention is drawn to areas where Management's rejection or part acceptance of a recommendation is, in their opinion, exposing the Council to an unacceptable level of risk. These relate to Contract Management and Risk Management

Internal Audit Annual Assurance Opinion

7.7 The Committee reviewed the Annual Internal Audit Assurance Report for 2023/24 at its meeting on 23 May 2024 and noted the Auditor's overall opinion that notwithstanding the significant issues identified above, the Council's systems in relation to internal control, risk management and governance were, in general adequate and operated effectively and they were able to provide satisfactory assurance in relation to the effective and efficient achievement of the Council's objectives.

7.8 The Audit Committee welcomed the overall opinion of Satisfactory Assurance and commended Officers for their good work. The Committee also requested regular progress updates on the actions taken to address the significant issues referred to the Internal Audit Annual Assurance Report.

#### Follow up Review of Internal Audit Recommendations

7.9 The Committee also reviewed on 01 February 2024 a follow up report from Internal Audit on the Implementation of Prior Year Internal Audit Recommendations for 2022/23. The review identified that, out of the 51 accepted recommendations, 33 recommendations were fully implemented, 7 recommendations were partially implemented, 8 recommendations were not implemented. There were a further 3 recommendations where Internal Audit were unable to test the implementation status.

7.10 The Assistant Director of Finance and Performance also reported during the year the progress on the implementation of the Internal Audit Recommendations in the years prior to 2022/23. This included an update on the risk facing the Council when these recommendations were not implemented on a timely basis which enabled the Audit Committee to have a fuller understanding of the implications of these recommendations not being in place.

7.11 The Audit Committee is committed to ensuring the prior year Internal Audit recommendations are completed and reported to the Audit Committee at each meeting.

#### Tender for Internal Audit Services

7.12 Newry Mourne and Down District Council procured the services of ASM again as its Internal Audit Services provider from 01 April 2019. The contract was for two years with the options of two one-year extensions. The Audit Committee agreed to the second one year extension period which will be utilised to work on the fourth year of the four year Internal Audit Plan, i.e., 2022/23.

#### Approval of Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 and Internal Audit Strategy

7.13 The Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 was brought to the Audit Committee Meeting on 23 May 2024 for approval.

7.14 The Internal Audit Plan will then be kept under review throughout the year and will be considered against any emerging risks identified as part of the Council's wider risk

management processes. Any future proposed changes will be brought to the Audit Committee for consideration.

## **8. External Audit Strategy**

8.1 The NIAO will present their Annual Audit Strategy for the Year Ending 31 March 2024 to the Audit Committee on 31 July 2024.

8.2 The Audit certification deadline for certifying local government bodies' accounts is 30 September 2024 and to ensure compliance a meeting has been scheduled for 26 September 2024 to review and approve the audited accounts so they can be signed by the deadline.

## **9. Performance Improvement Arrangements**

9.1 Every year the LGA is required to report on whether each Council has discharged its duties in relation to improvement planning, the publication of improvement information and the extent to which each Council has acted in accordance with the Department's Guidance.

9.2 The LGA proposed an unqualified audit and assessment opinion, with no statutory recommendations being made. An Audit and Assessment certificate of compliance has been received.

9.3 The LGA has certified that the Council has discharged its duties in connection with improvement planning and the publication of improvement information in accordance with section 92 of the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities guidance sufficiently.

9.4 The LGA stated that in their opinion the Council has demonstrated a track record of ongoing improvement and that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Act during 2023/24.

9.5 Strengthening existing performance management arrangements and embedding a culture of performance and improvement has gained momentum within Newry Mourne and Down District Council. It is vital that performance is used as a key driver to identify improvements and facilitate the delivery of effective, efficient and value for money services in the post COVID-19 environment.

## **10. Acknowledgments**

10.1 As Chair of the Audit Committee, I wish to extend my thanks to the Members for their support during the year and to the political parties for ensuring continuity of membership on the Committee from year to year. On behalf of the Audit Committee, I wish also to thank officers, the Internal and External Auditors for their hard work, also their open engagement with the Committee, thereby allowing it to meet its responsibilities.

**Brona Slevin**  
**Independent Chairperson**  
**31 July 2024**

<b>Report to:</b>	Audit Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	31 July 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Corporate Risk Register
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Josephine Kelly – Director of Corporate Services
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director of Finance & Performance

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

<b>For decision</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>For noting only</b>	
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>
1.1	The Corporate Risk Register was reviewed and updated by SMT on 23 July 2024. Quarter 4 Assurance Statements for 2023-24 have been used to inform and update the content of the Corporate Risk Register. Where relevant, Officers have also provided updates in relation to specific controls and action plans.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
2.1	<p><b>Corporate Risk Register</b></p> <p>The Council has identified 12 corporate risks, 6 of which are red, 5 of which are amber and 1 of which is a yellow level risk. No new risks have been added to the Risk Register.</p> <p><u>Appendix 1</u> provides an overview of each risk, risk owner(s), gross and residual risk scores, as well as a summary of changes and updates which have been made to the Corporate Risk Register since May 2024.</p> <p>Several actions have been updated to ensure the Corporate Risk Register is a live document and can be used as a Management tool for decision making.</p> <p>The updated Corporate Risk Register is attached at <u>Appendix 2</u>.</p>
2.2	<p><b>Other Risk factors which were considered</b></p> <p>There was once action from the May 2024 Audit Committee that SMT would consider <i>'taking account of the risks identified in the ASM report within the next updated Risk Register'</i>.</p> <p>The two limited internal audit reports were;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contract Management</li> <li>2. Compliance checking – facilities review (considering fire risk, asbestos and legionella checking)</li> </ol> <p>CR02 has been amended to further reflect both reports. Both Limited Reports are also covered off at Directorate level. Within the Corporate Services Directorate Risk Register the following risk covers actions in relation to Contract Management <i>'CS04 - Breach of legislation / legislative challenge in relation to the procurement of goods and services and works'</i>.</p>

	<p>Within the Sustainability and Environment Directorate Risk Register, the following risk covers detailed actions in relation to asbestos, legionella and fire risk assessments '<i>SE04 - Failure to comply with relevant statutory and legislative requirements in Council Facilities</i>'</p> <p>Management concluded that there was adequate coverage of both Limited Assurance Reports at both Corporate and Directorate level risk registers.</p>
2.2	<p><b>Directorate Risk Register – Sustainability and Environment (S&amp;E)</b></p> <p>The Risk Reporting section of the Risk Strategy states that Directorate Risk Registers will be presented to the Audit Committee on a rotational basis. The Risk Register for the S&amp;E Directorate is attached at Appendix 3. The Risk Register was reviewed and updated with the Assistant Directors and Director of S&amp;E on the 10 July 2024.</p>
2.3	<p>Within the S&amp;E Directorate Risk Register, 6 risks have been identified, 2 of which are red, 3 which are amber level risks and one yellow risk. These risks cover a range of service areas and functions.</p> <p>The S&amp;E Risk Register will be updated on a regular basis and considered by the Audit Committee annually.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
3.1	<p>To approve the updates to the Corporate Risk Register highlighted within the summary at Appendix 1. Full Corporate Risk Register can be evidenced at Appendix 2.</p> <p>To note the revised S&amp;E Directorate Risk Register summary at Appendix 3 and detailed S&amp;E Directorate Risk Register at appendix 4.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1	There are no resource implications.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></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><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></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><b>Proposal initiating consultation</b></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><b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b></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><b>Appendices</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1: Summary Sheet – Corporate Risk Register – July 2024  Appendix 2: Corporate Risk Register – July 2024  Appendix 3: Summary Sheet – S&amp;E Directorate Risk Register – July 2024  Appendix 4: S&amp;E Directorate Risk Register – July 2024</p>
8.0	<p><b>Background Documents</b></p>
	<p>None</p>



NMDDC Corporate Risk Register Cover Sheet - July 2024

Risk	Description	Risk Owner(s)	Gross Risk Score	May-24	Jul-24		Comments
				Revised Residual Risk Score	Revised Residual Risk Score		
CR01	Failure to deliver the capital investment programme for the District	SMT Caolain Boyd	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR02	Non-compliance with legislative requirements, including procurement	Josephine Kelly Sinead Murphy	25	20	20	↔	Risk score remains unchanged. Actions have been updated. It was decided not to have separate risk for Contract Management and Compliance limited Internal Audit reports as there is adequate coverage at both Corporate and Directorate Risk Register level.
CR03	Failure to effectively manage waste	Sinead Murphy	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated.
CR04	Failure to provide robust and timely planning decisions	Conor Mallon	25	16	16		Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR05	Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements	Marie Ward Josephine Kelly	20	16	16	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR06	Failure to adequately react to a major incident which would minimise any negative consequences/impact	SMT Caolain Boyd	25	8	8	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR07	Failure to implement an economic development programme to regenerate the district and attract inward investment due to financial uncertainties caused by the current economic and political climate, including the Windsor Framework	Marie Ward Conor Mallon	20	16	16	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR08	Failure to manage sickness absence resulting in delays and an inability to deliver Council services.	Senior Management Team	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR09	Risk that Council does not adequately react to the Economic Shocks facing the district, therefore failing in its objectives to regenerate and build a prosperous district due to the inability of Council to be financially sustainable in the long term	Senior Management Team	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR10	Failure to effectively plan for and manage a cyber security attack.	Josephine Kelly Gavin Ringland	25	20	20	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR11	Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery	Senior Management Team	25	15	15	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.
CR12	Insufficient staff resources to deliver Council services in an effective and efficient manner	Marie Ward Josephine Kelly	20	16	16	↔	Residual risk score remains unchanged and actions have been updated.



# 1. Corporate Risk Register NMDDC

## Risk CR. 01 - Failure to deliver the capital investment programme for the District

Consequence	5					G
	4					R
	3			T		
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Probability				

<b>Risk Categories</b>	Buildings / Engineering / Environment Business operational/reputational		
<b>Risk Description</b>	Failure to adequately resource the capital programme Failure to effectively manage capital contracts Capital programme does not sufficiently deliver on the Corporate Objectives		
<b>Potential Root Cause</b>	Lack of availability of construction materials and increases in the cost of materials due to inflation and Cost of Living crisis Contractors on key projects fail to deliver on time and on budget Consultant and/or contractor collusion Procurement delays, failures or legal challenges Governance Arrangements not being adhered to Projected timelines too optimistic Delays due to the statutory approvals process Lack of awareness in staff and managers Lack of resources - economic downturn/recession Funding reduced/withdrawn, timescales extended leading to increased costs Impact of the pay award and inflation on the financial viability of the capital plan going forward		
<b>Consequence</b>	Impact on service delivery Financial impact - inflationary pressures / pay demands Legal challenge / Negative PR Impact on quality/cost of projects Future reduction on the capital budget Reputational damage		
<b>Risk Owners</b>	Caolain Boyd; Senior Management Team		
<b>Gross/Inherent Risk</b>	Red 25	<b>Last Review</b>	7/23/2024
<b>Residual Risk</b>	Red 20	<b>Next Review</b>	9/1/2024
<b>Target Risk Level</b>	Yellow 9	<b>Risk Appetite</b>	Risk Open

### Objectives

1. Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills
6. Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities.
7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

### Key Controls Identified

1. Asset Management Strategy in Place to identify surplus assets
1. Monthly review of spend against budget
1. Professionally qualified and experienced staff
- 2 Project risk register in place for major projects
2. Capital Plan annually approved at Council
2. Large projects are project managed by external consultants who report to the Estates Team.
2. Monthly site progress meetings which are minuted
2. Multi Year Capital Plan
2. Strategic Finance Working Group scrutinises each Capital Project
3. Gateway Reviews
3. Internal Audit of Project Governance received SA 2022/23.

### Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Capital Plan Cash Flow forecasting	Detailed cash flow of Council capital plan was brought to SFWG in December 2023 to display to Members the scale of the capital Programme and communicate when Council's big outlay will be required.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne	7/31/2024	Work is continuing on estimating the MRP/Loan payments over the life of our capital Programme. New Capital Plan Process presented to SFWG in May 2024. Contact made with UKIB by the AD of Finance and Performance in relation to future loans.
Construction Industry - Material Shortages and Price Increases - Potential Impact to our capital Plan	NI central government have informed me that the Dept of Finance is being lobbied by the construction industry to contribute to the unforeseen increase in material costs for those construction projects (large value) which were awarded in advance of the recent price spikes, as well as term service contracts with fixed rates for undertaking works.	In Progress	Caolain Boyd	7/31/2024	Were possible during the design stage utilise building materials that meets the OBC estimates using value engineering and value management when appropriate. Incorporate Contract Clauses X1 Price adjustment for Inflation to ensure contracts are not overpriced and council are not paying a premium for non encountered risks.
Supplier/Contractor Options	AD of Capital Projects and Procurement currently looking a number of options to counter act the over reliance on a small number of Contractors/Suppliers/PMs in NI	In Progress	Caolain Boyd	7/31/2024	Council has put more stringent Pre-Qualification Questionnaire criteria to ensure construction line value and project cashflow is stress tested prior to award



**Key Controls Identified**

- 1. Asbestos and Legionella Policies and Management Plans in place
- 1. Dedicated skilled teams in place for:
  - Health and Safety, HR, Legal and Procurement
- 1. Health and Safety Committees in place and ongoing programme of training in place
- 1. Policies and procedures in place - i.e H&S Policy, Procurement Policy, Access to Information, Capital Projects etc
  - 1. Procurement training rolled out to all relevant staff
- 2. Compliance Reporting to SMT and H&S Committees
- 2. Procurement a standing agenda item at Councils Audit Committee
- 3. Internal Audits Completed and Scheduled going forward annually.

**Action Plans**

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Actions from Fire Risk Assessment Audits	The actions from the Fire Risk Assessments which have been completed need to be actioned as soon as possible for all Council properties by the Facilities Management and Maintenance Department.	In Progress	Conor Sage	7/31/2024	<p>Council is currently recruiting (second time) for a Compliance Officer to improve the management of compliance issues. The current level of risk regarding fire risks in our buildings is considered Low. The Fire Risk Management Policy has been approved and effective since 12th March 2020, however the associated Fire Safety Management Plan requires progressing. The priority is to seek agreement on a Fire Safety Management Plan which will guide future control of this risk.</p> <p>The Council has appointed a Council wide Contractor/s to undertake annual inspections of fire alarms and firefighting equipment. In relation to fire alarms inspections are likely to highlight a programme of work to upgrade some systems. The Council's Building Maintenance team continue to address work as required.</p>
Advisory Internal Audit Review - Health and Safety	Implement the 30 recommendations arising from the internal audit review of Health and Safety	In Progress	Josephine Kelly Sinead Murphy	7/31/2024	<p>An external review has been undertaken and an independent Report from by external body has been received and considered by the Directors of Corporate Services (CS) and Sustainability &amp; Environment (SE). An action plan is being formulated. A revised Facilities Management Cross Service Working Group has been established under the Chairmanship of the Directors of CS and S&amp;E.</p> <p>Where appropriate updates from the Working Group will be provided to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.</p>

Asbestos Policy and Management Plans	Implementation of Asbestos Policies and Management Plans	In Progress	Conor Sage	7/31/2024	The current level of risk for asbestos, is considered Low. All buildings have been surveyed and no significant risks have been identified which cannot be managed through good building practices. A Contractor was appointed in October 2020 for a three-year period to undertake inspections, air sampling, training and related asbestos consultancy work. There was a defined year 1, 2 and 3 work programmes. An occurrence of asbestos has been identified associated with the Downshire Civic Centre and is being managed in line with the policy. Contract documents currently being reviewed for a new tender for Asbestos Surveys. Asbestos reinspection surveys are now due for completion. Asbestos Management Policy is now due for review.
E-Learning Training	E-Learning training to be promoted throughout the organisation as take up is low - this is particularly relevant to mandatory training sessions.	In Progress	Marina Hughes	9/30/2024	E Learning is promoted throughout the organisation, however it should be noted that there is currently a joint Council E Learning platform contract in place that is lead by LCCC.
Insurance	CMT to ensure that Council Properties and Vehicles are adequately covered and schedules are up to date	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	8/31/2024	Work currently underway to validate Councils Operators License against Councils fleet insurance schedule. SMT has approved the recruitment of an Insurance Officer which is progressing.
Internal Audit - Compliance checking – facilities review (considering fire risk, asbestos and legionella checking)	Implement recommendations outlined in the limited assurance internal audit which was finalised in May 2024	In Progress	Conor Sage Senior Management Team	3/31/2025	In progress
Internal Audit - Contract management	Implement recommendations from the limited assurance Internal Audit which was finalised in May 2024	In Progress	Caolain Boyd Senior Management Team	4/30/2025	In progress
Legionella Policy and Management Plan	Implementation of Legionella Policies and Management Plans	In Progress	Conor Sage	7/31/2024	The current level of risk for legionella is considered Medium. A STA is currently in place to undertake legionella control measures on behalf of the Council. This comprises monthly, quarterly, six monthly and annual inspections and works. Current Contract being reviewed for retendering. Council officers are investigating remote monitoring which will be tabled in November 2023. Legionella Management Policy is now due for review.
Social Procurement Policy	Council to consider bringing in a social procurement policy following the guidance issued by the Minister of Finance in June 2021.	In Progress	Caolain Boyd	12/31/2024	Legislation to be reviewed to determine if this is possible while adhering to Public Contract Regulations. Procurement team are liaising with the LG Procurement Working Group. Council is currently adhering to legislative requirements. Procurement Policy to be reviewed in October 2024 when new procurement legislation is introduced.



**Risk CR. 03 - Failure to effectively manage waste**

Consequence	5				R	G
	4					
	3			T		
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Probability				

**Risk Categories** Buildings / Engineering / Environment  
Quality of Service  
Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)

**Risk Description** Failure to effectively manage waste

**Potential Root Cause** Industrial dispute lodged by the Trade Unions  
Insufficient resources (particularly availability of HGV drivers)  
Market forces enable commercial operators to increase prices (MDR)  
Failure to plan effectively for the future (including financial planning)  
Historic contract arrangements which may not be providing the Council with VFM  
Future changes to waste management arrangements  
Structure of new contracts to process & dispose of our waste to reflect changes in legislation  
Operation of the ARC21 Corporate Body going forward

**Consequence** Failure to meet recycling Targets  
Reputational Issues  
Lower levels of customer satisfaction  
impact on service delivery and lost productivity  
With high CPI price increases the budget for waste management is likely to be insufficient for the 2023/24 year.

**Risk Owners** Sinead Murphy

**Gross/Inherent Risk** Red 25      **Last Review** 7/23/2024

**Residual Risk** Red 20      **Next Review** 9/1/2024

**Target Risk Level** Yellow 9      **Risk Appetite** Risk Cautious

**Objectives**

- 2. Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district and reduce health inequalities.
- 7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

**Key Controls Identified**

- 1. Contingency Plans in place
- 1. Long term Waste Strategic Plan in place
- 1. Partnership working with key stakeholders
- 3. Internal Audits Completed;  
Fleet Management /Fuel Management procedures / Waste Management 2021/22
- 3. Internal Audits Scheduled;  
Waste Management - 2021/22

## Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
arc21 Waste Management Group	Following the May 2022 refusal to grant arc21 planning permission for their residual waste project and the requirement to recycle 70% by 2030 as per the Climate Change Bill and the Circular Economy package coupled with governance and internal issues within arc21 the long term viability of the group is now very questionable.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy	8/31/2024	Arc21 are carrying out their own strategic review of themselves the results of which may be known by the end of March 2024. NM&D have had an opportunity to input. Consideration needs to be given as to how the Council would participate in any successor body to arc21. This could have staffing implications for the Council should the Council decide to provide the functions currently provided by arc21 themselves. These resource implications would at least in part be offset by the arc21 contribution which in 2022/23 was some £156k.
Internal Waste Management Planning	Council waste management planning is driven by a number of internal and external factors including the introduction of legislation such as the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, Extended Producer Responsibility, Deposit Return Scheme and Common Collection Systems.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Sinead Trainor	8/31/2024	Ongoing but stayed as there have been delays to the introduction of Deposit Return Scheme. Common Collection Systems may require legislation which cant be progressed without a sitting Assembly. Response to DAERA consultation "Rethinking our resources: Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in NI" currently being prepared.
Operators Licence	Internal Audit carried out a review of the progress in implementing TRU and FTA recommendations in October 2018. A further review took place during November/December 2020 which has provisionally highlighted that limited progress has been made in implementing a number of recommendations from the 2018 audit.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage	8/31/2024	A consolidated action plan in relation to compliance to the Council's Operators License (OL) was presented to SE Committee in November 2022. A further update on compliance was provided in June 2023 showing good progress towards full implementation of actions and ongoing compliance.. Staffing issues are being addressed and the Head of Cleansing has been seconded as interim Head of Fleet. Further operators license COTC holders trained and named on the OL. A further follow up Audit by RHA for 2023/24 also demonstrated positive progress and the Transport Regulation Unit is being regularly informed of progress.
Waste Management Plan	The Waste Management Plan is organised by ARC 21. The Council is required to feed into and approve ARC 21s Waste Management Plan.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy	8/31/2024	A initial review of the arc21 Waste Management Plan (which includes NMDDC) has been completed by WRAP on behalf of DAERA/NIEA. Technical expertise (RPS) has been procured to produce an Addendum for the Plan as part of the six yearly review. It is now understood that in the absence of a Minister DAERA will not now be consulting on a draft Waste Management Strategy for NI by the end of 2023; the publication of which would better inform the Councils Waste Management Plans.

**Risk CR. 04 - Failure to provide robust and timely planning decisions**

Consequence	5					G
	4				R	
	3			T		
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Probability				

**Risk Categories** Business operational/reputational  
Financial  
Quality of Service

**Risk Description** Failure to provide robust and timely planning decisions

**Potential Root Cause** Ineffective and/or inadequate resources  
Planning Legislation not being followed  
Ineffective technology - EPIC system changes - challenges of introducing new planning portal and associated training.

**Consequence** Litigation and financial costs  
Reputational issues  
Lower levels of customer satisfaction  
Impact on service delivery and lost productivity  
Financial implications resulting in budget constraints  
Failure to achieve the statutory standards around local / major planning applications and enforcement cases

**Risk Owners** Conor Mallon

**Gross/Inherent Risk** Red 25

**Residual Risk** Amber 16

**Target Risk Level** Yellow 9

**Last Review** 7/23/2024

**Next Review** 9/1/2024

**Risk Appetite** Risk Open

**Objectives**

- 3. Enhance, protect and promote our environment
- 6. Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities.

**Key Controls Identified**

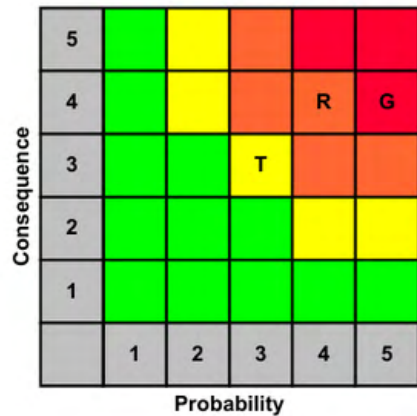
- 1. Action plan in place to reduce backlog
  - 1. Increase in employee numbers
  - 1. Ongoing training for officers and members
  - 2. Dedicated Planning Committee in operation
- 2. Local Development Plan developed and timetable agreed
  - 2. Quarterly report to Committee on progress against action plan
- 2. Scheme of Delegation in place to facilitate timely planning decisions



**Action Plans**

	<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<b>Action Plan Type</b>	<b>Action Plan Owner</b>	<b>Action Plan Action Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Backlog cases	Implement action plan to reduce backlog in line with timeframe set	In Progress	Jonathan McGilly	7/31/2024	in 22/23 NMD received 1478 applications, 13.2% of total NI applications excluding CLUDs and non material change applications which bring the total to 1781. Average processing times for 22/23 across Councils was 19 weeks with Newry, Mourne and Down at 21.6 weeks. During 2021/22, Newry, Mourne and Down received the highest number of applications at 1,781. The new Planning Portal was implemented during 22/23 and disrupted normal processes for 4 – 6 weeks adding to backlog challenges, work is ongoing to monitor performance within the department to improve efficiency. Comparable stats for 23/24 are not yet available however mid term assessments show that processing times remain challenging and new application numbers have increased despite a general trend downwards in most other Council areas. Recruitment to backfill vacancies has been completed and staff have commenced taking up posts in December 2023 - Feb 2024. Absence management process is utilised to manage all absences as per Council policy.
Internal Review of overturn decisions	Council will undertake a review/audit of overturn decisions - this is based on the NIAO Public Accounts Committee report on Planning decisions across Councils in NI	In Progress	Conor Mallon Jonathan McGilly	7/31/2024	Audit is now complete and will be tabled at the May 2024 Audit Committee with key recommendations to be implemented thereafter as per greed action plan.
IT infrastructure	Upgrade of technical IT infrastructure (EPIC Replacement)	Completed	Jonathan McGilly	7/31/2024	Operational from December 2022 – work is ongoing to fine tune performance of new system to improve user friendliness and efficiency through direct engagement with staff at all levels and stakeholder groups. The enforcement modules are now a priority action and this likewise will be managed via NI officer working groups co-ordinated by ICF
Regional Planning Review	The Public Accounts Committee issued a regional report on Planning in Northern Ireland on 24 March 2022	In Progress	Conor Mallon	7/31/2024	Work also ongoing through the Local Government Development Management Working Group - Planning Improvement - PADS. Through a series of Planning Improvement Plans developed via Heads of Planning Working Groups in consultation and engagement with Dfl, SOLACE have agreed a series of actions to improve the Planning prcess in conjunction with PAC and Dfl.

**Risk CR. 05 - Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements**



**Risk Categories** Business operational/reputational  
Financial  
Impact on individuals (staff or public)  
Quality of Service

**Risk Description** Failure to adequately deliver future efficiencies and improvements

**Potential Root Cause** Difficulty recruiting key positions in Councils Management Team  
Corporate efficiency projects and other improvement activities are not currently joined-up with wider transformational activity  
The Council is currently unable to track the realisation of benefits (financial or non-financial) arising from investment in new IT systems (i.e. Legend)  
A lack of corporate capacity currently exists to support transformational activity  
The overall affordability of the Councils long term plans considering; Cost of Living Crisis / inflation / pay demands.

**Consequence** Not promoting a single corporate identity  
The budget situation will continue to get worse (salaries and wages) therefore not providing VFM  
Our ability to provide citizens / customers with the services they require will be significantly constrained  
We will potentially lag behind other Councils & other public sector organisations

**Risk Owners** Josephine Kelly; Marie Ward

**Gross/Inherent Risk** Red 20      **Last Review** 7/23/2024

**Residual Risk** Amber 16      **Next Review** 9/1/2024

**Target Risk Level** Yellow 9      **Risk Appetite** Risk Hungry

**Objectives**

7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

**Key Controls Identified**

1. PFF now complete
2. IT Project Group in place and meets regularly
2. IT Strategy in place

**Action Plans**

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Digital Strategy	Digital Strategy currently being drafted	In Progress	Josephine Kelly	8/31/2024	Work is underway to develop a Digital Strategy for Council
New HR System	New Self Service Human Resource Management system to be procured	In Progress	Marina Hughes Josephine Kelly	7/31/2024	The Business Case for the procurement of new systems has been reviewed following changes to the eLearning system and OH provider changes and is almost complete A draft action plan / timetable of service reviews has been provided to the Trade Unions as part of the agreement to the current dispute. Work is progressing.
Service Reviews	Service Reviews are currently being completed across Directorate in line with paper which was approved at SP&R	In Progress	Senior Management Team	8/31/2024	A full list of Service Reviews is being collated to ensure resources are appropriately directed to undertake the work required.

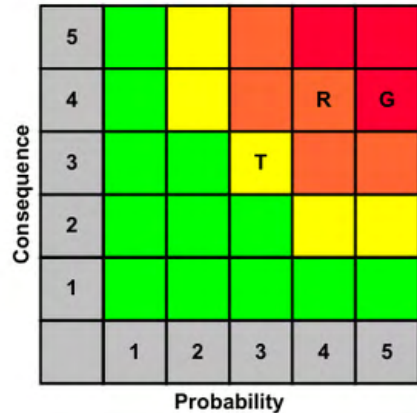


**Action Plans**

	<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<b>Action Plan Type</b>	<b>Action Plan Owner</b>	<b>Action Plan Action Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Documenting Business Continuity Plans	BCPs to be documented for each Service Area	In Progress	Gavin Ringland Sinead Trainor	8/31/2024	Revision of all Departmental BCP's was completed in July 2023 and is ongoing
Independent External Review of Flooding Incident	Independent review to be carried in the coming months of all statutory agencies	In Progress	Sinead Murphy	7/31/2024	Council engaged with an independent external review of the recent flooding incident along with all other statutory partners. When report is issued, Council will implement any recommendations or learning from the review.
Northern Ireland Emergency Planning Structures	Officers will continue to attend and contribute to the NI Emergency Planning Structures.	In Progress	Senior Management Team	9/30/2024	Council is represented at NIEPS were any upcoming incidents will be discussed.
Risk Assessments	A review of all Council Risk Assessments currently in place and a review of all Officers who have been trained in IOSH	In Progress	Sinead Trainor	7/31/2024	Information is currently being collated through Councils Corporate Management Team.



**Risk CR. 07 - Failure to implement an economic development programme to regenerate the district and attract inward investment due to financial uncertainties caused by the current economic and political climate, including the Windsor Framework**



**Risk Categories** Impact on individuals (staff or public)  
Quality of Service

**Risk Description** Failure to implement an economic development programme to regenerate the district and attract inward investment due to financial uncertainties caused by the current economic and political climate, including the Windsor Framework.

**Potential Root Cause** Failure to engage stakeholders (public and private sector)  
Inflationary pressures and cost of living crisis.  
FFNI - NMDDC is lead Council with operations team - increased risk  
Impact of the City Deal  
The weakness in sterling driving inflation expectations higher  
Issues around the Windsor Framework including:  
-Loss of EU funding  
-Disruption of food and medical supplies  
-Changes in regulations, border controls, cross border trade and movement of goods and people  
-Uncertainty amongst the business community in relation to food standards, trading standards and exports  
-Lack of employees with the required expertise and experience, eg Environmental Health Officers

**Consequence** Lack of investment in the District and lower levels of economic activity  
Lack of confidence from the private sector  
Some services, which were funded externally, not being delivered  
Lack of leadership and direction from the NI Executive and UK Government  
Inadequate levels of service provision

**Risk Owners** Conor Mallon; Marie Ward

**Gross/Inherent Risk** Red 20

**Last Review** 7/23/2024

**Residual Risk** Amber 16

**Next Review** 9/1/2024

**Target Risk Level** Yellow 9

**Risk Appetite** Risk Hungry

**Objectives**

1. Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills
4. Support sustainable forms of tourism which value our environment and cultural heritage.
6. Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities.
7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

**Key Controls Identified**

1. FFNI Digital Transformation Projects underway
1. Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2020-25 in place
2. Engagement with other Councils, other Departments, NILGA and the Private Sector through the Chamber of Commerce
2. Establishment of Economic Forum including public and private sector stakeholders
3. Internal Audits Completed and Scheduled going forward - including the Enhanced Flood Support Scheme grant

**Action Plans**

	<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<b>Action Plan Type</b>	<b>Action Plan Owner</b>	<b>Action Plan Action Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
City Deals	Actively engage in Belfast Region City Deal	In Progress	Conor Mallon Marie Ward	9/30/2024	The Belfast Region City Deal was signed in December 2021 and unlocks £1 billion of transformative co-investment. OBCs for NMD projects have been approved by BRCD Board and relevant Government Departments. Contracts for funding and funding agreements have been progressed. Progress ongoing on project delivery, based on stage of development of each. The NCCR projects are both currently out to tender for construction.
Full Fibre Network NI (FFNI)	Delivery of Digital Infrastructure and Digital Related projects under the FFNI Consortium / NMDDC	In Progress	Conor Mallon	7/31/2024	Digital Transformation Flexible Fund: FFNI Operations team responsible for centralised implementation and delivery of this programme across all Council areas. The project offers grants to micro and small enterprises. Grant value to businesses max £20k. Total value of funding £7.5m from the Complementary fund and DAERA (£1.1M). NMDDC is the lead Council for this project under FFNI. Invest NI is the Investment Decision Maker.  Development and delivery of the BRCD Digital Pillar projects including proposed Regional Innovation Hub for NMDDC.  Mobile Action Plan: FFNI appointed by Solace as lead for all Councils Digital Champions. FFNI operations lead and project officer currently appointed as Digital Champion and Coordinator in respect of the Mobile Action Plan. Barrier Busting team to be established to promote rollout of advanced technologies which underpins Councils Digital Transformation activities and projects under the City and Growth deals.  LFFN/ RGC - Ongoing benefits realisation and management information tracking of DCMS funded fibre installed across 887 public sector sites in Northern Ireland. NMDDC lead Council via FFNI Consortium. Data is required to be monitored for 5 years as per DCSM grant agreement. IT dept are currently engaging 3rd parties to put the fibre into use.
Provide Flood Recovery Support to Local businesses in impacted areas of the District	Administering funding provided by UK Treasury for Businesses impacted by flooding in November 2023	In Progress	Sonya Burns Conor Mallon	8/31/2024	Following the floods across the District, Council hosted LPS workshops for businesses online to provide information on rate relief. Council organised 3 business information clinics (Newry, Downpatrick and Flurrybridge). 114 were paid out. The Enhanced Flood Support Scheme grant applications are currently being assessed.

Support local businesses	The Council is also providing support, advice and guidance to local businesses as they anticipate and manage the changes associated with Brexit.	In Progress	Conor Mallon	7/31/2024	NMDDC is a delivery partner for Go Succeed, the service is funded by UK Government UKSPF. Belfast City Council is leading on contract management and administration. Enterprise NI and Full Circle are contracted to deliver pillars of the programme on behalf of NMDDC. Implementation was delayed which has significantly impacted on Council's statutory job creation targets for Q3-4 2023/4. DfE increased Council's statutory job creation from 155 to 170 in June 2023 at a time of delivery flux. Council has not achieved its statutory targets for 23/24. Delivery against Labour Market Partnership Action Plan concluded in March 2024. An action plan for delivery was submitted to DfC in February for consideration. Funding for LMP is under review.
Warrenpoint Port	To ensure efficient delivery of statutorily required of food import checks on relevant Agri-Food goods entering Northern Ireland at Warrenpoint port	In Progress	Sinead Murphy	8/31/2024	Required checks are being completed at Warrenpoint Port on an on-going basis by trained and authorised staff. Regular meetings are attended with relevant partners, DAERA, Defra, FSA, Border force, Seatruck, Warrenpoint Port, to continue to share learning and work through operational issues as they arise, including the implementation of the Windsor Framework. Funding is continuing to be provided through the FSA.

**Risk CR. 08 - Failure to adequately manage sickness absence resulting in delays and an inability to deliver Council services.**

Consequence	5	T	R	G		
	4	T	R	G		
	3	T	R	G		
	2	T	R	G		
	1	T	R	G		
		1	2	3	4	5
		Probability				

**Risk Categories**  
Business operational/reputational  
Financial  
Impact on individuals (staff or public)  
Quality of Service

**Risk Description**  
CR. 08 - Failure to adequately manage sickness absence resulting in delays and an inability to deliver Council services.

**Potential Root Cause**  
Increased levels of sickness absence  
Failure to adequately manage sickness absence  
Failure to conduct Return to Work Meetings following instances of absenteeism  
Increase in sickness absence being experienced across all sectors

**Consequence**  
Increase in sickness absence  
Critical services failing to be delivered  
Financial cost of Occupational Sick Pay  
Impact on remaining staff of increased workloads to cover sickness absence  
Increased cost to Council due to the use of agency staff/overtime

**Risk Owners**  
Senior Management Team

**Gross/Inherent Risk**  
Red 25

**Residual Risk**  
Red 20

**Target Risk Level**  
Yellow 10

**Last Review**  
7/23/2024

**Next Review**  
9/1/2024

**Risk Appetite**  
Risk Minimal

**Objectives**

- 2. Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district and reduce health inequalities.
- 8. Advocate with others for the benefit of all people of the district.

**Key Controls Identified**

- 1. Employee Health Cash Plan
- 1. Human Resources Team
- 1. Managing Attendance Procedure
- 2. Health and Wellbeing Working Group/Team
- 2. Occupational Health Service
- 2. RTW absence interviews are now being monitored through the CMT group
- 3. Internal Audit of Sickness Absence in completed in 2023/24 - Satisfactory



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**Action Plans**

	<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<b>Action Plan Type</b>	<b>Action Plan Owner</b>	<b>Action Plan Action Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Return to Work interviews	The completion rate of RTW is very low presently.	In Progress	Marina Hughes	8/31/2024	RTW meetings are a core line management responsibility. HR will continue to provide support and management information. SMT & CMT ensure compliance in their areas of responsibility. An attendance management audit was undertaken in December 2023. The report has been provided to management with satisfactory assurance. Agreed actions will be taken forward in 24/25, in particular a review of the management of RTW meetings for long term absence.
Training	All Managers must complete Managing Attendance training on the Councils e-learning platform	In Progress	Marina Hughes	8/31/2024	The new provider has been appointed and HR will work with them to establish robust processes which contribute to reduction in sickness absence durations. An attendance management audit was undertaken in December 2023. The report had a satisfactory assurance rating. Agreed actions will be taken forward in 24/25, particularly in relation to mandatory attendance management training and refresher training.

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**Objectives**

1. Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills
2. Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district and reduce health inequalities.
6. Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities.
7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement
8. Advocate with others for the benefit of all people of the district.

**Key Controls Identified**

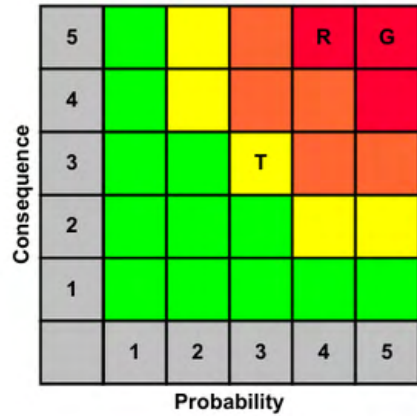
1. Monthly Management Accounts completed by Finance
2. Multi agency Community Hub
2. Service and Business plans now in place
2. Working with ALFCO around a Council wide position to DfC and DoF
3. Internal Audits Completed and Scheduled going forward

**Action Plans**

	<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<b>Action Plan Type</b>	<b>Action Plan Owner</b>	<b>Action Plan Action Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Food Standards Agency Funding - Warrenpoint Port	To ensure efficient delivery of statutorily required of food import checks on relevant Agri-Food goods entering Northern Ireland at Warrenpoint port following the full implementation of the Windsor Framework	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Sinead Trainor	8/31/2024	Required checks are being completed at Warrenpoint Port on an on-going basis by trained and authorised staff. Regular meetings are attended with relevant partners, DAERA, Defra, FSA, Border force, Seatruck, Management are working with Central Government to ensure funding will be in place for future years.
Management Accounts	Embedding a culture of reporting on variance analysis and budget accountability.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne Josephine Kelly	7/31/2024	ADs provide variance analysis going forward on a quarterly basis on their own Service Areas. This will feed into the Quarterly Management Accounts which are presented to SP&R. Quarterly budget meetings are to take place with Directorates, led by the DCS and AD of Finance & Performance. Internal Audit of the Management Accounts process completed in January 2024 with a satisfactory assurance. Management Accounts Procedure to be revised and strengthened., particularly in relation to capital reporting.
Rates Support Grant	Director of Corporate Services to write to the Minister of Finance and Communities about the reduction of the Rates Support Grant and to ascertain the grant will not be reduced going forward	In Progress	Gerard Byrne	8/31/2024	The Department for Communities Minister has agreed that an independent review of the Rates Support Grant should now take place and be completed by October 2024. The 7 impacted Councils are meeting in May 2024 to discuss.  •whether the RSG remains fit for purpose i.e. does the 'need' it sought to meet still exist. •does the original policy intent remain relevant. •does the provision of the RSG meet the needs of people in the districts receiving the Grant; are there other existing funding streams that meet the need originally identified; and •what is the RSG used for by councils – e.g. service provision or specific programmes to tackle deprivation etc.
Strategic Finance Working Group - rates process 2025/26	Strategic Finance Working Group to be established for new term of Council.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne Josephine Kelly	9/30/2024	SFWG now established for new term of Council. All Members can attend in relation to the Rates Estimate Process for 2025/26. New Capital Process was presented in May 2024.

Treasury Advice - Banking	The fallout from Silicon Valley Bank has quickly sparked international concerns and more uncertainty arose after Credit Suisse also collapsed. The turmoil in global markets fuel fears that this could mark the start of the next financial crisis.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne Josephine Kelly	8/31/2024	While we closely monitor market conditions, we are meeting with our Treasury Advisors in relation to our current Banking and Money Market arrangements and their exposure to a financial crisis. AD of Finance & Performance attended NI wide briefing on Treasury Management in December 2023. Another meeting has been scheduled in May 2024 regarding new borrowing requirements.
Working Groups	Multiple Officer groups discussing these financial concerns on a regular basis.	In Progress	Gerard Byrne Senior Management Team	9/30/2024	CEO attends Solace and the AD of Finance & performance attends the Council wide Finance Working Group and ALGFO. AD of Finance & Performance and the CEO have also met with our Treasury Advisors to get an overview of the economic situation on a global scale - i.e. interest rates / borrowing etc Officers will continue to attend and input into the above groups.

**Risk CR. 10 - Failure to effectively plan for and manage a Cyber Security Attack**



**Risk Categories** Business operational/reputational  
Impact on individuals (staff or public)  
Quality of Service

**Risk Description** Risk of a cyber security event causing significant operational, financial and reputational damage to the Council

**Potential Root Cause** Cyber attack  
Lack of specialist/dedicated in-house resource  
Lack of staff compliance with IT training  
Accidental breach of security  
Breach of people, process, physical or technical controls  
Failure to respond to and recover from a cyber incident within, or impacting upon, Council  
Lack of skills and competencies  
System vulnerabilities  
Supply chain breach

**Consequence** Threat to availability, integrity and confidentiality of Council information and systems  
Failure to deliver Council services (including statutory and regulatory services)  
Financial loss  
Reputational damage  
Extended period to recover services to Business as Usual (BaU)  
Destruction of systems and data  
Theft of data for criminal use  
Political impact  
Environmental impact

**Risk Owners** Josephine Kelly; Gavin Ringland

**Gross/Inherent Risk** Red 25      **Last Review** 7/23/2024

**Residual Risk** Red 20      **Next Review** 9/1/2024

**Target Risk Level** Yellow 9      **Risk Appetite** Risk Averse

**Objectives**

- 7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

**Key Controls Identified**

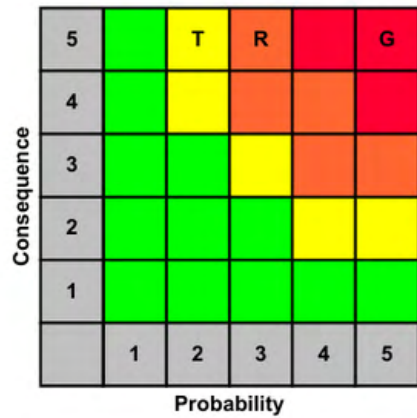
- 1. Agile working policy now in operation from 12 September 2022
- 1. Back up arrangements
- 1. Business Continuity Scenario Planning
- 1. Participation in threat intelligence networks
- 1. Penetration testing and vulnerability scanning
- 1. Phishing simulation and learning exercises
- 1. Technical security controls and arrangements
- 2. Engagement with Cyber bodies
- 2. National Cyber Security training
- 3. Internal Audits Scheduled completed in 2021/22 and an action plan in place

**Action Plans**

	<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<b>Action Plan Type</b>	<b>Action Plan Owner</b>	<b>Action Plan Action Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Business Continuity Plans	BCP plans to be updated to reflect the cyber risk	In Progress	Gavin Ringland Sinead Trainor	8/31/2024	Critical and Priority Services currently being prioritised via scenario planning - being managed by the SHEP Department.
Cyber Incident Response/Disaster Recovery	Establish and test cyber incident response and disaster recovery capabilities	In Progress	Gavin Ringland	8/31/2024	Event Scenarios and PlayBooks are being continually tested and refined where confidence of no-impact is high. Deep impact testing will be completed and as part of the Computing Platform (formerly IT Services) project, currently in implementation phase, due to complete by June 2024.
IT Strategy	Implement additional security tools including multifactor authentication, conditional access and modern authentication where possible and appropriate	In Progress	Gavin Ringland	3/31/2025	Remote access to LAN completely MFA. MFA and conditional access to Office 365 complete. MFA also enabled on many Line of Business Systems, including IDOX. Single Sign On (SSO) implemented on numerous systems. Currently implementing LAPS, InTune, Defender and PAM with a view to having at least two such solutions implemented by June 2024. New Mobile Worker solution which forms part of new WAN arrangements due to be implemented by July 2024.
Training / Development Plans	Training to increase User Resilience	In Progress	Gavin Ringland	3/31/2025	In-person training was delivered to All Staff and Elected Members in 2023. A new eLearning campaign on Cyber Security commenced in October 2023 running through October 2024. Testing of user resilience will continue with enhanced training delivered to those deemed higher risk with statistics reported to Senior Management Team.
Upgrade Virtual Servers	Upgrade the Operating Systems, database engines and on-premise applications to latest supported and stable versions	In Progress	Gavin Ringland	3/31/2025	To start upon completion of the Computing Platform project



**Risk CR. 11 - Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery**



**Risk Categories** Business operational/reputational  
Impact on individuals (staff or public)  
Quality of Service

**Risk Description** Risk of Industrial Action impacting on Service Delivery

**Potential Root Cause** In common with many sectors and employers across the UK, industrial unrest has become increasingly likely  
Unresolved Legacy employment issues  
Current economic climate

**Consequence** Creation of uncertainty and instability  
Negative impact on service delivery and lost productivity  
Negative PR for the Council  
Management & HR time lost to IR issues which impacts on operational and strategic matters being progressed  
Financial implications for Council where meeting the TU demands results in increased salary costs

**Risk Owners** Senior Management Team

**Gross/Inherent Risk** Red 25 **Last Review** 7/23/2024

**Residual Risk** Amber 15 **Next Review** 9/1/2024

**Target Risk Level** Yellow 10 **Risk Appetite** Risk Averse

**Objectives**

- 2. Continue to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the district and reduce health inequalities.
- 7. Provide accessible, high-quality and integrated services through continuous improvement

**Key Controls Identified**

- 1. Detailed budgeting process in operation
- 1. Qualified HR, IT & Finance professionals in place
- 2. Agreement was reached between MS and JTUS on 28 February 2024
- 2. External Facilitator engaged
- 2. LRA Conciliation Process

**Action Plans**

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Labour Relation Agency (LRA) Conciliation Process	Negotiations have been ongoing since March 2023 to resolve current industrial relations dispute, with the assistance of the LRA	Completed	Senior Management Team	8/31/2024	Agreement was reached between MS and JTUS on 28 February 2024. Work has commenced on an industrial Relations Framework and an agreed Workplace between MS and JTUS.
Rebuilding the Industrial Relations (IR) Framework	Agreement is in place between Management and the Joint Trade Unions, to work with an external facilitator, to rebuild the IR Framework and processes in NMDDC	In Progress	Josephine Kelly	8/31/2024	Agreement was reached between MS and JTUS on 28 February 2024. Work has commenced on an industrial Relations Framework and an agreed Workplace between MS and JTUS.

**Risk CR. 12 - Insufficient staff resources to deliver Council services in an effective and efficient manner**

Consequence	5					
	4			T	R	G
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5

Probability

**Risk Categories**

**Risk Description**

Insufficient staff resources to deliver Council services in an effective and efficient manner

**Potential Root Cause**

There has been a difficulty in recruiting key positions in across Council. Another issue has been the retention of staff across all Directorates.  
 Pay scales in private sector  
 Competitive Job Market  
 Candidates less likely to apply for temporary positions

**Consequence**

Our ability to provide citizens / customers with the services they require will be significantly constrained  
 We will potentially lag behind other Councils & other public sector organisations  
 Increased costs due to employing agency staff / consultants etc

**Risk Owners**

Josephine Kelly; Marie Ward

**Gross/Inherent Risk**

Red 20

**Last Review**

7/23/2024

**Residual Risk**

Amber 16

**Next Review**

9/1/2024

**Target Risk Level**

Amber 12

**Risk Appetite**

Risk Cautious

**Objectives**

**Key Controls Identified**

1. Agency Framework in place
1. Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection
1. Qualified HR professionals in place
2. SMT review of recruitment schedule



**Action Plans**

	<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<b>Action Plan Type</b>	<b>Action Plan Owner</b>	<b>Action Plan Action Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Alternative methods of recruitment	HR to look at alternative method of recruitment due to the difficulties in recruiting into key positions across Council. All Directorates are struggling to fill certain vacant posts.	In Progress	Marina Hughes	8/31/2024	<p>This includes the Regional Approach in relation to the Talent Management Strategy which is overseen by the LG Staff Commission. NMDDC represented on and contributing to LGSC Regional Talent Management Group.</p>
Service Reviews	Service Reviews are currently being looked at in line with paper which was approved at SP&R.	In Progress	Senior Management Team	8/31/2024	<p>The recruitment processes for the Director posts have been completed and the Directors are in place. The recruitment of a number of AD posts as part of PFF has been completed. There are currently two posts at Assistant Director that are in the process of being recruited. However it should be noted that there are still challenges across the Directorates on a number of posts at different levels. A draft action plan / timetable of service reviews has been provided to the Trade Unions. Work is progressing. A full list of Service Reviews is being collated to ensure resources are appropriately directed to undertake the work required.</p> <p>Impact of pause on recruitment due to service reviews will be assessed by management with the support of HR.</p>

NMDDC SE Risk Register Cover Sheet - July 2024

Risk	Description	Risk Owner(s)	Gross Risk Score	Jun-23	Jul-24		Comments
				Revised Residual Risk Score	Revised Residual Risk Score		
SE01	Failure to deliver operational services throughout the year due to staff shortages	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage Sinead Trainor	20	9	15	↑	Risk score increased. Actions have been updated.
SE02	Failure to maintain a modern and legislatively compliant fleet	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage	20	12	15	↑	Risk score increased, the score will be reconsidered after the IA review on fleet management this year. Actions have been updated.
SE03	Lack of burial capacity at Council Cemeteries	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage	20	9	10	↑	Risk score increased. Actions have been updated.
SE04	Failure to comply with relevant statutory and legislative requirements in Council Facilities	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage	25	12	20	↑	Risk score increased on the back of a limited Internal Audit report which considered compliance with requirements across Council facilities in 2023/24. Actions have been updated.
SE05	Failure to develop and implement a planned maintenance programme	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage	16	12	12	↔	Residual risk remains unchanged - actions have been updated
SE06	Failure to procure and manage contracts in line with the Council's procurement procedures	Andrew Cassels Sinead Murphy Gail Kane Aidan Mallon	25	12	20	↑	Risk score increased due to the number and value of procurements within S&E that form part of the Directorates Procurement Action Plan. Actions have been updated.

# Sustainability and Environment

7/25/2024 10:50:44 AM

## Risk 01. Failure to deliver operational services

Consequence	5	T	R	G		
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Probability				

<b>Risk Categories</b>	Business operational/reputational Impact on individuals (staff or public) Quality of Service Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)	
<b>Risk Description</b>	Failure to deliver operational services	
<b>Potential Root Cause</b>	Carry over of annual leave into 2024-25 will have an impact on service provision The use of temporary contracts/agency makes it difficult to attract, recruit and retain employees Difficulty in recruiting seasonal staff Trade Union industrial actions Legacy working arrangements and operating procedures Levels of absenteeism especially long term sick Adverse weather conditions.	
<b>Consequence</b>	Health and safety risks Increase in Council complaints Staff shortages reduce service provision Services not operating effectively Reputational damage	
<b>Risk Owners</b>	Sinead Murphy; Conor Sage; Sinead Trainor	
<b>Gross/Inherent Risk</b>	Red 20	<b>Last Review</b> 7/10/2024
<b>Residual Risk</b>	Amber 15	<b>Next Review</b> 10/31/2024
<b>Target Risk Level</b>	Yellow 10	<b>Risk Appetite</b> Risk Averse

### Objectives

Consistently deliver reliable, operational services

### Key Controls Identified

1. Business Continuity Plans
1. Ongoing recruitment campaigns
1. Overtime.
1. Service reviews
1. Workforce Plans in place for each service.
3. Internal Audit of Services

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**Action Plans**

	<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<b>Action Plan Type</b>	<b>Action Plan Owner</b>	<b>Action Plan Action Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Business Continuity Plans	Continuously monitor, review and update the Business Continuity Plans and Contingency Plans.	In Progress	Conor Sage Sinead Trainor	10/31/2024	Continued implementation of the Business Continuity Plans to identify and address potential workforce deficits.
Directorate Re-structure	Re-structure of the Facilities Management and Maintenance department and Waste Management department, specifically the HRC / Cleansing / Garage sections/Refuse	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage Sinead Trainor	10/31/2024	The Directorate re-structure has been reviewed and agreed by SMT. Both sections continue to work with Human Resources to progress the re-structure of specific sections, ensuring alignment with business needs in consultation with Trade Unions.
Workforce Planning and Service Reviews	Continued implementation of Workforce Plans and Service Reviews.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage Sinead Trainor	10/31/2024	Continue to implement, monitor, review and update the Workforce Plans and progress Service Reviews to ensure effective service provision in consultation with Trade Unions.

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**Risk 02. Failure to provide/maintain a compliant fleet**

Consequence	5	T	R	G		
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5

Probability

**Risk Categories** Buildings / Engineering / Environment  
Quality of Service  
Statutory Duty (Legal/Regulatory)

**Risk Description** Failure to maintain a modern, legislatively compliant (Operators Licence) and reliable fleet

**Potential Root Cause** Failure to comply with operators licence.  
Failure to review, implement and comply with fleet policies and procedures.  
Failure to implement a vehicle replacement programme  
Challenge of transitioning to a green fleet.  
Failure to update insurance on changes to fleet including hire.  
Delivery times of vehicles due to global supply issue

**Consequence** Loss of operators license / financial penalties of breaching the operators license.  
Reputational damage for the Council.  
Failure to deliver operational services  
Breach in health and safety.

**Risk Owners** Sinead Murphy; Conor Sage

**Gross/Inherent Risk** Red 20

**Residual Risk** Amber 15

**Target Risk Level** Yellow 10

**Last Review** 7/10/2024

**Next Review** 10/31/2024

**Risk Appetite** Risk Averse

**Objectives**

Develop and implement key sustainability strategies and action plans and advocate internally and externally to work towa

**Key Controls Identified**

- 1. Fleet Management audits and action plans.
- 1. Fleet Management Policy and Procedures.
- 1. Fleet Replacement Programme
- 1. Meeting PMI schedule for fleet including MOT/PSV
- 1. Sustainability and Environment Procurement Action Plan in place.
- 3. Annual Carparking Audit
- 3. Audit of Fleet in 2024-25.

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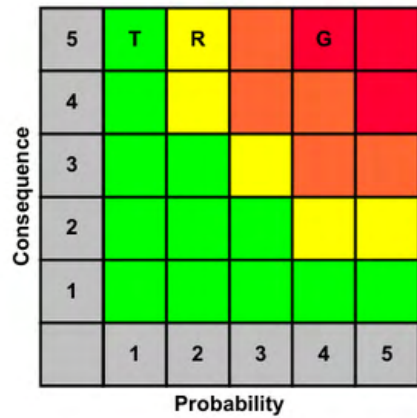
**Action Plans**

	<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<b>Action Plan Type</b>	<b>Action Plan Owner</b>	<b>Action Plan Action Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Fleet Management Audits and Action Plans	Implement the recommendations and action plans from the internal and external audits of Fleet Management.	In Progress	Conor Sage	10/31/2024	The follow up internal audit of Fleet Management was carried out by ASM in April 2021 and the external audit was carried out in October 2023 with further ASM audits planned for August and September 2024
Fleet Replacement Programme	Continue to implement the 4 year Fleet Replacement Programme.	In Progress	Conor Sage	10/31/2024	Business case approved for new fleet. A 4 year programme for fleet replacement 2023-27. Business cases approved for 2023-25.
Service Review of Garages and resources	Progress the service review of the Garages section.	In Progress	Conor Sage	10/31/2024	Progress the service review of the Garages section to determine and inform future resource requirements in consultation with Trade Unions

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**Risk 03. Lack of burial capacity at Council Cemeteries**



**Risk Categories** Buildings / Engineering / Environment  
Business operational/reputational  
Impact on individuals (staff or public)

**Risk Description** Lack of burial capacity at Cemeteries

**Potential Root Cause** Existing cemeteries running out of burial space.

**Consequence** An essential service not being provided to the public.  
Reputational damage.  
Negative impact on local community.

**Risk Owners** Conor Sage

**Gross/Inherent Risk** Red 20 **Last Review** 7/10/2024

**Residual Risk** Yellow 10 **Next Review** 10/31/2024

**Target Risk Level** Green 5 **Risk Appetite** Risk Averse

**Objectives**

Delivery of Facility Management and Maintenance Service to meet Council needs

**Key Controls Identified**

1. Capital programme includes funding for new graveyard and/or extensions to existing graveyard
  1. Committee approval in place for cemetery extensions
- Ongoing Review of cemetery capacity throughout the District

**Action Plans**

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Digitalisation of burial records	Progress to procurement of a cemetery management system through ITPG	In Progress	Gail Kane	10/31/2024	The Council has a legal responsibility to manage burial records and work is underway to prepare a Project Mandate for an electronic solution, through the IT Projects Board. It is anticipated that this bespoke software solution to manage burial records will cost £60k, with an annual £10k maintenance fee.
Kilbroney Cemetery	Phase 3-5 - Kilbroney Cemetery	In Progress	Gail Kane	10/31/2024	Work progressing for submission of planning application for Phase 3 - 5 extension to cemetery.
Long term cemetery provision	Plan ahead for the long term provision of cemeteries and burials.	In Progress	Gail Kane	10/31/2024	Scope out anticipated burial projections across the District in line with demographic / population trends and begin the process of identifying potential land and sites to meet projected need.
Monks Hill Cemetery	Phases 3 extension at Monks Hill Cemetery.	In Progress	Gail Kane	10/31/2024	Phase 3 cemetery works to be completed by August 2024.

**Risk 04. Failure to comply with relevant statutory and legislative requirements in Council Facilities**

Consequence	5	T	R	G		
	4	T	R	G		
	3	T	R	G		
	2	T	R	G		
	1	T	R	G		
		1	2	3	4	5
		Probability				

**Risk Categories** Business operational/reputational  
Financial  
Impact on individuals (staff or public)

**Risk Description** Failure to comply with relevant statutory and legislative requirements which the SE Directorate is responsible for (Remedials for Fire Risk Assessments/Legionella/Asbestos).

**Potential Root Cause** Lack of adherence to Council policy and procedures, including training.  
Controls not being implemented for Legionella / Asbestos or Remedials for Fire Risk Assessments.  
Failure to comply with Council policies.  
Remedials for Fire Risk Assessments of Council buildings not being undertaken.

**Consequence** Injury/death to staff or public.  
Damage to the Council reputation.  
Increased insurance premiums.  
Breach in legislation and compliance.

**Risk Owners** Sinead Murphy; Conor Sage

**Gross/Inherent Risk** Red 25      **Last Review** 2/21/2024

**Residual Risk** Red 20      **Next Review** 6/30/2024

**Target Risk Level** Yellow 10      **Risk Appetite** Risk Averse

**Objectives**

Embed and align the new functions and services within the S&E Directorate structure and across Council. Review and tran

**Key Controls Identified**

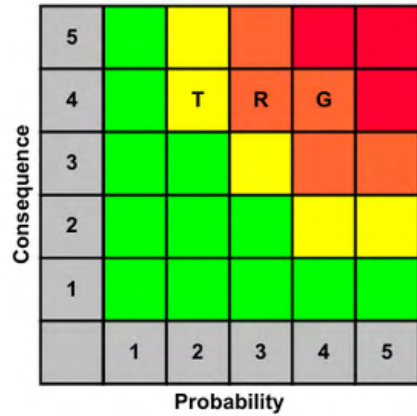
1. Asbestos Policy and Management Plan
1. Fire Safety Policy
1. Legionella Policy and Management Plan
1. Portable Electrical Appliances Policy and Management Plan
1. Technical Compliance Officer post recruited. Started in post April 2024
2. Regular reporting to the Health and Safety Committee, Audit Committee and SMT



**Action Plans**

	<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<b>Action Plan Type</b>	<b>Action Plan Owner</b>	<b>Action Plan Action Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
18th Electrical Testing Codes	Continue to implement tests to achieve fixed wire and emergency light certification.	In Progress	Conor Sage	10/31/2024	New contract awarded July 2024
Asbestos Policy and Management Plan	Continued implementation of the Asbestos Management Plan.	In Progress	Conor Sage	10/31/2024	Tender documents completed in draft for a new contract for Asbestos Management Surveys. Asbestos Policy and Management Plan currently under review
Legionella Policy and Management Plan	Continued implementation of the Legionella Management Plan.	In Progress	Conor Sage	10/31/2024	Contractor led management works continue. Continuing work required concerning training through e learning and contractor led training. Full implementation of the agreed Legionella Management Plan required to keep risk at a low level. New tender documents completed in draft for new water quality management contract. Legionella Policy and Management Plan to be kept under review

**Risk 05. Failure to develop and implement a planned maintenance programme**



**Risk Categories** Buildings / Engineering / Environment  
Impact on individuals (staff or public)  
Quality of Service

**Risk Description** Failure to develop and implement a planned maintenance programme.

**Potential Root Cause** Over reliance on reactive maintenance and contractors.  
Inadequate funding.  
Lack of inspections and documentation records.  
Reactive / forward planning split imbalanced

**Consequence** H&S implications.  
Negative PR for the Council and reputational damage.  
Closure of buildings.  
Legal liabilities.  
Increased costs.  
Reactive and inefficient service provision.  
Failure to progress sustainable solution/option

**Risk Owners** Sinead Murphy; Conor Sage

**Gross/Inherent Risk** Amber 16      **Last Review** 7/10/2024

**Residual Risk** Amber 12      **Next Review** 10/31/2024

**Target Risk Level** Yellow 8      **Risk Appetite** Risk Averse

**Objectives**

Deliver sustainable services that protect our natural and built environment, continue to meet our statutory obligations

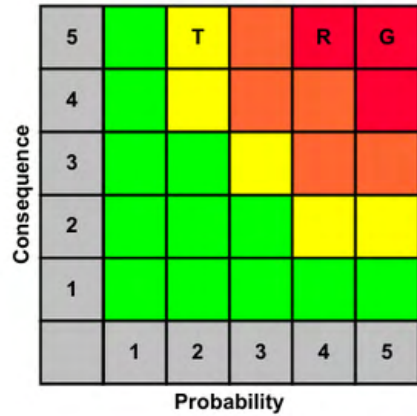
**Key Controls Identified**

- 1. Property Maintenance Strategy to be developed
- Sustainability management structure has been reviewed and signed off by SMT

**Action Plans**

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
Property Maintenance Strategy	Develop and implement the Property Maintenance Strategy to include planned and reactive maintenance.	In Progress	Conor Sage	10/31/2024	Property Maintenance Strategy to be developed. Update of the 3i Maintenance System completed

**Risk 06. Failure to procure and manage contracts in line with the Council's procurement procedures**



**Risk Categories** Buildings / Engineering / Environment  
Financial  
Impact on individuals (staff or public)

**Risk Description** Failure to procure and manage contracts in line with the Council's procurement procedures.

**Potential Root Cause** Insufficient and inadequate resources within the Directorate to purchase and manage Contracts  
Procurement Policy and procedures require review and update  
Lack of experience, training and awareness.  
Capacity of the Procurement Team to support the Directorate  
Lack of forward planning and appropriate management controls.  
Lack of timely reviews of contracts.  
Lack of ongoing Contract Management

**Consequence** Delay in meeting project deadlines  
Financial impact  
Impact on customer satisfaction through delayed service delivery.  
Risk of litigation.  
Failure to comply with the corporate Procurement Policy.  
Managing conflicting demands.

**Risk Owners** Sinead Murphy; Conor Sage; Sinead Trainor

**Gross/Inherent Risk** Red 25      **Last Review** 7/10/2024

**Residual Risk** Red 20      **Next Review** 10/31/2024

**Target Risk Level** Yellow 10      **Risk Appetite** Risk Averse

**Objectives**

Embed and align the new functions and services within the S&E Directorate structure and across Council. Review and tran

**Key Controls Identified**

- Approved STA's in place to cover any out of contract situations.
- Governance and Procurement training delivered to staff.
- Manage Procurement Schedule to maintain compliance
- Procurement Policy and Procedures
- Sustainability and Environment Procurement Action Plan

**Action Plans**







	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Action Plan Action Date	Comments
SE Procurement Action Plan	Resource and implement the SE Procurement Action Plan. Speed of implementation directly related to the level of additional resources.	In Progress	Sinead Murphy Conor Sage Sinead Trainor	10/31/2024	The SE Procurement Action Plan is monitored and reported to the SE Committee and Audit Committee on a regular basis. SIB engagement completed - review of Contract status and development of detailed operational arrangements.

<b>Report to:</b>	Audit Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	31 July 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Prompt Payment Statistics – Quarter 1 2024/25
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Gerard Byrne: Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Gerard Byrne: Assistant Director of Finance & Performance

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

<b>For decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>For noting only</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>																		
1.1	<p>'Prompt payment' is the payment of valid supplier invoices by public bodies, as set in government targets.</p> <p>This dataset contains the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total amount paid by each Northern Ireland council to suppliers</li> <li>• Total number of invoices</li> <li>• Number of invoices paid within 10 working days</li> <li>• Number of invoices paid within 30 calendar days</li> <li>• Number of invoices paid outside 30 calendar days</li> </ul> <p>Adherence to the policy is not mandatory for councils, but in a letter issued to council Chief Executives in October 2013, the Department of Environment’s Local Government Policy Division said that: ‘District councils are encouraged to pay suppliers as promptly as possible and to endeavour to meet the 10 day prompt payment commitment made by Northern Ireland Executive in response to the current economic position’.</p>																		
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>																		
2.1	<p>The table below provides a comparison of prompt payment statistics for the last five financial years.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Financial Year</th> <th>Within 30 days (T&amp;C’s)</th> <th>Within 10 days</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>90%</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020/21</td> <td>86%</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>89%</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>86%</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023/24</td> <td>95%</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Financial Year	Within 30 days (T&C’s)	Within 10 days	2019/20	90%	18%	2020/21	86%	11%	2021/22	89%	17%	2022/23	86%	43%	2023/24	95%	50%
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2.2	<p><b>Quarter 4 2023/24 - 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Paid within 10 days</th> <th>Paid within 30 days</th> <th>Paid outside payment period</th> <th>Total invoices</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Number of Invoices</td> <td>1,975</td> <td>3,753</td> <td>148</td> <td>3,901</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Percentage</b></td> <td><b>51%</b></td> <td><b>96%</b></td> <td><b>4%</b></td> <td><b>100%</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Value</td> <td>£5,504,326.71</td> <td>£13,980,023.99</td> <td>£1,064,352.28</td> <td>£15,044,376.27</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><b>Average number of days to pay suppliers: 16</b></td> <td colspan="2"><b>Performance trend:</b> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Paid within 10 days	Paid within 30 days	Paid outside payment period	Total invoices	Number of Invoices	1,975	3,753	148	3,901	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>100%</b>	Value	£5,504,326.71	£13,980,023.99	£1,064,352.28	£15,044,376.27	<b>Average number of days to pay suppliers: 16</b>			<b>Performance trend:</b> 	
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3.0	<b>Recommendations</b>																									
31	<p>To note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Q1 2024/25 Prompt Payment statistics.</li> </ul>																									
4.0	<b>Resource implications</b>																									
4.1	The Accounts Payable Team provide statistics to the Department for Communities on a quarterly basis.																									
5.0	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>																									
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></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><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></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><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></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> <p>Consultation not required.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>
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>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	None
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>
	None

<b>Report to:</b>	Audit Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	31 July 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Assurance Framework and Code of Governance
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director of Finance & Performance

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

	<b>For decision</b>	<b>For noting only</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>		
1.1	The purpose of this paper is to explain to Members the key elements of the 'year-end' process and the 'assurance framework' that the Council developed to help ensure that the Council complies with statutory requirements and Members and senior officers can have effective, ongoing oversight of the Council's governance and assurance arrangements.		
1.2	The Assurance Framework and Code of Governance at <b>Appendix 1</b> are used to inform Council's Governance Statement within our Statement of Accounts.		
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>		
2.1	<p><u>Assurance Framework</u></p> <p>The Council's Assurance Framework is summarised at <b>Appendix 1</b>. It demonstrates how different sources of assurance and related key elements / control measures combine to enable the Council to monitor its governance arrangements and produce the evidence to support its Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>The diagram shows how the Council's Audit Committee, the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee and Council provide oversight of these governance arrangements.</p> <p>Only minor amendments have made to the Assurance Framework including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People Perform Grow appraisal process now included for staff</li> <li>• Whistleblowing policy now referred to as Raising Concerns Policy</li> <li>• Reference made to the Equality and Diversity Framework</li> <li>• Reference made to Belfast Region City Deal Investment Plan</li> <li>• Reference to the Health and Wellbeing Working Group</li> <li>• Treasury Management and Capital Strategy in place with quarterly reporting</li> </ul>		
2.2	<p><u>Annual Governance Statement 2023/24</u></p> <p>The Council has a statutory responsibility to annually prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement as part of the Financial Statements. Many different processes inform the preparation of the Statement as can be seen from the Assurance Framework at <b>Appendix 1</b>.</p>		

	The Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 is presented at item number 9. It will be incorporated into the unaudited statement of accounts and will be subject to review by the NIAO as part of their annual audit.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
3.1	Members are asked to note the Council’s Assurance Framework and the Code of Governance, illustrated and described at <b>Appendix 1</b> .
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1	There are no resource implications.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></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><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></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><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></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>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>



<p>6.1</p>	<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>
<p><b>7.0</b></p>	<p><b>Appendices</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1: Appendix 1 – NMDDC Assurance Framework (including Code of Governance)</p>
<p><b>8.0</b></p>	<p><b>Background Documents</b></p>
	<p>Agenda Number 9 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24</p>

# Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

## Assurance Framework



**Effective Date: June 2019**

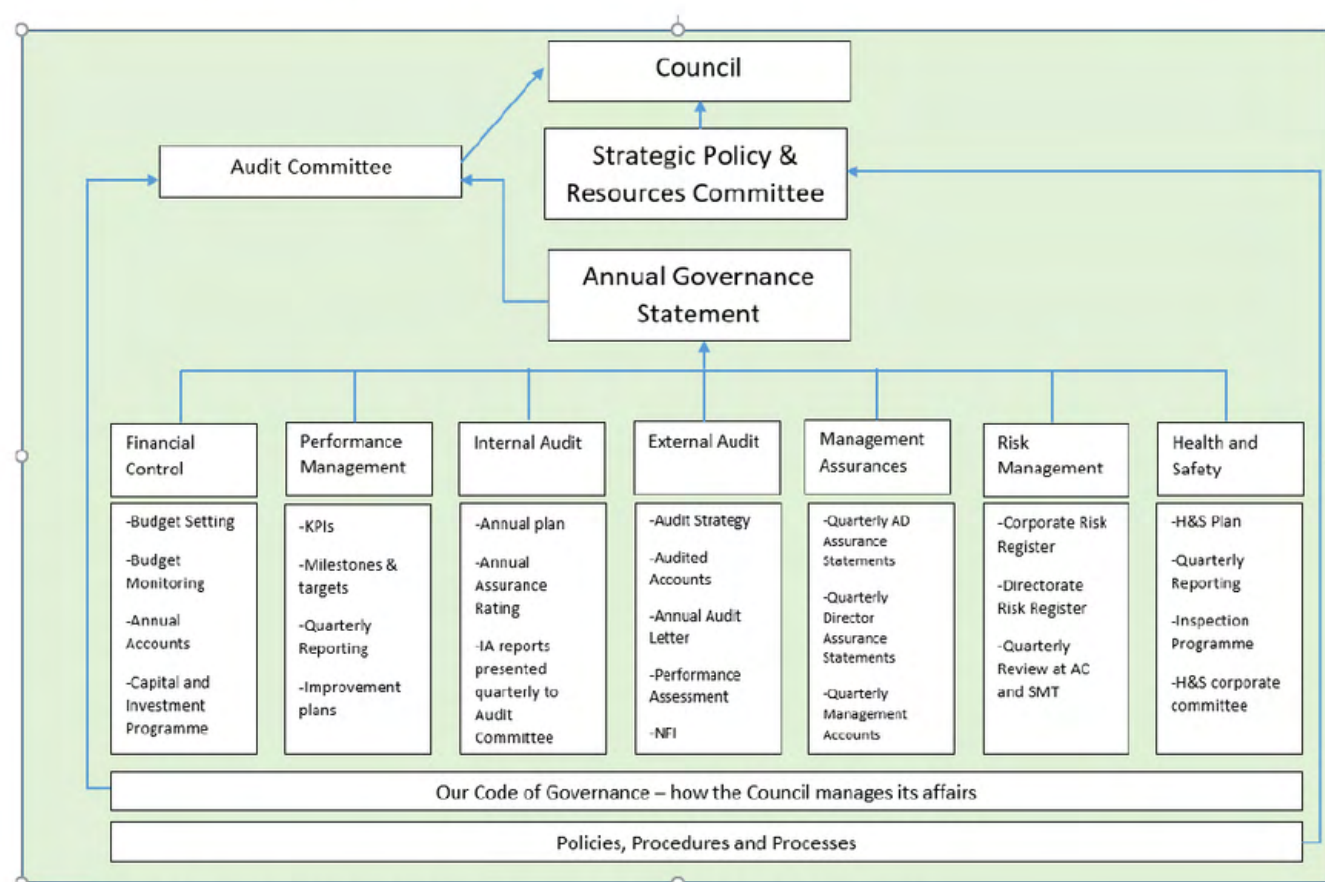
Version 5.0



### Policy Control

Policy Title	Assurance Framework
Departmental Ownership	Corporate Services
Document Owner	Josephine Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Officer Responsible	Gerard Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
Date of Approval	Audit Committee – 3 July 2019 Council – 5 August 2019
Date of Last update	June 2024
Updated by	Gerard Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
Date of next Review	June 2025
Location where document is held and referenced	Shared Drive and NMDDC Website

## Key Components of the Council's Assurance Framework



### Description of Key Elements the Council's Assurance Framework

The diagram shows how different sources of assurance and related key elements / control measures combine to enable the Council to monitor its governance arrangements and produce the information which enables the Council to prepare their Annual Governance Statement. The diagram also shows how the Council's Audit Committee, the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee (SP&R) and Council provide oversight of these governance arrangements. The key elements of the framework are described below.

#### Financial Control

A Financial Report for the year ended 31 March is prepared annually and submitted to the Department for Communities by 30 June. The report is then audited by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and published by 30 September each year (after approval by Committee). There is a budgetary control process including budget setting, budget monitoring and budget reporting. Senior Management Team (SMT), Corporate Management Team (CMT) and SP&R Committee challenge the process corporately when budgets are approved annually and performance is reported quarterly.

Standing Committees are also responsible for challenging and approving their annual budget and subsequently scrutinizing their budget performance at the end of each quarter in the following financial year.

#### Performance Management

The Council's performance management framework supports the implementation of the corporate and directorate plans through regular monitoring, reporting and review and, in future, will support monitoring / reporting on Community Planning outcomes. These plans set out what the Council



intends to deliver over the course of the year and through the performance framework regular performance reports are produced detailing progress against key milestones and targets.

These reports are considered by Directorate Management Teams and the CMT and actions for improvement are agreed. These arrangements are also designed to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties in relation to continuous improvement and our performance and related plans are subject to annual NIAO audit.

### Internal Audit

Internal auditing is an independent and objective assurance designed to add value and improve Council's operations. The Council's Assistant Director of Finance and Performance, who liaises with the fully independent specialist Auditing Contractor who prepares an annual Strategy and Plan of work designed to ensure that:

- there is a robust system of internal audit of key Council activities and processes through a plan of work which affords suitable priority to the Council's objectives and risks
- there is a process of ensuring improvements to the Council's control environment, by providing management with advice, training and recommendations to improve risk management, governance and control arrangements, including the formal monitoring of the implementation of audit recommendations
- the specialist Auditing Contractor will be in a position to provide, at the end of each year, a professional, evidence-based opinion on the adequacy of the Council's risk management, control and governance arrangements which, in turn, will support the preparation of the Council's Annual Governance Statement
- the Council meets its legislative responsibilities for internal control, risk management and internal audit.

### External Audit

Each year, the Local Government Auditor (LGA), the NIAO, completes an audit of the Council's accounts in accordance with legislation and the Local Government Code of Audit Practice issued by the Chief LGA. The LGA Annual Report sets out their opinion on the Council's financial statements and is included within the annual Financial Report.

The NIAO also examines annually whether the Council has proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources and that public money is properly accounted for and undertakes an annual audit and assessment of the Council's performance improvement arrangements. Their findings are summarised in an Annual Audit Letter, a Performance audit report and a Report to those Charged with Governance.

### Assurances from Management & Governance Statement

Each quarter, Assistant Directors provide their Director with a Quarterly Assurance Statement. The Directors in turn then prepare a quarterly assurance statements for the Chief Executive. The Assurance Statements confirms:

- Their responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound risk management and internal control system which supports the achievement of the corporate and directorate objectives.
- Compliance with the risk review process and outlining progress to manage key risks and highlight any significant governance issues that should be considered by SMT for inclusion within the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

Assistant Directors provide analysis on all budget variance quarterly to both their Director and to Finance.

### Risk Management

There is an agreed risk management strategy which sets out the processes the Council has put in place to manage risk. Risk registers and risk action plans are in place at corporate, directorate and



project level and are recorded on the corporate risk management system, GRACE Governance Solutions. There is reporting to CMT, SMT and the Audit Committee on risk management.

### **National Fraud Initiative (NFI)**

NFI is a UK-wide counter-fraud exercise. In Northern Ireland, the exercise is undertaken by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG) under their statutory data matching powers set out in Article 4 of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. The C&AG works in collaboration with the Cabinet Office, Audit Scotland and Audit Wales, which undertake the NFI exercise in England, Scotland and Wales respectively. The NFI uses computerised techniques to compare information about individuals, held by different public bodies and on different financial systems, which might suggest the existence of fraud or error. It means that public bodies can take action if any fraud or error has taken place, and it allows auditors to assess the fraud prevention arrangements which those organisations have in place.

The Assistant Director of Finance and Performance coordinates this biannual exercise to ensure Council complies with its statutory duties and to ensure Council controls are effective to assist in preventing and detecting fraud and error.

### **Health and Safety (H&S)**

The Council has a Corporate H&S Policy which is reviewed on an annual basis and incorporates the Organisation Structure and Arrangements to deliver on the Policy. The remit of the Corporate Health and Safety Joint Forum is to liaise between Senior Management, Assistant Directors, Safety Health & Emergency Planning (SHEP) Section and recognised Trade Union Representatives and any other subject matter experts deemed relevant.

The purpose of this forum is to discuss and review overarching health and safety issues and any unresolved matters escalated from the Departmental Operational Meetings (as appropriate).

The Joint Forum meets on a quarterly basis and discuss issues as defined by the terms of reference for same. H&S reports and updates are provided by SHEP to all levels – operational, corporate and strategic to include information on performance against health and safety targets, accident statistics, policy changes, legislative changes and emerging health and safety issues.

The SHEP section facilitate the delivery of cross-cutting corporate H&S training as per agreed programme to include e-learning platforms.

### **Code of Governance**

Underlying our Assurance Framework is our Code of Governance. The Council is committed to the principles of good governance and our Code of Governance is a public statement of that commitment. Our Code has been prepared in line with best practice and a summary is contained in the Annual Governance Statement, see appendix 1 for further detail.

### **Policies, procedures and processes**

Policies, procedures and processes are designed to underpin day-to-day operations. All policies are controlled centrally by the Head of Corporate Policy.

### **Audit Committee**

Its purpose is to provide an independent assurance on the adequacy of the Council's risk management framework and associated control environment.

### **Strategy Policy & Resources Committee (SP&R)**

The SP&R Committee also oversees directly the financial management / stewardship of the Council.

## Code of Governance

### Introduction

Governance arrangements in the public sector are keenly observed and sometimes criticised. We need to ensure that we meet the highest standards and that our governance arrangements are not only sound but are seen to be sound.

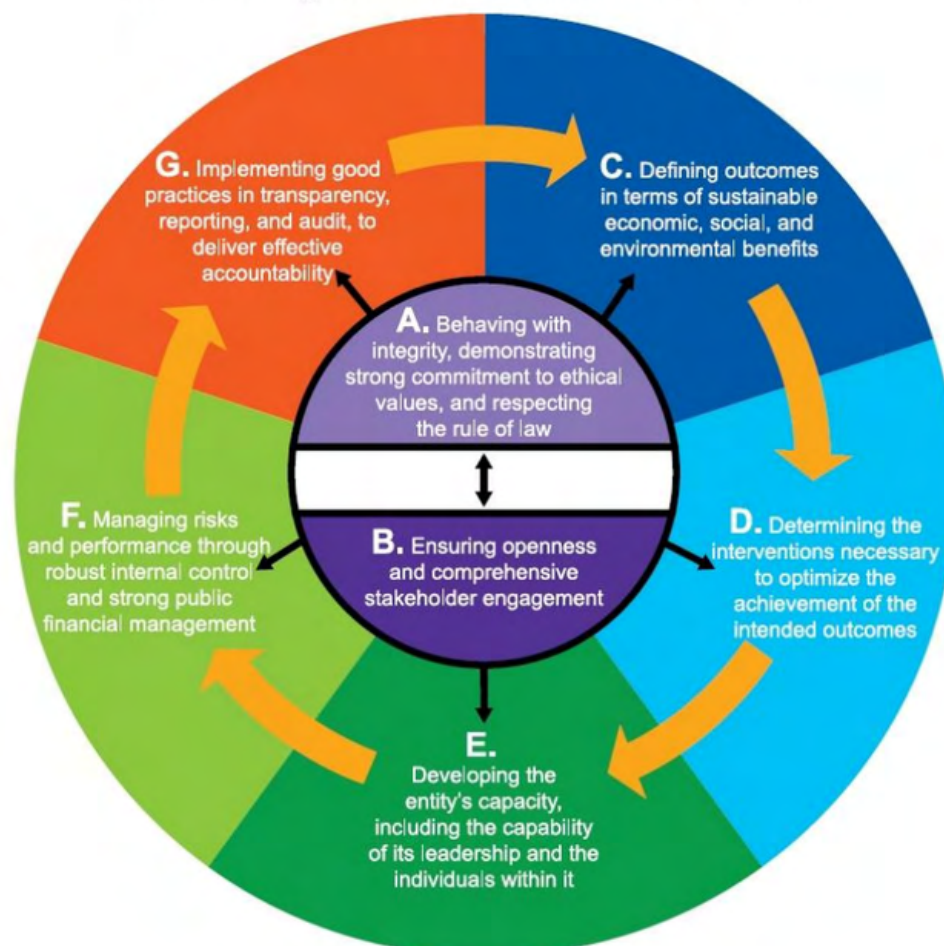
Governance is about how Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC) ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads its community.

The CIPFA Solace 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: A Framework' was issued in April 2016 and represents best practice for developing and maintaining a local code of governance and applies to annual governance statements prepared for the 2018/19 financial year onwards.

NMDDC is committed to the principles of Good Governance and has developed this Code of Governance to demonstrate this commitment. This Code will be updated and approved by the Audit Committee on an annual basis.

### The 7 Principles of Good Governance

#### Achieving the Intended Outcomes While Acting in the Public Interest at all Times







## A. Behaving with integrity

- Shared values communicated via community plan, corporate plan and key strategies
- Mandatory Code of Conduct for Councillors
- NI charter for Elected Member Development
- Staff Code of conduct
- Council Constitution including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation
- Council Anti-Fraud Policies and Fraud Response Plan
- Council participate in the National Fraud Initiative – Bi annual data matching exercise
- Council Raising Concerns Policy
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Declarations of interest
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Equality and Diversity Framework
- People Perform Grow (PPG) appraisal process for staff

## B. Ensuring Openness

- Council and Committee meetings open to the public
- Council and Committee agendas and minutes displayed on the Council web site
- Consultation and engagement with staff and trade unions
- Annual financial report published on the Council's web site
- Access to Information Policy and Procedure
- Community Plan and Local Development Plan
- Corporate plan and performance improvement plan are subject to consultation before agreement

## C. Defining Outcomes

- Community Plan 'Living well together'
- Corporate and Directorate Plans
- Belfast Region City Deal Investment Plan
- Organisational Development
- Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy
- Performance Improvement Plans
- Local Development Plan
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Grant Funding Processes

## D. Optimising the achievement of outcomes

- Corporate and Directorate plans
- Constitution
- Strategic financial management and reporting framework in place
- Risk Management Policy and Framework in place
- Adoption of the NMDDC Local Development Plan (LDP)
- Key partner in the Belfast Region City Deal
- Regular reports on progress of our performance improvement plan to SMT, SP&R and Audit Committee

## E. Developing Capacity and Capability

- Organisational Development and Learning Development Policy
- Harmonisation of policies
- Development of a joint Employee Relations consultation and negotiating policy

- Elected Members Development Charter/Member Leadership Programme
- Appraisal Scheme in place for Chief Executive
- People Perform Grow (PPG) appraisal process for staff
- Health and Wellbeing working group

## F. Finance, Performance and Risk Management

- Financial Regulations In place
- Risk Management Policy and Framework
- Quarterly Audit Committee
- Fully independent outsourced Internal Audit firm
- Annual Internal Audit Strategy and Plan
- Data Protection policy and procedures
- Director and Assistant Director quarterly Assurance reporting
- Independent Audit Committee Chairperson
- Annual Rate Setting Process
- Compliance with CIPFA Financial Management Code
- Treasury Management and Capital Strategy in place with quarterly reporting

## G. Transparency, Reporting and Effective Accountability

- NMDDC website which is regularly updated
- Publication of key reports including Annual Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and Performance Improvement Report
- Committee support framework to approve papers prior to submission to Members
- Internal Audit annual assurance statement within the annual governance statement
- Internal Audit effectiveness annually reviewed against public sector internal audit standards, with an independent external review every five years
- Monitoring of all Internal and External Audit recommendations and quarterly updates to the Audit Committee.

## Compliance with the Code

This Code of Governance is supported by Policies, Procedures and Systems that determine and control how the Council manages its affairs. **Appendix B** provides more detail, demonstrating how the Council currently complies with the Code.

## Monitoring and Review

Our governance arrangements are reviewed annually to ensure that they are adequate and operating effectively in practice. The results of these reviews are reported to the Audit Committee and inform the preparation of our Annual Governance Statement which forms part of our published financial report.

Internal Audit will undertake reviews of the Councils governance arrangements to ensure they are adequate and operating effectively in practice.



Appendix B

Core Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law	
Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles
A.1 Behaving with integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mandatory Code of Conduct for Councillors – The NI code of Local Government Conduct for Members</li> <li>➤ Code of conduct for NMDDC staff</li> <li>➤ NI Charter for Elected Member Development</li> <li>➤ Declarations of interest a standing agenda item for Council/Committee meetings</li> <li>➤ Conflicts of Interest Policy</li> <li>➤ Annual Mandatory declarations of Interest to be completed by staff who are deemed to be high risk. Voluntary declarations to be completed by other staff</li> <li>➤ Council minutes include whether any declarations of interests have been made</li> <li>➤ Fraud and Raising Concern policies in place</li> <li>➤ Council participate in the National Fraud Initiative – Biannual data matching exercise</li> <li>➤ Gifts and Hospitality Policy with each Department maintaining a register (Directors' Pas record all declarations)</li> <li>➤ Members approve the:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Constitution</li> <li>▪ Standing Orders and Financial Regulations</li> <li>▪ Codes of Conduct</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Members approval of the Community and Corporate Plans</li> <li>➤ Scheme of Delegation</li> <li>➤ Party Group Leaders Forum</li> <li>➤ Members Training and Workshops</li> <li>➤ Shared values communicated through the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and the Annual Performance Improvement Plan</li> <li>➤ Open and transparent committee system and reporting</li> <li>➤ People Perform Grow (PPG) appraisal process for staff</li> </ul>
A.2 Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mandatory Code of Conduct for Councillors</li> <li>➤ Register maintained of Members' declarations of interest</li> <li>➤ Register maintained of Officers' declarations of interest</li> <li>➤ Ethical requirements of Professional Standards</li> <li>➤ Standing Orders</li> <li>➤ Register maintained of Members' declarations of interest</li> <li>➤ Ongoing monitoring and reporting through Internal Audit and Risk Management processes</li> <li>➤ Systems and processes for financial administration</li> <li>➤ Partners and Contractors required to comply with relevant policies</li> <li>➤ Policies in place which demonstrate our commitment to ethical values includes:</li> </ul>

Core Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law	
Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan</li> <li>▪ Equality and Diversity Framework</li> <li>▪ Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group</li> <li>▪ Disability Action Plan</li> <li>▪ Data Protection Policy</li> <li>➤ Equality Screening process and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</li> <li>➤ Letters of Offer issued with Grants</li> <li>➤ Monitoring arrangements</li> <li>➤ Procurement guidance and policy</li> </ul>
A.3 Respecting the rule of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Council Constitution</li> <li>➤ Updated Financial Regulations</li> <li>➤ Updated Standing Orders</li> <li>➤ Register maintained of Members' declarations of interest</li> <li>➤ Register maintained of Officer' declarations of interest</li> <li>➤ Operating Protocol for Planning Committee</li> <li>➤ Council Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan</li> <li>➤ Council participate in the National Fraud Initiative – Biannual data matching exercise</li> <li>➤ Council Raising Concern Policy</li> <li>➤ Gifts and Hospitality Policy</li> <li>➤ Qualified majority voting and Call-In process in operation in accordance with the Local Government Act 2014</li> <li>➤ External expert legal and other professional advice sought when necessary.</li> <li>➤ Fraud and Raising Concern investigations undertaken</li> <li>➤ HR Disciplinary processes.</li> </ul>

Core Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	
Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles
B1: Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Council meetings are open to the public and members of the media</li> <li>➤ Council's web site provides up-to-date information regarding:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council activities</li> <li>▪ Policies</li> <li>▪ Reports issued</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Use of Social Media</li> <li>➤ Internal Communications issued via Chief Executives' briefs</li> <li>➤ Consultation with stakeholders regarding the Community and Performance Improvement Plans</li> <li>➤ Community Planning Process</li> <li>➤ Corporate Complaints Procedure</li> <li>➤ Customer Service Standards in Draft format – to be brought through Council Summer 2019.</li> <li>➤ Council minutes are published on the website</li> <li>➤ Standard pro forma for all Committee reports.</li> <li>➤ Annual Performance Improvement Plan published on the web site.</li> <li>➤ Categories for 'confidential business' for Committee</li> <li>➤ Staff Consultations</li> <li>➤ Access to Information Policy and Procedure</li> </ul>
B2: Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A co-ordinated and strategic approach to community engagement and involvement that enables partners to bring together their community engagement work and plans and connects Members, community and citizen engagement and partnership decision making</li> <li>➤ Local Development Planning</li> <li>➤ Strategic Stakeholder Forum</li> <li>➤ Community Planning Process</li> <li>➤ Monthly Community Planning team meetings</li> <li>➤ Community planning partnership meets 3 times per year</li> <li>➤ Community Plan Statutory Partners</li> <li>➤ Place Shaping Agenda</li> <li>➤ Ongoing engagement with Trade Unions</li> </ul>



<p>B3: Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Community Plan developed following consultation with Statutory Partners, stakeholders and the public</li> <li>➤ Local Development Plan</li> <li>➤ Annual Performance Improvement Plan</li> <li>➤ Corporate Plan Engagement</li> <li>➤ Residents Survey undertaken every four years</li> </ul>
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<p>Core Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</p>	
<p>Supporting Principles</p>	<p>How we meet these principles</p>
<p>C1: Defining Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 'Living well Together' the Districts Community Plan 2017-2030</li> <li>➤ The Corporate Plan will be driven by priorities set out in the 'Living Well Together' Community Plan</li> <li>➤ Annual Performance Improvement Plan</li> <li>➤ Corporate Planning Framework for the development of the 2024-2027 Corporate Plan</li> <li>➤ Transformation programme being developed which will include detailed service reviews</li> <li>➤ Treasury Management</li> <li>➤ 4-year Capital Programme</li> <li>➤ Prudential Financial Framework</li> <li>➤ Local Development Plan</li> <li>➤ Annual Directorate Business Plans</li> <li>➤ Sports Facilities Strategy Document</li> <li>➤ NMDDC Tourism Strategy</li> <li>➤ Tourism Marketing Plan</li> <li>➤ Tourism Experience Brochure</li> <li>➤ Belfast Region City Deal Investment Plan</li> <li>➤ Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy</li> <li>➤ Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy</li> <li>➤ Irish Language Strategy</li> </ul>

<p>C2: Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 'Living well Together' the Districts Community Plan 2017-2030</li> <li>➤ Annual Performance Improvement Plan</li> <li>➤ Local Development Plan</li> <li>➤ New Corporate Plan will be driven by priorities set out in the Community Plan</li> <li>➤ Corporate Planning Framework for the development of the 2024-2027 Corporate Plan</li> <li>➤ Local Development Plan – Preferred Options Papers</li> <li>➤ Risk Management processes</li> <li>➤ Corporate Policy &amp; Equality Officer</li> <li>➤ Established processes for governance, management and administration of grants</li> <li>➤ Equality Impact Assessments</li> <li>➤ Equality Screening completed for all policies</li> </ul>
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<p>Core Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievements of the intended outcomes/</p>	
<p>Supporting Principles</p>	<p>How we meet these principles</p>
<p>D1: Determining interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Evidence and Research team support the Council in the development of a data and evidence based approach to support the creation of the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Local Development Plan and key related strategies.</li> <li>➤ Ongoing consultation and engagement with the public, stakeholders and the community and voluntary sectors.</li> <li>➤ Ongoing consultation and engagement with the public and key stakeholders</li> <li>➤ Professional advice sought when required</li> <li>➤ Transformation programme being developed which will include detailed service reviews</li> </ul>



<p>D2: Planning interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Planning processes encompassing Community, Corporate and Performance Improvement Plans</li> <li>➤ Community Planning engagement framework completed through thematic groups via the DEA's</li> <li>➤ Local Development Plan</li> <li>➤ Strategic Planning Framework</li> <li>➤ Directorate business plans</li> <li>➤ Performance Improvement Plans including KPI's</li> <li>➤ Risk Management processes</li> <li>➤ Budgetary Control including a rolling 4-year capital plan</li> <li>➤ Monthly Management accounts</li> <li>➤ Financial planning</li> <li>➤ Estimates process including Efficiency Working Group</li> <li>➤ Performance Indicators</li> <li>➤ Transformation programme being developed which will include detailed service reviews</li> <li>➤ Medium term financial planning</li> <li>➤ Financial management of capital programme</li> <li>➤ Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators</li> </ul>
<p>D3: Optimising achievement of intended outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Financial reporting</li> <li>➤ Reporting to the StrategyPolicy and Resources Committee</li> <li>➤ Treasury Management</li> <li>➤ Estimates Process</li> <li>➤ Budgetary Reporting</li> <li>➤ MRP Policy</li> <li>➤ Estimates Process</li> <li>➤ Council/Committee Reporting</li> <li>➤ Community Plan</li> <li>➤ Local Development Plan</li> </ul>

**Core Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it**

Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles
<p>E1: Developing the entity's capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Organisational Development</li> <li>➤ Transformation programme being developed which will include detailed service reviews</li> <li>➤ Performance Improvement Plan</li> <li>➤ Annual NIAO Improvement Audits and Assessments of Council</li> <li>➤ Monitoring of the performance of the delivery of Council Improvement Objectives to ensure compliance with the performance improvement requirements of part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014</li> <li>➤ Directors and Assistant Directors quarterly assurance statements</li> <li>➤ Community Plan Statutory Partners</li> <li>➤ Service Level Agreements</li> </ul>
<p>E2: Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Group Party Leaders Meetings</li> <li>➤ Induction Training and Learning and Development Programme for Members</li> <li>➤ Member Development Charter</li> <li>➤ Scheme of Delegation</li> <li>➤ Audit Committee undertake an annual self-assessment exercise against CIPFA standards</li> <li>➤ Planning Scheme of Delegation</li> <li>➤ CE Job Description/Specification and Appraisal Scheme</li> <li>➤ Terms and conditions of employment</li> <li>➤ Capacity building around the Code of Conduct</li> <li>➤ Performance Improvement consultation</li> <li>➤ Consultation on major Council strategies</li> <li>➤ Performance Improvement Plan</li> <li>➤ Directorate business plans</li> <li>➤ Project Plans</li> <li>➤ Corporate Management Team Meetings</li> <li>➤ Continuing Professional Development</li> <li>➤ Corporate Health &amp; Safety</li> <li>➤ Occupational Health Service including Westfield Health</li> <li>➤ All staff have access to leisure facilities</li> <li>➤ A number of posts related to improving health and wellbeing in the district (i.e. Exercise referral coordinator, GP referral coordinator, Macmillan move more coordinator and Age friendly Coordinator)</li> </ul>

Core Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong financial management	
Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles
F1: Managing risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Risk Management Policy</li> <li>➤ Risk Management software system</li> <li>➤ SMT update Corporate Risk Register quarterly and present to audit Committee</li> <li>➤ Directorate risk registers updated bi-annually</li> <li>➤ Director and Assistant Director Quarterly Assurance Statements</li> </ul>
F2: Managing performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Annual NIAO Audit and Assessment Reports</li> <li>➤ Annual Performance Improvement Plans</li> <li>➤ Directorate business plans</li> <li>➤ Agreed pro forma for Committee reports showing option appraisals and implications.</li> <li>➤ Regular reporting of financial information to the SP&amp;R committee</li> <li>➤ Legal and professional advice obtained as necessary</li> <li>➤ The SP&amp;R and Audit Committee oversees and monitors performance management, processes, systems and related arrangements.</li> <li>➤ The SP&amp;R Committee oversees and monitors structures, governance arrangements and financial information.</li> <li>➤ Performance Improvement updates</li> <li>➤ Financial Management</li> <li>➤ Risk Management processes and reporting</li> <li>➤ Budgetary reporting</li> <li>➤ Performance Management System</li> </ul>
F3: Robust internal control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Directorate Business Plans</li> <li>➤ Risk Management Policy and processes</li> <li>➤ Risk registers in place and linked to objectives</li> <li>➤ Assistant Director of Finance and Performance liaises with a fully independent internal audit firm</li> <li>➤ Independent External Review of Internal Audit every 5 years.</li> <li>➤ Internal Audit planning</li> <li>➤ Risk based auditing</li> <li>➤ Recommendation tracker to monitor all Internal Audit recommendations</li> <li>➤ Council Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan</li> <li>➤ Council Raising Concern Policy</li> <li>➤ Council participate in the National Fraud Initiative – Biannual data matching exercise</li> <li>➤ Gifts and Hospitality Policy</li> <li>➤ Directors and Assistant Director Quarterly Assurance Statements</li> <li>➤ Annual Governance Statement</li> <li>➤ Audit Committee with an independent Chairperson</li> </ul>

### Core Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong financial management

Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles
F4: Managing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Data Protection Policy</li> <li>➤ Data Protection training</li> <li>➤ IT Transformation Project underway</li> <li>➤ Access controls in place on Council network</li> <li>➤ Secure physical access to Council buildings and IT server rooms</li> </ul>
F5: Strong public financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rates Estimates process</li> <li>➤ Annual Budget setting process and Budgetary reporting systems</li> <li>➤ Financial management detailed in Directorate Business Plans</li> <li>➤ Prudential Framework</li> <li>➤ Compliance with CIPFA's Code on a Prudential Framework for Local Authority Capital Finance and CIPFA's Treasury Management Code</li> <li>➤ Transformation programme being developed which includes detailed service reviews</li> <li>➤ All Committee reports include financial implications</li> <li>➤ Financial Regulations</li> </ul>



**Core Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability**

Supporting Principles	How we meet these principles
G1: Implementing good practice in transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Annual Financial Report published on the Council's website.</li> <li>➤ The Financial Report and accounts are prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting the UK</li> <li>➤ The Council web site provides the public with up to date information</li> <li>➤ Standard Committee report template</li> </ul>
G2: Implementing good practices in reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Annual Accounts published on the Council's web site</li> <li>➤ Established timescale for submission and approval of annual accounts</li> <li>➤ Performance Improvement – Annual Audit and Assessment Reports</li> <li>➤ Publication of statutory performance indicators in line with the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014</li> <li>➤ Annual Governance Statement reviewed by Chief Executive and published on Council's website</li> <li>➤ Council Committees consider and approve reports which are ratified by full Council</li> <li>➤ Review of Corporate Governance carried out by Internal Audit</li> <li>➤ Service Level Agreements</li> <li>➤ The Annual Accounts are prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK based on International Financial Reporting Standards and the Department of Communities Accounts Direction.</li> <li>➤ Committee reports presented by Senior Officers</li> </ul>
G3: Assurance and effective accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All NIAO recommendations are included on the recommendation tracker with updates reported to Audit Committee</li> <li>➤ All NIAO (External Audit) reports presented to the Audit Committee</li> <li>➤ Assistant Director of Finance and Performance who liaises with fully independent Internal Audit firm</li> <li>➤ External audit completed by NIAO</li> <li>➤ NIAO Proper Arrangements Audit</li> <li>➤ Internal Audit annual review of effectiveness</li> <li>➤ Community Planning Statutory Partners</li> <li>➤ The Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016</li> <li>➤ Service Level Agreements</li> <li>➤ Contract Management</li> <li>➤ Directorate Business Plans in place which contain key corporate actions, risk actions and performance indicators</li> </ul>

<b>Report to:</b>	Audit Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	31 July 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Gerard Byrne – Assistant Director: Finance and Performance
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Catherine Hughes – Head of Performance and Improvement (Acting)

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

<b>For decision</b>	<b>For noting only</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>	
1.1	<p>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.</p> <p>The Performance Improvement Plan was approved by the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee on 13 June 2024 and published on the Council's website before 30 June 2024, in order to meet the statutory timescale.</p>	
1.2	<p>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.</p>	
1.3	<p>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.</p>	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>	
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 2024-25 is attached at <b>Appendix 1</b>, and includes the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance improvement objectives 2024-25</li> <li>• Statutory performance indicators and standards for economic development, planning and waste management</li> <li>• Self imposed performance indicators, as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2024-27</li> </ul>	
	<b>Public Consultation and Engagement 2024-25</b>	

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"> <li>• 764 responses to the Residents Survey (September 2022)</li> </ul> <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"> <li>• 48 responses to the survey on the draft performance improvement objectives, published through the Speak NMD platform</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> <p>Overall, the feedback from the consultation and engagement process revealed widespread support for the proposed performance improvement objectives, as outlined in <b>Appendix 2</b>.</p>
<p><b>Objective Delivery Plans 2024-25</b></p>	
2.4	<p>Delivery plans for each performance improvement objective have been developed, as outlined in <b>Appendix 3</b>. 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.</p>
3.0	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>
3.1	<p>To note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 (including the five performance improvement objectives), Consultation and Engagement Report 2024-25 and Objective Delivery Plans 2024-25.</li> </ul>
4.0	<p><b>Resource implications</b></p>
4.1	<p>There are no financial resource implications within this report.</p>
5.0	<p><b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b></p>
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></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><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></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><b>Proposal initiating consultation</b></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 then statutory deadline of 30 June 2024 for publishing the Performance Improvement Plan.</p>
6.0	<p><b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b></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><b>Appendices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appendix 1</b> – Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25</li> <li>• <b>Appendix 2</b> – Consultation and Engagement Report 2024-25</li> <li>• <b>Appendix 3</b> – Objective Delivery Plans 2024-25</li> </ul>
8.0	<p><b>Background Documents</b></p> <p>Performance Improvement Plans 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2022-23 and 2023-24</p>

# 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





<p><b>Why this matters</b></p>	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the top priorities for improving your local area was 'Improving people's health and wellbeing (and reducing health inequalities)</li> <li>• 17% of our residents are not active for a single day each week.</li> <li>• 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'</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 85% of respondents to our 2023-24 survey agreed with this objective</li> </ul> <p>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.</p>	
<p><b>Looking Back:</b> What we did in 2023-24</p>	          	<p>769,000 paid attendances across the 6 leisure facilities</p> <p>Recorded 263,364 visits across a total of 10 community trails.</p> <p>9,923 memberships across the indoor leisure facilities</p> <p>Progressed a number of new build and/or upgraded capital projects including Kilkeel Bowling Pavilion and Play Park signage</p> <p>10,805 people participating in targeted health programmes</p>
<p><b>Looking Forward:</b> What we will do in 2024-25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of paid attendances at indoor leisure facilities.</li> <li>• Continue to deliver a range of targeted, sustainable health programmes to encourage participation in physical activity.</li> <li>• Progress the leisure projects agreed within the Capital Programme</li> <li>• Maintain the number of recorded visits to Community Trails.</li> <li>• Work towards Leisure-Safe Accreditation for all indoor leisure facilities</li> </ul>	



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
<b>What you will see by March 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>850,000 paid attendances at our six leisure centres by end of 2024-25</li> <li>Increase in the number of people participating in targeted health programmes to 20,000.</li> <li>Increase in the number of memberships being taken out to 10,000.</li> <li>265,000 recorded visits to community trails.</li> <li>A number of new build and/or upgraded capital leisure projects progressed.</li> <li>Leisure-Safe Accreditation being worked towards for all indoor leisure facilities.</li> </ul>					
<b>Alignment</b>						
Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District.</li> </ul>					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing</li> </ul>					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We all enjoy long, healthy, active lives</li> <li>People want to live, work and visit here</li> </ul>					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service quality	Service Availability	Fairness		
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director: Active and Healthy Communities</b>					

## Performance Improvement Objective 2

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

<p><b>Why this matters</b></p>	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Improving skills, employability and job prospects' was your top priority for improving the local area in the 2022 residents survey</li> <li>• 'Supporting local businesses, attracting investment and jobs' is in your top three priorities for improvement</li> <li>• Investment to grow the economy, create jobs and attract tourists is the most important form of investment</li> <li>• 81% of respondents to our 2023-24 survey agreed with this objective</li> </ul> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
<p><b>Looking Back:</b> What we did in 2023-24</p>		<p>90 new business starts created and 90 new jobs promoted through business start-up activity</p>
		<p>12 new social enterprise start-ups supported and 14 new social enterprise jobs created</p>
		<p>351 businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions</p>
		<p>'Make it Local' campaign delivered to stimulate footfall and the re-opening of businesses across the District</p>
<p><b>Looking Forward:</b> What we will do in 2024-25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme and 'Go Succeed'</li> <li>• Engage individuals in pre-start activity</li> <li>• Support the establishment of new businesses through the 'Go Succeed' Programme</li> <li>• Support the growth of existing businesses and creation of new jobs through the 'Go Succeed' Programme</li> <li>• Continue to create opportunities for employability and skills through implementation of the LMP Action Plan.</li> </ul>	








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
<b>What you will see by March 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 361 business plans created for Start-Up businesses and employer enterprises</li> <li>• Over 700 participants engaged across all Go Succeed activity</li> <li>• Support provided to 220 existing businesses to progress growth and scaling ambitions</li> <li>• 170 new jobs promoted via business start-up activity.</li> <li>• 12 social enterprise start-ups supported and 12 social enterprise jobs created</li> <li>• More support for new and established local businesses and more employment opportunities across the District</li> <li>• Continue to ensure the District becomes more economically active and prosperous</li> </ul>					
<b>Alignment</b>						
Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the continued growth and development of our local economy</li> </ul>					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities</li> </ul>					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone can reach their potential</li> <li>• Our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon neutral</li> <li>• People want to live, work and visit here</li> </ul>					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service quality	Service availability	Innovation		
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director: Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism</b>					

\*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

<p><b>Why this matters</b></p>	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog mess and dog fouling and rubbish or litter lying around are your top two perceived problems in your local area</li> <li>• 6% of the residents surveyed were dissatisfied with the cleansing service provided by the Council.</li> <li>• 91% of residents said recycling is important to them, an increase of 5% on the 2018 residents survey figure.</li> <li>• 83% of respondents to our 2023-24 survey agreed with this objective</li> </ul> <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>	
<p><b>Looking Back:</b> What we did in 2023-24</p>		<p>Issued 25 fixed penalty notices, 19 of which were paid</p>
		<p>Supported 19 community clean-ups</p>
		<p>9 environmental projects funded through the NI 'Live Here Love Here' Scheme</p>
		<p>Anti-littering and responsible dog ownership campaigns rolled out</p>
		<p>Increase in the rate of recycling, to 50.9%</p>
<p><b>Looking Forward:</b> What we will do in 2024-25</p>	<p>Address issues around littering, illicit dumping and dog fouling by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to implement the Enforcement Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity and social media campaigns</li> <li>• Working with Louth County Council to raise awareness of the impact of littering and illicit dumping along the border area</li> <li>• Encouraging residents to bring properly sorted surplus recyclable waste to our Household Recycling Centres</li> <li>• Supporting local community clean ups</li> <li>• Implementation of a Paint Re-Use Scheme at 7 Household Recycling Centres throughout the district.</li> </ul> <p>Work in partnership with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission surveys to monitor street cleanliness and identify emerging issues and hotspots</li> </ul>	








	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the 'Live Here Love Here' campaigns</li> <li>Encourage community groups to 'Adopt a Spot'</li> <li>Highlight the impact of littering on the marine environment</li> </ul>					
<b>How we will measure success</b>	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
<b>What you will see by March 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the number of fixed penalty notices issued.</li> <li>Responsible dog ownership and reduced levels of dog fouling, littering and illicit dumping</li> <li>Improved opportunities to report littering, dog fouling and illicit dumping</li> <li>Reduction in the disposal of paint from our Household Recycling Centre sites.</li> <li>Opportunities to engage in community clean ups</li> <li>A cleaner, greener District, with improved civic and community pride</li> </ul>					
<b>Alignment</b>						
Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future</li> </ul>					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment</li> </ul>					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment</li> </ul>					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service availability	Innovation		Sustainability	
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director: Sustainability and Environment</b>					




\*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.







<p><b>Why this matters</b></p>	<p>You told us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing waste, reducing climate change, investing in renewable energy etc. was important to you.</li> <li>Green technology skills were the second most important training support needed to improve the growth of resident employability.</li> <li>91% of residents said recycling is important to them, an increase of 5% on the 2018 residents survey figure.</li> <li>79% of respondents to our 2023-24 survey agreed with this objective</li> </ul> <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>	
<p><b>Looking Back:</b> What we did in 2023-24</p>		<p>Installed 5 drinking water fountains across the District</p>
		<p>Planted 2,800 trees across the District</p>
		<p>Progressed the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy</p>
		<p>Progressed the development of a Biodiversity Strategy</p>
		<p>Continued the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan</p>
<p><b>Looking Forward:</b></p>	<p>Address issues around climate change and sustainability by:</p>	



What we will do in 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing the draft climate change and sustainable development strategy ready for consultation, review, approval and then publication.</li> <li>• Publishing the Council’s Climate Change Adaptation Plan</li> <li>• Implementing the newly published biodiversity strategy 2023-30</li> <li>• Continuing to implement the Council’s Tree Strategy</li> <li>• Supporting the continued implementation of new Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points</li> <li>• Undertaking a baseline assessment of the Council’s carbon footprint and renewable energy output</li> <li>• Continuing to implement the Council’s fleet replacement programme</li> </ul>					
<b>How we will measure success</b>	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
<b>What you will see by March 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of the Council’s Climate Change and Sustainable Development strategy</li> <li>• Publication of the Council’s Climate Change Adaptation Plan</li> <li>• Implementation of the new Newry, Mourne and Down Biodiversity Strategy (2023-2030)</li> <li>• New trees planted</li> <li>• Carbon footprint of Council estate established</li> <li>• Renewable energy baseline of Council established</li> <li>• Energy consumption of Council buildings established</li> <li>• Increase in the percentage of younger, less polluting vehicles within the Council fleet</li> <li>• New electric vehicles ordered for use within the Council fleet.</li> </ul>					
<b>Alignment</b>						
Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future</li> </ul>					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All people from Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment</li> </ul>					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment</li> </ul>					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Efficiency	Innovation	Sustainability		
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director: Sustainability and Environment</b>					

## Performance Improvement Objective 5

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

<p><b>Why this matters</b></p>	<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>					
<p><b>Looking Back:</b> What we did between April-December 2023</p>		<p>51.7% of live enforcement cases in the system longer than 2 years, which is above the regional average of 36.9%</p>				
		<p>Average processing time of 29.8 weeks for local planning applications, which is above the regional average of 20.4 weeks</p>				
		<p>Average processing time of 421 weeks for major planning applications, which is below the regional average of 44.2 weeks</p>				
		<p>Received 986 local planning applications, which is the second highest across Northern Ireland</p>				
<p><b>Looking Forward:</b> What we will do in 2024-25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases which have been in the system for over 12 months</li> <li>• Work with agents and architects to improve the standard of planning applications submitted</li> <li>• Support employees to deliver service improvements through ongoing training, capacity building and 'planning surgeries'</li> <li>• Effectively implement the new electronic planning system</li> </ul>					
<p><b>How we will measure success</b></p>	<p>2020-21 Actual</p>	<p>2021-22 Actual</p>	<p>2022-23 Actual</p>	<p>2023-24 (Q1-Q3) Actual</p>	<p>Status Trend</p>	<p>2024-25 Target</p>
<p>Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>18.3</p>	<p>21.6</p>	<p>29.8</p>	<p> </p>	<p>&lt;15 weeks</p>



Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)	64.6	49.8	89	421		<30 weeks
Percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks	40.9%	46.9%	-	-	-	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	934	1,130		700
Number of enforcement cases in the system 12 months or more**	551	486	503	592		450
<b>What you will see by March 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A more efficient and effective planning service</li> <li>• Improved processing times for local and major planning applications</li> <li>• Improved processing times for planning enforcement cases</li> <li>• Reduction in the number of live planning applications and enforcement cases in the system</li> <li>• An empowered and motivated workforce</li> <li>• Increased confidence in the Planning system</li> <li>• Sustainable development and regeneration of the District</li> </ul>					
<b>Alignment</b>						
Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver sustainable services</li> </ul>					
Community Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities</li> </ul>					
Programme for Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People want to live, work and visit here</li> </ul>					
7 aspects of improvement	Strategic effectiveness	Service availability	Service quality		Efficiency	
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director: Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism</b>					

\*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 2024-25 targets have been carried forward from 2023-24.

## Strategic Alignment

<b>Performance Improvement Objective</b>	<b>Corporate Objective(s)</b>	<b>Community Planning Outcome(s)</b>	<b>Duty of Improvement</b>
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
<b>Economic Development</b>		
ED1	The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity	>155 170* (updated target)
<b>Planning</b>		
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%
<b>Waste Management</b>		
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.

	Number of users registered to Council corporate social media channels.
	Number of visits to Council’s corporate website.
Represent the voice of the District with our partners	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
<p><b>PIO 1:</b> We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services</p>	<p><b>PIO 1:</b> We will improve the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services</p>	<p>During 2023-24 progress was made against a number of key actions under this objective including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of paid attendances at Council's 6 main leisure centres.</li> <li>• Increase in the number of people participating in targeted health programmes .</li> <li>• Increase in the number of recorded visits at community trails.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Retain</b> This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2024-25.</p>
<p><b>PIO 2:</b> We will grow the economy by supporting local businesses and creating new jobs</p>	<p><b>PIO 2:</b> We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation</p>	<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 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> highest priorities for improving the local area.</p>	<p><b>Amend</b> This performance improvement objective to be amended for 2024-25.</p>

<p><b>PIO 3:</b> We will improve the cleanliness of our district by addressing littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling incidents</p>	<p><b>PIO 3:</b> 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"> <li>• Promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity campaigns and dog licences</li> <li>• Working with neighbouring County Council’s on the border to raise awareness of the impact of fly-tipping along the border area.</li> </ul> <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><b>Amend</b> This performance improvement objective to be amended for 2024-25</p>
<p><b>PIO 4:</b> We will improve our sustainability by reducing our impacts in relation to climate change</p>	<p><b>PIO 4:</b> 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"> <li>• Progressing the development of a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy</li> <li>• Planting 2,800 trees across the District</li> <li>• Exceeded the target for the percentage of Council’s fleet younger than 8 years.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Retain</b> 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

During 2023-24 progress continued to be made against a number of key actions including:

- Working with agents and architects to improve the standard of planning applications submitted.
- Implementation of the new electronic planning system.

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.

**Retain**

This performance improvement objective to be carried forward to 2024-25

## Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down

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

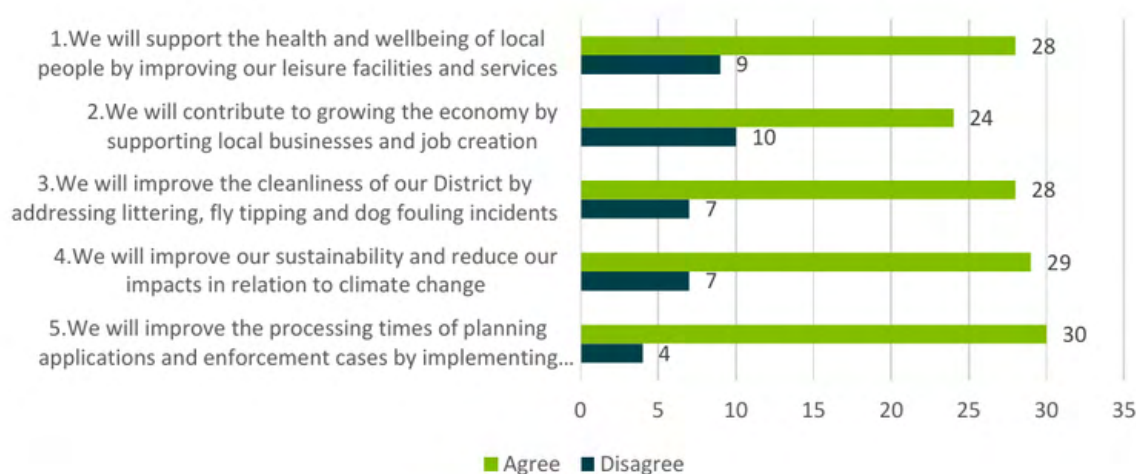
This year again, the Council used the Speak NMD platform to host the consultation and engagement process. As a dedicated online space, which is facilitated through the Newry, Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership, Speak NMD enables residents to participate in local consultation and engagement 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"> <li>Section 75 groups, including the Newry, Mourne and Down Youth Voice and the Cedar Foundation</li> </ul>	37 consultees
Engagement with : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 DEA’s across the District</li> </ul>	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.

### Agreement on Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-25



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.

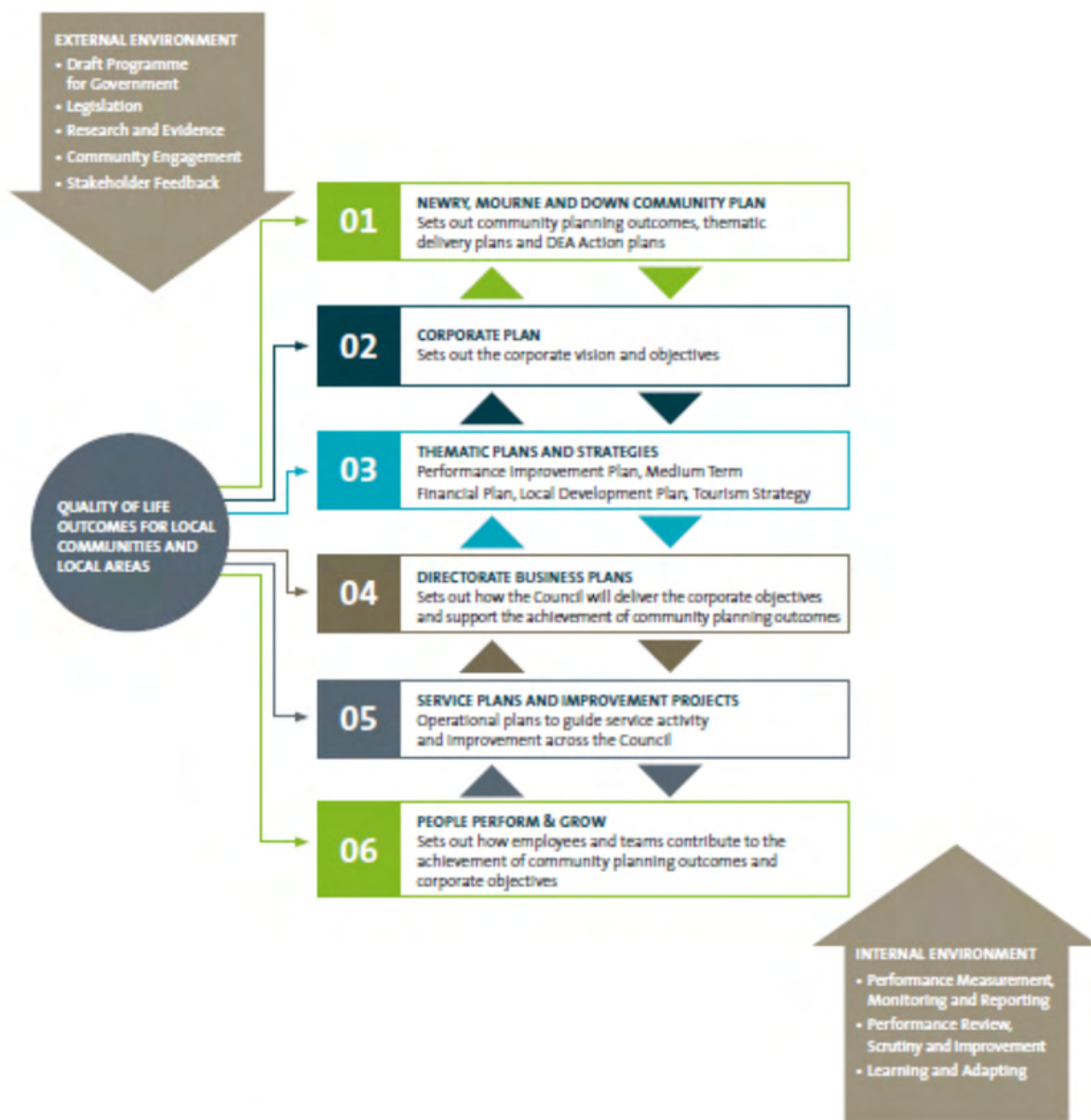
The Council has put in place a number of frameworks and systems to drive forward continuous improvement and facilitate a performance improvement culture. These include the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, Policy Development Framework, Equality Scheme, Governance Framework and Risk 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)  
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
Co Down  
BT35 8DJ

**Telephone:** 0300 013 2233

**Email:** [performance@nmandd.org](mailto:performance@nmandd.org)



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**Serving Down  
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**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:

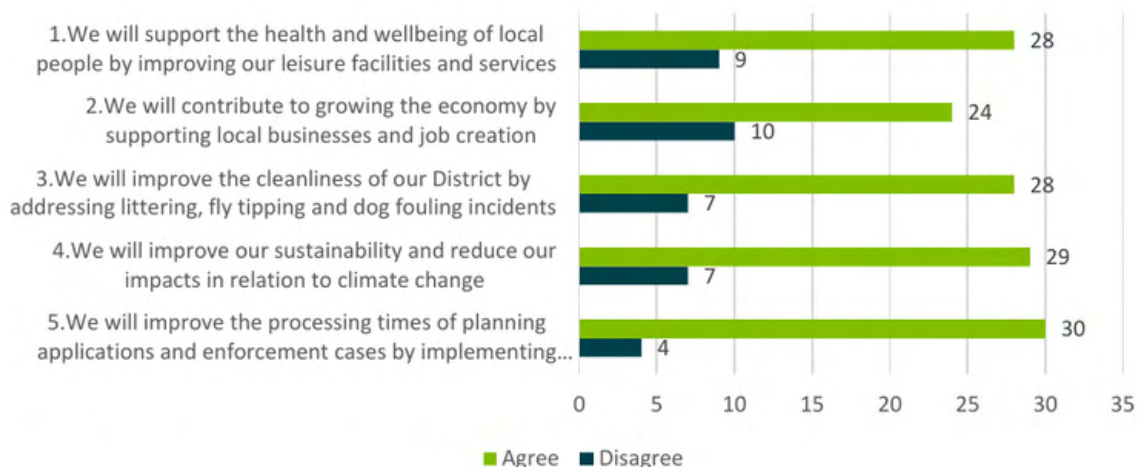
Consultation and Engagement	Details
Newry DEA Forum	14 participants – 28 March 2024
Downpatrick DEA Forum	13 participants – 09 April 2024
Rowallane DEA Forum	12 participants – 10 April 2024
Crotlieve DEA Forum	9 participants – 16 April 2024
Slieve Gullion DEA Forum	14 participants – 16 April 2024
Slieve 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

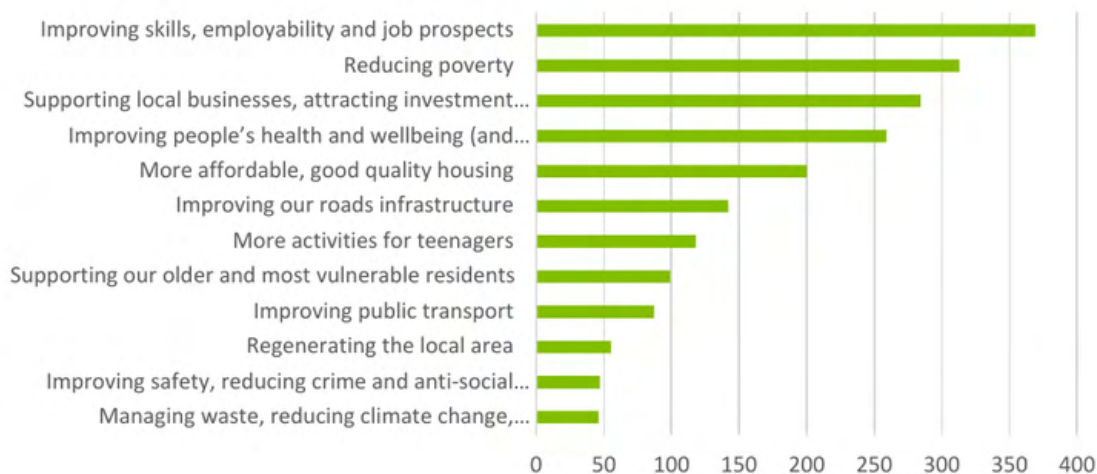


### Residents Survey (2022)

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.

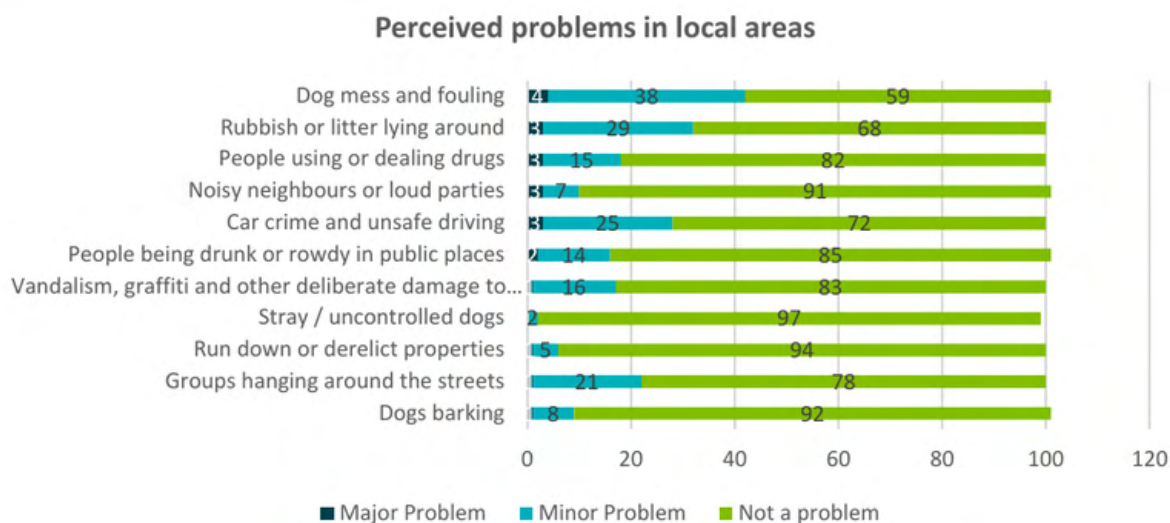
- The local economy, health and wellbeing, housing, infrastructure, public transport, protecting the environment, climate change and managing waste are amongst the top priorities for improvement.
- Supporting communities, educational provision, accessible leisure centres, accessible arts centres/theatres 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
<b>We will support the health and wellbeing of local people by improving our leisure facilities and services</b>	<i>'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>	The full list of Community trails is available on the Council's 'Be Active' app under Outdoor Leisure.	

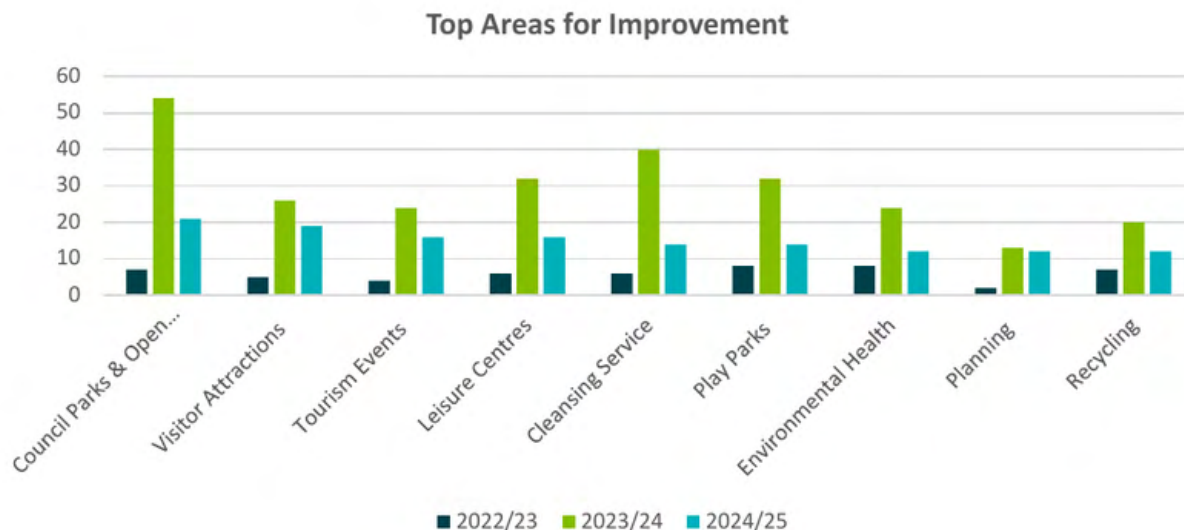


			<p>Revised the 2023-24 figure for community trails based on updated year end data which has also led to a revised target for 2024-25.</p>
<p><b>We will contribute to growing the economy by supporting local businesses and job creation</b></p>			<p>Figures for economic development programmes have been revised to reflect 2023-24 actual figures.</p>
<p><b>We will improve the cleanliness of our District by addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents</b></p>	<p>The wording of this objective should also include 'continue to promote recycling and' so that it reads: <b>'We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents'</b></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: <b>'We will improve the cleanliness of our District by continuing to promote recycling and addressing littering, fly tipping and dog fouling incidents'</b></p>

	awareness of the pros of recycling'		
<b>We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change</b>			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.
<b>We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by implementing the Planning Service Improvement Programme</b>			

### 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.

## 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

-



## 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					
<b>Responsible Officers</b>	<b>Director:</b> Activity and Healthy Communities <b>Assistant Director:</b> Leisure and Sport				
<b>Link to Community Plan</b>	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing	<b>Link to Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27</b>	Improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the District		
<b>Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.</li> <li>Annual Assessment of Performance to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.</li> </ul>				
<b>Meeting the legislative criteria</b>	<p><b>Strategic Effectiveness:</b> 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><b>Service Quality:</b> 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><b>Service Availability:</b> 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><b>Fairness:</b> 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	Responsible Officers
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	Assistant Director Healthy Living  Assistant Director Capital and Procurement
Increase the number of paid attendances at indoor leisure facilities	AHC Business Plan 2024-25	Target set at <b>850,000</b> 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



					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 <b>20,000</b> 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 <b>15,000</b> 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. Ballynahinch Rugby Club - 2018/19, Rowallane. 3. Drumkeeragh Forest - 2019/20, Slieve Croob. 4. Tievenadarragh Forest - 2019/20 Slieve Croob. 5. Seaforde Plantation & Corry Wood - 2019/20, Slieve Croob. 6. Daisy Hill Wood 2020/21, Newry. 7. Aghrim Hill 2020/21, Mournes.	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. Glendesha Forest Trail, Forkhill, 2021/22, Slieve Gullion. 9. Lough Park/Windmill Hill Trail, Ballynahinch 2021/22, Rowallane 10. Tievenadarragh 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	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the AHC Business Plan and Service Plan 2024-25	Assistant Director: Healthy Living  Head of Indoor Leisure
<b>Risk Management</b>					
<b>Risks</b>		<b>Actions to Mitigate Risks</b>			
Leisure facilities do not achieve the projected paid attendance levels		Targeted promotional and publicity campaigns including online campaigns are being carried out.			
Targeted groups do not engage in physical activity programmes		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					
<b>Senior Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director:</b> Economy, Regeneration and Tourism <b>Assistant Director:</b> Economy, Growth and Tourism				
<b>Link to Community Plan</b>	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	<b>Link to Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27</b>	Support the continued growth and development of our local economy		
<b>Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.</li> <li>• Annual Assessment of Performance to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.</li> </ul>				
<b>Meeting the legislative criteria</b>	<p><b>Strategic Effectiveness:</b> Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives, and will deliver tangible benefits to citizens, local businesses and social enterprises.</p> <p><b>Service Quality:</b> The quality of services available to businesses and stakeholders will improve through the broad range of economic development programmes available.</p> <p><b>Service Availability:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> Implicit within this objective are innovative, forward looking ways to promote / create new jobs and support businesses / social enterprises across the District.</p>				
What we are going to do					
Supporting Action	Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy	Measures of Success	Resources	Governance Arrangements	Responsible Officers
Support the creation of new businesses, support existing businesses and promote new jobs through the new 'Go Succeed' programme	Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27  Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2020-25  ERT Business Plan 2024-25	Number of participants engaged across all 'Go Succeed' activities  Number of business plans created for start-up businesses and employer enterprises  Number of new jobs promoted through business start-up activity	NMD contribution: £168k  Regional programme led by Belfast City Council	Monthly meetings of the regional Management Team  Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan 2024-25	Assistant Director: Economy, Growth and Tourism  Head of Regeneration and Business Development

		<p>Number of new enterprises created as a result of support</p> <p>Number of existing businesses supported to progress growth and scaling ambitions</p>			
Invest in the social economy through the Social Enterprise programme		<p>Number of social enterprise start ups supported</p> <p>Number of social enterprise jobs created</p>	Social Enterprise Programme: £51k	<p>Quarterly meetings with Newry Enterprise Agency</p> <p>Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan 2024-25</p>	<p>Assistant Director: Economy, Growth and Tourism</p> <p>Head of Regeneration and Business Development</p> <p>Enterprise Development Officers</p>
<b>Risk Management</b>					
<b>Risks</b>		<b>Actions and Controls to Mitigate Against Risks</b>			
Failure to deliver the economic development programmes to support the economic recovery of the District		All programmes to be in place with robust management and governance arrangements.			
The impact of Brexit and a non-functioning executive on delivering the various economic development programmes and achieving targets		Ongoing monitoring of key influences and economic development support adjusted to meet local demand.			
Lack of interest in and applications made to participate in programmes		Publicity campaigns delivered through online and social media platforms. Signposting service in place.			



## 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					
<b>Senior Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director:</b> Sustainability and Environment <b>Assistant Directors:</b> Environment / Sustainability				
<b>Link to Community Plan</b>	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	<b>Link to Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27</b>	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future		
<b>Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee</li> <li>Annual Assessment of Performance to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee</li> </ul>				
<b>Meeting the legislative criteria</b>	<p><b>Strategic Effectiveness:</b> Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives and will deliver real benefits and outcomes to local citizens.</p> <p><b>Service Availability:</b> The availability of key services will improve, through support for community led initiatives and access to funding through 'Live Here Love Here' campaigns.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Sustainability:</b> 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.</p>				
What we are going to do					
Supporting Action	Link to Thematic Plan/Strategy	Measure of Success	Resources	Governance Arrangements	Responsible Officers
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	Assistant Director: 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	Head of Waste Processing
Promoting responsible dog ownership through	Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plan 2024-25			Ongoing assessments of the Dog Fouling Strategy and	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>		<p>Enforcement Action Plan</p>	
<p>Implementation of a Paint Re-Use Scheme at 7 Household Recycling Centres throughout the district</p>	<p>SE Directorate Business Plan 2024-25</p>	<p>Reduction in the disposal of paint from our Household Recycling Centre sites.</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<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 &amp; 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>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<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
Highlight the impact of littering on the marine environment		Work commenced in relation to littering and the marine environment			Head of Waste Processing
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.		

WORK IN PROGRESS



## Performance Improvement Objective 4

We will improve our sustainability and reduce our impacts in relation to climate change					
<b>Senior Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director:</b> Sustainability and Environment <b>Assistant Director:</b> Sustainability				
<b>Link to Community Plan</b>	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment	<b>Link to Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27</b>	Protect and enhance our environment to secure a sustainable future		
<b>Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee</li> </ul>				
<b>Meeting the legislative criteria</b>	<p><b>Strategic Effectiveness:</b> Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives and will deliver real benefits and outcomes to citizens.</p> <p><b>Efficiency:</b> 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><b>Innovation:</b> 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><b>Sustainability:</b> 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



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

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
<b>Risk Management</b>					
<b>Risks</b>		<b>Actions to Mitigate Against Risks</b>			
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					
<b>Senior Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director:</b> Economy, Regeneration and Tourism <b>Assistant Director:</b> Regeneration <b>Chief Planner</b>				
<b>Link to Community Plan</b>	All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities	<b>Link to Draft Corporate Plan 2024-27</b>	Deliver sustainable services		
<b>Governance: Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid Year Progress Report of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee</li> <li>Annual Assessment of Performance 2023-24 to the Senior Management Team, Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and Audit Committee</li> </ul>				
<b>Meeting the legislative criteria</b>	<p><b>Strategic Effectiveness:</b> Aligned to community planning outcomes and corporate objectives and will deliver real benefits to citizens.</p> <p><b>Service Quality:</b> 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><b>Service Availability:</b> Improved availability of the Planning Service, focused on reducing processing times, will contribute to the sustainable development of Newry, Mourne and Down.</p> <p><b>Efficiency:</b> 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	Responsible Officers
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	ERT Business Plan 2024-25	Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)  Average processing time of major planning applications (weeks)  Percentage of planning enforcement cases	Within existing resources	Annual and bi-annual assessments of the ERT Business Plan 2024-25	Assistant Director: Regeneration



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