

# 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

# Our District, Our Organisation, Our Performance



## District

Population: 182,074  
 Households: 68,397  
 7 District Electoral Areas  
 41 Elected Members  
 1,000+ employees  
 88% of residents are satisfied with the Council



## Community

**Life expectancy:**  
 Male: 78.9 years / Female: 82.6 years  
**Age Profile:** 0-15 years: 22% / 65+ years: 17%  
 87% of residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together  
 100% of residents feel safe during the day, 78% of residents feel safe after dark  
 115 Neighbourhood Watch Schemes  
 18,407 food parcels delivered to vulnerable households  
 £9.4m awarded through the Financial Assistance Scheme since 2015



## Tourism

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



## Health and Wellbeing

82% of residents feel they are in very good or good health  
 83% of residents are physically active at least once a week for 30mins  
 73.5% of customers are satisfied with the Council's six leisure facilities  
 225k recorded visits at community trails  
 Over 500,000 recorded visits at Killbroney and Slieve Gullion Forest Parks for the last 9 months of the year 2023-24



## Economy

Employment rate: 61.6%  
 9,375 VAT Registered Businesses  
 14.3% of the population aged 16-64 years have no qualifications  
 90 new jobs promoted through business start activity  
 347 businesses supported through economic development programmes



## Environment






Recycling is important to 91% of residents  
 Top perceived problem for residents: Dog mess and fouling  
 Recycling rate: 49.6%  
 166 community clean ups supported since 2020  
 Second lowest level of waste to landfill across all NI Councils





## 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

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.

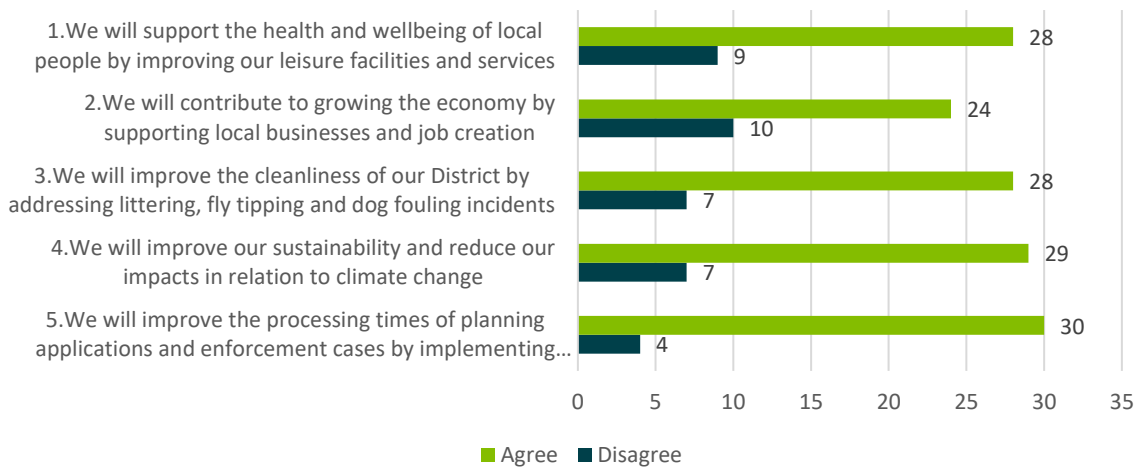
This year again, the Council used the Speak NMD platform to host the consultation and engagement process. As a dedicated online space, which is facilitated through the Newry, Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership, Speak NMD enables residents to participate in local consultation and engagement 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.

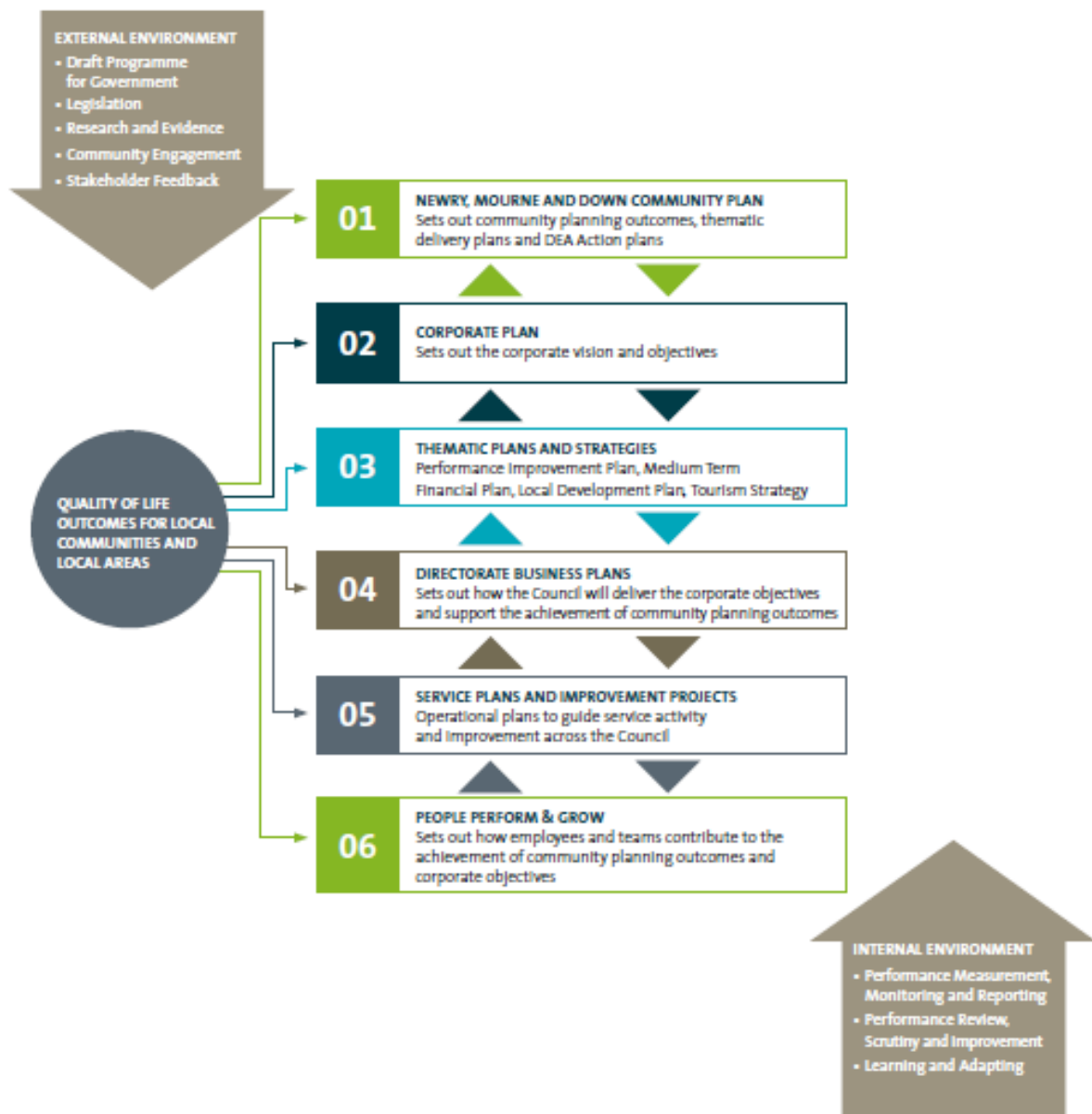
The Council has put in place a number of frameworks and systems to drive forward continuous improvement and facilitate a performance improvement culture. These include the Business Planning and Performance Management Framework, Policy Development Framework, Equality Scheme, Governance Framework and Risk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

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  
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**Telephone:** 0300 013 2233

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