

## **PERFORMANCE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS 2021-23**

### **Background**

#### **Legislative Context for the Performance Improvement Duty**

Under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, Antrim and Newtownabbey has a statutory duty to set objectives for the improvement of services, whilst ensuring the necessary arrangements exist to support and secure their realisation. In addition, targets for planning, job creation and waste management are set by Central Government.

#### **Performance Improvement under the Local Government Act 2014**

Part 12 of the Act details the framework to support continuous improvement in the delivery of services, in the context of strategic objectives and issues that are important to those who receive the services. The Council is required to gather information to assess improvements in services and to issue a report annually on performance against self-imposed and statutory indicators.

#### **The General Duty of Improvement**

Under section 84 of the Act, the Council is under a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions.

#### **What is Improvement?**

'Improvement' in the context of the Act means more than just quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or the internal effectiveness of an organisation. Improvement for the Council should mean activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities.

Firstly, the duty involves 'making arrangements' to improve, and the Council should put in place arrangements which allow the effective understanding of local needs and priorities, and to make best use of resources and capacity to meet them and to evaluate the impact of actions.

Secondly, the duty refers to 'continuous improvement'. The Council should seek continuously to ensure that improvement objectives remain relevant, that the best arrangements for delivering them are in place, and that Council is able to understand and demonstrate the impact on the outcomes for citizens.

#### **Improvement objectives**

Section 85 requires the Council, for each financial year, to set improvement objectives for improving the exercise of its functions and to have in place arrangements to achieve those objectives.

The Council must frame each improvement objective so as to bring about improvement in at least one of the specified aspects of improvement as defined in section 86 of the Act:

Strategic Effectiveness; Service Quality; Service Availability; Fairness; Sustainability; Efficiency and Innovation.

Thus, it follows that for the Council to successfully discharge its general improvement duty, it should incorporate the seven aspects of improvement into its decision-making processes and its assessments of functions and services. This would also extend to governance or scrutiny functions.

### **Corporate Recovery Plan in the context of performance legislation**

The Council continues to have high ambitions for our residents. We are committed to ensuring that the Borough not only recovers from the current pandemic, but that it continues to develop, improve, grow and be a place where people choose to invest, learn, work, visit and live in.

To this end the Council has prepared a Corporate Recovery Plan 2021-23 which sets out the plans for recovery and renewal, focusing on public safety, maintaining service standards, and maximising opportunities for community capacity building and investment in the regeneration of our towns and villages. The Corporate Recovery Plan 2021-23 will support the revival of the local economy, working with partners and stakeholders to build an inclusive, green, digital future.

The Corporate Recovery Plan 2021-23 reflects the areas where services need to be brought back to pre Covid-19 levels as well as reflect a number of key areas for performance improvement in the periods 2021-22 and 2022-23.

### **Delivering Continuous Improvement and Managing Performance**

The Council has put in place arrangements to support performance management and improvement which will drive and provide assurance that we are delivering on our vision, shared outcomes and objectives.

The Strategic Performance Framework diagram (Figure 1) illustrates the hierarchy of our corporate Plans, which are central to the achievement of our vision and mission statements and illustrates the alignment of the internal/external factors and processes in terms of performance management.

## Strategic Performance Framework

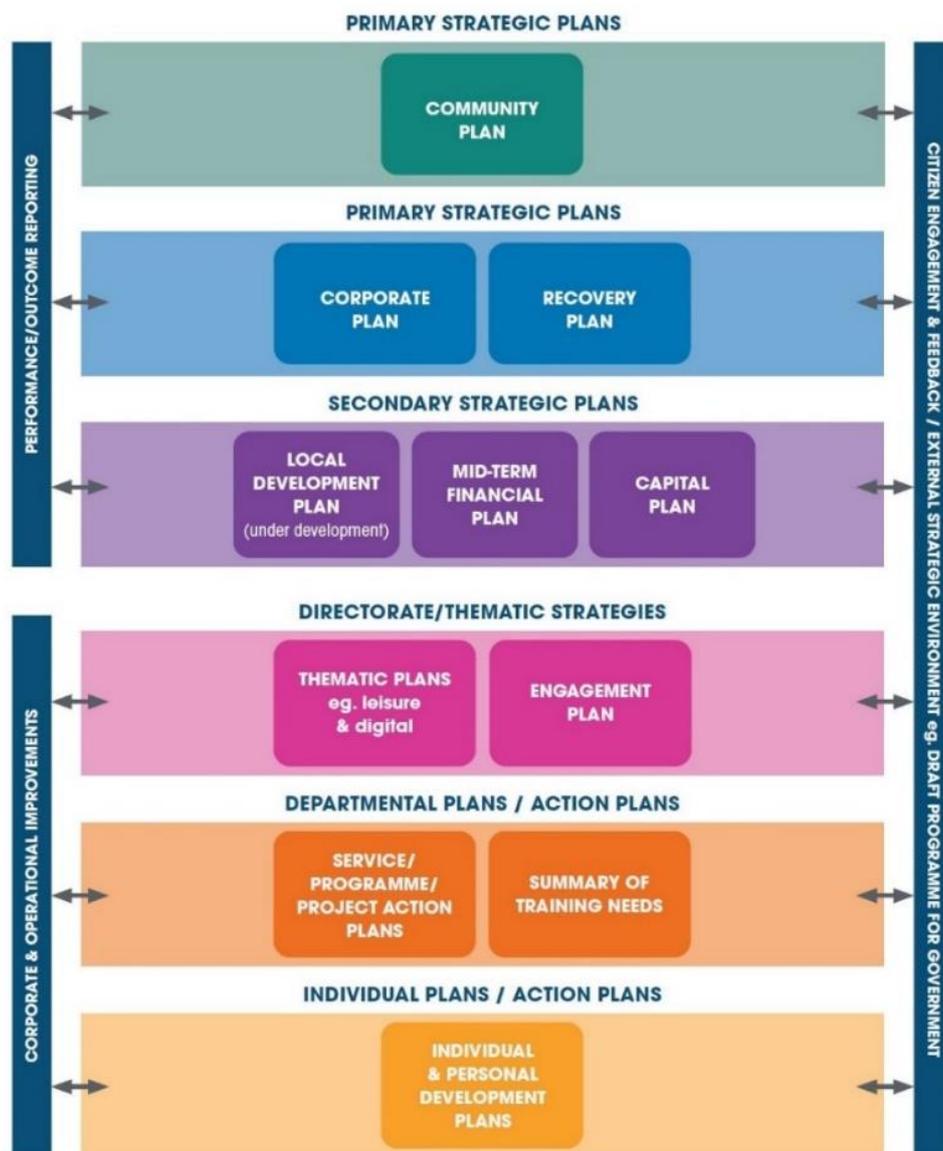


Figure 1

### Identifying Recovery Objectives

The Vision set out by our Corporate Plan remains our guiding principle. To be, “A progressive, smart and prosperous Borough. Inspired by our people. Driven by ambition.”

To realise this Vision, the Council recognises it must work in collaboration with others, particularly our Community Planning partners under the framework of our Love Living Here Community Plan.

The pandemic has impacted on our pursuit of the long-term objectives set-out in those two key strategies, but they remain our focus.

In addition, our Local Development Plan will provide a spatial framework to support the economic growth and social needs of our Borough.

This Corporate Recovery Plan 2021-23 will sit alongside these Plans to guide us through this period of uncertainty to assist us to work towards the goals and ambitions we have already committed to and fulfils our statutory performance duty.

The Corporate Leadership Team, working with Elected Members, identified and developed, and publicly consulted upon, a range of objectives within the Corporate Recovery Plan 2021-23 which have been framed within the three themes of the Corporate Plan and to reflect the outcomes of the Community Plan.

These objectives have been aligned to the seven aspects of improvement which are identified within the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 Section 84.

Additional statutory performance targets, for Planning, Economic Development as well as Waste and Recycling, which are set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015, are also monitored.

See attached Corporate Recovery Plan 2021-2023.

### **Recovery Performance Framework**

A Recovery Performance Framework has been developed for to ensure that the commissioning, delivery, problem solving and monitoring of identified objectives are achieved. Elected Members are a key part of this governance framework.

### **Reporting Arrangements**

Formal reporting arrangements are in place to ensure the effective delivery of the Recovery Plan. Progress is monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to the Council/Committees and the Corporate Leadership Team.

An annual self-assessment of performance report for each financial year is published on the Council's corporate website by 30 September of each year.

In addition, the Council commissions an internal audit annually to undertake a review of different aspects of performance improvement which reports to the Audit Committee.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office also reviews the processes and arrangements as part of the annual Performance Improvement Audit, which will assess compliance with legislative obligations within the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, which also requires the Local Government Auditor to publicly publish their assessment annually.

Individual roles and responsibilities are as follows:

### **Council & Committees**

The Council provides overall approval for the Recovery Plan. Reports are forwarded on a quarterly basis for monitoring the progress of delivery of the Council's recovery. Both Council and Committees provide a crucial role in terms of promoting innovation by challenging the status quo and encouraging different ways of thinking and options for delivery.

## **Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee subjects objectives, targets, indicators, risks and performance to appropriate scrutiny, challenge and evaluation. It further reviews progress reports of the Corporate Recovery Plan 2021-23 on a quarterly basis, providing scrutiny and challenge to results, as well as ensuring that evaluations are carried out of risks and assessments of performance. Furthermore, it holds responsibility to ensure that arrangements for good governance are in place and operating effectively and that systems are in place to secure continuous improvement in its functions. Performance is reviewed using a range of quantitative and qualitative measures, and where possible comparing to appropriate benchmarks.

## **Community Planning**

The Council has established a Community Planning Partnership and 'Support' Partners have also been appointed to reflect the priorities of the Recovery Plan. The Community Planning Partnership is complemented by 3 x Outcome Delivery Groups:

- People
- Place
- Prosperity

The Community Planning Partnership meets on a bi-annual basis, with minutes noted at the Community Planning Committee.

To support the delivery of the Recovery Plan 2021-23, Elected Members and officers have roles within seven District Elected Member Engagement Groups. Meetings are held three times annually.

The Community Planning Partnership, associated Outcome Delivery Groups and DEA Engagement Groups are embedded in Council's Recovery Plan.

## **Corporate Leadership Team**

The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) oversee delivery of the Corporate Recovery Plan 2021-23, whilst quality assuring any proposals and resolving corporate issues as they arise. CLT report progress to Council/Committee and seek policy direction as required. Directors act as DEA Leads and have strategic influence throughout the organisation to ensure that the officers involved in the delivery of the recovery objectives obtain the necessary resources – HR, Finance & IT etc.) to ensure ultimate success.

## **Project Managers and Project Officers**

A formal reporting structure has been developed and approved for project managers and officers delivering against the Recovery Plan to report progress.

## **Performance and Transformation Team**

The Performance and Transformation team provide support for the performance management system and the recording, measurement and reporting of the results of the Recovery Plan.

## **Benchmarking**

The Council is an active member of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), which works with over 300 councils throughout the UK to promote public sector excellence. This includes participation in the Performance Network, enabling the Council to compare our performance across a wide range of services and activities.

Council officers will continue to work with the Local Government Performance Working Group, Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Audit Office to progress a benchmarking approach.

In addition to this, council officers, benchmark and review best practice as part of the continuous improvement process.

## Recovery Plan Objectives

Recovery Objective	Delivering against statutory aspects of improvement	Associated Community Planning Framework Outcome	Associated Corporate Plan 2019-2030 Objectives	Why has this objective been chosen
Place We will improve the attractiveness of our Borough.	Strategic Effectiveness Service Quality Service Availability Fairness Sustainability Efficiency Innovation	Our citizens live in connected, safe, clean and vibrant places.  Our citizens enjoy good health and well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People take pride in their surroundings.</li> <li>• People feel safe.</li> <li>• Our environment, natural habitats and built heritage are protected and enhanced.</li> <li>• We have vibrant and welcoming towns, villages, neighbourhoods and rural areas.</li> <li>• People choose to reuse or recycle their waste.</li> <li>• We have an efficient planning process that promotes positive development and sustainable growth.</li> </ul>	<p>We want to ensure that our Borough is an attractive place for residents, visitors and investors.</p> <p>The Council is mindful that people have changed their behaviours in the way that they shop and travel and the impact on our environment.</p>
Prosperity We aim to accelerate our economic recovery and attract investment.	Strategic Effectiveness Service Quality Service Availability Fairness Sustainability Efficiency Innovation	Our citizens benefit from economic prosperity.  Our citizens enjoy good health and well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a world class infrastructure which supports the expansion of indigenous businesses, attracts investment and supports productivity, exports and business growth and acts as a centre of excellence for global companies.</li> <li>• We will identify and support entrepreneurs and have a strong competitive business advantage which sustains existing jobs and creates new employment opportunities.</li> <li>• We have an attractive tourism offer and have maximised the benefits to our Borough.</li> <li>• We have a strong arts and culture brand which enhances the image and reputation of the Council.</li> <li>• We have an efficient planning process that promotes positive development and sustainable growth.</li> </ul>	<p>Businesses have been hugely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council recognises the challenges they are facing and will continue to provide support through a comprehensive portfolio of advice and funding.</p> <p>The Council understands the need to engage with Central Government Departments, the private sector and other stakeholders to accelerate our economic recovery and attract investment in key employment locations to ensure that our infrastructure can attract sustainable investment and create new job opportunities.</p> <p>We appreciate the need to support our existing businesses to protect existing jobs and create new employment opportunities to assist, upskill and reskill our residents to make sure that they can take advantage of the employment opportunities that we will create.</p>

## Recovery Plan Objectives

Recovery Objective	Delivering against statutory aspects of improvement	Associated Community Planning Framework Outcome	Associated Corporate Plan 2019-2030 Objectives	Why has this objective been chosen
<p><b>People</b></p> <p>The Council will take steps to ensure an inclusive recovery which will address the economic and social needs of our residents.</p>	<p>Strategic Effectiveness Service Quality Service Availability Fairness Sustainability Efficiency Innovation</p>	<p>Our citizens enjoy good health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Our citizens achieve their full potential.</p> <p>Our vulnerable people are supported.</p> <p>Our citizens live in connected, safe, clean and vibrant places.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We deliver high quality Council services and improve access for people, communities and businesses in the Borough.</li> <li>• The support we provide will lead to a more active, healthy and empowered community.</li> <li>• Communities and agencies work together to plan and deliver better services, address disadvantage and improve the quality of life for everyone.</li> <li>• Our community is inclusive and supportive and encourages a culture of equity, diversity and respect.</li> <li>• We communicate clearly with our residents, listen to their feedback and respond to their needs. Customers increasingly use the Council's digital platforms and can self-serve a wider range of council services.</li> <li>• We achieve excellence in customer and service quality standards and this will be recognised through accreditation schemes and awards.</li> <li>• People choose to reuse or recycle their waste.</li> <li>• We have an attractive tourism offer and have maximised the benefits to our Borough.</li> </ul>	<p>Our communities and residents have been most impacted by COVID-19 and we recognise the challenges and opportunities we need to address in the future.</p>

## **Statutory Performance Measures**

A set of seven performance measures are in place for Local Government through the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015.

These relate to three distinct services within the Council, as set out below.

### **Waste and Recycling**

W1: The percentage of household waste collected by Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse)

Household waste is as defined in Article 2 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997(a) and the Controlled Waste and Duty of Care Regulations (NI) 2013(b).

W2: The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled.

Local Authority collected municipal waste is as defined in section 21 of the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003(c).

The Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) has set targets up to 2019-20, and whilst the scheme is no longer operational, the Council expects to meet these targets.

W3: The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings

Local Authority collected municipal waste arisings is the total amount of local authority collected municipal waste which has been collected by a district Council.

Statutory indicators have been set by the former Department of the Environment for Waste Management Functions of Councils to ensure consistency and reliability of data and to facilitate accurate comparison between Councils. This is aimed at providing Ministerial and public assurance over the performance of the local authority collected waste management system.

Central reporting also ensures that the Department (now DAERA) continues to meet its statutory obligations under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics when reporting at a regional level.

Each of the 11 Councils has access to a web based system for local authority collected municipal waste reporting known as Waste Data Flow (WDF). This facilitates reporting from local government to central government and data is based on returns made to WDF by Councils, within two months of the end of each quarter.

Quarterly data reports are provisional and may change when all returns have undergone validation. The fully validated figures that are published in the annual report have undergone audit by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and further validation by Statistics and Analytical Services Branch (SASB).

Performance against Waste and Recycling targets, and the standards to be achieved for 2021-22 are:

<b>Measure of success</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21 Projected</b>	<b>Statutory target for 2021-22</b>
The percentage of household waste collected that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse)	57.3%	54.5%*	50%
The amount (tonnage) collected municipal waste arising	102,267	91,582*	N/A
The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable municipal waste that is landfilled	10,988	11,668*	16,788

\*Most recent version of unvalidated data, September 2021, from the WasteDataFlow system. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, will publish a validated annual report in November 2021.

## **Economic Development**

ED1: The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity

Business start-up activity means the delivery of completed client led business Plans under the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's Regional Start Initiative or its successor programmes).

Business start-up activity means the delivery of completed client led business Plans under the Department for the Economy and the Regional Start Initiative (or its successor programmes).

The Council's Economic Development Service is responsible for managing the Business Start-Up Programme for the Borough alongside other economic development and tourism programmes and initiatives. The Business Start-Up Programme, only one part of the Council's economic development service, transferred to Local Government on 1 April 2015 from the former Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the statutory indicator was introduced by regional government to ensure that the function is carried out in a clear, fair and consistent manner and that best practice is applied across the 11 Councils.

Performance against the Economic Development target, and the standard to be achieved for 2021-22 are:

<b>Measure of success</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>Statutory target for 2021-22</b>
Number of jobs promoted through start-up activity via the Go for It Programme	106	84	80

## **Planning**

P1: The average processing time of major planning applications

An application in the category of major development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015(a).

P2: The average processing time of local planning applications

Local applications means an application in the category of local development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI)

2015, and any other applications for approval or consent under the Planning Act (NI) 2011 (or any orders or regulations made under that Act).

P3: The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks

Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control under Part 5 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 (or any orders or regulations made under that Act).

The Council's Planning Service is responsible for:

- Receiving and making decisions on the majority of planning applications;
- Enforcing breaches of planning permission;
- Making tree preservation orders;
- Protecting and preserving built heritage; and
- Producing a Local Development Plan outlining how land should be used and developed in the future.

The Planning function transferred to local government from the former Department of the Environment on 1 April 2015 and the statutory indicators were introduced at that time to ensure that the planning functions were carried out in a clear, fair and consistent manner.

Quarterly reports are produced by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) based on information available through the Planning Portal, i.e. a regional website where you can track all planning applications. Every application received, across all 11 Councils and by the DfI (i.e. regionally significant applications), is entered onto the Planning Portal.

The quarterly statistical reports are compiled by DfI and provided to each of the Councils. The reports are also available through the DfI website.

Council Planning Officers also have the ability to produce management reports from the Planning Portal to monitor application processing.

Performance against Planning targets, and the standards to be achieved for 2021-22 are:

<b>Measure of success</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>Statutory target for 2021-22</b>
MAJOR - % processing times for major planning applications processed within the 30 week target	58.3%	40%	50%
MAJOR - Average processing times in weeks for major planning applications processed within the 30 week target	24.6 weeks	113.4 weeks	30 weeks
LOCAL - % processing times for local planning applications within the 15 week target	80.3%	64.3%	50%
LOCAL - Average processing times in weeks for local planning applications within the 15 week target	9.4 weeks	12.4 weeks	15 weeks

ENFORCEMENT - % processing times for enforcement planning cases within the 39 week target	98.7%	90.8%	70%
ENFORCEMENT - Average processing times in weeks for enforcement planning cases within the 39 week target	7.0 weeks	24.4 weeks	39 weeks

## **Consultation**

On 24 May 2021 an eight-week public consultation was initiated to derive feedback from Residents and Stakeholders; Local Businesses; Statutory and Community Planning partners; and other bodies with which collaborative working is taking place or is being planned.

An online questionnaire on the Council's corporate website / consultation hub enabled the Council to seek opinions on the key priorities identified within the draft Plan. In addition, Officers emailed a copy of the Plan to all their key stakeholders and Section 75 consultees for their comment and feedback.

The public consultation closed on 19 July 2021 and 45 responses (42 questionnaires completed and 3 independent responses) were received. The responses were extremely positive and provided reassurance of the appropriateness of the principles identified to assist recovery of our Borough. All respondents received an acknowledgement, and their comments were passed on to officers as appropriate.

Members were provided with a summary of the consultation responses. The feedback from the consultation will be considered for incorporation into the implementation plans to ensure the Borough continues to develop, improve, grow and be a place where people choose to invest, learn, work, visit and live in.

## **Continuous Feedback**

The Council is committed to improving our services and an important part of that is listening to the residents, businesses and visitors to our Borough.

The Council have a number of systems and processes in place to capture this feedback and integrate it into continuous improvement processes.

## **Accessibility**

To comply with legislation, the Corporate Recovery Plan 2021-23 is available in a number of alternative formats on request and is published on the Council's website in an executive summary format.