

Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan

2026/2027 DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Executive Summary

| FOREWORD

We are delighted to present the Executive Summary of our Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan for the year 2026/27, outlining our steadfast commitment to the wellbeing of our residents, protecting our environment, the prosperity of the Borough and the seamless delivery of our services.

We have reviewed our Corporate Plan for 2024-2030 ensuring it continues to be aligned with our Community Plan. Our dedication to the delivery of exceptional services to our residents, enhancing their quality of life remains.

The Council's Vision as set out in our Corporate Plan remains to be an "ambitious Council working towards a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable Borough" Our Mission is "to meet and exceed the needs and aspirations of all our people and to be recognised for dynamic leadership and excellence locally, nationally and internationally."

To achieve Our Vision, the Council recognises the need to collaborate with a broad spectrum of stakeholders. This includes our Community Development partners through our Love Living Here Community Plan, and Local Development Plan, as well as ongoing engagement with our residents, businesses, stakeholders, dedicated staff and trade unions.

The Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan highlights the good work and performance achievements for the past year, building upon our efforts of previous years, recognised with our status as APSE UK Council of the year in

2024 and finalist in 2025. It illustrates how we have focused on supporting the residents and businesses of the Borough, maintained essential services, maximised community capacity building, invested in the regeneration of our towns and villages and protected our environment.

In the Plan the Council has set out six Performance Improvement Objectives focusing on supporting the Health & Wellbeing of our residents, listening to and learning from, our customers, improving the attractiveness of the Borough, engaging our staff, supporting local businesses, promoting sustainability and upholding the highest standards of governance. To drive progress in these areas, Council strives to meet these Performance Objectives the Plan sets out a range of ambitious targets, detailed on pages 8 to 19.

The Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2026/27 identifies six Guiding Principles that underpin our approach to continuous improvement:

- **Improve the Health & Wellbeing of our Residents**
- **Protect our Planet's Environment**
- **Provide the Best-in-Class Customer Service Experience**
- **Improve our Employee Experience**
- **Encourage Economic Growth within the Borough**
- **Maintain the Financial Sustainability and ensure we are a Trusted Organisation**

Our Performance Improvement Objectives and linked improvement indicators will be scrutinised by the Northern Ireland Audit Office under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. We are also subject to a number of Statutory Performance Targets set through the Local Government (Performance Indicator Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

We will review the Plan on a regular basis in line with the resources available to the Council and to make sure that it meets the needs of our residents, visitors, businesses and investors and reflects the priorities of the Northern Ireland Executive. It will be supported by robust Performance Governance Arrangements and detailed departmental Business Plans. The outcomes, of which, will be reported in our annual self-assessment, scheduled for publication in September 2027.

The Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan, along with its Performance Objectives and Indicators, are the drivers to ensure that as a Council we reinvigorate our Place, support our People, build Prosperity whilst safeguarding our Planet.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leah Kirkpatrick".

COUNCILLOR LEAH KIRKPATRICK
Mayor of Antrim and
Newtownabbey



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Baker".

RICHARD BAKER GM MSc
Chief Executive

I OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We will implement key guiding principles that will improve the health & wellbeing of our residents, protect our planet's environment, proactively enhance the attractiveness of our towns, villages, parks and managed open spaces, provide best-in-class customer services and encourage economic growth within Antrim and Newtownabbey to ensure that it continues to be a place to invest, work, visit and live in. To ensure our principles are rooted within the Council and fully benefit all parts of our Borough, we will attract and retain talent, foster dynamic leadership and protect the wellbeing of our staff. We will embed best in practice governance arrangements to maintain our financial sustainability and protect our profile and ensure we comply with our legislative and regulatory obligations. We will continue to engage collectively with stakeholders to ensure a focused, sustainable and inclusive Borough for everyone.



To Improve the Health & Wellbeing of our Residents,

We will:

- Provide civic leadership and work with our partners to improve the quality of life for all our residents.
- Improve our Leisure, Parks, Community Programmes, Culture and Heritage sites to encourage resident engagement and support their Health & Wellbeing.
- Ensure through community engagement, we will maximise the uptake of Council support and wellbeing initiatives.
- Proactively enhance the attractiveness of our Borough.
- Ensure the health of residents by ensuring compliance with the highest standards of Environmental Health regulations.



To Protect Our Planet's Environment,

We will:

- Continue to demonstrate our commitment to improve the environment by reducing our carbon emissions and water usage, through the implementation of our Climate Change Action Plan.
- Protect and enhance our environment, conserving and restoring the biodiversity of our open spaces.
- Promote responsibility through climate and sustainability education and awareness programmes.



To Provide the Best-in-Class Customer Service Experience,

We will:

- Improve our customer experience through a variety of digital and traditional communication channels.
- Encourage open communication with residents.
- Utilise the newest technology to enhance the customer experience journey.



To Improve our Employee Experience,

We will:

- Foster dynamic leadership, promote diversity and inclusion, drive innovation and excellence to support succession planning and the development of our staff.
- Enhance the employee experience and strengthen our employee value proposition.
- Develop best practice staff development and training programmes.
- Support our staff through proactive and reactive wellbeing programmes.



To Encourage Economic Growth within the Borough,

We will:

- Engage with Central Government Departments, the private sector and other stakeholders to accelerate growth in our economy.
- Attract investment by promoting key employment locations within the Borough, ensuring that our infrastructure can attract sustainable well paid career opportunities.
- Support our existing businesses to protect existing jobs and expand their operations.
- Assist, upskill and reskill our residents to make sure that they can take advantage of the employment opportunities that we will create.
- Revitalise our Town Centres, Villages, Parks and Open Spaces by ensuring they are welcoming, safe, vibrant and connected places.

- Continue to implement an investment programme to improve Council facilities.
- Maximise levels of external funding available to the Borough to support our strategic actions.



To Maintain our Financial Sustainability and ensure we are a Trusted Organisation,

We will:

- Ensure our finances are managed in accordance with all relevant legislation.
- Ensure we comply with all our regulatory and legislative obligations.
- Maintain the financial sustainability of the Council and protect its reputation through transparency and best practice Governance arrangements.
- Continue to fully engage with external assessment and audit arrangements.
- Continue our Elected Member development programme.
- Ensure we pay our suppliers promptly.

I CONSULTATION

Significant consultation and engagement has been undertaken throughout the community planning process to identify and understand community needs and priorities and to align these to community planning outcomes.

Throughout 2025/26 to date 34 consultations were carried out with 6045 respondents.

This work has helped to inform the identification of Corporate Performance Indicators and Performance Improvement Targets for 2026/27, along with their associated implementation plans. Alongside this, the Council provides a facility through its website for the submission of comments in relation to potential improvements.

The draft Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2026/27 has been reviewed and agreed by Elected Members who, through their local representative role, can test the relevance of the improvement objectives against local needs.

Public consultation on the draft Plan will take place from 2 February to 27 April 2026.

In order to provide your feedback on our plans, or to make additional suggestions, you can do so by completing the public consultation in the following ways:

- Copies of the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2026/27 (Draft) for Consultation and the consultation document are available at the reception of both Mossley Mill and Antrim Civic Centre.
- Online at antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/consultations.
- By emailing performance@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk to request copies of both documents.

- Digitally accessing both documents via the QR Code.



- Or by attending one of consultation events details of which can be accessed on our website.

If you would like a response to any comment / issue you raise during the consultation please provide your contact details and indicate that you wish to be contacted by opting to do so when selecting the communication option.

A summary of the comments will be reported to the Policy & Governance Committee and Council, with the final version of the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2026/27 brought to the Council in June 2026.

| FEEDBACK

YOUR OPINION MATTERS

The Council is committed to improving our services and it is important that we listen to what the community have to say. We welcome your comments and your suggestions at any time of the year.

If you have any comments, or would like any further information, or to request a copy of this Plan, please contact:

Performance Improvement Team
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Antrim Civic Centre,
50 Stiles Way,
Antrim
BT41 2UB

T. 0300 123 4568

E. performance@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

To ensure the equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide alternative formats upon request, where reasonably practical. If the exact request cannot be met, we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY) or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

For information in alternative formats, or to discuss any aspect of accessibility, please contact:

Accessibility and Inclusion Officer
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Antrim Civic Centre,
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| APPENDIX 1 - CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2026/27

This year's Improvement Objectives continue to focus on supporting the health & wellbeing of our residents, listening to our customers, improving the attractiveness of our Borough, supporting our local businesses, creating a more sustainable Borough and ensuring the highest standards of Governance.

We have retained five out of the six improvement objectives from 2025/26, and we include one new 2026/27 improvement objective. These objectives seek to develop growth in the local economy by supporting existing businesses, encouraging investment and creating jobs, and encourage transparent, robust and best practice Governance Arrangements to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council and protect the services we provide. Please see an outline of each improvement objective below:

IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 1

We will support the Health & Wellbeing of our residents through increasing the use of Council facilities, visits to our parks, culture and heritage sites, and availing of Council support and wellbeing programmes and initiatives.

Which of the 7 statutory aspects of improvement will this objective aim to deliver against?

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

Associated Community Plan Framework Outcome:

"Our citizens enjoy good Health & Wellbeing."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Objective:

"Working in partnership to plan and deliver better services, address disadvantage and improve the quality of life for everyone."

"The facilities and support we provide will lead to a more active, healthy and sustainable community."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Theme:

Our People, Our Planet, Our Place

Why has this been retained as an improvement objective for 2026/27

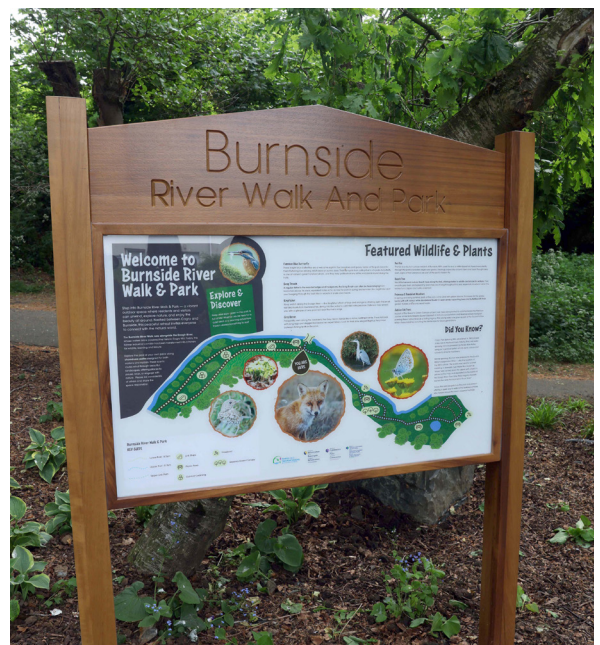
We strive to be an area where people choose to locate and where residents enjoy a high quality of life. Through our leisure and community provisions and other commitments we will continue to support initiatives to improve the health & wellbeing of our citizens. We are committed to working in partnership with all key stakeholders to plan and deliver better services, address disadvantages and improve the quality of life for everyone.

What will we do?

- Develop a single unit responsible for the administration and management of Grant Funding
 - Work in partnership with Community Advice, services to ensure wraparound support for residents
 - Encourage participation in arts, culture and heritage events
 - Promote our Community Centres and hubs for community groups and events
 - Measure the number of visitors to our award-winning parks and open spaces
 - Maintain the number of visits to our leisure centres
 - Implement a programme of initiatives that help to support our residents health & wellbeing
 - Ensure compliance with Environmental Health regulations
 - Continue to improve the way we interact with our customers
- Continue to promote and fulfil our responsibilities through a review of our Disability and Equality Scheme Action Plans
 - Promote Antrim and Newtownabbey as an Age Friendly Borough

We will have succeeded in 2026/27 if:

- £1.5m grant funding is supported through Community and Culture Grant Aid
- We attract 575,000 visitors to our arts, culture and heritage sites and 1.3m to our parks and open spaces
- We will maintain the number of people with MORE Leisure membership at 14,500
- 85% compliance with statutory Environmental Health regulations
- 80% Customer and Resident satisfaction with Community and Wellbeing initiatives across the Borough



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 2

We will protect and improve our planet's environment, through reducing the impact of our activities to make Antrim and Newtownabbey a sustainable and climate adapted Borough. This includes promoting renewable energy, improving waste management, encouraging sustainable transportation and fostering community awareness and engagement in environmental conservation efforts.

Which of the 7 statutory aspects of improvement will this objective aim to deliver against?

Strategic Effectiveness; Sustainability; Efficiency and Innovation

Associated Community Plan Framework Outcome:

"Our citizens live in connected, safe, clean and vibrant places."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Objective:

"We will work towards being environmentally sustainable and reducing the impact of Council services by improving our environmental performance and reducing our carbon footprint."

"We will maximise the tourism potential of the Borough by developing attractive and sustainable destinations and experiences."

"Operate a proactive and efficient planning service that promotes positive sustainable development and growth."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Theme:

Our Planet, Our Place

Why has this been retained as an improvement objective for 2026/27

We recognise that our activities and services can have positive and negative impacts upon the environment, and that we need to manage them to improve our performance and manage risks. We are committed to protecting the environment by minimising any adverse environmental impact, while creating opportunities for enhancing positive environmental effects to improve the quality of life for people. We have established an all-party Sustainability Working Group which will steer the development of our Sustainability Action Plan. Our Action Plan reflects the UN Sustainability Development Goals we can influence both directly and indirectly. We aim to inspire others by continuously improving the environmental performance of our operations, and continue to promote to reduce, reuse and recycle to create a healthier more sustainable community for current and future generations.

What will we do?

- Undertake a full review of energy usage across operations
- Reduce waste and minimise water and energy demand across Council buildings and services
- Encourage the use of renewables and low cost carbon energy
- Protect and enhance our environments, conserving and restoring them and the biodiversity they contain
- Continue to invest in education and awareness programmes promoting responsible behaviours

We will have succeeded in 2026/27 if:

- 62.5% of household waste is sent for recycling (Statutory Target)
- Reduce the total annual water consumption by >2%
- 2.5% reduction in the amount of carbon emissions from the Council operational fleet
- We have a 1% reduction in the Council's Carbon Footprint
- We maintain the percentage of Council parks and open spaces assigned for biodiversity projects at >19.3%



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 3

We will provide best-in-class services for our residents and make them feel valued and engaged. By fostering trust, engagement, through attracting and retaining talent, developing dynamic leadership and ensuring the wellbeing of our colleagues, we are committed to elevating the customer experience and increasing the satisfaction with the services the Council provides.

Which of the 7 statutory aspects of improvement will this objective aim to deliver against?

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

Associated Community Plan Framework Outcome:

"Our citizens live in safe, connected, safe and vibrant places."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Objective:

"We deliver high quality Council services and improve access for people, communities and businesses in the Borough."

"Promote the Customer voice by engaging with citizens, to achieve excellence in customer and service quality standards."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Theme:

Our People

Why has this been retained and enhanced as an improvement objective for 2026/27?

The Council continues to put our customers at the heart of our service delivery, which is why we have kept high Customer Satisfaction as an Improvement Objective. We continue to promote and improve live chat functionality and customer hubs, in addition to expanding the number of services available through our digital platform.

We want to better understand the needs of our customers and utilise the development of a customer engagement framework to promote the customer voice by engaging with our citizens, to achieve excellence in customer and service quality standards. We will use several different data sources to build a rich picture of our customers and use this information to tailor our services.

The Council recognises that investing in employee wellbeing can lead to better employee engagement, reduce sickness absence and higher performance. We will continue to enhance the employee experience and strengthen our employee value proposition. We aim to improve employee satisfaction, retention and reduce absence. We will continue to deliver a comprehensive wellbeing programme and work collaboratively to manage attendance closely, review relevant procedures and improve service delivery.

What will we do?

- We will continue to improve our communication with our citizens utilising both digital and traditional methods including our enhanced live chat functionality, website, Residents App, social media channels, Borough Life magazine and review our customer service system to integrate the latest technology to be the best in class.
- We will regularly seek and act on feedback from residents, visitors and local businesses through a programme of consultation and engagement
- We will make customer interactions seamless, responsive and positive
- We will reduce the number of abandoned calls
- We will promote and improve our live chat functionality
- We will implement a customer engagement framework
- We will provide customer services training to all frontline staff
- Through staff training and wellbeing initiatives we will improve our effectiveness in delivering services

We will have succeeded in 2026/27 if:

- We achieve at least 80% satisfaction with overall Council services
- The percentage of abandoned calls will be 6% (or less)
- The percentage of abandoned live chats will be 6% or less
- We will continue to improve our customer engagement through increasing our consultation response

- We will increase our following on Council social media platforms
- We will increase the average number of staff training days
- 80% of employees report a positive employee experience



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 4

We will improve the attractiveness of the Borough through proactively improving the cleanliness of our streets, town and village centres, parks and open spaces. We will engage with other partner agencies to improve the perceived safety of our residents within the Borough. Working collaboratively to make Antrim and Newtownabbey a place where people want to live, work and visit.

Which of the 7 statutory aspects of improvement will this objective aim to deliver against?

Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Fairness, Sustainability, and Efficiency

Associated Community Plan Framework Outcome:

"Our citizens enjoy good Health & Wellbeing."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Objective:

"To be a place where people take pride in their surroundings"

"Have vibrant and welcoming towns, villages neighbourhoods and rural areas"

"Work in partnership to plan and deliver better services, address disadvantage, and improve the quality of life for everyone"

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Theme:

Our Place, Our People, Our Prosperity, Our Profile

Why has this been added as a new improvement objective for 2026/27?

The Council strives to make Antrim and Newtownabbey an attractive, welcoming and safe Borough for all, and to make it a better place for residents, businesses and visitors to live, work and visit. This is why we have introduced this as an improvement objective for 2026/27. We will survey our towns, villages, parks and open spaces to proactively identify and address areas of improvement. We will work with partner agencies to improve the safety of the Borough and to campaign to end violence against women and girls.

What will we do?

- Through the use of specialised applications carry out regular inspections of streets, roads, parks, playparks and cemeteries.
- Continue to support a wide range of organisations across our community to raise awareness and help end violence against women and girls across Antrim and Newtownabbey
- Work with other agencies to make the Borough a safer place to live
- Tirelessly work to End Violence Against Women and Girls
- Respond promptly to cleansing requests
- Provide a range of family friendly events for residents and visitors to enjoy.
- Continue to promote Antrim and Newtownabbey as a place to live, work and visit.

We will have succeeded in 2026/27 if:

- The total number of attendees at all Council run events exceeds 165,000
- The percentage of residents that believe Antrim and Newtownabbey is a safe place to live exceeds 80%
- Streets and Roads inspected via the LAMS randomiser application achieve a satisfactory (A or B) rating exceeds 90%
- The satisfaction with the cleanliness of the Borough exceeds 80%
- Cleansing requests are responded to within less than 48hrs of notification
- Residents' satisfaction with Parks and Open spaces exceeds 80%



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 5

We will grow the local economy by supporting development of existing businesses securing new investment, creating jobs, providing training and upskilling people into work.

Which of the 7 statutory aspects of improvement will this objective aim to deliver against?

Strategic Effectiveness; Service Quality and Efficiency

Associated Community Plan Framework Outcome:

"Our citizens benefit from economic prosperity."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Objective:

"We will nurture our entrepreneurial base, creating an environment for new and existing businesses to succeed, providing upskilling opportunities and increasing employment."

"We will continue to deliver regulatory services and implement efficient processes and improvement programmes across Council services."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Theme:

Our Prosperity, Our Performance

Why we have chosen to retain this as an improvement objective for 2026/27

We are an ambitious Council and want to take advantage of all opportunities to encourage people to live, work and invest in the Borough.

We have a Borough of real opportunity and have much to offer investors and businesses. We will work collaboratively with all stakeholders to maximise the economic prosperity in the Borough.

What will we do?

- Nurture our entrepreneurial base, creating an environment for new and existing businesses to succeed, providing upskilling opportunities, increasing employment.
- Through responsive and efficient Planning and Economic Development support, we will attract investment, support business growth, and be a centre of excellence for global companies.
- We will continue to review and improve our internal processes, whilst delivering regular training to staff.

We will have succeeded in 2026/27 if:

- 250 existing businesses are assisted to develop / expand their operations through business support programmes
- 150 people are assisted in to work through local labour market partnership and related activity
- 50 new jobs are created through the Council investment promotion fund
- 500 businesses have availed of / engaged with / been supported through the Council's suite of programmes and events
- Secure a minimum of £500,000 external funding for the achievement of projects across a variety of sources.



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 6

We will embed transparent, robust and best practice Governance Arrangements to maintain the financial sustainability of the Council, to protect the services we provide, and to ensure compliance with all our obligation both regulatory.

Which of the 7 statutory aspects of improvement will this objective aim to deliver against?

Strategic Effectiveness; Service Quality; Service Availability; and Efficiency

Associated Community Plan Framework Outcome:

"Our citizens live in connected, safe clean and vibrant places."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 objective:

"We will be at the forefront of good governance, optimise the resources available to us and ensure financial sustainability."

"Continue to deliver regulatory services and implement efficient processes and improvement programmes across Council services."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Theme:

Our Performance, Our Profile

Why we have chosen to retain this as an improvement objective for 2026/27

We want to ensure that as a Council we are financially sustainable and deliver value for money. We will review and refine our services to ensure that they are being delivered in an efficient and effective manner. We have a responsibility to apply good governance and to use our statutory powers of environmental health, planning and building control to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of those living and working in the Borough.

The Council needs to ensure there are robust and regulatory arrangements in place to support performance management and improvement which drive and provide assurance that we are delivering on our vision, shared outcomes and improvement objectives.

As a key procurer of goods and services in the Borough, the Council is aware of the importance of cash flow to businesses, particularly small businesses, and will continue to review its processes to ensure that suppliers receive payments quickly.

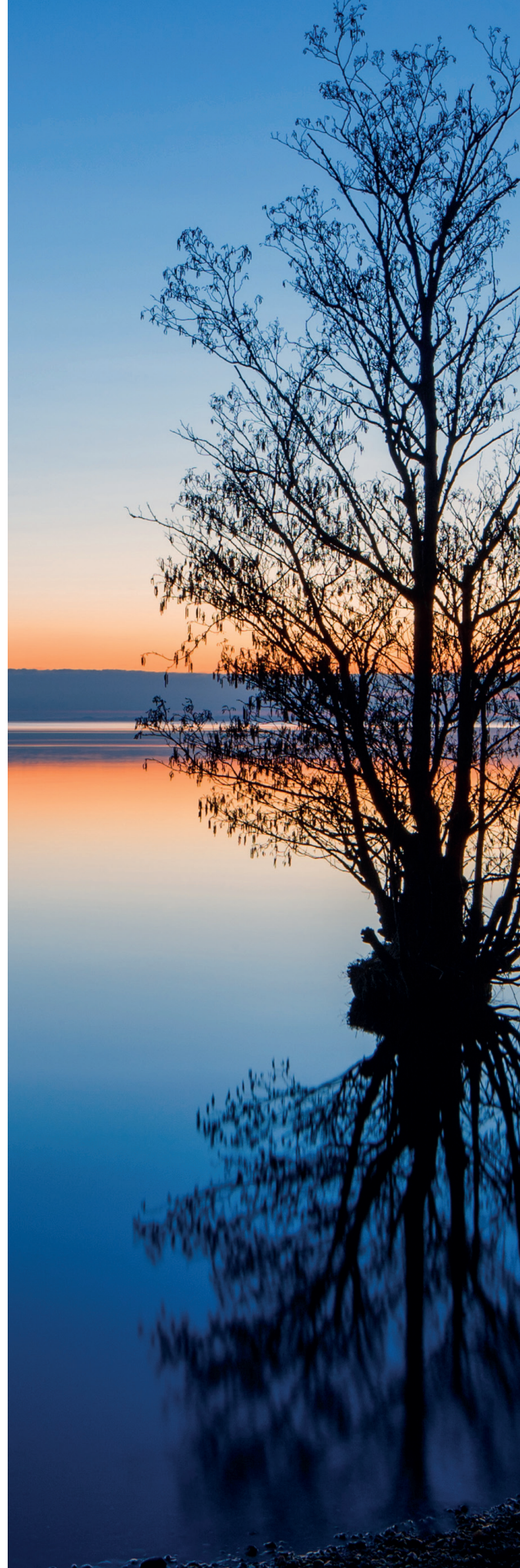
Improving our systems and processes to ensure the Council is consistently meeting its quarterly target is important to the Council and businesses in the Borough.

What will we do?

- Maintain the financial health of the Council
- Ensure our finances are managed in accordance with the requirements of all relevant legislation
- Provide full assurance and good governance through the continued pursuit of internal and external assessment and audit arrangements
- Continue to adopt a Councillor led strategic approach to Elected Member development and wellbeing
- Monitor and publish our payment timescales ensuring we strive for excellence

We will have succeeded in 2026/27 if:

- We maintain Council's general reserves as per policy
- The annual Governance Statement is reported
- We achieve the Certificate of Compliance from the Northern Ireland Audit Office under Section 95 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 Act
- We receive NIAO certificate concluding that the financial statements have been prepared according to LG (Accounts & Audit) Regulation (NI) 2015 and the Department for Communities directions
- We maintain the Charter Plus Award for Elected Member Development
- 95% of Freedom of Information Requests responded to within agreed timescales.
- 80% of invoices are paid within 10 working days
- 90% of invoices are paid within 30 calendar days





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 **ANBorough**