

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2025/26

Executive Summary

| FOREWORD

This document provides an Executive Summary of the six Performance Improvement Objectives as set out in the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan for 2025/26. It outlines our 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 and revised 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, including our status as

APSE UK Council of the Year. 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, 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 6 to 17 of this executive summary.

The Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26 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 the 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 2026.

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

| OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We will implement key guiding principles that will improve the health & wellbeing of our residents, protect our planet's environment, 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, the update of Council support and wellbeing initiatives.



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 education and awareness programmes.



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

We will:

- Communicate clearly with our residents and ensure we provide the highest standards of customer service for our residents.
- Improve our level of engagement with residents and seek feedback, through enhanced residents' consultation to better understand the needs and priorities.
- Improve our customer experience through improved and proactive channels.
- Implement a new engagement framework.



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.



To Encourage Economic Growth within the Borough,

We will:

- Engage with Central Government Departments, the private sector and other stakeholders to accelerate 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.
- 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.

| VISION AND MISSION

OUR VISION

“Our ambitious Council working towards a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable Borough.”

OUR MISSION

“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.”

Our performance and improvement framework is centred on four themes of

• Place • People • Prosperity • Planet

OUR STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE MODEL





UK OVERALL COUNCIL OF THE YEAR — WINNER —



| APPENDIX 1 - CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2025/26

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

We have enhanced four out of the six improvement objectives from 2024/25, and we included two new 2025/26 improvement objectives. 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 and enhanced as an improvement objective for 2025/26

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 and 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

We will have succeeded in 2025/26 if:

- £870K grant funding is supported through

Community Development Grant Aid

- We attract 575,000 visitors to our arts, culture, and heritage sites and 650,000 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 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 and enhanced as an improvement objective for 2025/26

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 2025/26 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 establish the percentage of Council parks and open spaces assigned for biodiversity projects



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 3

We will provide best-in-class services for our residents and make them feel valued and engaged. By fostering trust, engagement and increased satisfaction, we are committed to elevating the customer service experience.

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 2025/26?

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.

What will we do?

- We will continue to communicate with our citizens through Borough Life, Website, Residents' App, and Live Chat
- We will regularly seek and act on feedback from residents, visitors and local businesses through a programme of consultations 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 have succeeded in 2025/26 if:

- We achieve at least 80% satisfaction with overall Council services
- The percentage of abandoned calls will be 6.5% (or less)
- The percentage of abandoned Live Chats will be 8% or less
- We have increased the number of consultations and responses



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 4

We will attract and retain talent, foster dynamic leadership, promote development, diversity and inclusion and ensure the wellbeing of our colleagues. Our goal is to drive innovation and excellence in service delivery and strive to be a great place to work.

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 enjoy good Health & Wellbeing."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Objective:

"To be recognised for dynamic leadership and excellence locally, nationally and internationally."

"We will continue to build a resilient organisation culture by adopting best practice health, safety and wellbeing practices."

Associated Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Theme:

Our People, Our Performance, Our Profile

Why has this been retained and enhanced as an improvement objective for 2025/26?

The Council recognises that investing in employee wellbeing can lead to better employee engagement, reduced sickness absence and higher performance. This is why we are keeping staff attendance as an improvement objective. We will continue to enhance the employee experience and strengthen our employee value proposition. This is why 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?

- Enhance our employee experience and strengthen our employee value proposition
- Report and review performance and proactively respond to emerging needs
- Develop innovative leadership programmes to support succession planning and the development of our people

We will have succeeded in 2025/26 if:

- We will reduce the average number of days lost per employee to less than 14 days
- At least 55% of employees have full (100%) attendance
- 80% of employees report a positive employee experience



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 add this as an improvement objective for 2025/26

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 2025/26 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



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 and legislative and increasing the speed with which we pay suppliers.

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 add this as an improvement objective for 2025/26

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.

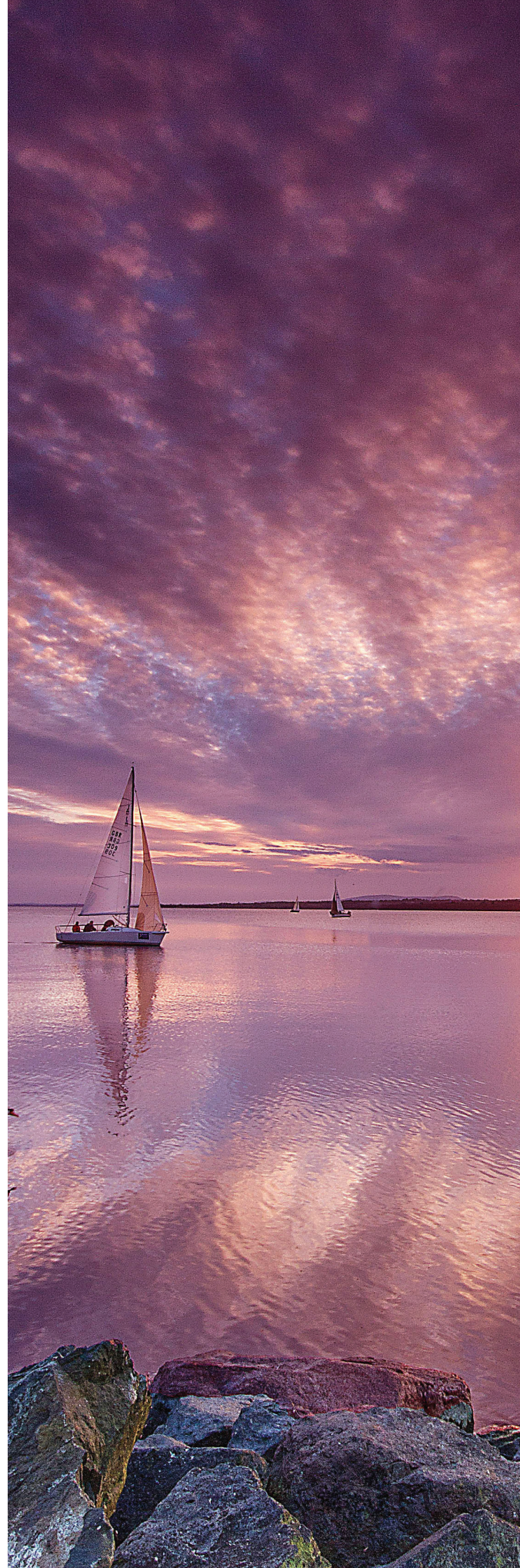
Improving our systems and processes to ensure the Council is consistently meeting its quarterly target is important to the Council and businesses in the Borough.

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 2025/26 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





SERVICE
AWARDS
2024 | UK OVERALL COUNCIL
OF THE YEAR
WINNER

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