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Mr Anthony Tohill
Chief Executive
Mid Ulster District Council
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28 November 2019

Dear Anthony,

Mid Ulster District Council: Section 95 of the Local Government Act 2014

Improvement Audit and Assessment – Audit and Assessment Report

The Local Government Auditor has now certified the improvement audit and assessment for the Council with a standard, unqualified opinion. I attach a copy of our final audit and assessment report.

The report sets out the findings and conclusions from our work, it includes the audit and assessment certificate as an Annex. I also attach a scanned copy of the original certificate signed by the Local Government Auditor.

This letter and attachments have been copied to the Department for Communities as the legislation requires. I would like to thank you and your staff for the assistance and co-operation we received throughout the audit.

Yours sincerely

Karen Beattie
Audit Manager

Audit and assessment of Mid Ulster District Council's performance improvement arrangements

Certificate of Compliance

I certify that I have audited Mid Ulster District Council's (the Council) assessment of its performance for 2018-19 and its improvement plan for 2019-20 in accordance with section 93 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) and the Code of Audit Practice for local government bodies.

I also certify that I have performed an improvement assessment for 2019-20 at the Council in accordance with Section 94 of the Act and the Code of Audit Practice.

This is a report to comply with the requirement of section 95(2) of the Act.

Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Local Government Auditor

Under the Act, the Council has a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions and to set improvement objectives for each financial year. The Council is required to gather information to assess improvements in its services and to issue a report annually on its performance against indicators and standards which it has set itself or which have been set for it by Government departments.

The Act requires the Council to publish a self-assessment before 30 September in the financial year following that to which the information relates, or by any other such date as the Department for Communities (the Department) may specify by order. The Act also requires that the Council has regard to any guidance issued by the Department in publishing its assessment.

As the Council's auditor, I am required by the Act to determine and report each year on whether:

- The Council has discharged its duties in relation to improvement planning, published the required improvement information and the extent to which the Council has acted in accordance with the Department's guidance in relation to those duties; and
- The Council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act.

Scope of the audit and assessment

For the audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information or whether the improvement plan published by the Council can be achieved. My audits of the Council's improvement plan and assessment of performance, therefore, comprised a review of the Council's publications to ascertain whether they included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the documents complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing them.

For the improvement assessment I am required to form a view on whether the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act, informed by:

- A forward looking assessment of the Council's likelihood to comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement; and
- A retrospective assessment of whether the Council has achieved its planned improvements to inform a view as to its track record of improvement.

My assessment of the Council's improvement responsibilities and arrangements, therefore, comprised a review of certain improvement arrangements within the Council, along with information gathered from my improvement audit.

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 93 to 95 of the Act cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.

Audit opinion

Improvement planning and publication of improvement information

As a result of my audit, I believe the Council has discharged its duties in connection with (1) improvement planning and (2) publication of improvement information in accordance with section 92 of the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.

Improvement assessment

As a result of my assessment, I believe the Council has discharged its duties under Part 12 of the Act and has acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.

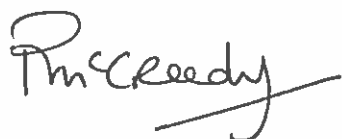
The 2019-20 year was the fourth in which councils were required to implement the performance improvement framework. The Council's arrangements to secure continuous improvement, should by now be well embedded. Whilst the Council continues to strengthen these arrangements, it nonetheless delivered some measurable improvements to its services in 2018-19 and has demonstrated a track record of ongoing improvement. In my opinion I believe that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Act during 2019-20.

I have not conducted an assessment to determine whether the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act in subsequent years. I will keep the need for this under review as arrangements become more fully established.

Other matters

I have no recommendations to make under section 95(2) of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014.

I am not minded to carry out a special inspection under section 95(2) of the Act.



PAMELA MCCREEDY
Local Government Auditor
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
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28 November 2019

Mid Ulster District Council

Audit and Assessment Report 2019-20

Report to the Council and the Department of Communities
under Section 95 of the Local Government (Northern
Ireland) Act 2014



28 November 2019

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We have prepared this report for sole use of the Mid Ulster District Council and the Department for Communities. You must not disclose it to any third party, quote or refer to it, without our written consent and we assume no responsibility to any other person.

1. Key Messages

Summary of the audit

Audit outcome	Status
Audit opinion	Unqualified opinion
Audit assessment	The LGA has concluded that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.
Statutory recommendations	The LGA made no statutory recommendations
Proposals for improvement	The LGA made one new proposal for improvement

This report summaries the work of the Local Government Auditor (LGA) on the 2019-20 performance improvement audit and assessment undertaken on Mid Ulster District Council (the Council). We would like to thank the Chief Executive and his staff, particularly the Performance Improvement Manager, for their assistance during this work.

We consider that we comply with the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) ethical standards and that, in our professional judgment, we are independent and our objectivity is not compromised.

Audit Opinion

The LGA has certified the performance arrangements with unqualified audit opinion, without modification. She certifies an improvement audit and improvement assessment has been conducted. The LGA also states that, as a result, she believes that Mid Ulster District Council (the Council) has discharged its performance improvement and reporting duties, including its assessment of performance for 2018-19 and its 2019-20 improvement plan, and has acted in accordance with the Guidance.

Audit Assessment

The LGA has assessed whether Mid Ulster District Council (the Council) is likely to comply with its performance improvement responsibilities under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act). This is called the 'improvement assessment'.

In her opinion the Council is likely to discharge its duties in respect of Part 12 of the Act during 2019-20 and has demonstrated a track record of improvement. The LGA did not exercise her discretion to assess and report whether the Council is likely to comply with these arrangements in future years.

Audit Findings

During the audit and assessment we identified no issues requiring a formal recommendation under the Act. We made one proposal for improvement (see Section 3). This represents good practice which should assist the Council in meeting its responsibilities for performance improvement. Detailed observations on thematic areas are provided in Annex C and progress on key proposals for improvement raised in prior years, which had not been fully addressed last year, has been noted in Annex B.

Status of the Audit

The LGA's audit and assessment work on the Council's performance improvement arrangements is now concluded. By March 2020 she will publish an Annual Improvement Report on the Council on the NIAO website, making it publicly available. This will summarise the key outcomes in this report.

The LGA did not undertake any Special Inspections under the Act in the current year.

The total audit fee charged is in line with that set out in our Audit Strategy.

Management of information and personal data

During the course of our audit we have access to personal data to support our audit testing. We have established processes to hold this data securely within encrypted files and to destroy it where relevant at the conclusion of our audit. We can confirm that we have discharged those responsibilities communicated to you in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

2. Audit Scope

Part 12 of the Act provides all councils with a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. It sets out:

- a number of council responsibilities under a performance framework; and
- key responsibilities for the LGA.

The Department for Communities (the Department) has published '*Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement 2016*' (the Guidance) which the Act requires councils and the LGA to follow. Further guidance to clarify the requirements of the general duty to improve was issued by the Department during 2019.

The improvement audit and assessment work is planned and conducted in accordance with the Audit Strategy issued to the Council, the LGA's Code of Audit Practice for Local Government Bodies in Northern Ireland and the Statement of Responsibilities.

The improvement audit

Each year the LGA has to report whether each council has discharged its duties in relation to improvement planning, the publication of improvement information and the extent to which each council has acted in accordance with the Department's Guidance. The procedures conducted in undertaking this work are referred to as an "improvement audit". During the course of this work the LGA may make statutory recommendations under section 95 of the Act.

The improvement assessment

The LGA also has to assess annually whether a council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act, including consideration of the arrangements to secure continuous improvement in that year. This is called the 'improvement assessment'. She also has the discretion to assess and report whether a council is likely to comply with these arrangements in future years.

The annual improvement report on the Council

The Act requires the LGA to summarise all of her work (in relation to her responsibilities under the Act) at the Council, in an 'annual improvement report'. This will be published on the NIAO website by March 2020, making it publicly available.

Special inspections

The LGA may also, in some circumstances, carry out special inspections which will be reported to the Council and the Department, and which she may publish.

3. Audit Findings

This section outlines key observations in the form of proposals for improvement, arising from following thematic areas of the Council's audit and assessment:

- General duty to improve;
- Governance arrangements;
- Improvement objectives;
- Consultation;
- Improvement plan;
- Arrangements to improve;
- Collection, use and publication of performance information; and
- Demonstrating a track record of improvement.

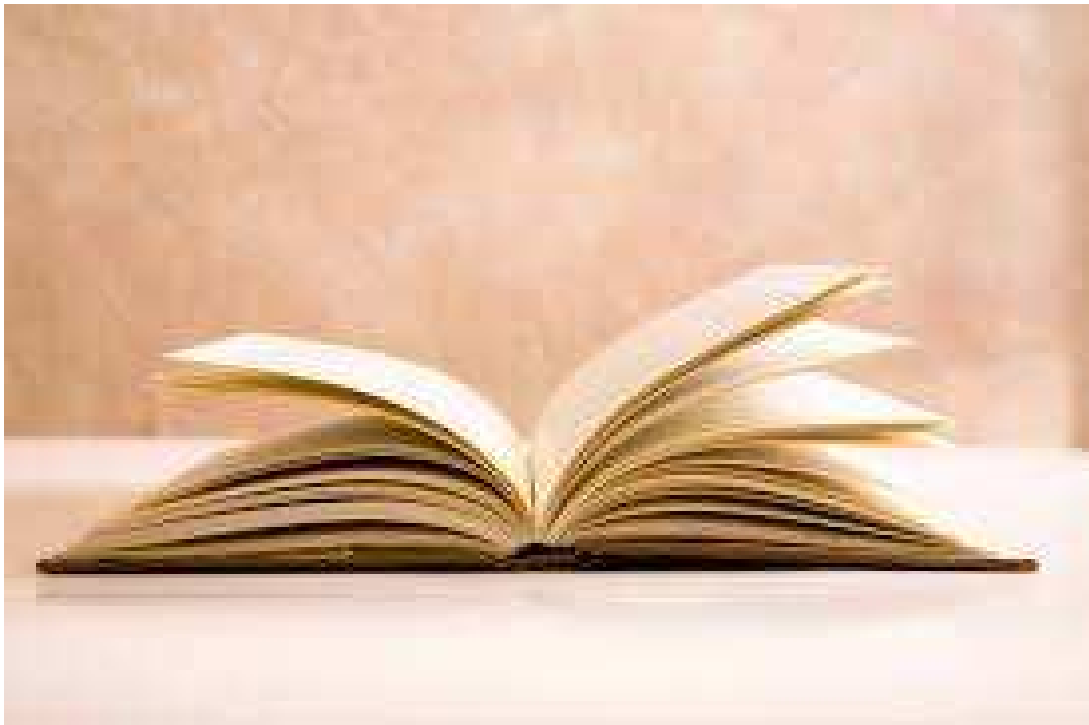
These are not formal recommendations, which are more significant matters which require action to be taken by the Council in order to comply with the Act or Guidance. Proposals for improvement include matters which, if accepted, will assist the Council in meeting its performance improvement responsibilities. The LGA may follow up how key proposals have been addressed in subsequent years. We recommend however that the Council's Audit Committee track progress on all proposals for improvement.

Our procedures were limited to those considered necessary for the effective performance of the audit and assessment. Therefore, the LGA's observations should not be regarded as a comprehensive statement of all weaknesses which exist, or all improvements which could be made.

Detailed observations for the thematic areas can be found at Annex C.

Thematic area	Issue	Proposal for improvement
Collection, use and publication of performance information	The detailed observations section of this report highlights examples of incorrect performance improvement information being published.	The Council should ensure that appropriate supporting documentation is in place in order to accurately assess performance against targets and that actual performance reported in the annual self assessment is agreed back to supporting documentation prior to publication. Appropriate validation procedures should be put in place for all information reported in respect to improvement objectives.

4. Annexes



Annex A – Audit and Assessment Certificate

Audit and assessment of Mid Ulster District Council’s performance improvement arrangements

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As the Council’s auditor, I am required by the Act to determine and report each year on whether:

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The 2019-20 year was the fourth in which councils were required to implement the performance improvement framework. The Council's arrangements to secure continuous improvement, should by now be well embedded. Whilst the Council continues to strengthen these arrangements, it nonetheless delivered some measurable improvements to its services in 2018-19 and has demonstrated a track record of ongoing improvement. In my opinion I believe that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Act during 2019-20.

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PAMELA McCREEDY
Local Government Auditor
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
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BT7 1EU

28 November 2019

Annex B – Follow up of implementation of key prior year proposals for improvement

Year of report	Reference	Proposal for improvement	Action taken by Council	Status
2018-19	Consultation	We would encourage any public body that regularly consults with the public to develop a flexible, principles based policy based on current good practice.	The Council has a draft policy in place which will be presented to the Policy & Resources on 5 December 2019.	In Progress
2017-18	General Duty to Improve	The Council needs to prioritise the development of its Performance Improvement Policy and performance management system and processes to support the general duty to improve. This will enable the performance management data across all its functions and services to be measured, benchmarked, and reported on to ensure the process of identification and selection of those areas which would benefit most from improvement is robust, transparent, well documented and subject to appropriate levels of scrutiny.	<p>The Council has a draft performance improvement policy, which will be included in the draft Corporate Performance Management and Improvement Framework. The policy is to be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee on 5 December 2019.</p> <p>The Council has started to benchmark year on year trend data in relation to both statutory and "self-imposed" indicators. The Council currently uses excel spreadsheets to track performance but is looking to further develop the capture and use of service data (or other qualitative data) by other electronic means/ a performance management system. This will enable more efficient performance measurement and benchmarking of its services and functions.</p> <p>The Council has undertaken extensive work in ensuring data in the three self-imposed' indicators is accurate, reliable,</p>	In Progress

Year of report	Reference	Proposal for improvement	Action taken by Council	Status
			valid and timely. Performance indicator templates have been developed and capture the descriptions, intent, purpose, calculations, data management, recording, potential for benchmarking, and accountabilities. These performance indicator templates will be a quality tool/standard for performance improvement development.	
2017-18	Improvement Objectives	Additional clarity over the level of improvement expected for each objective and how it will be measured would improve the objectives. This could be achieved by establishing baselines, and setting challenging and realistic standards at the objective level, against which the associated key performance indicators and measures would be used to measure improvement in terms of outcomes.		Implemented
2017-18	Performance Information	The Council should continue working with other councils and the Department to agree a suite of self-imposed indicators and standards as soon as practicable. This will enable meaningful comparisons to be made and published in line with its statutory responsibility as well as to demonstrate its general duty for continuous improvement across all of its functions and services.	<p>A sub-group from the main Performance improvement working group has produced a paper on how to move forward in establishing a regional performance framework (Benchmark Framework). The paper was discussed with the Department of Communities in November 2019.</p> <p>Some progress has been made in the current year as the Department of Communities required councils to benchmark two self-imposed indicators</p>	In progress

Year of report	Reference	Proposal for improvement	Action taken by Council	Status
			<p>relating to the general duty to improve, in addition to the statutory indicators. The Council has benchmarked these indicators against the other Councils within the annual assessment report 2018-19.</p> <p>The Council has recognised the need for council profiles to give an overview of councils, e.g. information such as population size, socio-economic data, whether rural, semi-rural, urban councils etc., and the need for this to be undertaken in conjunction with a province wide framework.</p> <p>Significant progress by all councils is essential in the coming year to allow a broader range of functions to be compared.</p>	
2017-18	Publication of Performance Information	<p>Self-assessment reports must include a self-assessment of performance in relation to the general duty to improve as required under the legislation.</p> <p>Self-assessments should not focus solely on the underlying projects, but also include an assessment of the Council's progress in delivering outcomes against its improvement objectives.</p>		Implemented
2016-17	General Duty to Improve	Use of service data (or other qualitative data) to enable performance measurement and		Implemented

Year of report	Reference	Proposal for improvement	Action taken by Council	Status
		<p>benchmarking. This will help identify those functions/services which would benefit most from improvement.</p> <p>Given the statutory nature of the framework, expand upon the current corporate performance management framework to develop a performance improvement policy. Whilst this is not a statutory requirement we would regard this as good practice</p>	<p>The policy is still in draft form and is due to be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 5 December 2019.</p>	In progress
2016-17	Governance Arrangements	<p>The Audit Committee should consider the benefit of using the internal audit function, where required, to provide them with future assurance on the integrity and operation of the Council's performance framework and identify areas for improvement.</p>	<p>To date there have been no internal audits in relation to performance improvement arrangements.</p> <p>However, performance improvement is scheduled in the Internal Audit programme for 2020-21.</p>	In Progress

Annex C – Detailed observations

Thematic area	Observations
General duty to improve	<p>The Council's arrangements to secure continuous improvement (including community planning, corporate planning, Service Plans and its Performance Improvement Framework and processes within) incorporate the seven aspects of improvement into its assessments of functions and services. The Council engaged with the public through its community planning consultation process to strengthen its understanding of community needs and what its citizens and stakeholders want. The Corporate Plan was extended by an extra year to 2019-20 due to the recent elections. Key improvement areas designated by the Council within its Performance Improvement Plan include: economic development, leisure and customer service, and these are aligned to its Community Plan outcomes.</p> <p>The Council's arrangements are becoming more established and continue to be developed. For example, the Council has a draft performance improvement policy to include in the draft Corporate Performance Management and Improvement Framework. The policy will be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee on 5 December 2019. The Council has also started to benchmark trend data in relation to both statutory and "self-imposed" indicators. The Council plans to further develop the capture and use of service data (or other qualitative data) to enable performance measurement and benchmarking of its services and functions.</p> <p>A sub-group of SOLACE's performance improvement working group has produced a paper on the way forward to establish a regional performance framework (benchmark framework). The approach will be agreed with the Department of Communities. A meeting of the sub-group discussed the issue in November 2019.</p> <p>Some progress has been made in the current year following advice from the Department of Communities that councils should benchmark at least two self-imposed indicators relating to the general duty to improve in addition to benchmarking the statutory indicators. The Council has benchmarked these indicators against the other councils within the annual assessment report 2018-19. Significant progress by all councils is essential in the coming year to allow a broader range of functions to be compared.</p> <p>It is important, in the interest of openness and transparency, that the logical evidence base and documented process to support the general duty to improve and the selection of priority areas for improvement continues to develop.</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>The Council has already undertaken extensive work in ensuring data quality in the three self-imposed' indicators are accurate, reliable, valid and timely through the introduction of performance indicator templates.</p> <p>We expect that further improvements on the general duty will be made in 2020.</p>
Governance arrangements	<p>The Council's governance arrangements support effective decision making and oversight, relating to its responsibility for continuous improvement in its functions and it continues to develop these.</p> <p>Responsibility for delivering performance improvement objectives rests with established project teams under the direction of a Senior Responsible Officer appointed by the Chief Executive. The Democratic Services Team looks after the corporate planning and service delivery and improvement planning processes alongside performance management and improvement.</p> <p>The Audit Committee receives reports specific to performance improvement throughout the year, which includes considering audit reports and correspondence, as and when required. The oversight role on performance improvement is undertaken by its Policy & Resources Committee throughout the year. This includes the review and scrutiny of the council's performance improvement plans and reporting on various aspects the council's performance framework.</p> <p>A proposal for improvement raised in the 2016-17 performance improvement audit and assessment suggested that the Council consider that the internal audit function be used to provide assurance on the integrity and operation of the Council's performance framework and identify areas for improvement. The Council should also consider using internal audit to obtain independent validation of data collected for published self-imposed KPIs and standards. This will be reflected in the draft performance improvement policy being considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 5 December 2019. An internal audit review of performance improvement has been scheduled for 2020-21.</p>
Improvement objectives	<p>The proposed improvement objectives, rationale and associated risks were considered and reviewed by Elected Members at the June 2019 Policy and Resources Committee meeting.</p> <p>Four improvement objectives were set, all of which meet at least one of the seven criteria required by legislation and relate to the functions and services identified for improvement set out in the Community Plan and the Council's Corporate Plan themes and outcomes. The Council's Corporate Plan for 2015-2019 has been extended for another year to cover the 2019-20 period pending new Council elections. This should be formally reviewed and updated as soon as is practicable. The objectives were selected on the basis of a range of factors including an analysis of available statutory,</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>corporate and service performance measures, information from performance reports, as well as engagement with elected Members, the Senior Management Team, Heads of Service and consultation with citizens.</p> <p>Three out of four improvement objectives remained unchanged from the 2018-19 improvement objectives. The current year improvement objective relating to average processing time for planning applications has replaced the prior year improvement objective of reducing the amount of waste going to landfill. The Council ensured completeness of improvement objectives by engagement and linking to the Corporate plan themes and outcomes as detailed above.</p> <p>For each improvement objective the Council sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why have we chosen this improvement objective? • What have we done so far? • Actions – what are we going to do? • How will be know? • Visible improvements that residents, businesses or visitors expect to see? • Partnerships – who do we need to work with? • What risks do we need to manage? <p>Measurement (baselines, outturns, targets) have been included in the 2019-20 Performance Improvement Plan. There are several headings included in the forward looking plan 2019-20 and in the annual assessment 2018-19 that include the answers to the questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we measure how much we do? • How can we measure if we are delivering services well? • How can we measure if customers are better off? • What are the most important measures and how are we doing? • What works well and how do we improve? • What are we going to improve?
Consultation	<p>An internal process involving Heads of Service and Senior Management identified emerging objectives and improvement projects for 2019-20 which would contribute to achieving the Council's improvement objectives. The Council carried out consultation on its improvement objectives with staff, elected representatives, community and voluntary groups, local businesses and representative business organisations.</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>The Council undertook a consultation exercise from February to March 2019 on the Council's draft corporate improvement objectives. In order to help raise the profile and transparency of the performance improvement framework, a number of communication channels were used including: advertising in local newspapers, on the Council website with an online survey, inviting comments through existing mailing lists and social media. The Council received 55 responses. Additional measures should be considered to attract a higher response rate amongst citizens.</p> <p>The Council's constitution and standing orders do not provide any guidance on matters relating to consultation although a draft policy has been prepared and is scheduled to be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee in December 2019. Good practice for any public body which regularly consults with the public is to develop a flexible, principles based policy.</p> <p>The consultation documentation was presented to the Policy and Resources Committee, and included the questions asked. The questions within the consultation survey directly related to each improvement objective. The improvement objectives remained the same in light of the high level of support shown within the 55 responses received from citizens.</p>
Improvement plan	<p>The Council published its Performance Improvement Plan in June 2019. It is available in electronic format on the Council's website and other formats upon request.</p> <p>The improvement objectives outlined in the Plan are based around the themes set out in the Community Plan and the Corporate Plan and align to the identified quality of life outcomes therein. It identifies a number of areas which the Council will focus on in the year ahead, with the aim of delivering improvements to benefit residents and service users.</p> <p>The Plan contains a high level description of the Council's arrangements for discharging its performance improvement duties and includes its improvement objectives as well as the related community planning and corporate plan outcome. A summary of the Council's consultation process, together with information on how citizens and stakeholders may propose new objectives during the year are included, in addition to the governance arrangements in place for the Performance Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The Plan sets out clearly the basis on which objectives were selected, together with related projects and key actions to contribute to the achievement of the higher level objectives, the visible improvements residents, businesses or visitors can expect, and how success will be measured. It also reflects how citizens and other stakeholders within the Council will be better off as a direct result of the improvement process.</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p>The Plan benefits promotes the transparency and meaningfulness of the Council's commitment to continuously improve its functions.</p> <p>More relevant data will become available as time progresses to help measure improvement.</p> <p>The Plan includes a separate section on the statutory imposed performance indicators and standards and provides sufficient information on its arrangements to exercise its functions so that any applicable statutory performance standards are met.</p>
Arrangements to improve	<p>The Council is required to establish arrangements to deliver on its improvement objectives each year. The underlying projects in relation to the improvement objectives are supported by delivery plans and budgets for use by operational teams. These are being project managed and have lines of accountability, including risk management, to senior management and Members.</p> <p>In addition, Members and Officers at full council and committee meetings with a strategy / policy and oversight focus receive regular updated from senior management on how these established arrangements to improve are progressing.</p>
Collection, use and publication of performance information	<p>The collection and use of timely and relevant performance information on a council's broad-ranging service areas is essential to the operation of an effective performance improvement framework. It enables the Council to measure and evaluate any improvement, assists in the identification of priority areas for improvement, facilitates comparison and benchmarking and supports the communication of outcomes and progress with its citizens and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The type of information required to be collected, used and reported falls under three key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the general duty to improve – reflected by "self-imposed" performance indicators and standards; • the improvement objectives – with specific associated performance measures and indicators; and • statutory indicators. <p>In September 2019, the Council published its 'Annual Report Performance Improvement Plan Self-Assessment 2018-19'. This gives an overview and a self-assessment of the performance of the Council during the previous financial year in accordance with its legislative requirements.</p> <p>The key purpose of the report is to show citizens and other stakeholders how the Council is discharging its duty under legislation to secure continuous improvement as set out in its 2018-19 Performance Improvement Plan. It enables the</p>

Thematic area	Observations
	<p data-bbox="562 236 1980 300">Council to communicate progress against its improvement objectives and to highlight what visible improvements it has made to its functions and services.</p> <p data-bbox="562 344 1966 480">Improved data collection and management processes during the year has allowed the Council to begin identifying and measuring improvement. This has enabled the Council to support its self-assessment and report on a number of improvements to its services, which would benefit its citizens. However there have been examples where incorrect information has been published:</p> <ul data-bbox="611 491 1993 778" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="611 491 1993 627">• A project from improvement objective 1 was selected to test for accuracy of reporting. The project was to "deliver 20 corporate strategic events across the district per annum and increase attendance figures by 5% in 2019." The Council had reported an attendance of 103,732 in 2018-19 however the supporting documentation included total attendance of 101,165. Nonetheless the target set was achieved. <li data-bbox="611 639 1993 778">• Within the 2018-19 annual self-assessment, a target of 19,131 tonnes has been reported for statutory indicator W2. This is the prior year target and has not been updated in the current year. It is important that all targets are accurately reported in the annual self-assessment, and agreed back to source documentation prior to publication. It should be noted that the Council still achieved the actual target. <p data-bbox="562 823 2004 994">Good progress was reported against each of the four improvement objectives. Baseline figures were included where possible and performance in the year was measured against this, with commentary provided. The Council also set out for each objective what was achieved in terms of improvements and whether the objective was achieved, substantially achieved, partially achieved or not achieved. This provided a useful link between the previous Improvement Plan, past performance and the current Improvement Plan, which helps to demonstrate continuous improvement.</p> <p data-bbox="562 1038 2004 1137">The Council's assessment of its performance and its published report now contains a comparison of its performance with previous years, and where reasonably practicable, with the other councils. In future years, year-on-year trend analysis should continue.</p> <p data-bbox="562 1182 1993 1281">The report includes a comparison of its performance statutory indicators to other councils. The issue of benchmarking with other councils is part of the work plan of the Multi-Stakeholder Group and it is expected that progress on this issue will continue to be made to allow a broader range of functions to be compared.</p> <p data-bbox="562 1326 1993 1386">The report also includes a section on the Council's achievement of its self-imposed performance measures based on the corporate plan priorities and commitments during the year.</p>

Thematic area	Observations
Demonstrating a track record of improvement	<p>A review of the performance of the improvement objectives, statutory indicators and standards and self-imposed indicators over the past three years has identified an overall trend of improvement.</p> <p>For improvement objectives in the current year two have been fully achieved and two have been substantially achieved in 2018-19 with all improvement objectives substantially achieved in the prior year, demonstrating a track record of improvement over the past three years.</p> <p>Statutory performance indicators ED1, P1, P2 and P3 have shown a decline in performance in the current year in comparison with prior years and the target set. The other three statutory indicators have shown improvement across the last three years.</p> <p>Two out of the three self-imposed indicators have shown improvement over the past three years.</p>