Mid Ulster District Council

Annual Self-Assessment Report 2022 – 2023

August 2023

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Foreword

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Welcome to the 2022 to 2023 Annual Report for Mid Ulster District Council. This report outlines the progress Mid Ulster District Council is making towards delivering its Improvement Objectives set out in the two year Performance Improvement Plan 2021-2022 to 2022-2023. The report reflects on the achievements we have made in the second year, the challenges that we have faced, and the lessons that have been learned.

The core vision and purpose of the Council is to improve the quality of life of everyone in Mid Ulster. We do that by providing the best possible services for local people, and we continually strive to improve those services, working in partnership with our communities. Public performance reporting is an important part of this process as it explains how well we are delivering on our services, showing how effective we are in terms of achieving high standards.

The Council's Annual Performance Self-Assessment Report is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of everything we have completed over the past year. It is intended to provide a summary and a range of different examples of work we have undertaken in relation to performance improvement in a visual and digestible way for our audiences.

At the start of 2022 to 2023, we retained our four ambitious Corporate Improvement Objectives (as part of a 2-year plan), relating to: regeneration through capital programme development, digitally transforming services, creating cleaner neighbourhoods and improving resilience to climate change; with some key priority areas to deliver against.

Over the last few years, global events including the Covid pandemic, Brexit, Ukraine conflict and now the cost-of-living crisis have brought huge challenges to our District, families, communities and businesses. It is in such challenging times that we remember the importance of public services for both short-term support and long-term solutions and improvement. We have also learned that none of this can be achieved by the council alone. It is for these reasons that Council continues to work with other organisations from private, public, not-for-profit, community groups and charities at local, regional and national levels, to help deliver our priorities for the citizens of Mid Ulster.

With high inflation and soaring energy prices, the costs of delivering public services and investing in our buildings and infrastructure are all going up. We have, however, faced challenges in the past and met them with renewed ambition and an unrelenting commitment to delivery. We will do so again.

We have a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in place that sets out the Council's commitment to providing value for money services. To deliver our services Council finances will be structured and managed to ensure that this fits with, and supports, the delivery of our Corporate Plan and Improvement Objectives.

We will continue to do our very best to support the District through these challenging times and invite you to join us – everyone's contribution, no matter how big or small, is key to making this, our district, an ambitious, fairer, and more sustainable for everyone.

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Councillor Dominic Molloy
Chair Mid Ulster District Council

1.0   Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of Council performance at the end of year 2022-23, based on Council's progress against its Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2022 to 2023, statutory performance indicators, as outlined in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, as well Corporate Health Indicators.

The PIP plan is published each year before the 30th of June, in order to comply with Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 (hereby referred to as The Act). An annual assessment report is also undertaken to comply with the Act and provides a retrospective review of the work Council had undertaken to improve its services. The annual assessment complies with departmental guidance under the Act and is published before the 30th of September each year.

Our work is scrutinised by the Northern Ireland Audit Office to ensure that we use public money effectively to deliver benefits to our communities (Annual Audit Reports are available to view on our website – refer to Performance section Northern Ireland Audit Office Report). We have ensured that this annual report presents progress and performance for the year in a fair and balanced way.

The four improvement objectives for 2022 to 2023 look at how we contribute in reducing activities that impact the environment; ensuring Mid Ulster is more connected digitally; as well as creating cleaner neighbourhoods and how we can continue to contribute to the ongoing regeneration of our district.

2.0 Strategic Context of 2022 to 2023.

International conflict, especially the Russian invasion of Ukraine, has caused instability, leading to inflation and cost of living pressures, while also altering economic patterns worldwide, as well as a need for a humanitarian response to the needs of those displaced by conflict. The cost of living pressures continue to be high on the local, regional and national agenda. Recent labour disputes have occurred in the wider context of the UK's rising cost of living. Between June 2022 and February 2023 there have been increasing numbers of strikes occurring across

a range of industries, including many parts of the rail and bus networks, postal workers, council workers, civil servants, teaching staff and NHS staff. In total, across the UK, 2.472 million working days were lost between June and December 2022; of these, over three-quarters (79%) came from workers in transport, storage, information and communication[1]. Inflation was expected to ease during 2023 but remains at an elevated level. Accordingly, the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts living standards to fall by a cumulative 5.7% in the two years to 2023-24[2], the largest two-year fall since records began in 1956-57.

The direct and indirect impacts of the COVID pandemic on the economy and health are starting to be better understood. Certain groups of people are still readjusting to life beyond COVID, particularly those with long term health conditions or anxiety who may not yet have returned to pre-pandemic behaviours. Addressing climate change is a global and local priority. Extreme weather events have severe impacts on our communities and ecosystems. As the climate changes they pose an increasing threat. We are now seeing more frequent extreme weather events, such as flooding and high temperatures.

[1] [The impact of strikes in the UK - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)](#)

[2] [Economic and fiscal outlook - March 2023 - Office for Budget Responsibility (obr.uk)](#)

3.0   General Duty to Improve and Council's Hierarchy of Plans - Performance Management Framework.

3.1   General Duty to Improve

Legislation contained within Part 12 of The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (hereafter referred to as 'The Act'), requires that all Councils are, under a general duty, to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions.

The Act sets out a number of Council responsibilities under a performance framework. This section highlights how Council has embedded its duty to improve within its performance management framework and governance arrangements.

3.2   Definition of Improvement within legislative Guidance

Improvement is defined in statutory guidance as 'more than just quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or the internal effectiveness of an organisation. Improvement for councils should mean activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities'. Essentially, improvement is about making things better and our focus is on how we can deliver better services for the benefit of our residents and service users.

3.3   What is improvement?

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, put in place a new framework to support continuous improvement in the delivery of council services, in the context of strategic objectives and issues that are important to those who receive the services. Councils are required to gather information to assess improvements in their services and to report annually on their performance against indicators, which they have either, set themselves or that have been set by Stormont Executive Departments.

The Act, is supported with guidance from the Department of Communities and "improvement" in the context of the Act means that Improvement is no longer limited to economy, efficiency and effectiveness but rather embraces the following:

- Making Progress towards a Council's strategic objectives (as set out in the community plan)
- Improving the quality of services
- Improving the availability of services
- Improving fairness by reducing inequality in accessing or benefitting from services, or improving the social wellbeing of citizens and communities
- Exercising functions in ways which contribute to sustainable development
- Improving the efficiency of services and functions
- Innovation and change, which contributes to any of the above objectives.

The Act specifies that Council must make arrangements for the publication of:

A.   Its assessment of its performance during a financial year:

- In discharging its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement

- In meeting its improvement objectives which are applicable to that year

- By reference to the statutory performance indicators and self-imposed indicators which are applicable to that year.

B.   Its assessment of its performance in exercising its functions during a financial year as compared with:

- Its performance in previous financial years.

- So far as is reasonably practicable, the performance during that and previous financial years of other Councils.

Mid Ulster District Council is committed to driving continuous improvement and performance across all service areas within the organisation and that the best arrangements for delivering them are in place.

3.4   Corporate Planning and Performance Framework

A network of plans (key plans in a clear hierarchy) that work together to create a 'line of sight' to deliver key outcomes for Mid Ulster, informs the Council's Strategic Planning framework (refer to diagram 3.4.1 - Mid Ulster District Council's Strategic Planning Framework page 12).

The plans show the relationship between the long term future of the area, the vision for the Council, mid-term plan of action, plan for Council finances, all the way down to what each Council service plans to achieve in the next year and how each employee understands how they contribute to the organisation achieving its goals and priorities.

Evidence linked to existing and forecasted data informs the Council's policy framework, which in turn informs our planning process. It is important that elements within Council's planning and reporting activities are monitored and reviewed within an annual cycle.

Planning is an essential component of good performance management and the delivery of effective and efficient services. It acts as a tool for making decisions about resource allocation and assists services/teams in staying focused on

delivering ambitions, even during time of change. A good example of this happened in early 2020, when it became self-evident that Council's emergency planning capabilities came to the fore in being able to sustain front-line service delivery in the face of the first waves of Covid-19 and the subsequent restrictions.

The business planning process translates high-level objectives (e.g. Community and Corporate Plans) into management action linked to performance measures. This process will be undertaken at all levels of the organisation, producing a hierarchy framework of plans that all feed up wards (the "golden Thread") and are aligned to the Council's overarching vision (as outlined in the Corporate plan). The business plans for 2022 to 2023 were developed by Service Directors, with their teams and taken through each services' respective committee for approval and Council for ratification.

The Council's performance management framework is set against the statutory background of Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) 2014 Act, where Council undertakes the following:

- Issue an Annual Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)
- Issue a Community Plan in conjunction with our partners
- Set objectives and targets, which make a difference to our customers, reflect their needs and expectations as well as values of the Council.
- Stretch and motivate our employees and partners.
- Convert top-level outcomes into specific actions at appropriate levels.
- Assign clear ownership and accountability.
- Measure and review overall council progress at least quarterly and take action to address shortcomings.
- Engage all areas of the Council in performance improvement
- Scrutinise what we do to ensure value for money.

We ensure through our performance management process that the Community plan outcomes and corporate plan priorities and annual improvement objectives (where relevant) are reflected through our service delivery and through our appraisal scheme, this is reflected for individual staff members through their

personal development plans (refer to diagram 3.4.2 - Mid Ulster District Council's step approach to managing performance page 13).

We rely on having good information on which to base our decisions on how to deliver our services more efficiently and effectively. Successful performance management is organised and structured to allow people to work together to do the right things. The diagram below outlines Mid Ulster District Council's (MUDC) Strategic Planning Framework (Golden Thread**)**

Diagram 3.4.1 – MUDC's Strategic Planning Framework

3.5   Community Plan

The 10-year plan for Mid Ulster "Our Community Plan" is the sovereign plan for Mid Ulster and forms part of the new statutory duty, which requires Council to "initiate, maintain, facilitate, and participate in community planning for the district", (the Community Plan is available on our web site and was published in 2017). Community planning involves integrating all the various streams of public life e.g. education, community safety, health, the voluntary sector, arts, leisure etc. to produce a plan that will set out the future direction of the Mid Ulster District Council area.

The Community Plan reflects what has been outlined at regional level in documents like the Programme for Government Framework, and other regional development

strategies such as Growth Deals. The figure below outlines Council's Step Approach to Managing Performance.

The Community Plan describes what the Community Planning Partners' aim to achieve by working together, over and above what partners could do as individual organisations. Partners include statutory bodies/agencies and the wider community including the voluntary, community and business sectors.

The plan sets out the Community Planning partner's strategic priorities for action, and is a shared commitment to tackle these challenges. The plan sets out the vision for Mid Ulster as,

"…*a welcoming place, where people are content, healthy and safe, educated and skilled; where our economy is thriving, our environment and heritage is sustained, and where our public services excel*".

Diagram 3.4.2- MUDC's step approach to managing performance

Mid Ulster District Council's Step Approach to Managing Performance

Legislation and Guidance

8. Revise objectives and review outcomes – After following steps 1 to 7 revise objectives/priorities to deliver future ambitions.

7. Feedback & Learning – Audit i.e. (internal & Local Government Auditor), consultations, evaluations, benchmarking & peer reviews, case studies and wide communication of good performance.

6. Report Progress – Regular corporate monitoring/ reporting (internal & external) of performance and measures/indicators - team based tracking.

5. Measure & Monitor Performance – SMART action plans, risk reviews, team reviews, one to ones, budget reviews.

REVISE   PLAN

REVIEW   DO

Define & Agree Strategy; Local /Regional priorities & needs

Strategy Management & Key Performance

Objectives Management

Operational Delivery and Reporting

1. Involve Stakeholders – Community and stakeholder engagement, member's involvement, gather data.

2. Develop Strategy/Plans – Community Plan, Local Development Plans, Corporate Plan, Improvement Plan, and Service Improvement & Team plans – (Performance indicators & standards).

3. Align and Link Objectives – Objectives, cascaded to all teams (meetings) & individuals (one-to-one's - DEP Scheme, PDP's) Measures/ Performance indicators mapped.

4. Align & Link Operations – Resource Management, budget management, team plans, workforce management, risk management.

Corporate Priorities

The Community Plan resonates around five themes (refer to table - Mid Ulster's Community Plan Theme and Outcomes below, pages 14-15), and running across the five themes are cross cutting guiding principles. All of our strategic actions must incorporate the principles of sustainable environment, equality and the highest standard of public service. The five themes have aligned outcomes associated with each, there are fifteen outcomes in total:

The Community Plan is the key strategic document for Council and an integral element of the performance management framework and performance improvement. The Community planning partners and Council must put in place arrangements for monitoring progress and publish a statement every two years, which outlines progress made against the identified outcomes and performance indicators.

Table - Mid Ulster's Community Plan Themes and Outcomes

Community Plan Theme	Community Plan Outcomes
1. Economic Growth	• We prosper in a stronger and more competitive economy • We have more people working in a diverse economy • Our towns and villages are vibrant and competitive
2. Infrastructure	• We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure • We increasingly value our environment and enhance it for our children • We enjoy increased access to affordable quality housing
3. Education and Skills	• Our people are better qualified and more skilled • We give our children and young people the best chance in life • We are more entrepreneurial, innovative and creative

Community Plan Theme	Community Plan Outcomes
4. Health and Well-being	• We are better enabled to live longer healthier and more active lives • We have the availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time • We care more for those most vulnerable and in need
5. Vibrant & Safe Communities	• We are a safer community • We have a greater value and respect for diversity • We have stronger communities with less disadvantage & poverty

The Community plan must also be reviewed before the fourth anniversary on which it was published and every four years thereafter.

3.6   Corporate Plan

The Council's corporate plan 2020 to 2024 is the key Council policy document. The current plan sets out how the Council achieves its vision and key priorities as outlined from community consultation.

All Council plans should be consistent with corporate priorities, improvement objectives and values in existence at the time of publication. The Corporate Plan covers improvement priorities and high-level actions, identified to achieve those priorities. The vision and priorities that are set out in the Corporate plan have a direct relationship with directorate business/service delivery plans at all levels, to ensure we are unified in working towards delivering our vision.

Council developed a corporate plan for 2020 to 2024, encompassing priorities with the key outcomes of the Community plan, thereby ensuring that the Council is able to deliver its commitments we have made alongside our partners, and enable a clear 'golden thread' to be demonstrated within and across our partner organisations.

Council undertakes annual monitoring and reporting of the corporate plan's performance. The Council developed a suite of Corporate Indicators in late 2017/18 and are set out in Appendix One, performance status and updates are reported to Senior Management and Council on a regular basis. Currently work is being undertaken to develop a new corporate plan, in alignment with the new Council term (Councillors) and in conjunction with citizens, businesses and the statutory, voluntary and community sectors for 2024 to 2028.

3.7   Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

The purpose of the Corporate Performance Improvement Plan is to enable the council to evidence it has discharged its duty to, "…*make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions*." (Section 84 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014). Councils are required to identify, consult upon and publish improvement objectives on an annual basis. To ensure Council discharges its improvement duty it prepares an annual improvement plan containing improvement objectives, (Councils can set improvement objectives spanning more than one year).

Whist we constantly strive to improve all our services, it is important for us to identify a small number of areas where we want to focus our attention in order to achieve improvements more quickly. These are our Improvement Objectives, set out in our Annual Corporate Performance Improvement Plan. Each year the Council identifies, consults upon and publishes a set of improvement objectives, Council ensures that the objectives are:

- Legitimate: making a demonstrable contribution to at least one (or probably more than one) of the aspects of improvement listed in the Act.
- Clear: setting out the visible improvement that citizens can expect
- Robust: with defined terms of success (whether quantitative or qualitative)
- Deliverable: with established links to individual service programmes and budgets; and
- Demonstrable: capable of being supported by objective (but not necessarily measured or quantitative) evidence

3.8 Service Plans

Service plans describe the core services and objectives/activities and how these are sustained and agreed within an agreed annual budget. They also provide the mechanism for further planning within services, such as requirements resulting from: new legislation or statutory guidance, political or management priorities, improvements identified in the corporate performance improvement plan and recommendations resulting from statutory inspection, internal/external audit etc. They can also include elements within the Community plan, Corporate Plan, and Performance Improvement plan.

Council's service plans provide the essential link between the Council's high-level objectives and the individual employee's contribution towards the achievement of these, and is referred to as "golden thread" of performance management. The service plans are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, to ensure they are achieving their aims, and mitigating actions are developed in response to identified risks. The plans are presented as information to the service's respective committees annually. An annual retrospective overview of the previous year's performance (service review) is detailed in the annual service plan.

3.9 Statutory Indicators/Standards and Self-Imposed Indicators/Standards

In addition to the improvement, objectives and associated actions used to measure our performance, the Northern Ireland Government Departments have set a series of performance measures (indicators and standards) which the council will report on annually. Where relevant, the council's improvement objectives incorporate statutory performance standards and indicators for Economic Development, Planning and Waste Management.

Arrangements for managing, improving and tracking Council's performance in relation to set statutory indicators has been progressed through our service plans, which are developed on an annual basis and endorsed by Council, or if relevant may appear in the annual corporate performance Improvement plan as aligning with one of Council's chosen Improvement objectives. Data is classed as management information, (provisional) unless otherwise stated as validated (e.g. in annual DfI Statistical Planning Report etc)

Quarterly/six month reviews and update reports relating to Council's statutory indicator performance are collated and forwarded to our Senior Management Team, respective committees and Council (reporting and scrutiny arrangements). Unless otherwise highlighted in the annual corporate performance improvement plan, statutory performance indicators are managed at a directorate level. Performance progress against the indicators is submitted by Councils to the relevant regional body and validated data reports are issued showing comparisons across all of the eleven local Councils. Where the statutory target is not met the need to improve in accordance with the general duty set out in the Act is considered, Council is also minded to set performance data within a context. It is essential to provide a clear and consistent context when discussing performance measures to ensure that they are relevant, reliable, and valid.

3.10 Staff Engagement, Appraisals, and Personal Development Plans (PDP's)

Appraisals are individual plans that translate the service plan objectives (service plans and team plans i.e. how they will be delivered) into working measures and targets for all members of staff within the Council. They ensure employees understand the contribution and accountability towards meeting the Council's vision and objectives.

Once performance expectations and targets are agreed, managers will regularly review progress with staff one-to-one meetings throughout the year. Council has developed and adopted an appraisal scheme, called "Developing, Engaging and Performing" - (DEP's).

Relevant parts of the Community Plan, the Corporate Plan, Corporate Performance Improvement Plan and Service Plans forms the basis of personal objectives set for each SMT members, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service, Managers and individual team members, and achievement against are discussed at the regular meetings.

Within Council, a personal development plan (PDP) sets out the actions staff propose to take to deliver on objectives, and how to learn/develop themselves.

4.0 Developing Our Improvement Plan Objectives

4.1 Setting Our Improvement Objectives

The Council's Policy and Resources Committee oversaw the development of the two-year Performance Improvement Plan (2021/22 – 2022/23) to ensure the plan's publication as soon as practicable following the 1st April 2021, in line with Department for Communities guidance.

The process of developing the Council's improvement objectives involved engagement between Senior Management, Heads of Service and the Democratic Services Team. This engagement identified potential areas for improvement across the council from which four proposed improvement objectives where identified for consideration and approved by elected members as a focus for continuous improvement– the table below outlines Council's Improvement Objectives 2021 - 2023.

Table – Council's Improvement Objectives 2021-2022 to 2022-2023

Number	Objective
One	Mid Ulster District Council will seek to reduce the environmental impacts of our own activities and will contribute to the improvement of the wider environment through local action.
Two	We will ensure a more connected Mid Ulster where new technologies and ways of working, empower citizens to get the best services that matter to them.
Three	To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and the environment.
Four	We will contribute to the ongoing regeneration of our district by delivering a capital investment programme, enhancing facilities and opportunities for local people.

To lead the delivery of our improvement objectives council has established project teams to drive the objectives forward; under the direction of a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) from Assistant Directors/Heads of Service, appointed by the Chief Executive.

The proposed improvement objectives, rationale and associated links to the Community and Corporate Plan were considered and approved by elected members at their March 2021 Policy & Resources committee meeting, a report on the final improvement objectives were considered by Senior Management, and subsequently considered by elected members for approval at their April 2021 .

A public consultation regarding the improvement objectives for 2022 to 2023 was scheduled to be undertaken in the early spring of 2022.

4.2   Consultation

Consultation undertaken on our proposed improvement objectives, rationale for their inclusion and associated activities for the period of the plan, was undertaken Friday 4th March to Friday 15th April 2022. Our consultation involved a survey made available for completion and submission online and by post to the council.

To ensure maximum engagement, the consultation process was promoted through a variety of communication channels including; council social media outlets, internal staff meetings, and the council's website.

4.3   What the Consultation told us

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- **93.55% of respondents agreed with objective one**: - *Mid Ulster District Council will seek to reduce the environmental impacts of our own activities and will contribute to the improvement of the wider environment through local action.*

- **90% of respondents agreed with objective two**: - *We will ensure a more connected Mid Ulster where new technologies and ways of working, empower citizens to get the best services that matter to them.*

- **86.21% of respondents agreed with objective three**: - *To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and the environment.*

- **90% of respondents agreed with objective four**: - *We will contribute to the ongoing regeneration of our district by delivering a capital investment programme, enhancing facilities and opportunities for local people*

With such significant support for the four proposed improvement objectives, together with additional commentary provided, the council has developed its 2022-2023 Performance Improvement Plan around them.

When reviewed, respondent commentary did not warrant the removal, amendment to or addition to the objectives proposed. The additional commentary and views provided from consultees is informing our wider improvement activity across services.

5.0 Council's Self-assessment of the Performance Improvement Objectives - Projects

5.1. Self-Assessment of Corporate Improvement Projects 2022/23

The following sections review and gives a progress commentary under each of the Council's four improvement objectives in tabular format with associated narrative. The improvement objectives, provides a summary of what the council sought to achieve, how well the Council has performed.

The following tables also set out and refer to the improvement aspects, community plan and corporate plan themes, which align and link to the improvement activities/measures.

The achievement status of each is presented on the basis of: Fully Achieved, Substantially Achieved, Partially Achieved or Not Achieved as explained below – refer to Legend below for self-assessment (evaluation) of Council's four improvement project's performance.

Legend for Self–Assessment (evaluation) of Council's Improvement Project's Activities/ Performance.

Evaluated As	Explanation
Fully Achieved	All actions and measures were achieved
Substantially Achieved	Actions and measures mostly achieved, one or two falling marginally short of planned targets
Partially achieved	Some actions and measures were achieved
Not achieved	Actions and measures were not achieved as planned
Re-prioritised	No longer deemed a priority by Senior Management in year (refer to individual contexts)

Improvement Objective One

5.2   Objective One: Mid Ulster District Council will seek to reduce the environmental impacts of our own activities and will contribute to the improvement of the wider environment through local action.

"*Good to see Council seeking to reduce its impact on the environment, the reality of climate change is here, we're seeing more localised flooding, near drought conditions affecting our farming and habitats pushed to extinction, we all need to take ownership and reduce our carbon emissions.*"

(Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey Excerpt; April 2022)

Lead Officer: Assistant Director Environmental Services.

Why have we chosen this Improvement Objective?

As we navigate through and slowly emerge into a new era, two years on from the start of the pandemic, how we reshape our world will have key implications for our ability to address climate change this decade.

COP 26 (Conference of the Parties 26) was held in November 2021 in Glasgow. The World Climate Change Conference, brought together heads of state, climate experts and campaigners to agree coordinated action to tackle climate change and revisit climate pledges made under the 2015 Paris Agreement i.e. an agreed path forward to tackle global warming. Governments that signed the Paris Agreement, pledged to cut emissions and keep temperatures well below a 2C rise by the end of this century, but the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says even a 1.5C rise could be devastating [1.]

Nations adopted the Glasgow Climate Pact, aiming to turn the 2020's into a decade of climate action and support[2]. The pact aims to cut emissions further and faster in the next decade. Crucial other decisions were also reached, on accelerating the shift to clean power, on how international carbon trading should work, and on how much money rich nations should funnel to poorer countries to support their efforts to deal with climate change. The United Nations (UN) is also directed to assess climate plans every year, turning every COP into a pressure point for nations to commit more.

Climate change has been recognised internationally as the most important environmental challenge that we currently face. It is a large scale, long-term shift in the Earth's weather patterns and average temperatures. Scientific consensus recognises human activity[3] as a major cause of recent unprecedented warming and climate projections show that past, current and future gas emissions will influence the climate for decades.

The intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) predicts increases in extreme weather events over the twenty first century and attributes this to a result of greenhouse emissions and rising surface temperatures. The IPCC's 2021 Climate Change Report regarding the physical science basis, states that, "Climate change is already affecting every inhabited region across the globe with human

influence contributing to many observed changes in weather and climate extremes"[1].

The latest U.K Climate Change projections (UKC P18)[4] predict that Northern Ireland will experience warmer, wetter winters and hotter drier summers by the 2050's, with extreme weather events becoming more frequent[5].

Northern Ireland's first legally binding climate bill is currently making passage through the local Stormont Executive[6]. It will see legislation that introduce targets for Northern Ireland for years 2030, 2040 and 2050 – (i.e. reduction in greenhouse gas emissions), along with an independent Climate Change Commissioner's office. Other amendments to the bill will include a "just transition" fund aimed at supporting agriculture, statutory carbon budgets, targets for biodiversity and soil quality.

We recognise the key role and contribution that the Council has in supporting and promoting local actions and local people, businesses and partners in the move to a low carbon future. Taking action to protect the environment for future generations is a priority for Mid Ulster and is recognised in the Districts Community Plan and Corporate Plan. We care about the environment and understand our legal duty to protect it.

We seek to minimise the environmental impacts of our own Council activities and work with other partners and stakeholders to protect and enhance our local environment. Subject to procurement regulations, we can also choose to buy local produce which not only supports our local economy, it also reduces carbon emissions from freight transport and travel. Climate change is a collective issue and we can all make changes to our lifestyles to reduce the impact on the environment.

1. IPCC_AR6_WGI_Full_Report.pdf

2. COP26-Presidency-Outcomes-The-Climate-Pact.pdf (ukcop26.org)

3. https://climate.nasa.gov/scientific-consensus/

4. https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/approach/collaboration/ukcp/download-data

5. https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/UK-CCRA-2017-Northern-Ireland-National-Summary.pdf

6. Climate Change (No. 2) Bill (niassembly.gov.uk)

Two activities were not carried over from the previous year's project and were re-prioritised by the Senior Management Team due to Councils on-going re-structuring process, i.e. Raise community awareness/resilience of climate crisis and increase participation in practical action for climate friendly/low carbon lifestyles (Change One Bit Programme) and – Increase community involvement in sustainable food growing/gardening/self-sufficiency through "Mid Ulster is Growing from Home" scheme.

Link to District Community Plan Theme and Outcomes: Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment and enhance it for our children

Link to Corporate Plan Themes: Environment - We will work to mitigate against the impacts of climate change by taking steps to reduce carbon emissions as an organisation*.*

Performance Improvement Aspects which this improvement objective aims to deliver against

Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Sustainability, Service Availability, Fairness, Efficiency, Innovation

Table - Progress Made Against Improvement Objective One 2022 to 2023:

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
1. Increase the Council recycling rate to further boost the carbon reductions associated with recycling (target recycling rate 59%).	Council recycling rate in 2022/23 offset approx. 28,000 tonnes of Carbon equivalent per annum. There was a drop, which may be attributed to the strike action in Q2, that affected bin collections and recycling centre operations. Redevelopment of Magherafelt Recycling Centre was completed and re-opened to resume normal operations in December 2022.	Substantially Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
2. Manage Landfill Gas emissions at the Tullyvar, Magheraglass and Ballymacombs Landfill Sites and seek opportunities for further renewable energy projects, i.e. opportunities for the installation of solar power capacity at Tullyvar and Magheraglass.	2.30 GWHrs renewable electricity produced at Tullyvar Landfill Site with a further 0.28 GWHrs produced at Magheraglass Landfill Site. Reduction of approx. 11,000 tonnes of Carbon equivalent per annum by utilising / flaring methane. APSE Report was received on the feasibility of using solar panels at Tullyvar Landfill site.	Substantially Achieved
3. Increase participation in the Eco-Schools programme (100% Schools registered), which encourages and directs young people to think about climate action including litter, recycling, energy saving, and water conservation.	Currently 123 (100%) schools within Mid Ulster are registered on programme with 39 (33%) of schools having achieved Green Flag status by March 2023; 80 schools have achieved at least one Green Flag award since registering on programme (65% of schools). 39 (33%) schools with current Green Flag (awarded within the last two years) the Northern Ireland average is 24%. An additional 19 schools whose Green Flags have lapsed or who have not yet achieved this level have recently submitted a new/renewal Green Flag Application and are awaiting assessment for award before end of June 2023. A further 19 schools are working on an application but were not ready to submit by the March deadline.	Substantially Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
4. Increase the re-use of Council's technological hardware i.e. it is recycled and re-used.	In all there were 50 desktops allocated and distributed to community groups in year.	Fully Achieved
5. Monitor and review air quality across the District to determine whether national air quality objectives are being met. 2021 Air Quality statistics to be compiled and produced as a Report for 2022.	In all a total of 516 tubes were changed throughout District over 12 month period measuring Nitrogen Dioxide at selected worst case locations. The Mid Ulster District Council Air Quality Report for 2022 was completed and submitted to DAERA. During early 2023 the Air Quality Action Plan was reviewed at meeting with Councillors	Fully Achieved
6. Environmental Health Services will control the environmental impacts of certain specified industrial activities through an industrial permitting process by inspecting permitted premises to ensure compliance with with air emission targets as outlined in their Environmental permits – (Local Air Pollution Prevention and Control).	A total of 77 scheduled inspections completed for 12 month period and computer records duly amended to show this.	Fully Achieved
7. Energy Efficiency in households - Number of	In the 2022-2023 year 239 homes were helped by providing energy efficiency	Substantially Achieved

| What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
homes helped to provide Energy Efficiency Advice to (target 247 homes) and the number of homes/referrals helped to improve the energy efficiency of their homes (Affordable Warmth)	advice with a further 264 referrals for households eligible for Affordable Warmth Scheme.	
8. Seek to bring recycling and biodiversity themes into creative art project targeting schools, disability groups and older people programmes. 6 schools participating across Mid Ulster – targets of 150 students, 6 disability groups participating across Mid Ulster (50 participants) and 2 x workshops in Burnavon for Older people (30 participants)	In 2022/23, 20 disability and inclusion groups across Mid Ulster participated. Each group received 4 x 1hr sessions. Approx. 184 persons participated per session. Output - creation of various art pieces using reusable / upcycling materials including felting, mosaic, and wirework. Art Exhibition displaying art pieces held in Burnavon April 2023. In year 10 residential homes across Mid Ulster participated. Each group received 4 x 1hr sessions. Approx. 100 persons participated per session. Output - creation of various art pieces using reusable / upcycling materials including felting, mosaic, and wirework. Art Exhibition displaying art pieces to be held in Burnavon May 2023.	Fully Achieved
9. Develop a pilot habitat assessment tool to utilise as an exemplar for	Habitat survey assessment tool has been developed, Council sites chosen for pilot field work studies and the Digital Student has assisted with good	Partially Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
Council managed assets/land.	practice in digitising field work findings. There has been some slippage with this activity due to resource availability.	
10. Introduce and pilot sustainability assessment (screening tool) for 50% capital projects (Early stages).	The Sustainability Officer left post which has delayed this activity, due to the re-structuring the Strategic Director wants to take time to re-align sustainability role/function within the new structure. A new Waste and Sustainability Officer was employed during the last quarter	Not Achieved
11. Submit the Draft Plan Strategy for Independent Examination (IE), which will include policy to protect our environment e.g. including the Sperrins, Lough Neagh and Clogher Valley and; policy, which encourages more sustainable forms of transport, and reduces the need to travel by private vehicles.	Following submission of plan Council early in the year were awaiting a decision from the Department on whether the plan can go to public examination. (Local Development plan (2030) - Plan Strategy in draft form - published Feb 2019. Note: Unforeseen delays caused by the Department who have yet to forwarded the Draft Plan Strategy to PAC (for Independent Examination).The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) responded requiring further clarification and information which Council is working on with their legal team (i.e. a response).	Substantially Achieved
12. Research the application and introduction of alternative fuelled Vehicles/Diverse Plant	4 Electric powered vans purchased and in operation. Monitoring commenced and ongoing	Fully Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
(target two) into Council's Fleet and develop Fossil Fuel Usage Baseline Report on Fleet/diverse plant.		
13. Research and develop a Mid Ulster District Council's Estates Carbon Management Plan and develop monitoring arrangements for MUDC properties reference the impact of: 1. • Emissions. 2. • Fossil fuel consumption. 3. • Energy usage. 4. • Renewal source. Undertake Display Energy Certificate assessments (18 in total)	DEC's completed and reported to respective Committee. There is now ongoing consideration in the context of climate change 'baselining' exercise in conjunction with Environmental Services.	Substantially Achieved
14. Develop and agree Hybrid Working as part of flexible working arrangements policy	Updated draft Policy sent to SMT in Q3 for review/comment purposes. NJCLGS Guidance in respect of Home-Working has been received and reviewed, in the context of draft Hybrid Working Procedure. Equality Policy has been revised and approved by Council in Q4 22/23 yr., which links with Council's Flexible Working Arrangements Policy. Council's Internet and ICT Security	Substantially Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
	Policies have been revised and approved by Council in Q4 22/23 yr., which will also inform the Hybrid Working Procedure.	
15. Progress to Stage 3 of the NI Climate Adaptation Planning Cycle	Continued consultation with Climate NI, 2nd Adaptation workshop planned to take place in Q1 23/24 following the preparation of a draft risk register. Meeting held with Biodiversity & Sustainability Officers to develop draft risk register.	Partially Achieved
16. Prepare a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan	Two Sustainability Workshops held in Q4 on the 15 and 24th February to inform the preparation of the Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan. Draft Action Plan is 90% complete and is expected to go to Senior Management Team / Committee / Council for approval in Q1 2023/24	Substantially Achieved
17. Raise business awareness of the climate crisis and what are practical measures businesses can implement to reduce their carbon footprint through the delivery of an "On the Road to Net Zero"	Virtual Event (Net Zero: Challenge Accepted) was held on Wednesday 16th November and marketed as part of Mid Ulster Enterprise Week. Thirteen businesses were represented at the event. Feedback was positive from business in attendance. Seventy –three per cent of participants who completed online evaluation rated the event as	Fully Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
information and networking event as part of Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2022.	excellent or very good. Takeaways identified by businesses included: - The adjustment of working hours to avoid peak time electricity prices was a useful piece of information. - Start with small incremental steps and build on it. - Look closely at costs. - What small practical steps that businesses can take to reduce their carbon footprint. - To try and do what suits your company best. Don't bring in anything that won't be done or useful to everyone so research is key. - Put new policies in place. - What small steps lead to sustainability listen to customers and plan	
18. Research Environmental, Social and Governance ("ESG") principles in the context of the review of the Council's Procurement Policy. Consider whether and how same could be incorporated as to how the Council thinks ESG and buys/procures ESG	Research and awareness being carried out within immediate team, including attendance at conferences and seminars with examples of ESG in practice, potential of sustainability within financial reporting etc. Ideas being gathered of the types of awareness/training sessions that might be needed for wider Council and who would deliver/facilitate these, including case studies;	Partially Achieved

Diagram - Number of Improvement Activities in CIP1 Project 2022 to 2023 - End of Year Assessment Status

CIP1 Project - End of Year Assessment 2022/23
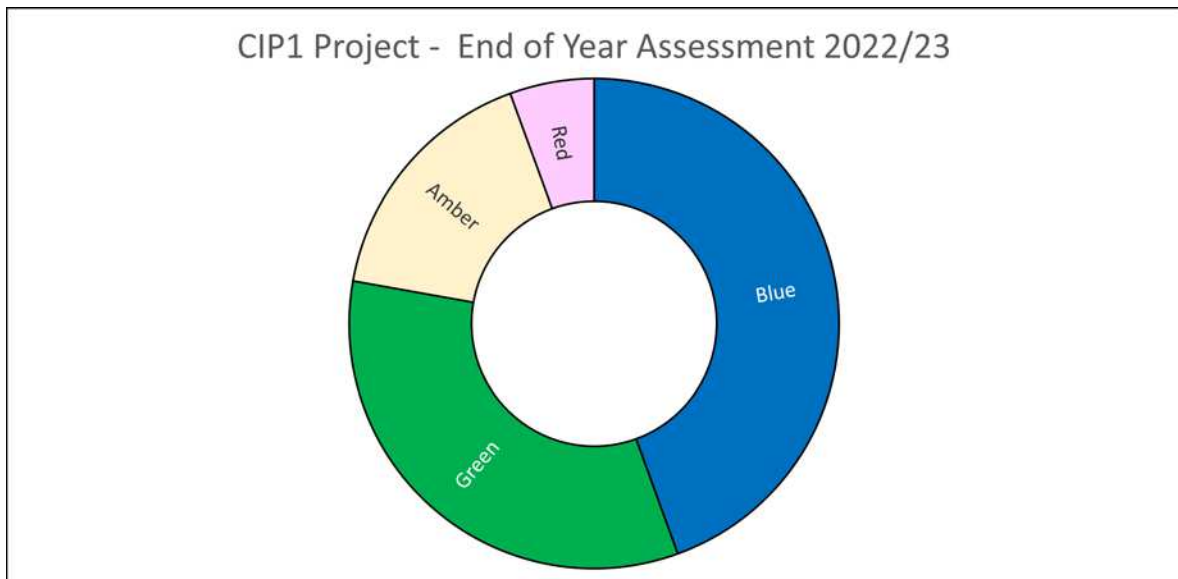
Improvement Objective Two

5.3 Objective Two: - We will ensure a more connected Mid Ulster where new technologies and ways of working, empower citizens to get the best services that matter to them.

"Again, this is an objective which is integral to allow our local council to continually improve on how it provides its services where it can beyond the routine 9 to 5 environment".

(Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey Excerpt, April 202)

Lead Officer: Assistant Director Corporate Services and Finance.

Why have we chosen this Improvement Objective?

'Tech' change has accelerated during the pandemic, the rate of digital transformation has increased exponentially in part due to the speed of adapting to unexpected challenges. Organisations, their customers and stakeholders expect digital experiences to be more

immersive, inclusive, secure, and simple to use than ever before. Technology change has always been about people, in 2022 that will be truer than ever in the era of hybrid work. The Council is aware that technology will be about the new ways in which we work, connect, create, and support one another—and how technology enables this.

There is now an enhanced need to transform how organisations engage with customers through digital platforms. This increasing use of digital channels is here to stay. Citizens now have higher expectations of online council services and want a digital customer experience similar to that provided by retailers, banks and utility providers.

We want to harness the potential of digital design, data and technology to work efficiently, transform the relationship between residents and the Council, and make Mid Ulster a leading destination for sustainable growth, opportunity and quality of life. To embrace such opportunities we are developing a roadmap to define how our future use of technology and human resources will be optimised to enable the efficient delivery of our business and community priorities to the businesses and citizens of Mid Ulster.

Technology is only an enabler, transformation involves changing how we work, how we organise ourselves and how we serve our citizens. We will have real opportunities to radically rethink, and redesign our services, as we are move towards being a more agile and flexible organisation, with staff able to work from any location as we make more efficient use of physical space and mobile technology.

We can and will learn lessons from innovative digital practice utilised as a response to the Pandemic. More of our high volume, low contacts that we deal with, should be completed at our customer's convenience, enabling Council staff to focus on more complex and sensitive enquiries that benefit from the human touch. All of this can help us manage the rising cost and demand pressures the Council is facing.

Whist we want everyone to become digital citizens, we recognise that not all residents have the means or skills to take up digital. The council aims to grow and develop its digital inclusion work to provide skills and confidence in this area for staff, and our customers will always be able to speak to a person when they need to, and the person they speak to will be able to provide improved customer service.

We will not leave anyone behind, however, we must continue to maximise technology to drive better services and lower delivery costs.

As a Council, we already offer online access in a number of areas; however we need to push further, faster with our digital approaches, data and technology, to ensure the district thrives through the fourth industrial revolution. The Council in order to make the right choices post-pandemic will need to think differently and crucially put citizens, data, insight, and technology at the heart of change.

Link to Community Plan Theme and Outcomes: *Economic Growth – We prosper in a stronger and more competitive economy*

Link to Corporate Plan Theme: Service Delivery - We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda.

Performance Improvement Aspects, which this improvement objective aims to deliver against:

Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness, Sustainability, Efficiency, Innovation.

Table - Progress Made against Improvement Objective Two:

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
1.Development of a Four-Year Digital Transformation Strategy	Strategy presented to Policy and Resources Committee in July 2022 and agreed to recommend adoption to the Council. Specification to procure a strategy implementation partner in place and initial internal works began reference. calls handling, customer service, online registration booking, a request to extend to 'full'	Substantially Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
	implementation phase requested for 2023 to 2024 (full action plan).	
2. Development of a new digital system to support the delivery of Planning.	Project plan implemented and delivered. Data cut successfully completed by 16 May 2022. System went live internally on 16 June 2022 and live to the public on 22 June 2022.	Fully Achieved
3. Development of digital systems to support the delivery of Financial Services	Phase 2 modules planning dates/timetabling agreed, however, commencement and implementation of some of these at best delayed being implemented until March 24 (due to resourcing challenges within the team). Initial discussions on Contracts and Sourcing modules have happened with AMS. Collaboration meeting taken place with other x 5 councils using TechOne and a follow up meeting in March –(likely to be a good resource for moving forward on some of our Phase 2 work).	Partially Achieved
4. Implementation of Phase 2 of the HR System to support the delivery of Human Resources	We have successfully rolled out CORE HR system across all Council providing easy access, self-service for staff to access all Payslips and P60s. Learning and Development (L&D) as well as the expenses module have both been rolled out across Council (all L&D courses bookings are done through	Fully Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
	system). Makodata Reporting is now available in relation to information in Dashboards.	

Diagram - Number of Improvement Activities in CIP2 Project 2022 to 2023 - End of Year Assessment Status

CIP2 Project - End of Year Assessment 2022.23

Green

Blue

Amber
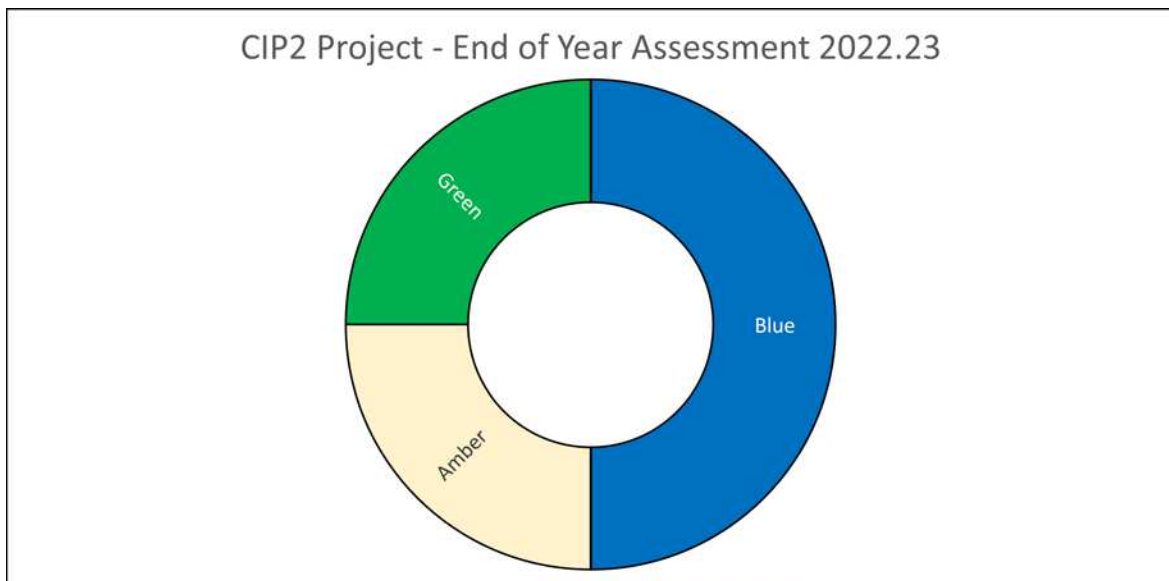
Improvement Objective Three

5.4   Objective Three: To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and the environment

"I think this is very important. The amount of litter thrown out of cars and strewn at the sides of roads is horrific. If everyone disposed of their own litter in a responsible way we would not have this issue. Plastic containers from fast food - people should

be encouraged to bring their own reusable dishes etc. Drinks cans - something needs to be done to discourage the dumping."

(Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey Excerpt, April 2022)

Lead Officer: Assistant Director, of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing

Why have we chosen this Improvement Objective?

Pre pandemic we all used public spaces every time we left home. These include the footpaths and streets we walk or drive along each day, the parks our children play in and the outdoor areas we go to exercise or relax in. Many of our daily decisions and activities are influenced by our perceptions of the quality and cleanliness of the public areas we encounter. The importance of clean, green and blue (our rivers, canals, loughs etc.) spaces, parks, cannot be underestimated. Many benefits derive from a pleasant environment.

The covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns has shown just how important it is for us to have easy access to open space for recreation and exercise and has had a huge impact on everyone in the district, region and worldwide. At its peak, half of the world's population was made to stay at home or restrict movement in public ([1]Sandford, 2020). The importance of safe, accessible and well-connected green and blue spaces for improving quality of life has never been more pertinent, and for those without gardens the value of these spaces is amplified.

Good quality parks and attractive open space contribute economic benefits to towns and villages. As Mid Ulster competes with others to attract growth, tourism and inward investment a clean, green and pleasant environment plays an important role in marketing the District as a place to live in, move to and visit. Businesses are drawn to places with good quality environment as this in turn attracts customers, employees and services into the local area. In addition, well-maintained towns and villages has a positive impact on commercial and domestic property values.

Regionally and locally increases in obesity, are linked to more sedentary lifestyles including lower levels of outdoor activity. Patterns of exercise in adults are set early in life, so obesity and inactivity in childhood can led to poor health in later years. Good

quality public open space is required to encourage healthier lifestyles by providing opportunities for walking, cycling and other outdoor pursuits, as well as being beneficial to mental well-being.

Clean and well-maintained play areas, parks and open space provide important beneficial opportunities for children to learn and develop (their social and emotional development) and stay healthy. Apart from access, the quality of green spaces is crucial too. Quality of facilities – including toilets and cafes; regular maintenance; organised activities can help ensure a green space supports the wellbeing of its citizens equally.

Clean neighbourhoods engender social pride, add vibrancy, and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, all of which are essential to the development of strong prosperous neighbourhoods. Anti-social behaviour can be seen through dog fouling, littering, abandoning vehicles, graffiti, and fly tipping etc. We are very much aware that many of our clean and green services are demand led, whilst much of this demand is inevitable, it is also clear some of it is avoidable. We want to be clear about our service promises, standards, and the response times we aim to achieve to ensure our communities understand what levels of service they can expect.

On its own the Council cannot deliver a cleaner and greener environment for residents. We want to work collaboratively, with residents, communities, visitors and businesses and through active citizenship we hope to see reduced demands on our services and more residents taking greater pride in and ownership of their local environment. This is more necessary then ever as overall public sector expenditure reduces at an unprecedented rate, combined with the economic fallout arising from the pandemic.

[1] Sandford, A., 2020. Coronavirus: Half of humanity now on lockdown as 90 countries call for confinement. Euronews.

Link to Community Plan Theme: Infrastructure- We increasingly value our environment and enhance it for our children.

Link to Corporate Plan Theme: Environment - We will continue to promote and protect our environment through our environmental and anti-littering programmes of education, awareness raising and enforcement.

Performance Improvement Aspects, which this improvement objective aims to deliver against

Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness, Sustainability, Efficiency, Innovation

Table - Progress Made against Improvement Objective Three:

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
1. Pilot New anti-littering enforcement approach.	1,747 Fixed Penalty Notices issued by 3rd party enforcement partner for period Jan 2022 - April 2023 as part of pilot enforcement scheme. Third party enforcement partner has withdrawn their Northern Ireland operations for Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) and other NI Councils effective from April 2023. MUDC currently reviewing options and engaging with other Councils where appropriate. "Walk this Way" pilot introduced during 2022 and plans for it to be extended during 2023. This pilot involves creating a dog-friendly walking route in a park, nature reserve, coastal, or woodland area. The route aims to facilitate more opportunities for owners to suitably dispose of dog waste by improving the sites bin-infrastructure and prominence. The Lough Fea walk near Cookstown was selected as the site for	Partially achieved

| What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
	this initiative during 2022. The walk is centrally located and is a popular dog walking spot. It is also one of the more significant dog fouling hotspots in the District. The initiative involved a 4-week baseline study of the amount of fouling along the route. This took place in May 2022. The results noted that the dog fouling was cleaned up at each monitoring visit. For 2023, it is suggested that Council seeks to extend the Walk This Way Scheme and areas to be taken from hotspot list.	
2. Support and promote local community clean-ups and events (5% increase in number of clean-ups supported from 2021/22). E.g. Big Spring Clean organised by schools, community groups and sports clubs.	Total of 58 clean ups supported in 2022/23 (compared to 49 in 2021/22) with an additional 53 new 'Adopt A Spot' registrations across Mid Ulster from 1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023. Combined total = 111. There were 6 social media posts with a combined total of 176 "likes", 12 "comments "and 18 "shares".	Fully Achieved
3. Co-author a Community engagement programme with "Friends from Maghera Walled Garden".	This particular project is now complete. A community engagement programme with the residents (now stakeholders) and visitors has been developed and is in place at Maghera Walled Garden that will continue into the foreseeable future. This year saw the garden host - Community	Fully Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
	Engagement/Stakeholder event - Environmental Gardening Event - Christmas Family Fun Event. To further enhance visitor participation and engagement funding has been successfully secured to update and create new car parking facilities and signage at the Garden thereby enhancing accessibility for visitors.	
4. Co-ordinate and deliver a programme of Town and Village Spruce Up - Deliver 40 grant schemes in 2022/23.	Now complete- In 2022/2023 the target was up to 40 schemes completed. 29 schemes completed with grant aid to the value of £104,425.25, private sector leverage £66,378.34. 11 schemes did not accept the Letter of Offer due to- works already completed by the applicant prior to issue of Letter of Offer (funding could not be claimed retrospectively) . Applicants had submitted applications in September 2019 and Letter of Offer was not issued to April 2022, due to budget availability and ranked position. Some were unable to efficiently run their business without completing the works that had been contained in their application and for others material prices had increased dramatically from initial quotations and cash flow was not available. Mid Ulster Town & Village Business Spruce Up Scheme is now	Substantially Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
	complete, which presents the opportunity for stakeholders to revaluate the scheme and investigate the potential for future projects. To date no approvals have been granted to bring forward a further scheme due to other economic development priorities and a new term incoming. Phases 1 to 4 of the Mid Ulster Town & Village Business Spruce Up Scheme has resulted in £699,454.52 of Grant aid awarded to 200 properties across the Mid Ulster District Council area, with private sector leverage of £427,097.85. The scheme has resulted in over £1.1 million investment	
5. Co-ordinated litter/ recycling educational programme in place for participating schools.	During the 22/23 school year 32 education visits were made to promote the litter and recycling message. Funding was awarded to 10 projects within the Mid Ulster area that met the scheme criteria. The total grant amount allocated to the successful projects within Mid Ulster was £16,498. Council made a funding contribution to the scheme of £10,500. The remainder of the funding was met by another participating funding partner.	Fully Achieved
6. Develop, manage and deliver a marketing and	Spring Campaign commenced via Council communications team. There	Fully Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
communication activity plan 2022/23 aimed at reducing littering and awareness of dog fouling across Council parks.	were 4 stakeholder community group meetings facilitated Ballyronan, Washingbay, Coolnafranky and Castledawson. Most dog owners are responsible and clean up after their pets, but a small number continue to cause problems. Dog fouling is a health risk to all people and can cause the infection 'Toxocariasis' which can lead to blindness. It can also transmit infections and diseases to other animals. Post community / stakeholder feedback media campaign launched scheduled. Message communicated via local social media channels. Banners / boards printed and installed on sites.	
7. Develop extended coverage of Forest Schools programme across all seven District Electoral Area's (DEA's) - DEA's are Carntogher, Clogher Valley, Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Moyola, Torrent in Mid Ulster District.	By incorporating innovative approaches to learning such as undertaking small and easily achievable tasks, children are encouraged to develop their curiosity and motivation to learn. This is particularly important for those who find it difficult to assimilate knowledge in a strictly classroom situation. Multisensory - The freedom to explore using multiple senses is fundamental for encouraging creative, diverse, and imaginative play. The focus is on the "whole child" not just their academic	Fully Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
	ability. Six forest schools completed 2022 all at Roundlake Fivemiletown. 150 children and teachers attended. Six schools have undertaken forest schools training at Hill of the O' Neill, Dungannon.	
8. Continue to raise Parks and Open Green Spaces management standards across Council Properties by attaining one additional Green Flag/Blue Standard award by 2023.	Environmental and sustainability standards assessed and awarded. Winning a Green/Blue Flag Award visibly demonstrates to the local community that a clear improvement has been made to a site. One Blue flag awarded June 2022 - Ballyronan Marina.	Fully Achieved
9. Provide environmental volunteering opportunities and support community groups to manage local environmental projects.	Agreed one service level agreement with the PSG community group for maintenance at Iniscarn Forest completed February 2022. Facilitated twelve Angling workshops, which included environmental learning, fish and aquatic insects life cycle completed August 2022, with 86 participants.	Fully Achieved

Diagram - Number of Improvement Activities in CIP3 Project 2022 to 2023 - End of Year Assessment Status

CIP3 Project - End of Year Assessment 2022.23
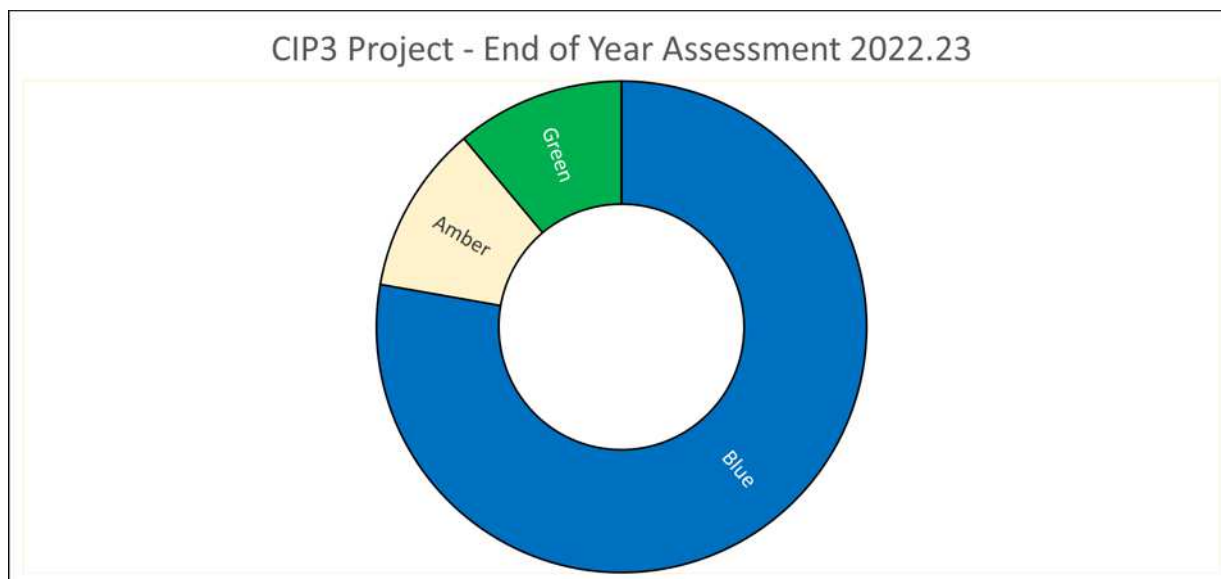
Improvement Objective Four

5.5 **Objective Four**:   We will contribute to the ongoing regeneration of our district by delivering a capital investment programme, enhancing facilities and opportunities for local people.

"There is a lot of positive work done by the Council in trying to regenerate the district and I acknowledge this. Keep it up!"".

(Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey Excerpt, April 2022).

Lead Officer: Head of Technical Services

Why have we chosen this Improvement Objective?

The Council has continued to deliver ambitious investment plans to recover from the economic challenges of Covid-19. It has taken a strong and determined leadership role to strengthen the economic, social, and physical wellbeing of our

places. We now look to a period of recovery emerging from the worst excesses of the Pandemic, we are aware there will be lasting effects, which will be felt for many years to come. We also recognise that our capital programmes will play an important role in the economic recovery from the impact of Covid-19.

We must look to a period of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We have had to lead our lives locally, pulling together more as communities, to see off the many challenges arising from coronavirus. The Council's capital programme of local projects will maintain our ongoing support for vibrant, accessible village/ town centres, open spaces and communities.

Regeneration is a long-term process and is delivered through a wide range of projects, programmes, partnerships, infrastructure initiatives. Since the late 1990s, policymakers have recognised the wider social factors that affect the success of regeneration schemes, but this is even more vital in the current economic climate. Infrastructure is a valuable and efficient economic stimulus. Every £1 of investment in infrastructure generates a potential further £2.70[1] due to economic multiplier effects. Making the most of existing social capital and providing opportunities for local people to be involved in regeneration is a vital part of making the best use of limited resources.

As a Council we support locally developed place based regeneration projects, we continue to invest in Mid Ulster, as well as providing essential services paid by your rates. Our Capital investment programme is our commitment to making the District a better place to live, work and invest. The programme includes major schemes to boost the economy, create jobs and improve the quality of life for our citizens.

Quality of place matters in economic, social, cultural and emotional terms. A sense of place helps establish strong social infrastructure, which supports people to improve their prospects and maximize their potential. We are taking a "Whole District" approach creating places that are attractive, well designed and well managed. Our approach focuses on tailored solutions for settlements within the District and business locations.

We recognise our major assets as those that have the potential to deliver the greatest impact. Building on and investing in these assets alongside complementary interventions will release the District's potential for growth and connect areas of growth with deprived places in need of generation.

By following a planned phased approach across the District, we will be able to deliver greater impact for each locality, using the resources available to best effect. This work has never been more important as we look to rebuild and recover from the devastating impact of COVID-19.

[1.]Further detail can be found here: https://www.ice.org.uk/getattachment/news-and-insight/policy/infrastructure-as-a-stimulus/post-crisis-infrastructure-investment-insight-paper-covid-19.pdf.aspx#_ga=2.179966759.2015985077.1591167730-1129742483.1567513176

Link to Community Plan Theme: Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger and more competitive economy.
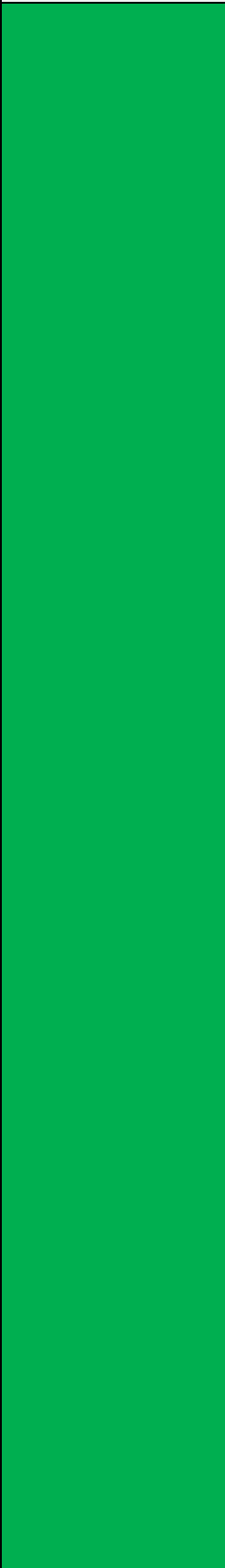
Link to Corporate Plan Theme: Economy - We will continue to identify opportunity sites for development proposals and to deliver against existing plans for other key strategic sites (including Ann Street, Dungannon and the former Maghera High School site).   .

Performance Improvement Aspects this improvement objective aims to deliver against?
Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Sustainability, Service Availability, Fairness, Efficiency, Innovation.

**Table - Progress Made Against Improvement Objective Four:**

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
1. Undertake the Project management of Council's current committed live Capital Works Programme 2020 - 2024 with an indicative spend < £26m. Projects include: 3 Waste	Capital reports are presented on a monthly basis to the Environment Committee and include: IST Capital reports, ICT Capital reports and Scoping Projects reports. Residents have been updated in terms of Projects being listed on web page - see link:	Substantially Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
Infrastructure Projects; - new Magherafelt Recycling Centre , final closure works at Ballymacombs Landfill and potential development of a Dry Recyclables Facility (MRF):2 Public Realm - Coalisland scheme Design out & Development of Maghera Magherafelt Phase. 14 Major Projects - Davagh Walks/Art, Maghera HS site , Connecting Pomeroy , Gortgonis Health & Well Being Hub, Dungannon Railway Park , Reservoirs Projects, MUSA Sports 3G & Running Track , Maghera Wetland Park , Active Travel Projects, Thomas Clarkes GAC, Sperrins Sculpture trail, Peace IV Shared Space Programme, Small Settlement Programme. 20 Minor Projects under £250k - Greenvale repairs , Peace IV projects in Draperstown, Moy,	https://www.midulstercouncil.org/your-council/investing-in-mid-ulster, plus monthly updates on media YouTube channel see link https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzfkoqzAiZjXfCcqEJ_5ANlV9g3HNRrPW	

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
Castledawson, Donaghmore, Moneymore, Aughnacloy, Tamnamore, Broughderg, Galbally, Ballyronan Wood, International Appalachian Trail, Iniscarn, Pomeroy Carpark, Cot Lane, Ballsaggart Lough Retaining Wall, Davagh Welfare Facilities, Murley Road Footpath, Greenvale LC Repairs, Access Inclusion, Magherafelt Art piece.		
2. Research, develop and implement a pilot capital project procedural guide - Efficient management and governance of capital programme.	Capital Planning Manager in post. Draft Capital document was circulated and reviewed by the Ass Directors/HoS level and comments made on the suite of documents. With the Organisational Restructure and the implementation of dedicated Capital Team this has resulted in the document being refined taking account of comments etc made on Draft document and with SMT approval the document was approved at PR Committee in March 23. With the delay in getting the document approved this has resulted in roll out of awareness session being delayed until April 2023 by the Capital Team. Capital	Fully Achieved

What are we going to do? (Activities/Measures)	What we delivered	Achievement
	Procedure guide to be reviewed on an annual basis.	
3. Develop a skills/competency matrix/ tool to map required and desired skills for capital projects team/client services teams and conduct training/development programmes to optimise efficiencies and workflows by April 2022 - Streamline processes for efficiency compromises within the capital projects team through staff development.	Resources have been limited with the restructuring of Council and with priority given to Key Capital projects for MSW (Mid South West Growth Deal) and LUF (Levelling Up Fund Phase 2) Quarter 1 Deadline Priority resulting in this being delayed and recruitment of additional 2 members of staff identified in restructuring plans. The roll out still being scheduled for Q1 2023-2024 as planned	Not Achieved

Diagram - Number of Improvement Activities in CIP4 Project 2022 to 2023 - End of Year Assessment Status

CIP4 Project - End of Year Assessment 2022.23
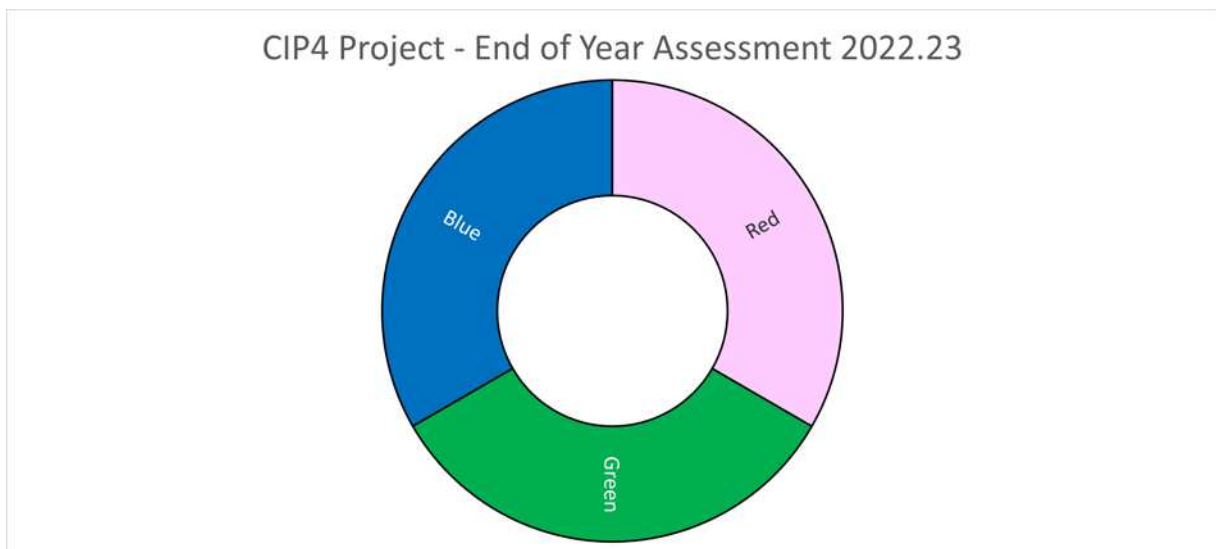
Summary of Progress Capital Works Programme During 2022 to 2023

In relation to capital waste infrastructure projects; progress has been made on Magherafelt recycling Centre with completion February 2023 with the Dry Recyclables Facility (MRF) still at development stage along with other Partner Councils with no development planned for 23-24. Ballymacombs Landfill is still under consideration for final Capping with no plans for the 23-24 year.

Projects relating to Public Realm schemes have seen the Coalisland project complete with formal Department for Infrastructure (DfI) adoption still outstanding. Maghera design has been completed and planning granted and now has funding secured via Levelling Up Fund (LUF) funding process. Magherafelt Public Realm whilst still listed in the Capital Framework is under review for funding partners. A further Public Realm under construction in Pomeroy; as part of the overall Connecting Pomeroy Project is due to commence 22-23.

In relation to Major Projects; 2022-23 saw one Major Capital Works Project completed, Sperrin Sculpture, although commencement was made during the year end with projects overlapping with 2023-24 including: Connecting Pomeroy (GAC, COI, Presbyterian, and Forest Building), Thomas Clarkes GAC, Forest Park upgrades at (Derrynoyd/Drumcairn).

During 2022/23 regarding Minor Projects: completed out on 19 of these from the Capital Programme were:
- Active Travel Schemes at Clonoe, Coalisland, Eglish, Maghera,
- Forest Park upgrades at Inniscarn, Pomeroy, Davagh, Ballyronan,
- Remedial repairs to Cott Lane Bridge, Ballysaggart Retaining Wall,
- Peace IV Shared spaces at Coalisland, Dungannon, Cookstown and Magherafelt as well as
- DDA improvements to various Council Assets.

Currently Council have progressed during 22-23 to having a dedicated page on its website this requires further development taking into consideration feedback and comments from the outworking's of the performance improvement consultations.

6.0 Council's self-assessment of statutory indicators and standards 2021 to 2022.

Statutory Indicators/Standards - (Set For Us)

Under the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, statutory performance indicators and standards have been set as part of the performance improvement arrangements for district councils (i.e. set for us). Performance measures have been specified for the functions of: economic development, planning and waste management.

The aim of the performance measures is to promote the improvement of service delivery. The information is currently collated by the Department for the Economy, Department for Infrastructure and DAERA (Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs) respectively and published on their websites. Once released to Council, this information is published for citizens and other stakeholders to assess Council's performance in these areas.

Mid Ulster District Council's 2022 to 2023 performance against these indicators (progress and trend/direction of travel) are outlined in the following section, also included is performance benchmarking data relating to the other 10 Northern Ireland Councils; where available.

The table below outlines how the statutory indicators and standards performance progress is analysed using a R. A.G (red, amber, and green) i.e. Status-reporting framework.

Table - R-A-G Reporting Status Framework

Status evaluated by colour as	Explanation of RAG colour status
Green	Met or exceeded target
Amber	Missed target narrowly
Red	Missed Target Significantly .

Trend

Trend or the Direction of Travel - the direction of travel demonstrates if performance has improved, declined, or been maintained relative to the previous year:

- Performance improved ⬆
- Performance remained the same ⬅➡
- Performance declined ⬇

6.1 Economic Development Statutory Indicator

ED1 – Numbers of jobs promoted through business start-up activity

The purpose of Performance Indicator ED1: The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity (Business start-up means the delivery of completed client led business plans under the Department of the Economy Regional Start Initiative or its successor Programmes). 'Go for it' programme is the first stop for entrepreneurs in Northern Ireland and provides individuals who wish to start a business with support in the production of their own business plans and in registering for self-employment. Experienced business advisors operate locally through Council partners and business plans produced as a result of this programme are quality assured by the 'Go for It' team.

The Department for Communities launched a consultation on The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022. This took account of proposed changes by the Department for the Economy (DfE) to performance indicators relating to job promotion and linked to Business Start-up activity. These targets were initially established in 2015 as part of the transfer of functions to local government. When the transfer took place in April 2015, DfE set the job targets based on the 2011-2015 Programme for Government (PfG) target, namely creating 6,500 local jobs, or 1,625 jobs per year. The total job numbers were then split across each council area, and loosely aligned to the Regional Business Start-up Programme (Go for It). These targets have remained in place since that date.

The consultation period opened in December 2021 and ran to 28th February 2022. It included a proposal to broadly retain the current Economic Development indicators at this time, and to amend the standards to reflect the outcome of research undertaken in 2019 (the so called "Capaxo work"). The result of this was an adjustment to the specific targets in some council areas (see details in table below).

This amendment will bring statutory targets in line with the targets currently being delivered through the current wave of the Northern Ireland Business Start Up Programme 2021-2023. Individual councils have been engaging directly with DfE on these targets.

Table - Proposed Adjusted new ED1 – Jobs promoted standards for NI Councils

| Council	Proposed New Standards Post Capaxo Report	Existing Standards (2015)
Antrim and Newtownabbey	80	80
Ards and North Down	123	85
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	182	165
Belfast	325	325
Causeway Coast and Glens	128	125
Derry and Strabane	140	140
Fermanagh and Omagh	170	170
Lisburn and Castlereagh	116	85
Mid and East Antrim	111	85
Mid Ulster	153	210
Newry, Mourne and Down	173	155

It was not possible to make the amendment to the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 (hereafter called the regulations), before the dissolution of the Assembly due to competing

legislative pressures and the volumes of legislation needed to be progressed before the mandate ended and as such the current economic development standards cited in the 2015 Order remain in operation.

This presented a complication, given that Councils had been working towards a set of programme standards that are not reflected in the statutory arrangements. Following a joint meeting of the DfE and the NI Audit Office it has been agreed that both the statutory targets and the "Go for It" programme target should appear in Councils 2022 to 2023 annual performance improvement assessment reports.

The graph below highlights Mid Ulster District Council's number of jobs promoted through business start up from 2015 to 2023, where the standard (utilised in 2015) was set at 210 jobs promoted p.a. The proposed new standard for Mid Ulster Council will be 153 jobs promoted when the legislation is enacted.

Graph - Mid Ulster Number of Jobs Promoted through Business Start Up activity 2015 to 2023 (utilising 2015 standard)
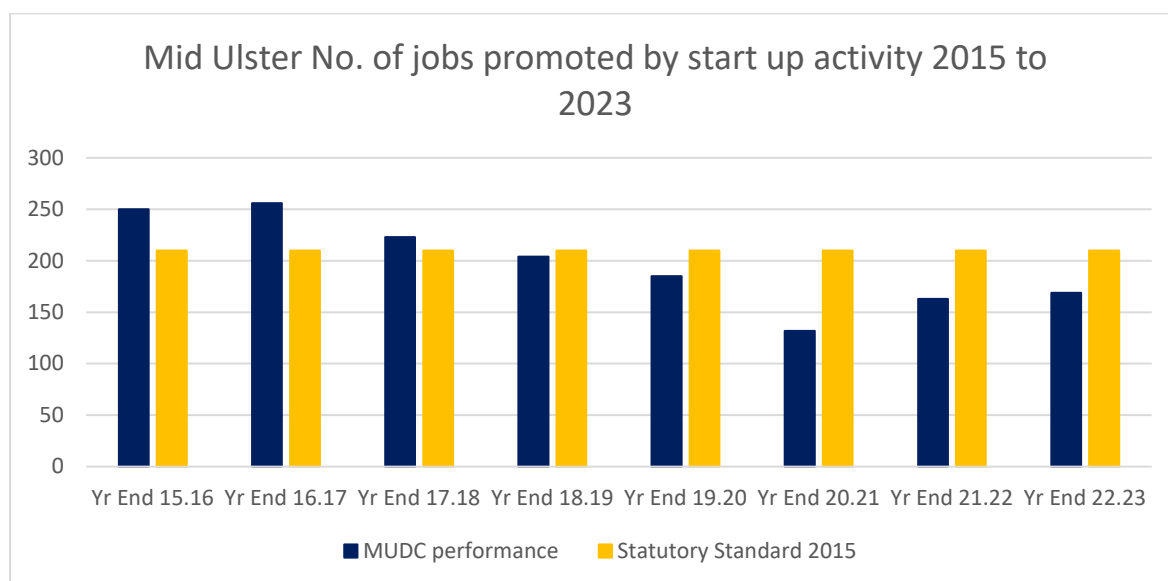
The Council have supported the revised targets as they more accurately reflect the changing economic circumstances of the sub-region, including high employment and loss of migrant population due to the impact of the European Union (EU) Exit. The Contract Management Team as Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (L&CCC) liaise regularly with the Contractor (ENI); following approval from funders, ENI offer both 'virtual' and physical delivery which is working well for clients and

enquiry levels to March 2023 have remained strong. However, indications are these are projected to decrease in the current economic climate as fewer are prepared to risk starting a business with increases in energy costs and cost of living

Table - the number of jobs promoted through business activity in Mid Ulster 2021/22 to 2022/23*.

Year			2021/22	2022 to 2023				
Ref	Statutory Indicator	Standard	Year End Result	Year End Result	% over or under target	Ranking against other Councils	Status	Trend
ED1	Number of jobs promoted through Business Start-up activity	210 jobs	163 jobs	169 jobs	81%	11th	Red	↑

*New proposed Mid Ulster District Council's new statutory target of 153 jobs awaiting NI Assembly ascension into legislation.

Analysis: More is better

Performance in 2022/23 is slightly higher (169 jobs promoted) than 2021/22 (163 jobs promoted) but has not returned to pre-Covid level Performance. Mid Ulster has slightly exceed the EU Programme target (169 vs 158 jobs promoted) and the proposed new Statutory Target (153) but not the current 2015 Statutory Target (210 jobs). In DfE's letter dated 12 May 2022, they advised that, as the Amendment Order was not ratified due to the collapse of the Executive DfE require Councils to report using both programme and statutory targets in self-assessment returns and improvement plans assurance, until new Statutory targets can be enacted in legislation (i.e. 153 for Mid Ulster).

Action Plan:

The intention of the Department for Communities will be to "make" the amended regulations as soon as possible, subject to Minister's agreement, to bring the start-up programme and the statutory indicators into line.

Northern Ireland Councils' ED1 Performance Data during 2022 to 2023

Across the eleven Northern Ireland Councils 1,625 jobs were created during 2022 to 2023 (refer to table below ED1 jobs promoted 2022/23), this is down from the previous year's job creation total of 1,868 jobs in 2020/21. Two out of the 11 Councils did not achieve the performance indicator target (i.e. Standard set in 2015), namely Belfast City Council (BCC) which saw 90% jobs promoted (293 jobs -, the previous year saw 311 jobs in BCC) versus the statutory target (325 jobs), and Mid Ulster which saw 81% of jobs promoted (169 jobs, up from the previous year of 163 jobs promoted) matched against the 2015 statutory target of 210 jobs promoted.

Cognisance should be made that all Councils in 2022/23, had been working towards a set of programme standards that are not reflected in the statutory arrangements due to the proposed amendment to the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022. The table below outlines the Northern Ireland Councils ED1 - Jobs Promoted Achieved through Business Start Up 2022 to 2023.

Table - Northern Ireland Councils ED1 - Jobs Promoted Achieved through Business Start Up 2022 to 2023

2022.2023 Year to Date Performance versus Statutory Target					
Council	BPA Year to Date	Jobs Created Year to Date	Statutory Jobs Target	Balance of Jobs to be created	% Jobs Created Vs Statutory Target
Antrim & Newtownabbey	176	106	80		132%
Ards & North Down	169	101	85		119%
Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon	360	216	165		131%
Belfast	489	293	325	32	90%
Causeway Coast & Glens	219	131	125	-6	105%
Derry & Strabane	250	150	140	-10	107%
Fermanagh & Omagh	310	186	170	-16	109%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	189	113	85		133%
Mid & East Antrim	207	124	85		146%
Mid Ulster	282	169	210	41	81%
Newry Mourne & Down	311	187	155		120%
Total 2022 -23	2,962	1,777	1,625	40	109%

## 6.2   Planning Statutory Indicators

Planning Activity across Northern Ireland 2022 to 2023

Department for Infrastructure (DfI) publish planning statistics in their annual Northern Ireland Planning Report[1]. In 2022/23 the volume of planning applications received was the lowest since the series began in 2022/03. With the exception of 2020/21, the volume of planning applications processed (i.e. decision to withdrawn) in the most recent year was also the lowest on record. While the number of enforcement cases opened in 2022/23 was slightly higher than 2021/22, the volume of cases closed was lower than the previous year.

The department in their 2022 to 2023 annual report noted that during the last two years there were some key events that had impacted on planning activity and processing performance. These were the coronavirus pandemic with some varying restrictions until February 2022; the accessibility of the planning system for some users for a period during January to February 2022, and a significant change in IT systems with the development and implementation of two new planning systems in June and December 2022. The Department of Infrastructure states that all of these factors should be borne in mind when interpreting these figures and when making comparisons over time periods[1].

During 2022/23, 11,217 planning applications were received in Northern Ireland by Councils and the Department; a decrease of 17.5% from the previous financial year (13,600) and the lowest level on record. This comprised of 11,072 local, 144 major and one regionally significant application.

Graph – Planning Applications received by NI Councils 2021/22 to 2022/23
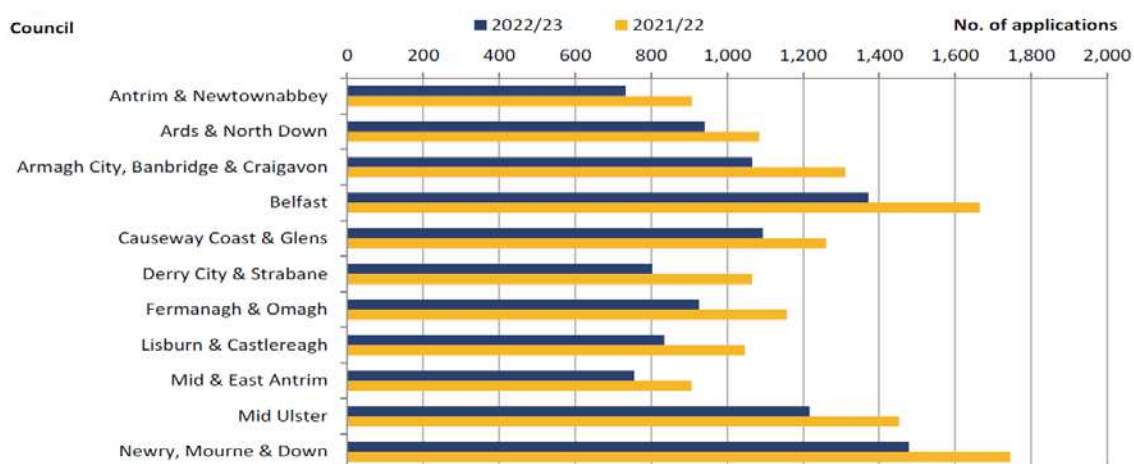
[1]   [Northern Ireland planning statistics April 2022 - March 2023 | Department for Infrastructure (infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)](#)

During 2022/23, the number of planning applications received across Councils ranged from 1,478 in Newry, Mourne and Down (accounting for 13.2% of all applications received across NI) to 732 in Antrim and Newtownabbey (6.5% of all applications received). During 2022/23 Mid Ulster received 1,217 planning applications down from 1,452 the previous year (difference of 235). *DfI has not published all of the statutory planning target information for Councils relating to 2022/23, where data is incomplete (from the Department) this has been highlighted in the following sections.

Table – Mid Ulster District Council's three statutory planning statistics results for 2021/22 and 2022/23

Ref	Statutory Indicator	Standard	2021/22 Year End Result	2022/23 Year End Result	NI Average	Ranking Against Other Councils	Status	Trend
P1	The average processing time of Major planning applications	30 weeks	88 weeks	68.1 weeks	57.8 weeks	7th	RED	↑
P2	The average processing time of Local planning applications	15 weeks	16.6 weeks	21.6 weeks	19 weeks	9th	RED	↓
P3	The percentage (%) of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks	70%	75.20%	*Not Available	*Not available	*Not available		

*DfI has not published % of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks for 2022 to 2023.

P1 – Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 30 weeks

Purpose of Performance Indicator: Planning Department deals with Major Planning applications faster - An application in the category of major development within the

meaning of Planning (Development Management Regulations (NI) 2015(a). Major developments have important economic, social and environmental implications.

The majority of major applications are multiple housing, commercial, government and civic types of development.

From 1 July 2015, pre-application community consultation became a pre-requisite to a major application. This means that major applications will not be accepted until they have gone through this minimum 12-week process and notice has been submitted to the council or Department. DfI states that "the impact of this requirement should be borne in mind when considering the longer term trend in major applications received, particularly when considering quarterly data"[1.]

The graph below outlines Mid Ulster District Councils Average processing times of major applications from 2015/16 to 2022/23, where the standard is within 30 weeks.

Graph – Mid Ulster Council Average Processing Times for Major Applications 2015 to 2023

Average Processing Time of Major Applications Mid Ulster 2015 to 2023
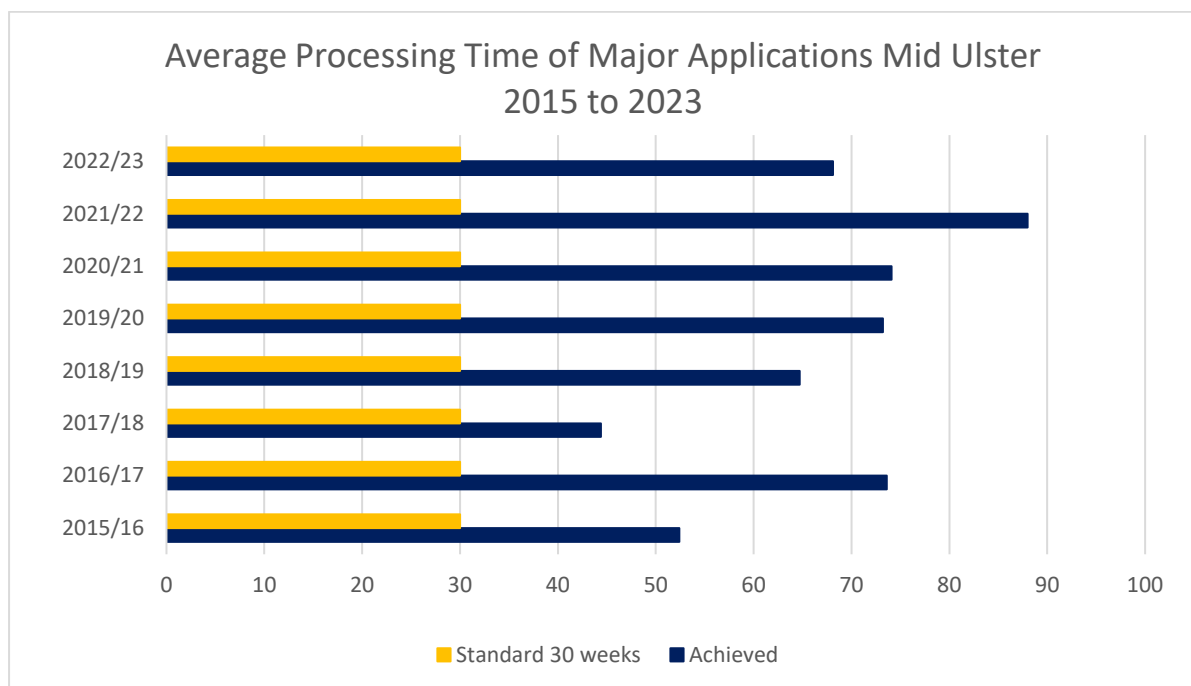
Analysis: Less is better

The average processing time in weeks for Mid Ulster's Major development applications in 2022/23 was 68.1 weeks, which while an improvement from the previous year of 88 weeks (2021/22), still did not meet the standard. Mid Ulster received twenty major planning applications (up from the previous year of ten major planning applications) and approved 14 during the year, (13 were approved in the previous year 2021/22).

Action Plan:

The staff make-up of the Major applications team is now finalised after a period of flux and absence. There is a permanent senior team lead, HPTO and Head of Strategic Planning as - Team Lead. Measures to improve the consultation response times of statutory consultees is on-going and internal practices being reviewed.

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2022 to 2023

The number of major applications received across Councils in 2022 to 2023 ranged from 25 in Belfast to four in Ards and North Down. Six Councils recorded decreases in the number of major applications received in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22, with Belfast receiving the largest decrease (from 38 to 25)[1]. Five Councils reported increases in the number of major applications received over the year, with the greatest increase recorded in Mid Ulster (up 10, from 10 to 20). During 2022/23, 150 major applications were decided, seven withdrawn and of the 150 applications decided upon 147 were approved (98% approval rate achieved)

Comparable performance with other Northern Ireland Councils is outlined in the chart below which is published by the Department of Infrastructure. The average processing time for major applications brought to a decision or withdrawal during 2022/23 was 57.8 weeks across all Councils. This represents an increase of 8.0 weeks when compared to the average processing time in 2021/22 (49.8 weeks) and is higher than the 30 week target. No Councils were within the 30 week target in 2022/23.

Graph - Average processing time of major planning applications by NI Councils 2021/22 and 2022/23.
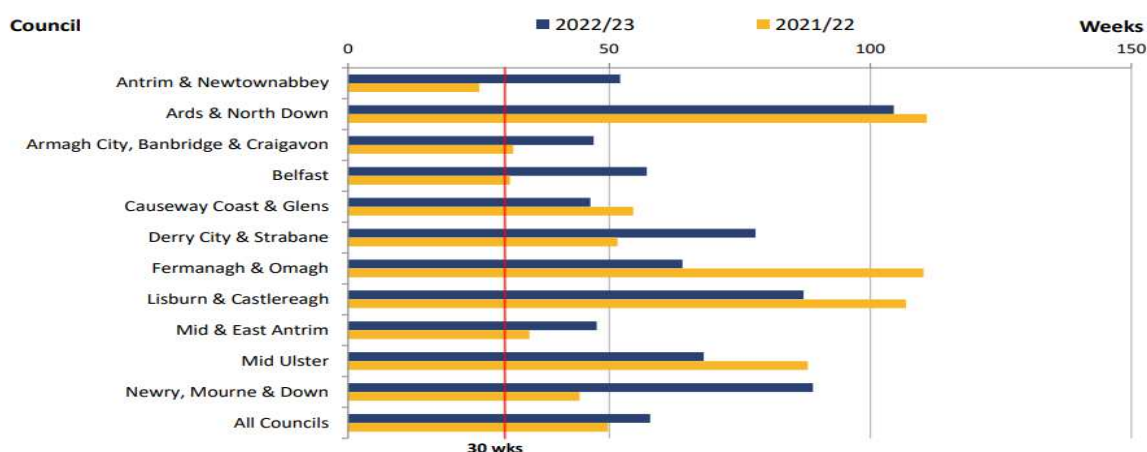
[Northern Ireland Planning Statistics 2022-23 Statistical Bulletin (infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)](https://infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

Planning P2 – Average processing time for Local planning applications from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 15 weeks.

Purpose of Performance Indicator: Local applications means an application in the category of local development within the meaning of the (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015, and any other applications for approval or consent under the Planning Act (NI) 2011 (or any orders or regulations made under the Act). Local Development planning applications are mostly residential and minor commercial applications received and determined by a Council. The time taken to process a decision/withdrawal is calculated from the date on which an application is deemed valid to the date on which the decision is issued or the application is withdrawn.

The average processing time in weeks for Mid Ulster's local development applications in 2022/23 was 21.6 weeks, this is down from 16.6 weeks in 2021/22. The total number of local Mid Ulster applications received in 2022/23 was 1,197 down from 1,442 the previous year. Mid Ulster District Council received the third highest (1,197 number of applications in 2022/23), after Belfast which received the second highest (1,347), Newry Mourne and Down which received the most number

of local applications at 1,471. Antrim and Newtownabbey received the least number of local applications 714.

Graph - Mid Ulster District Councils Average processing times of local applications from 2015/16 to 2022/23, where the standard is within 15 weeks.

Average Processing Time Local Applications Mid Ulster 2015 to 2023
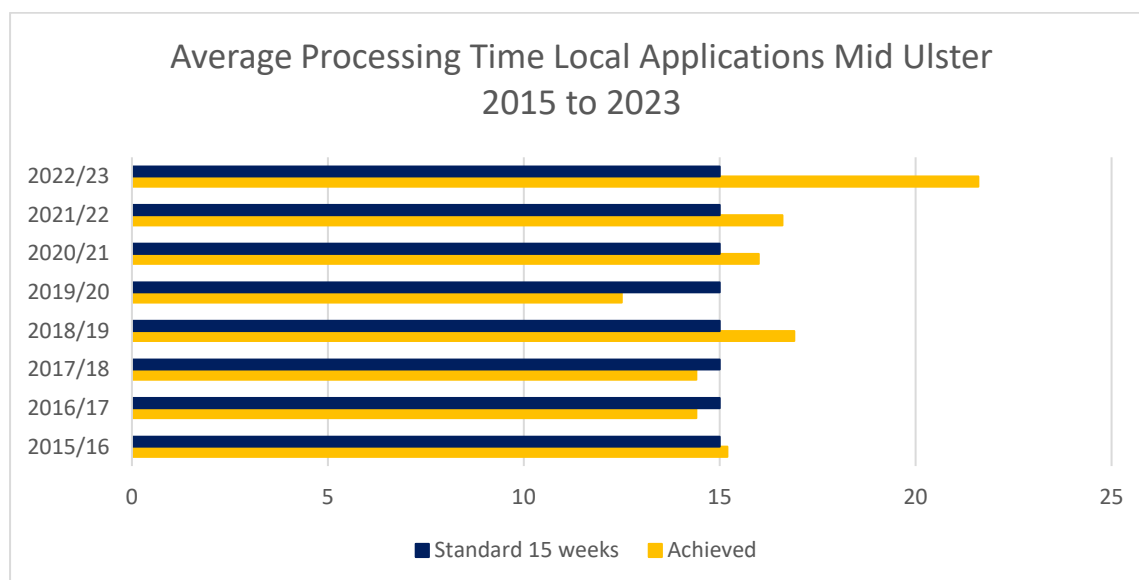
Analysis: Less is better

Standard of 15 weeks not achieved, however cognisance should be made of the availability of the planning portal in 2022 and the development, introduction and rolling out of the new bespoke Mid Ulster Planning Portal, which impacted the performance of local applications.

Action Plan:

The Head of Local Planning will oversee and review the Local applications in Quarter One 2023/24 moving forward.

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2022 to 2023

The average processing time for local applications brought to a decision or withdrawal during 2022/23 was 19 weeks across all councils. This exceeds the 15 week target and represents an increase of 1.8 weeks from the previous financial year (17.2 weeks).

Three of the 11 Councils met the 15 week target in 2022/23, namely; Mid and East Antrim (8.6 weeks), Fermanagh and Omagh (13 weeks) and Antrim and Newtownabbey (13.4 weeks).

The number of local applications received during 2022/23 was 11,072; the lowest since the series began in 2015/16 and a decrease of 17.7% on the 13,454 received during 2021/22 and all 11 Councils reported a decrease in their local applications during the year.

Graph - Average Processing time of Local planning applications NI Councils 2020/22 to 2021/23


https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics
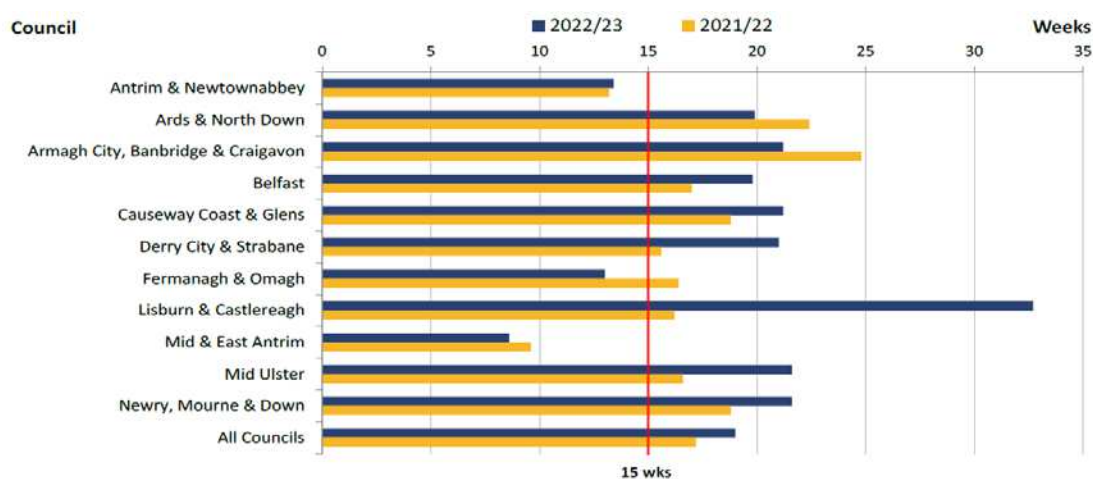
.**Planning   P3 – The percentage (70%) of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks.**

Purpose of Performance Indicator: Planning Department bring more enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks. Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control under Part 5 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 (or under any orders or regulations made under the Act.

An enforcement case is opened when there has been an alleged breach of planning control. An enforcement case is concluded when one of the following occurs: a notice is issued; legal proceedings commence; a planning application is received; or the case is closed. The time taken to conclude an enforcement case is calculated from the date on which the complaint is received to the earliest date of the following: a notice is issued; legal proceedings commence; a planning application is received; or the case is closed. At the time of publication DfI had highlighted that enforcement figures for 2022/23 enforcement data were provisional. The figures would be subject to further revision when the full suite of enforcement data became available and therefore the number of enforcement cases concluded and corresponding processing times were not presented in the annual report (users would be notified when available). The graph below due to facts highlighted above include data from 2015 to 2022 only

Graph - The percentage of Enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks in Mid Ulster 2015 to 2022
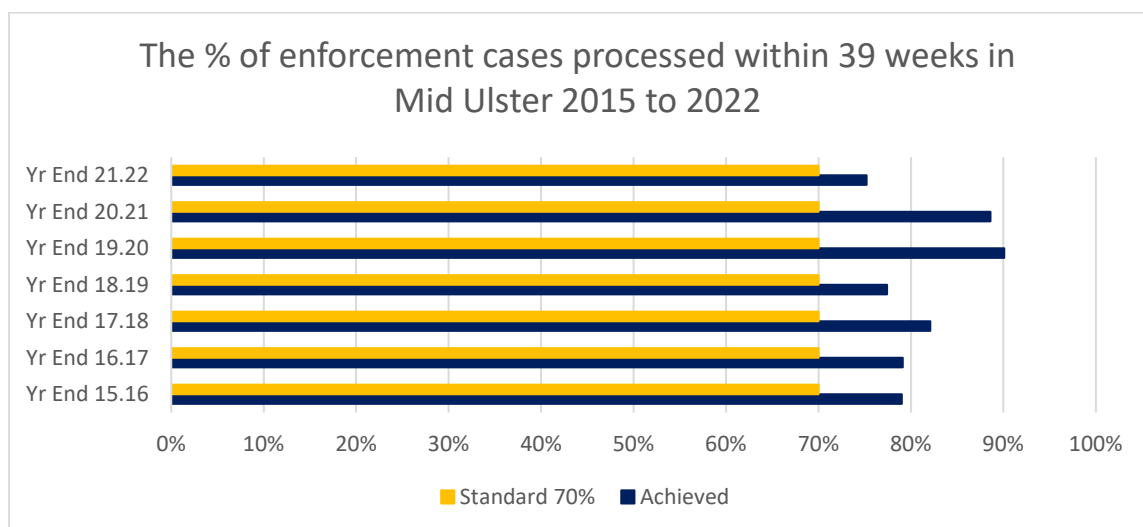
Analysis: More is better

DfI has not yet released or published information relating to quarter three and quarter four of 2022 to 2023 and have stated in their report, the "Annual Northern Ireland Planning Statistics Report April 2022 to 2023 ", that the number of enforcement cases concluded and corresponding cases dealt is not presented in the report and will be published later. Quarter one and quarter two data are available on the DfI web-site for 2022/2023 relating to this statutory target. Mid Ulster during the first six months of 2022 to 2023 had 51.6% of cases concluded within 39 weeks.

Action Plan:

Unknown if standard has been achieved as data has not been released in relation to quarter's three and four in 2022/23 year.

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2022 to 2023 (Provisional)

DfI in its annual report did not present the annual number of enforcement cases concluded and the corresponding processing times and stated that the information would be made available at a later date. Data was published in relation to quarter one and quarter two and across councils 73.4% of enforcement cases were concluded within 39 weeks during the first six months of 2022/23. This meets the statutory target of 70% and represents an increase from the rate reported for the same period in 2021/22 (72.3%). Seven of the 11 councils were within target after the first six months of 2022/23[2].

The report listed the number of 'live' enforcement cases at the end of March 2023 was 3,774, up 3.2% from 2021/22[1]. Across Councils; Newry, Mourne and Down had the highest number of live cases at the end of March 2023 (708), with almost one-half (48.6%) of these in the system for over two years, Mid and East Antrim had the smallest number of live case (97) at the end of March 2023, with 16.5% of these in the system for over two years.

There were 19 prosecutions initiated during 2022/23; down 48.6% from the number recorded in 2020/21 (37). Eight councils initiated prosecutions during 2022/23, with

Causeway Coast and Glens initiating the most (6). As not all data is available for the year2022/23 the most up to date complete data for P3 planning statutory target to 2021/22 has been included below.

Graph - The percentage of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks by Northern Ireland Councils 2020/21 and 2021/22
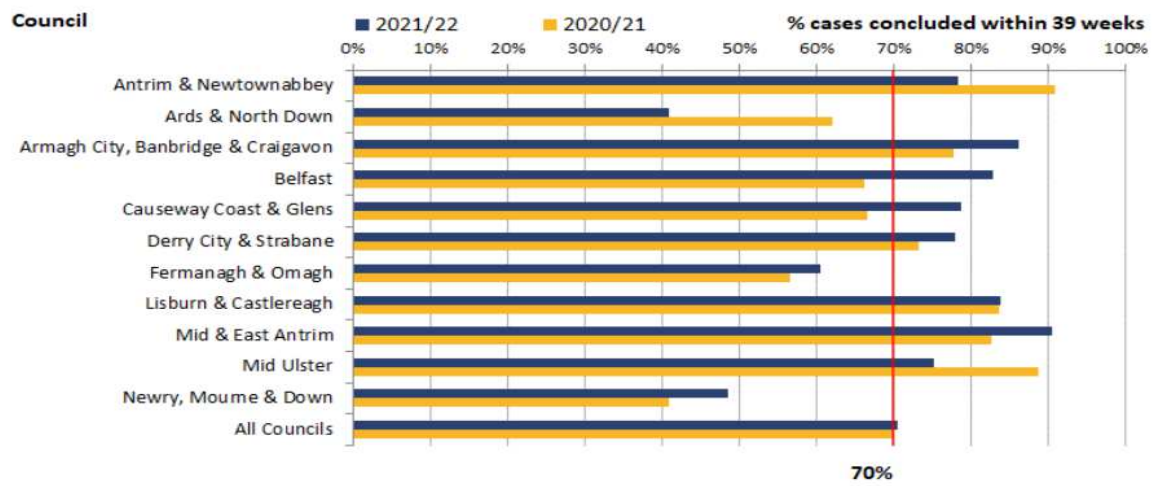
6.4 Waste Statutory Indicators

The Council has a statutory duty to make quarterly returns to the NI Environment Agency in respect of waste arisings managed by the Council. The results for all eleven Northern Ireland Councils are published quarterly by statistics and analytical services branch – DAERA.

Finalised data for 2022/23 are scheduled to be published in November 2023 (annual report) and will supersede previously published data from the four quarterly returns for that financial year.

Data contained in the quarterly and annual reports are published primarily to provide an indication of the progress towards achieving waste strategy targets. They allow for the assessment of the performance of the councils and waste management groups in Northern Ireland in managing waste arisings, recycling, composting and landfill. The proportion of waste collected by each council broadly reflects the population within the councils.

The Landfill Allowance Scheme (NI) Regulations 2004 (as awarded), placed a statutory responsibility on councils in each scheme year, to landfill no more than the quantity of biodegradable waste for which they had allowances. The scheme concluded at the end of 2019/20 financial year, however the continued monitoring of biodegradable waste is required for existing target commitments which specify that it must be reduced to 35 per cent of the total amount (by weight) of biodegradable municipal waste produced in 1995.

The year end result for 2022/23 contains *12 month figures which are provisional data. As already stated an annual report with fully validated figures for 2022/23 is scheduled to be published in November 2023. Targets for household recycling, remain at the 2019-20 level of 50%, however these have been superseded by the Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) there will be an interim target of 55% for the recycling of municipal waste by 2025.

Targets for biodegradable waste that is sent to landfill, were set within the Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) which remain set at the level (set for Council) in 2019-20, due to the scheme no longer being in place.

Future targets are expected to be set at 10% of the total amount of generated municipal waste by 2035, which is also subject to the enactment of the Waste

(Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland).which will increase by 2035 to 65%.

The latest validates annual report with finalised figures (2021/22) is available from the DAERA web-site.

* [Northern Ireland local authority collected municipal waste management statistics 2021/22 annual report | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk)](daera-ni.gov.uk)

Table – Mid Ulster's Three Statutory Waste Indicator results for 2021/22 and 2022/23

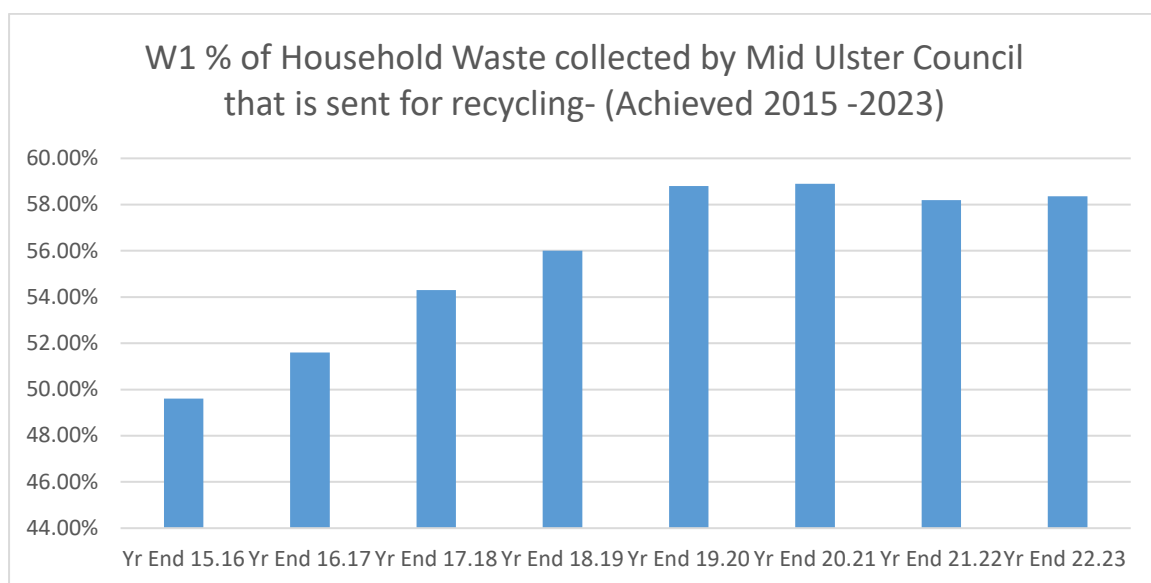| Ref | Statutory Indicator | Standard | 2021/22 | | 2022/23 | | | |
			Year End Result	NI Average	Year End Result	Ranking Against Other Councils	Status	Trend
W1	The percentage of household waste collected by Councils that is sent for recycling (More is better)	50% by 2020	58.2%	50.1%	*58.36%	2nd	■	⬆
W2	The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is Landfilled (Less is better)	No standard	1,537	NA	*1,286	NA		⬆
W3	The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings (Less is Better)	No standard	86,085	NA	*78,588	NA		⬆

*Provisional data

Waste W1 – The Percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse)

Purpose of Performance Indicator: The percentage of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse). It is to

meet Statutory Targets – Households Waste is as defined in Article 2 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 (a) and the Controlled Waste and Duty of Care Regulations (NI) 2013 (b).

Failure to meet statutory waste targets could result in infraction proceedings and fines. The graph below represents the percentage of household waste collected by Mid Ulster that is sent for recycling (results 2015 – 2023 - provisional)

Graph - Mid Ulster Council Household Waste sent for Recycling Results 2015-2023 (provisional)

W1 % of Household Waste collected by Mid Ulster Council that is sent for recycling- (Achieved 2015 -2023)

| | Yr End 15.16 | Yr End 16.17 | Yr End 17.18 | Yr End 18.19 | Yr End 19.20 | Yr End 20.21 | Yr End 21.22 | Yr End 22.23 |

Analysis: More is better

This is the latest in a number of impressive continued successes for the district in terms of its waste management performance. Mid Ulster is consistently in the top quartile of the table for its household recycling rate, most recently achieving the second highest household recycling rate of all 11 councils here for the 2022 to 2023 period with 58.36% and sits well above the Northern Ireland average of 51.05% (provisional data).

These are great achievements; they reiterate the extremely positive position of the Council in terms of waste management, and highlight the dedication of our waste teams to maintaining the service throughout the continuous ebb and flow of reduced services due to industrial action during the summer of 2022 (Council

endeavoured to collect bins where possible depending on the availability of staff on the given day). This also demonstrates the terrific work being done by residents in Mid Ulster in terms of their continued and unwavering recycling efforts.

Action Plan:

Standard achieved. Maintain management.

NI Councils 12-month provisional figures for local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste key performance indicators and Waste from Household recycling rate by Council 2022/23 (provisional) and validated data 2021/22 is highlighted in the graph below

Graph – W1 NI Councils percentage of household waste collected that was sent for recycling 2020/22 & 2022/23
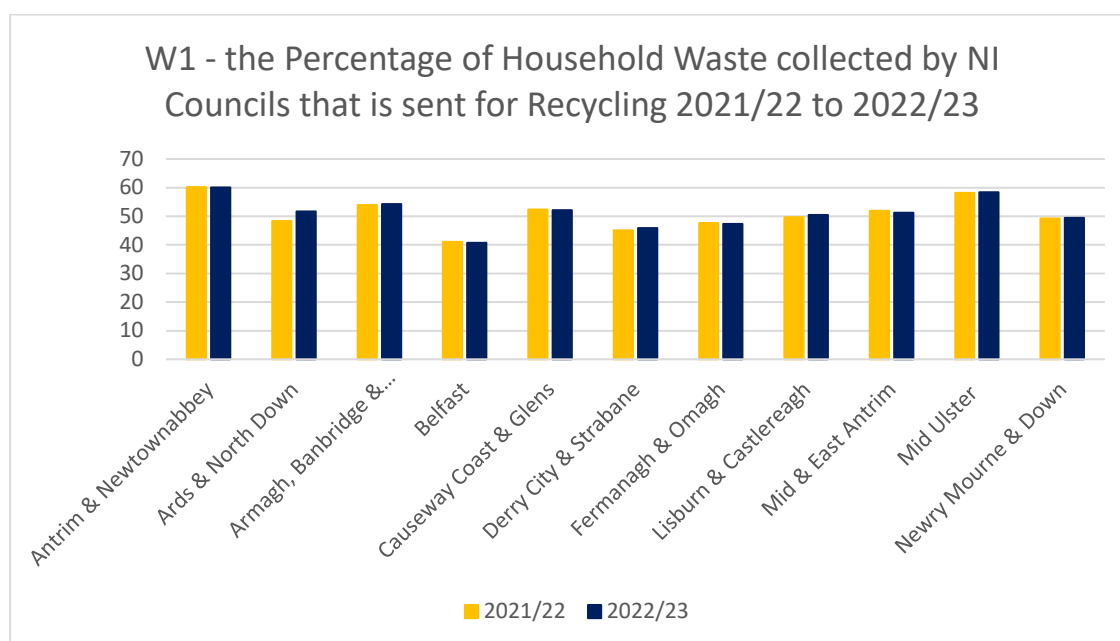
Waste W2 – The amount (tonnage) of Biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled.

Purpose of Performance Indicator: Meet Statutory Targets (scheme concluded 2019/20) -Local Authority collected Municipal Waste as defined in section 21 of the Waste Emissions Trading Act 2003 (c).

Analysis: Less is better

The landfill rate exhibits seasonality and the April to June and July to September quarters tend to have lower rates than October to December and January to March. The seasonality stems from the higher level of compostable garden waste arising during spring and summer.

The statutory requirement for all Councils to provide households with a container for food to enable separated collection has been attributed to the long-term drop in landfill rates. Mid Ulster's provisional figure for 2022/23 sits at 1,286 tonnes LAC that was landfilled, this is less than last year's cumulative rate of 1,537 tonnes in 2021/22. The graph below highlights the amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that was landfilled by Mid Ulster District Council from 2015 to 2023.

Graph – W2 Amount of biodegradable LAC municipal waste that was landfilled by Mid Ulster Council from 2015 to 2023

W2 - The amount of Biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled - Mid Ulster 2015 to 2023
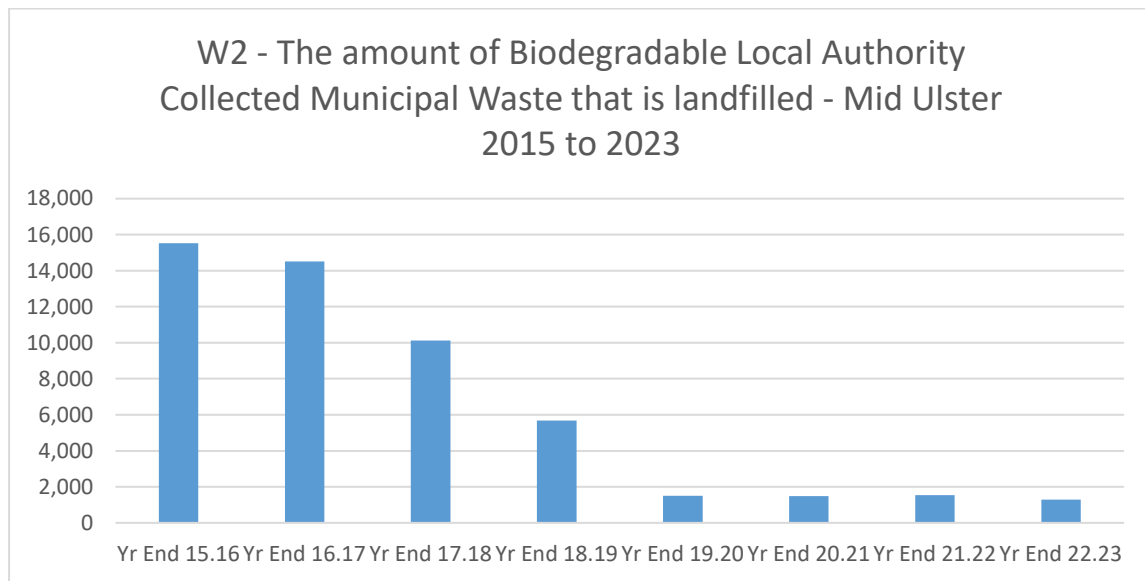
Action Plan:

Awaiting further advice on new standard

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2022 to 2023

The total amount of biodegradable local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste sent to landfill for all eleven Councils during 2022/23 was 122,093 (provisional*) a decrease from last years' figure of 141,312 tonnes in 2021/22.

Mid Ulster had the lowest incidence of reported biodegradable LAC municipal waste sent to landfill of all the eleven Northern Ireland (NI) Councils at 1,286 tonnes (provisional), while Belfast recorded the highest at 28,420 tonnes. The graph below outlines the amount of biodegradable LAC municipal waste (tonnage) that was landfilled by Northern Ireland Councils in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Graph – W2 the amount of biodegradable LAC municipal waste (tonnage) that was landfilled by Northern Ireland Councils in 2021/22 and 2022/23*
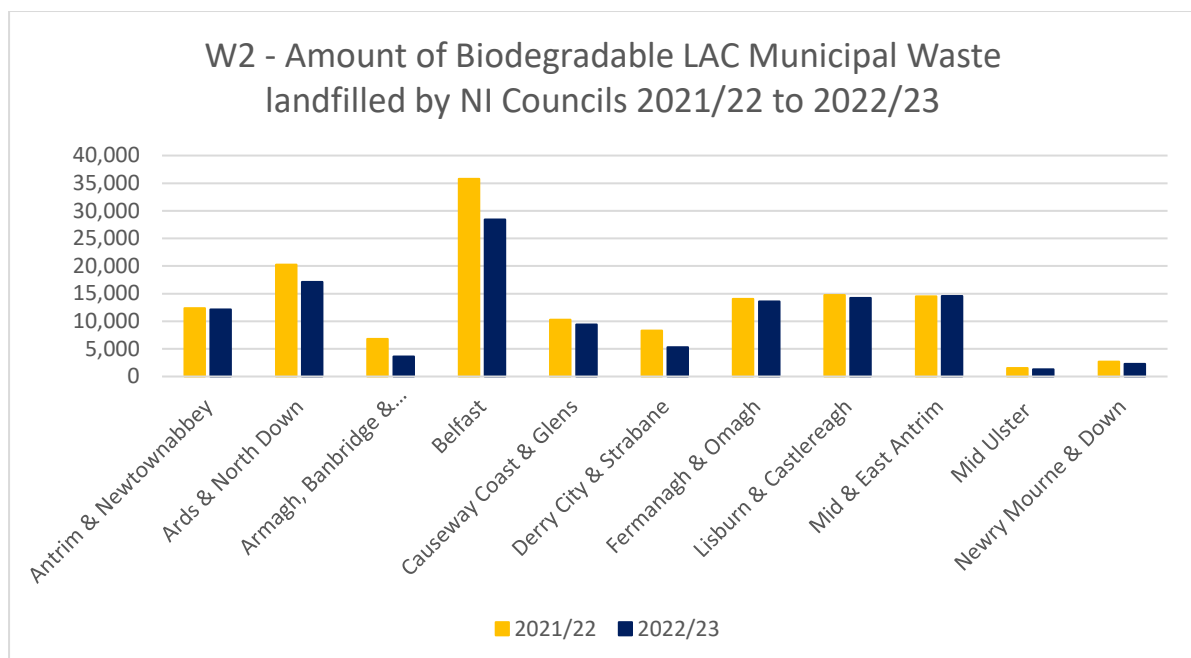
Waste – W3: The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings.

Purpose of PI: Meet Statutory Targets - Local Authority collected Municipal waste arisings is the total amount of local authority collected municipal waste, which has been collected by a district Council. The graph below highlights the amount of tonnage of Mid Ulster's collected Municipal waste arisings from 2015 to 2023.

Analysis: Less is better

During 2022/23 in Mid Ulster there were 78,588 tonnes of waste arisings, which is less than the previous year's total of 86,085 in 2021/22 and 86,049 tonnes (in 2020/21) – which were attributable to the impact of the pandemic.

Action Plan:

No set standard. Maintain management.

Graph W3 – The amount (tonnage) of Mid Ulster District Councils Collected Municipal Waste Arisings 2015 – 2023.

The amount (tonnage) of Mid Ulster District Council's Collected Municipal Waste Arisings 2015 - 2023
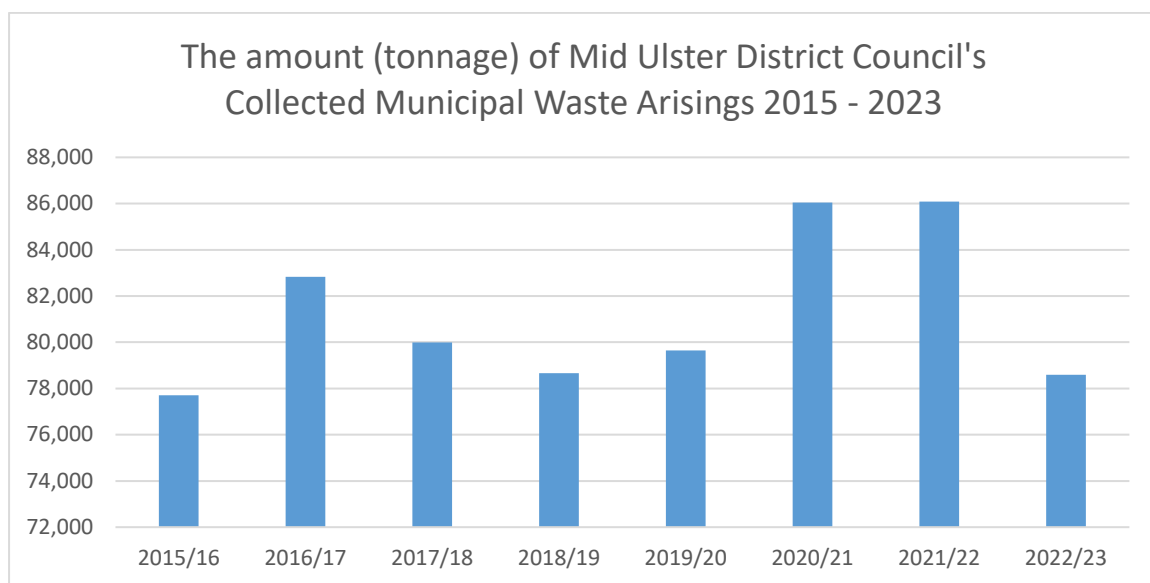
Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2022 to 2023

During 2022 to 2023 (provisional data), the total amount (tonnage) of local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste arisings was 972,242.

Omagh and Fermanagh Council reported the least amount of tonnage of local collected waste arisings at 55,361 tonnes, Mid Ulster reported 86,085 over the year and Belfast recorded the highest tonnage of local waste arisings at 157,831.

Graph – W3 Amount (Tonnage) of LAC Municipal Waste Arising by NI Councils 2021/22 and 2023/23

W3 - The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings by NI Councils 2021/22 to 2022/23

Legend: 2021/22, 2022/23

X-axis categories: Antrim &..., Ards & North..., Armagh,..., Belfast, Causeway..., Derry City &..., Fermanagh &..., Lisburn &..., Mid & East..., Mid Ulster, Newry...

Y-axis: 0, 50,000, 100,000, 150,000, 200,000
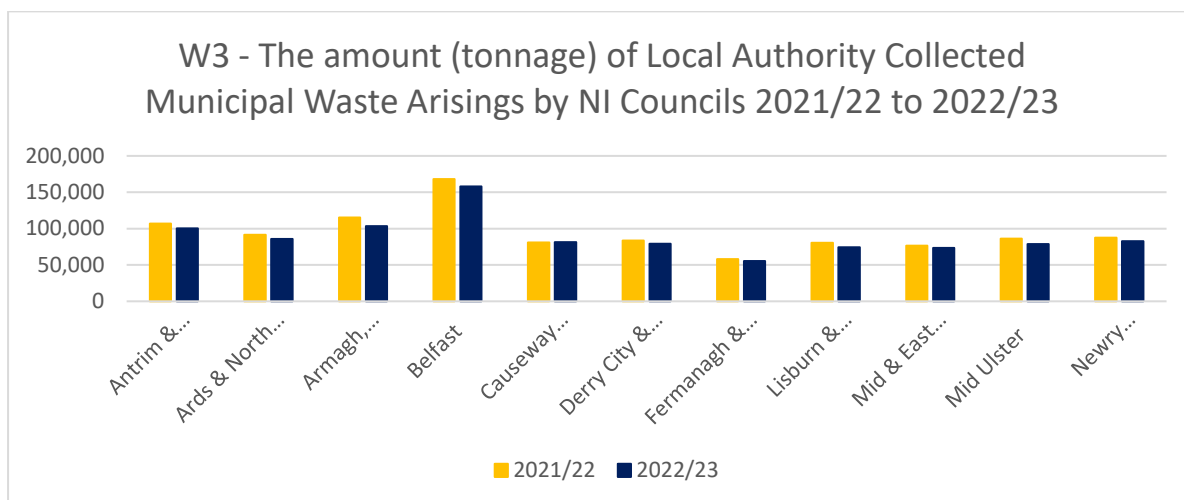
7.0 Benchmarking and Council's Self-assessment of Self-imposed Indicators and Standards During 2022 to 2023

7.1 Corporate Health Indicators (Self-imposed - Set by us)

During the start of 2016/17, Mid Ulster District Council in the absence of an agreed region wide local authority performance management framework, decided to concentrate on ensuring the data quality of three of its proposed "set by us" or "self-imposed" performance indicators. The three original indicators were prompt payments, freedom of information requests (FOI) responded to within 20 days and percentage lost time rate (relating to sickness absence).

At its meeting in November 2017 the Council's Policy and Resources committee approved a further suite of "Corporate Health Indicators". The indicators provide a barometer of how the Council is doing across its services and effectively provide a "performance dashboard" or a summary of how the Council is performing across eight key areas. The information is used by Council to help inform management decisions, plan services, benchmark performance and cost, and inform target setting. The key performance indicators are placed within the following themes: economy, waste management, Council facilities, better responses, resident satisfaction, staffing, engaged workforce and finance, (refer to Appendix A).

As outlined previously, Council is required statutorily to compare its performance for the 2022/23 year to that of previous years, legislation also requires Council, so far as reasonably practicable, to report their performance against other councils in the exercise of the same or similar functions.

7.2 Benchmarking

To date there is no agreed overarching Northern Ireland Local Government Performance Management Framework; however two additional performance measures are utilised to benchmark performance within the 11 Northern Ireland Councils, namely Prompt Payments and Absenteeism.

The Department of Communities requests information from councils at the end of each Quarter on the processing of invoices (as detailed in the circular LG 19/2016 Prompt Payment Guidance). Comparative analysis is published on council

performance to show members of the public how promptly invoices are paid for each of the council areas, further information is available at: [Publications | Department for Communities (communities-ni.gov.uk)](#)

The Northern Ireland Audit Office collate and report on all Northern Ireland Councils' absenteeism figures -refer to the Local Government Auditor's Annual Report, further information is available at :
https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/local-government-auditors-report-2021

Performance progress in this section also follows that described in the section outlining Council's self-assessment of statutory indicators and standards i.e. RAG (red, amber, green) status framework as well as the Performance direction of travel relative to the previous year.

7.3   Prompt Payments- 90% of invoices paid within 30 day target

Purpose of Performance Indicator: Prompt payments speed up cash flow from the public sector to its suppliers, particularly SME's. Council recognises that late payments are a key issue for business, especially for smaller businesses as it can adversely affect their cash flow and jeopardises their ability to trade and we recognise that as a Public body we should set a strong example by paying promptly**.**

This indicator allows Council to have a "signal" that it has an effective prompt payment system delivery, has in place a clear framework for managing prompt payments, in order to support an environment in which businesses flourish. Given the impact the cost of living crisis has had on the economy this indicator has become even more important in protecting jobs and local businesses.

Analysis: More is better

Mid Ulster has consecutively year on year remained one of the fastest payers of invoices to businesses within all eleven Councils. on average in 2022/23 it took Mid Ulster 6.5 days to pay suppliers[1] (an improvement from 8.75 days to pay suppliers in 2021/22), this equates to Council paying 99% of invoices (exceeding the internal

target of 90% of invoices paid within 30 days) and 97.48% of invoices within 10 days, with a total amount paid of £42,805,612.15 in 2022/23. The average amount of days to pay a supplier across all 11 Councils in 2022 to 2023 was 16.33 days. Mid Ulster has also consecutively hit the target since 2016, Council has exceeded the target and improved on its days to pay suppliers.

Council and its Finance team are to be commended on their duty to ensure our businesses were paid for work or services they had supplied to Council. Our incredible small businesses will be vital in, supporting many hundreds of livelihoods across the District, particularly in the current cost of living crisis. The graph below represents Mid Ulster District Council's (MUDC) achievement of percentage payment invoices within 30 days (90% paid within 30 days) 2016 – 2023.

[1] [District Councils Prompt Payments Year to Date figures 2022-23 (communities-ni.gov.uk)](#)

Graph – MUDC percentage of prompt payments within 30 days (standard 90%).
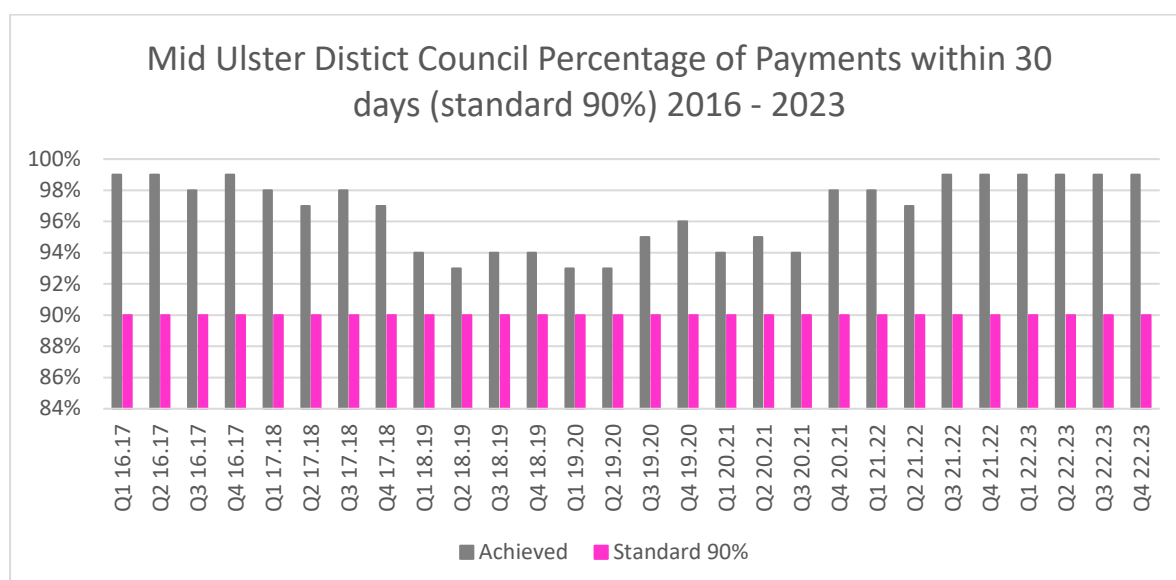

Action Plan:

Standard achieved. Maintain management.

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data during 2022 to 2023

Mid Ulster has consistently been able to pay invoices quickly. In total the Council paid 18,124 invoices during 2022/23. Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council paid less invoices during the year 17,627 however it took on overage 17.94 days to pay an invoice (compared with Mid Ulster's 6.5 days) and by the end of the year 87.25% of their invoices were paid within 30 days. The table below shows Northern Ireland Councils compliance with prompt payments (30 days average to pay 80% invoices) 2021/22 to 2022/23. Newry Mourne and Down Council during 2022 to 2023 took 28.75 days to pay an invoice and paid 8597 of their invoices within 30days and 42.09 within 10 days.

Graph – NI Councils compliance with prompt payments (30 days average to pay 80% invoices)
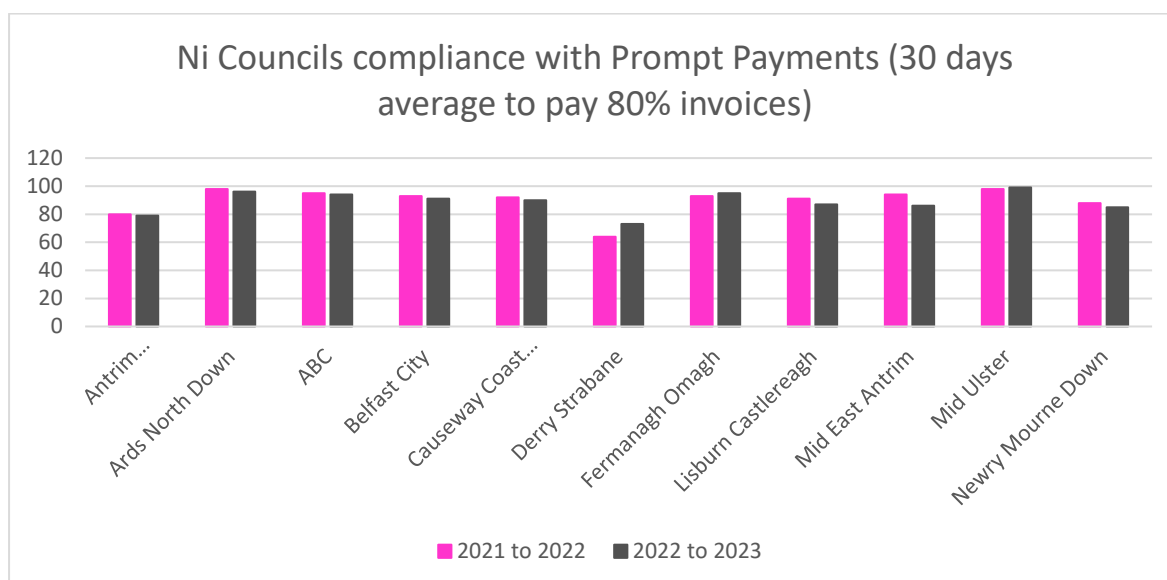
7.4 Corporate: Absenteeism – Percentage (%) Lost Time Rate sickness absence - (5% or less p.a.)

Purpose of Performance Indicator: The Lost Time Rate (LTR) shows the percentage of total time available that has been lost due to sickness absence during a certain time period. The indicator is based on full time equivalent (FTE) employees, and is useful as a general measure of the significance of sickness absence levels for an organisation.

This measure will be one indicator that allows Council to have a "signal" that it has an effective absence policy, has in place a clear framework for managing sickness absence, while setting out reporting mechanisms, states the attendance levels expected, uses monitoring arrangements, trigger mechanisms, effective roles and responsibilities, as well as ensuring management commitment. The lost time rate is useful as a general measure of the gravity of sickness absence levels for an organisation. Teams or departments, who want to ascertain whether or not there are absence issues in certain areas, can also use this measure.

Without staff that are well and at work, Mid Ulster District Council could not deliver quality and effective services to businesses, residents and our partnerships throughout the District. We need to ensure that staff are provided with an environment and opportunities that encourage and enable them to lead healthy lives and make choices that support their wellbeing, this will be our guiding principle.

The CIPD[1] states that everyone in the workforce, at all levels, feels the impact of ill health and sickness absence as it significantly affects organisations performance, productivity and workforce output. This in turn affects the level and quality of services provided to customers, both internal and external.

It makes business sense to support those who are ill and help then get back to work and to emphasise the importance of tackling health through good employment practices and pro-active well-being employer support, to encourage good occupational health management and to transform opportunities for people to recover from illness while retaining their jobs. This aligns with the Mid Ulster Community Plan outcome of, "We are better enabled to live longer and healthier more active lives". Employee absence is considered to represent one indicator of employee health and well-being (Mc Hugh[2] 2001a) and how well managed and efficient the organisation is; that is the 'health of the organisation' (HSE[3] 2002).

1. Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2006a) Absence management: annual survey report. London. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

2. McHugh, M (2001a) <u>Employee absence: an impediment to organisational health in local government</u>, The International Journal of Public Sector Management, 14:1, .43-58

3. Health and Safety Executive (2002) <u>Survey of Occupational Health Support</u>. HSE Contract Research Report 445/2002, London. Health & Safety Executive

Analysis: Less is better

During the last quarter of the year the total number of sick days reduced from 2702.67 in Quarter three to 2378.20 (in Quarter four - Q4), a reduction of around 12%. The % loss has also reduced during the final quarter to 5.41% from 6.26% in Q3. When compared with the same quarter last year we can see that there has been a reduction from 5.70% (21/22) to 5.41% (22/23), all very positive indicators.

The causes of sickness figures continue to highlight "stress, depression & fatigue" as our highest cause of sick representing 22.45% of the total sick days, "Other sickness" is now our second highest cause of sickness at 16.80% and "infections" remains in the top three with 15.77% of sick days.

Infections remaining in the top three reasons/causes is understandable considering COVID 19 is now recorded from day 1 as "infection" as there is no longer a requirement to self-isolate.

The cumulative % loss rate for 2022 to 2023 stands at 5.72%, up from the previous year of 5.03%, (above the Council's target of 5%). The Organisational Development team and line management will continue to work together to effectively manage and reduce the % Loss figure and the Absence Management Policy is up for review in 2023, the focus will be on reducing this performance measure in line with the target of 5%.

The Health Checks Clinics provided in February were very successful, they were fully booked with a number of staff providing very positive feedback afterwards with issues such as high cholesterol and blood pressure being identified which often go undetected.

Graph - Mid Ulster District Councils Percentage Loss Time Rate (Sickness Absence) 2016 to 2023.
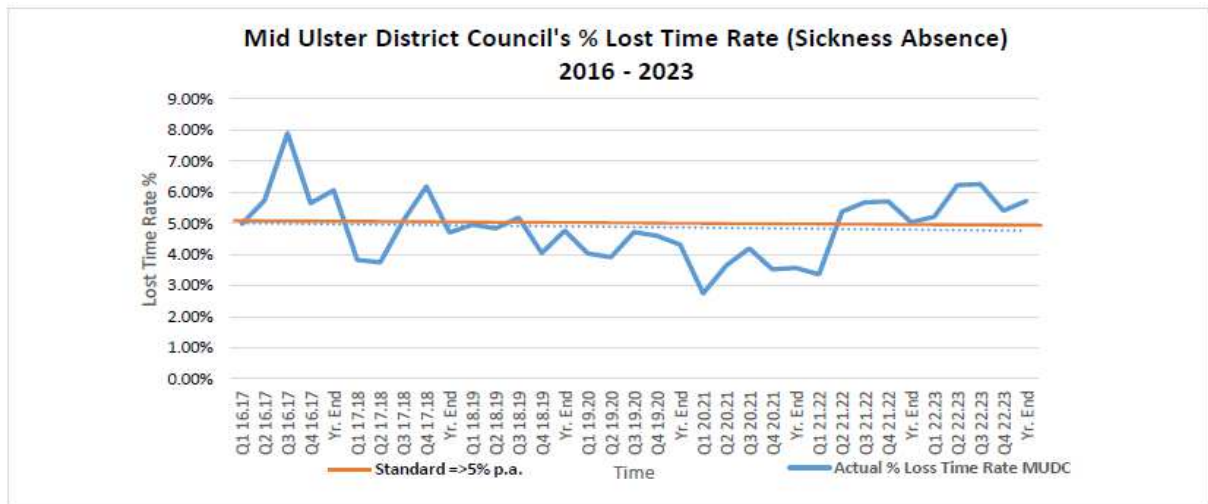
It is also helpful to realise the average number of working days lost per employee or full time equivalent from the new Council forming in 2015 until 2023 - see graph below (this had previously allowed for benchmarking with other Councils against this performance measure).

Graph - Mid Ulster District Council the Average Number of Working Days Lost from 2015 to 2023.
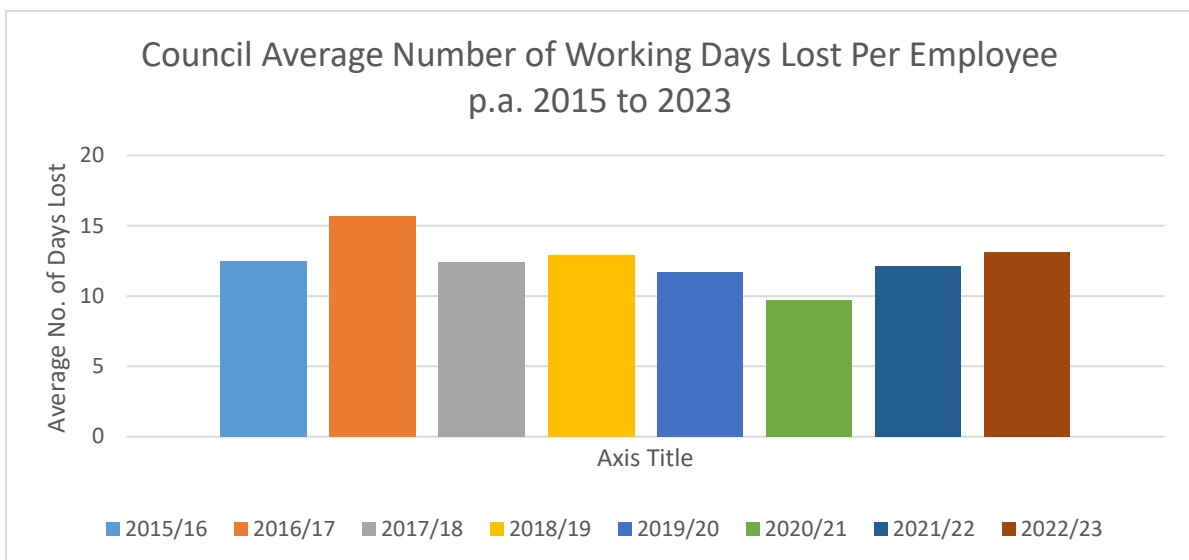
Action Plan:

Although the % Loss has reduced considerably it is still above the 5% target. In response to this, the Organisational Development team aim to reduce this % further by fully utilising the Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP) approach adopted at the start of the year. As part of this new approach a designated HRBP is responsible for all HR related elements of their own allocated Directorate, working closely with Managers to empower them to effectively manage sickness within their areas. This has been done by the provision of more detailed and regular metrics, alongside further provision of training and mentoring to Managers (on conducting absence related meetings) and managing long and short term absence more effectively.

It can be seen from the late quarter stats, that this strategy is starting to be effective. In an effort to address the consistently high number of days lost to mental health related illness the HRBPS are offering tailored 1-1 coaching sessions to employees, at an earlier stage, to both help staff who have a history of mental health manage their wellbeing long term. In effect helping them to remain at work and to assist those off with mental health related issues return to work and good health. .

Northern Ireland Councils' Performance Data Average Total Number of Days Lost (Sickness Absence) during 2019/20 and 2020/21.

The average numbers of days lost per employee performance data for all eleven Northern Ireland Councils is still not available for 2022 to 2023[2].

Reflection on the figures supplied to date from DfC, demonstrates that Mid Ulster during 2019/20 recorded the second lowest figure of 5.32%. The lowest recorded absence figure, during that year, was obtained by Mid and East Antrim Council (with 4.84%, equivalent to 10.64 lost days per employee) and the annual Council average was 6.46 %. The highest recorded annual absence figures appeared in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council at 8.31% (2019/20 and equates to 18.28 total days lost per employee).

During 2020 to 2021 Mid Ulster recorded the third lowest absence figure, namely 4.42%, the lowest recording was in Mid and East Antrim Council 2.13% (equivalent to 4.68 days lost per employee, the highest recorded absence was in ABC Council

was 7.12% and the NI Council average was 4.79% (equivalent to 10.54 days lost per employee)

Graph - NI Councils Average Days Lost 2019/20 and 2020/21

Percentage of Working Days Lost in NI Councils 2019/20 and 2020/21
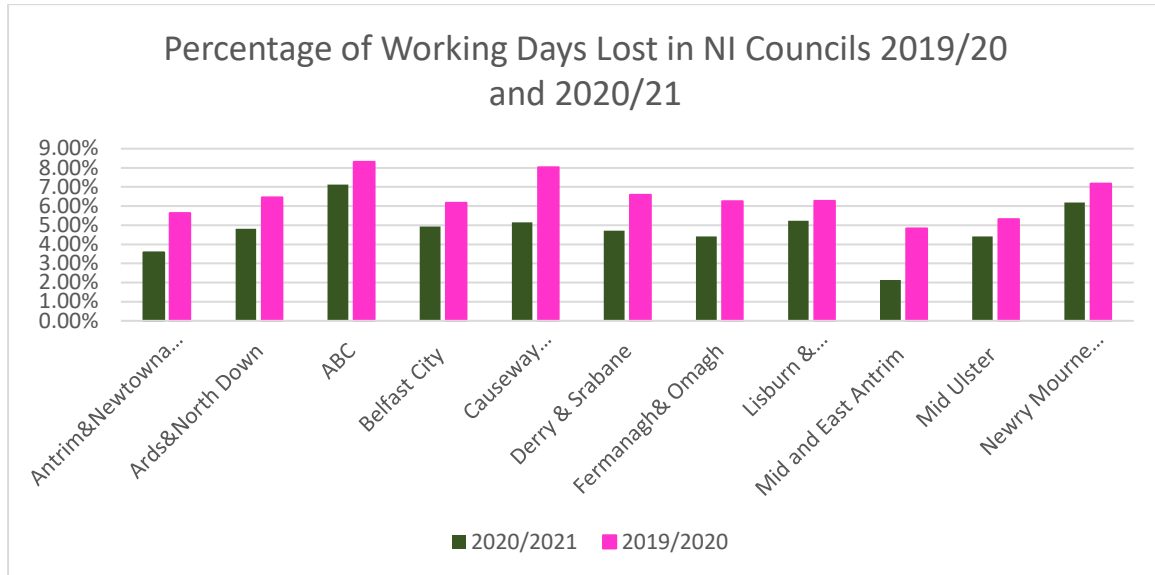
*FTE denotes Full Time Equivalent Employee

[2] NI Councils performance data for 2022/23 is usually supplied by the Department of Communities, the data has not been forwarded for 2021/22.

8.0   Overall Assessment for 2022 to 2023

As we came to the end of 2022 to 2023, it seems that every year recently has been described as an "extraordinary year". It remains an extraordinarily difficult time for local government as well as for the many differing and diverse communities, businesses, and sectors we serve. The last twelve months have seen our communities, still recovering from the impacts of Covid-19, now faced with new challenges, most acutely the rising cost of living and inflationary pressures.

This report is an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved in respect of performance improvement in the last twelve months, and how we have continued to support our residents and businesses in 2022/23. At the heart of everything we do is working together, with our local businesses, voluntary and community sectors as well as our public sector partners.

In many ways our services are still seen to be "building out of the Pandemic "during 2022 to 2023. The Council still performs well across many of the Corporate Health and Service indicators, in what has been again another challenging year, with particular regard the economy, cost of living crisis and inflation. In the remaining areas where there is scope for building on levels of performance, our services are assessing targets as part of plans for re-building, (post-pandemic). Services will closely monitor progress and take appropriate action.

Mid Ulster District Council has continued to achieve robust performance results across many areas including waste data , maintaining excellent household recycling rates, has reduced biodegradable (LAC) municipal waste that is landfilled from the previous year, while also reducing the tonnage of local authority municipal waste arisings from 2021/22.

Mid Ulster Council remains a leader in ensuring prompt payments are received by suppliers of works and or services. Paying promptly shows respect to our suppliers and treats them as Council would wish to be treated. It is particularly important where our suppliers are small businesses where late payment can be hugely damaging for them and indeed for all suppliers in the current cost of living crisis.

The cumulative % loss rate (absence) for 2022 to 2023 stands at 5.72%, up from the previous year of 5.03%, (above the Council's target of 5%). The Organisational

Development team and line management will continue to work together to effectively manage and reduce the % Loss figure and the Absence Management Policy is up for review in 2023, the focus will be on reducing this performance measure in line with the target of 5%.

Work commenced in 2021/22 on a re-structuring exercise within the Council. This significant piece of work has continued into 2022 to 2023, which has seen significant changes to senior, middle management and leadership teams. Working collaboratively with our Trade Unions through continual dialogue, will ensure that new ways of working are sustainable for individuals and the organisation and ultimately the services Council delivers to its customers.

In relation to the statutory jobs promoted target, performance in 2022/23, is slightly higher (169 jobs promoted) than 2021/22 (163 jobs promoted) but has not returned to pre-Covid level Performance. Mid Ulster has slightly exceeded the EU Programme target (169 vs 158 jobs promoted) and the proposed new Statutory Target (153 jobs) but not the current 2015 Statutory Target (210 jobs).

Key events in 2022 continued to impact on planning activity in 2022 to 2023. The accessibility of the planning system in January and February 2022, and significant changes to IT systems with the development and implementation of two new planning systems in June and December 2022 impacted on planning activity and performance. The Department of Infrastructure states that all of these factors should be borne in mind when interpreting these figures and when making comparisons over time periods[1.].

The four improvement projects were reviewed at the end of the first year (2021 to 2022); and work was undertaken to ensure their continued validity into 2022 to 2023. The four projects have made steady progress throughout 2022 to 2023. We have seen major solid progress in a number of key capital building programmes/projects, these have been made against an increasingly challenging rise in inflation, which in turn has led to an increase in cost of construction materials.

As you have read throughout this annual assessment report, we are a council focused on progress and improvement, yet we have demonstrated the ability to

adapt to local and national challenges while harnessing opportunity as it arises. It means we can be a resilient, agile, and responsive council but still lay the foundations for future proposals that centre on building a district of which everyone can be proud.

In looking ahead to the future, we have taken a long view, to a regenerated district with, vibrant communities in healthy, green spaces, local economic growth through capital programmes (growing local jobs and opportunities), and public services fit to meet the challenges of the future. This report fulfils our statutory duty to report on our performance, and despite growing challenges, the Council's aim remains unchanged – to be at the heart of the local community, making people's lives better by achieving positive outcomes for all of our communities.

9.0   Have Your Say

We welcome your comments or suggestions at any time of year. Mid Ulster District Council is committed to improving its services and is keen to hear from the community on what it has to say. We welcome your comments or suggestions at any time of the year. There are a number of ways in which to influence Council decision-making.

You can get involved and participate in consultations being conducted by, or on behalf of the Council. Meetings of the Council and its Committees are open to the public, with the exception of those times when sensitive or confidential issues need to be discussed.That is why we want to hear what you think about our performance and what we can do to improve. Please join us on the journey by sharing your thoughts.

If you have any comments, would like any further information, or would like a copy of this plan in an a alternative format please contact

Strategic Services and Engagement Team
Council Offices
Circular Road
Dungannon BT71 6DT
Telephone: 03000 132 132

Email: info@midulstercouncil.org

Appendix One – Mid Ulster District Council

Ref. No.	Measures	Lead Service	Standard/ Target	Annual Outturn 2018/19	Annual Outturn 2019/20	Annual Outturn 2020/21	Annual Outturn 2021/22	Year End Result 2022/23
1.1	No. of jobs promoted	Economic Development, Tourism Strategic Programmes	**210	204	185	132	163	169
1.2	Average Processing time for Local Planning Applications (weeks)	Planning	15 weeks	16.9	12.5	16	16.6	21.6
1.3	Average Processing time for Major Planning Applications (weeks)	Planning	30 weeks	64.7	73.2	74.1	88	68.1
1.4	% of Building regulations applications determined to target	Building Control	90%	90%	91%	94%	92%	69%

** Currently passing through amendment to legislation, this would see Mid Ulster District Council's Standard as 153 jobs promoted moving forward.

2.0 - *Waste Management

Ref. No.	Measures	Lead Service	Standard/ Target	Annual Outturn 2018/19	Annual Outturn 2019/20	Annual Outturn 2020/21	Annual Outturn 2021/22	Year End Result 2022/23
2.5	% of household waste going to landfill	Environment	4%	16.31%	3.75%	3.66%	3.63%	3.23%
2.6	% of household waste recycled	Environment	58%	55.98%	58.86%	54.75%	58.21%	58.36%

*some data awaiting validation reports from Executive Departments

3.0 - Council Facilities

Ref. No.	Measures	Lead Service	Standard/ Target	Annual Outturn 2018/19	Annual Outturn 2019/20	Annual Outturn 2020/21	Annual Outturn 2021/22	Year End Result 2022/23
3.7	Visitors to Arts/Cultural Venues	Communities & Place	TBC	120,247	135,939	7,208	38,422	92,147
3.8	Users of Leisure and Recreational Facilities	Communities & Place	TBC	2,230,312	2,071,748	1,232,504	1,604,486	1,979,413
3.9	Visitors to Council Offices	OD, Performance & Strategy	TBC	Not available	40,294	9,484	20,711	14,901
3.10	Number of RIDDOR incidents	Environment	NA	11	14	6	3	5

4.0 – Better Responses

Ref. No.	Measures	Lead Service	Standard/ Target	Annual Outturn 2018/19	Annual Outturn 2019/20	Annual Outturn 2020/21	Annual Outturn 2021/22	Year End Result 2022/23
4.11	FoI requests responded to within target	OD, Performance & Strategy	90%	86%	88%	87%	88%	92%
4.12	Complaints dealt with within target	Chief Executives	90%	Not available	89.47%	79.42%	86.20%	76.47%
4.13	Correspondence responded to within target	Chief Executives	90%	Not available	85.75%	80.74%	73.98%	77.68%
4.14	Number of online transactions	Corporate Services & Finance	<18,490	16,655	17,022	18,490	59,331	51,017

5.0 – Resident Satisfaction

Ref. No.	Measures	Lead Service	Standard/ Target	Annual Outturn 2018/19	Annual Outturn 2019/20	Annual Outturn 2020/21	Annual Outturn 2021/22	Year End Result 2022/23
5.15	% of residents content with our services	Marketing & Communications	80%	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
5.16	% of residents that agree Council keeps them informed	Marketing & Communications	80%	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
5.17	% of residents that agree that Council listens and acts on concerns	Marketing & Communications	80%	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
5.18	Number of organisations receiving Grant Aid	Communities & Place	NA	800	860	399	507	450

6.0 - Staffing

Ref. No.	Measures	Lead Service	Standard/ Target	Annual Outturn 2018/19	Annual Outturn 2019/20	Annual Outturn 2020/21	Annual Outturn 2021/22	Year End Result 2022/23
6.19	Number of staff (*FTE's) on payroll	OD, Performance & Strategy	NA	713.3	706.82	726.83	708.45	728.91
6.20	Number of casual staff employed in the past 12 months	OD, Performance & Strategy	NA	70	31	14	45	4
6.21	% Attendance	OD, Performance & Strategy	95%	95%	95.69%	96.46%	96.27%	94.59%
6.22	% Overtime	Corporate Services & Finance	2.5%	1.66%	1.32%	0.71%	0.85%	0.86%

* Full Time Equivalent Employee

7.0 – Engaged Workforce

Ref. No.	Measures	Lead Service	Standard/ Target	Annual Outturn 2018/19	Annual Outturn 2019/20	Annual Outturn 2020/21	Annual Outturn 2021/22	Year End Result 2022/23
7.23	% of workforce satisfied with current job	Marketing & Comms	80%	60.95%	65.34%	*65.34%	*65.34%	*65.34%
7.24	% of workforce of take pride in working for Mid Ulster District Council	Marketing & Comms	80%	79.48	84.07%	*84.07%	*84.07%	*84.07%
7.25	% of workforce who understand Councils priorities and how they contribute towards them	Marketing & Comms	80%	69.91	78.13	*78.13	*78.13	*78.13

* Figures relate to 2019/20 survey – survey undertaken every 3 years.

8.0 - Finances

Ref. No.	Measures	Lead Service	Standard/ Target	Annual Outturn 2018/19	Annual Outturn 2019/20	Annual Outturn 2020/21	Annual Outturn 2021/22	Year End Result 2022/23
8.26	Loans Outstanding (£)	Corporate Services & Finance	NA	£6,746,933	£6,114,748	£5,459,789	£4,780,670	£4,084,655
8.27	Cash Reserves (£)	Corporate Services & Finance	£10 M	£13,029,169	£11,791,888	*£29,955,234	£35,013,037	£40,027,174
8.28	Invoices Paid Within 30 Days	Corporate Services & Finance	**90%	94%	94%	95%	99%	99%

*£29,955,234: Non-recurring receipts £7M Covid Funding, £18M DAERA funding, £850K Rates Support Finalisation

** Mid Ulster District Council target