



Appendix One

To: Council Chief Executives

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Our ref:
Date: 11 May 2023

Dear Chief Executive

Publication of Council Performance Improvement Plans 2023

Section 92(4) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires a council to publish an 'improvement plan' setting out its plans for discharging its duties under sections 84(1), 85(2) and 89(5) of the 2014 Act for a financial year. Paragraph 45 of the statutory guidance on Local Government Performance Improvement ([Local Government Circular 21/2016](#)) indicates that the publication of an improvement plan should take place by the end of June each year.

Section 87 of the 2014 Act requires a council to consult on how it intends to discharge its duties under section 84 and 85 before the improvement plan is published. Given the need to consult and taking account of the upcoming local government elections on 18 May 2023, some concerns have been raised as to whether there would be sufficient time to have plans approved by councils by 30 June.

The Department has decided to move the suggested publication date as set out in paragraph 45 of the guidance. For 2023, councils will be required to have their performance improvement plans published by 30 September 2023 at the latest.

Yours sincerely

**Anthony Carleton
Director Local Government & Housing Regulation**

Outworking's from Consultation on

Mid Ulster District Council's Performance Improvement Objectives 2023-2024

May 2023

Background

As required under Section 84 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 (hereafter referred to as 'The Act'), the Council is placed under a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions.

Part 12 of the Act sets out a series of provisions which the Council should be mindful of in "making arrangements to secure continuous improvement", under section 85, the Council is to identify and set itself corporate level performance Improvement Objective(s) for improving the exercise of its functions and to have arrangements in place to achieve these objectives. Under section 87 of the Act, the Council is also required to consult on our improvement objectives.

This year the consultation exercise ran from Monday 27th February to Friday 21st April at 12 noon and focused on our proposed objectives for 2023/2024.

Under each improvement objective the Council asked whether respondents agreed with the objective or disagreed with the objective. Respondents were also asked to provide any related commentary they had regarding the proposed improvement objectives.

The consultation survey also asked respondents to outline any improvements the council should consider in the future. The final question asked respondents to provide any further comments relating to the draft Improvement objectives.

The consultation exercise was promoted via a variety of communication channels including social media, our Council website, staff intranet/e-mails, and press releases. In total, there were 34 respondents to the Mid Ulster District's Performance Improvement Objectives 2023-2024 consultation.

Responses to Improvement Objectives Consultation Questionnaire 2023-2024

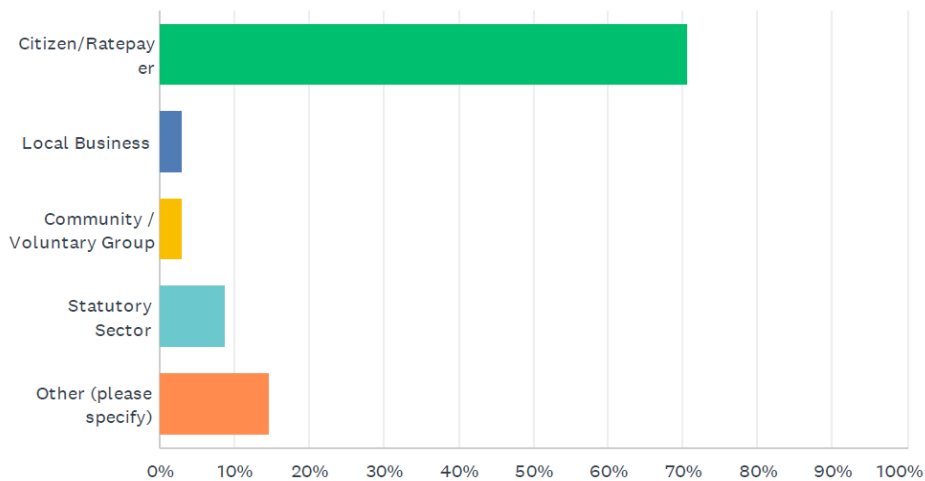
QUESTION 1

Consultees were asked what was their main interest in responding to this consultation.

Table 1.0- What is your main interest in responding to the consultation?

Capacity in which responding to survey	Percentage Responses
Citizen/Ratepayer	70.59%
Local Business	2.94%
Community /Voluntary Group	2.94%
Statutory Sector	8.82%
Other	14.71% (employees)

Figure 1 Main Interest in Responding



QUESTION 2 –

Percentage of consultees who provided contact details 23.5%

QUESTION 3 -

Do you agree that the proposed Performance Improvement Objectives are appropriate for our district?

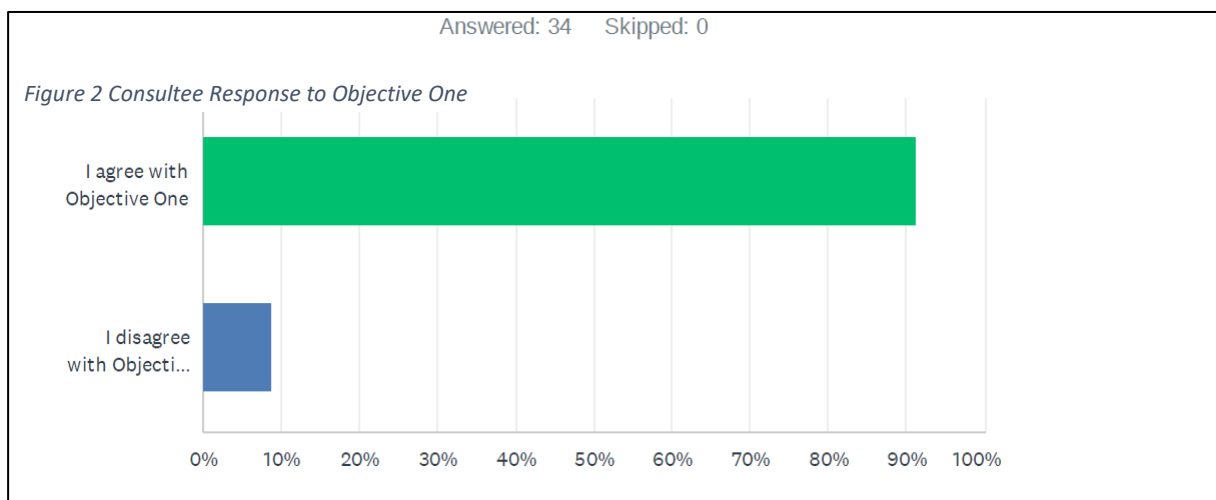
Consultees were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with objective one, and to add comments where applicable

Improvement Objective One

- 1. 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.**

Table 1.1 Percentage of Consultees who agreed or disagreed with objective one.

	Percentage
Number of Consultees agreed with objective one	91.18%
Number of Consultees disagreed with objective one	8.82%



Outlined below are the consultees' commentary in relation to objective one. There were 15 comments received in total.

#01	Bins are needed in the Killen area and there is nowhere to put waste
#02	This council needs to get real. Domestic violence is everywhere and your no 1 priority is the environment.
#03	I disagree with this objective on the basis of being a self-employed business owner in the Agriculture industry. Unfortunately the drive to Net Zero will drive farmers and agriculture out of business. Too much focus is placed on climate change at the moment and not on serving, helping and supporting citizens with rising living costs.
#11	It is vital that the Council takes positive pre-emptive action to prepare the District for the true impacts of climate change, the current energy crisis and innovative new technologies that support the 'Green Growth Strategy'. For example, I am hopeful that the Council will transform its fleet of vehicles to electric only as soon as possible and invest in providing electric vehicle charging points at its three principal Council Offices and associated Depots. An inter-connected infrastructure of electric vehicle charging points is vital for the District's future growth as Oil and Gas prices will continue to rise rapidly. In addition, I am hopeful that the Council will proactively led on transforming their suite of Council Owned buildings, and those that the Council manage on behalf of a third party, to renewable energy sources only by 2035 - this will require significant financial investment. Such infrastructure will help reduce the Councils overall carbon foot print. Simple, less financially intensive measures should be considered, for example actively encouraging cycle and walking to work programmes (already in place but rarely utilised). What about Electric Bicycles for moving people around the three main towns and two smaller towns. Flexible working and Working from Home also help to reduce the carbon footprint caused by staff travel. I am hopeful that the Council will seek to invest in a programme of routine maintenance, repair and reuse of the physical structures it already owns or manages as this will inherently reduce the Councils negative environmental impacts at a District wide scale i.e. Embodied Carbon – the most sustainable building is the one that already exists. I am hopeful that the Council will consider nature based solutions to adaptation and mitigation measures on an area based approach e.g. DEA scale thereby producing measurable outcomes for each DEA that links with Members jurisdictions.
#15	I agree with this objective but I don't see the appetite /action / initiatives in this area
#16	Yes, I think this is absolutely essential. We are already behind a number of other Councils and it is so important for our future generations. I think the Council needs to take the lead on this and in order to show leadership it needs to look at the impacts of its own activities first. I hope that the new

	Council coming in will take the initiative and declare a climate emergency so that it can move forward with a sense of urgency.
#17	Whilst I agree I think a few more things could help: there should be Electric charging points at all council facilities and bicycle sheds - these should be able to be used by both the public and staff
#19	Where are the electrical vehicle charge points discussed at Council, there is not a single one at any of the offices or parks or leisure facilities Where is the renewable energy sources that the council is investing in
#22	A more joined up approach across all 11 authorities in terms of purchasing, delivery of centralised services would be a more ideal objective
#24	I am not aware of the negative impact the council are currently causing
#25	However done to cost and value as a priority first as don't want rates increase to facilitate change.
#27	I agree, however, mid ulster Council is still growing and stillroom for improvement
#29	Concerned about future impact of accelerating climate change and what this means locally. I am not clear from the web site what sustainability advice and support to residents, communities and businesses across district. Is there signposting for any existing advice, grants, loans (and handhold people through these?). Can Council support residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, save money. Will there be home visits by council staff for elderly etc. to provide high level sustainability advice? Can the council also provide advice on our local ecology and wildlife for residents and businesses
#32	The Council needs to lead by example which should help with the wider environment following suit.
#33	Climate change is one environmental issue of the Anthropocene. Others include, habitat loss, reduced biodiversity and even species extinction. I would like to see what types of mitigation or adaptation strategies the Council will engage in order to meet objective one. Aside from Switching Council vehicles from diesel / petrol to electric ones would be one way, albeit at significant cost. Could MUDC set up its own renewable energy company, erecting wind turbines / farms or solar panels / farms on Council owned assets, this would help offset the cost associated with switching to electric vehicles? This would also aid sustainability going forward (Ecological, economic and social benefits), in the knowledge that MUDC can to some extent control its energy costs if it produced its own energy, and provide a range of new jobs during the planning, construction and operational phases. Prior to COVID, working from home was largely unheard of but there are significant environmental benefits associated with people not commuting to work 5 days per week. Firstly you have the

	<p>reduced carbon emissions from people using fossil fuels to get to work. While a small number of people do have electric cars in MUDC, NI still relies upon coal to generate almost half its electricity, meaning that even though people may have electric cars, a significant proportion is derived from fossil fuels to produce the electricity. Secondly, there would be reduced electricity and heating costs for MUDC buildings. Thirdly, from a social perspective, it provides a better work life balance, especially for anyone who doesn't live close to their workplace.</p>
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QUESTION 4 -

Do you agree that the proposed Performance Improvement Objectives are appropriate for our district?

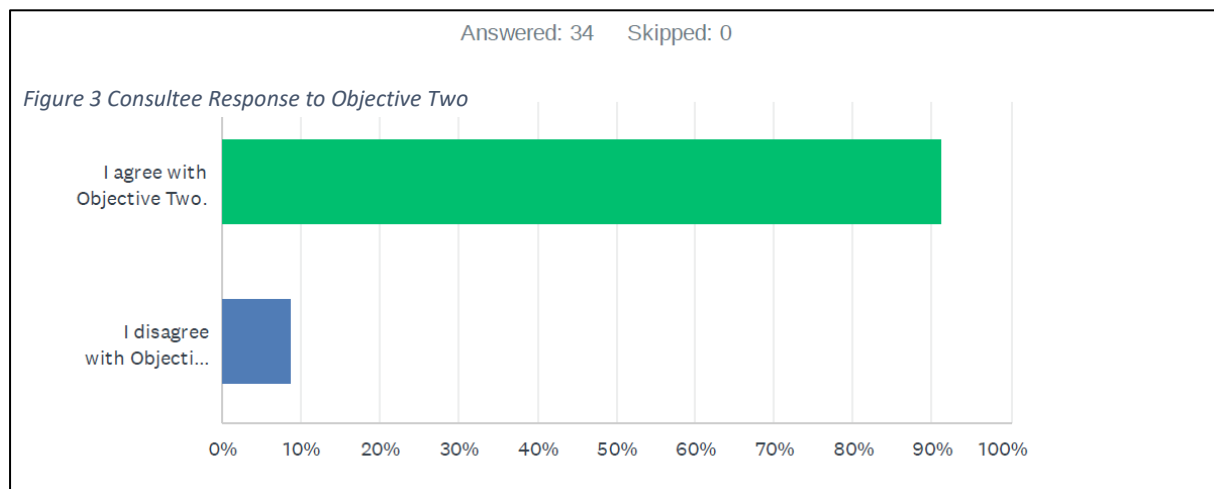
Consultees were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with objective two, and to add comments where applicable.

Improvement Objective Two

2. 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.

Table 1.2 – Percentage of consultees who agreed or disagreed with objective two.

	Percentage
Number of Consultees agreed with objective two	91.18%
Number of Consultees disagreed with objective two	8.82%



Outlined below are the consultees' commentary in relation to objective two. There were 13 comments received in total.

#01	More engagement is needed with local charities
#02	We need to be able to escape abuse. I live out in the country and I need to be able to get the police or work from home if I have mark's on me or marks on the wee fella.
#03	I disagree with this objective on the basis of being a self-employed business owner in the Agriculture industry. Unfortunately the drive to Net Zero will drive farmers and agriculture out of business. Too much focus is placed on climate change at the moment and not on serving, helping and supporting citizens with rising living costs.
#09	Jobs within Mid Ulster Council seem to be very Magherafelt based which leads to a wide disparity of employment by our local council, as it does not make opportunities for those living in the district from Dungannon or Fivemiletown
#11	There is always a need for better communication between people and place especially in a global market - Technology, Design and Innovation has its place but sometimes Local Authorities need to go back to basics to deliver public services for the people where the people live. Delivery of public services on the ground is key to the resilience of smaller communities and the rural nature of Mid Ulster as a geographical area. The Council's Audit of what it owns and manages should be made public and local communities should be encouraged through structured engagement workshops to identify what the local community needs and wants - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound outcomes that can be reviewed and evaluated on an annual / bi-annual bases .Improvement of Community Engagement and consistent, continuous and coherent feedback mechanisms are needed so that when a constituent engages with the Council on what matters to them at the local level (DEA scale) they receive constructive feedback - to ensure a more connected society, make sure to communicate clearly, consistently ,continuously and in a joint up manner (i.e. between Directorates).Community Planning and Community Development have a vital role to play in terms of providing advice, guidance and expertise in terms of true Public Engagement and Participation. If the Council aims to be at the heart of the community (the people and where they live) then they need to provide a platform for direct communication and engagement on how the people can be involved with designing, maintaining, managing and monitoring their area/place. It is vital that the Council Officers provide constructive feedback, evaluation and reviews back to the people involved. Stop the - 'what happened to that plan? Project, programme?' 'Why did I bother' attitudes Make the organisational chart more easily accessible and available and clearly state who is responsible for what. Provide single points of contacts by DEA...

#16	Services need to be available online so we can access them when free - I suppose though digital doesn't suit everyone and it's important not to forget those people who don't have access to or are unable to use digital means of interacting with the Council
#22	With an aging population the move towards providing everything online can be very exclusionary not just for older people but persons in general who are not all tech savvy
#24	This would make a more Unified, community, friendly place and can only help
#25	However be mindful of citizens who don't have access to technology or don't want to engage with it. Offer suitable alternatives.
#27	I agree, however, mid ulster Council is still growing and stillroom for improvement
#29	Is a more connected mid ulster mean that it will focus only on residents who can self-serve am aware of pockets of high deprivation and not everyone can afford the internet and e enabled phones. How is council and its partners going to help residents to become digitally included? That is devices, connectivity and skills
#32	Having access to a good Broadband service in the Mid Ulster area is a priority service as this helps achieve the best results for availability for other online services.
#33	MUDC's new planning computer system and portal provides a better connection with our stakeholders. It also allows the Council more control with its configuration and the ability to implement technical changes to the systems design and output. I would like to see examples of the types of new technologies being mooted and a strategy for empowering citizens.

QUESTION 5 -

Do you agree that the proposed Performance Improvement Objectives are appropriate for our district?

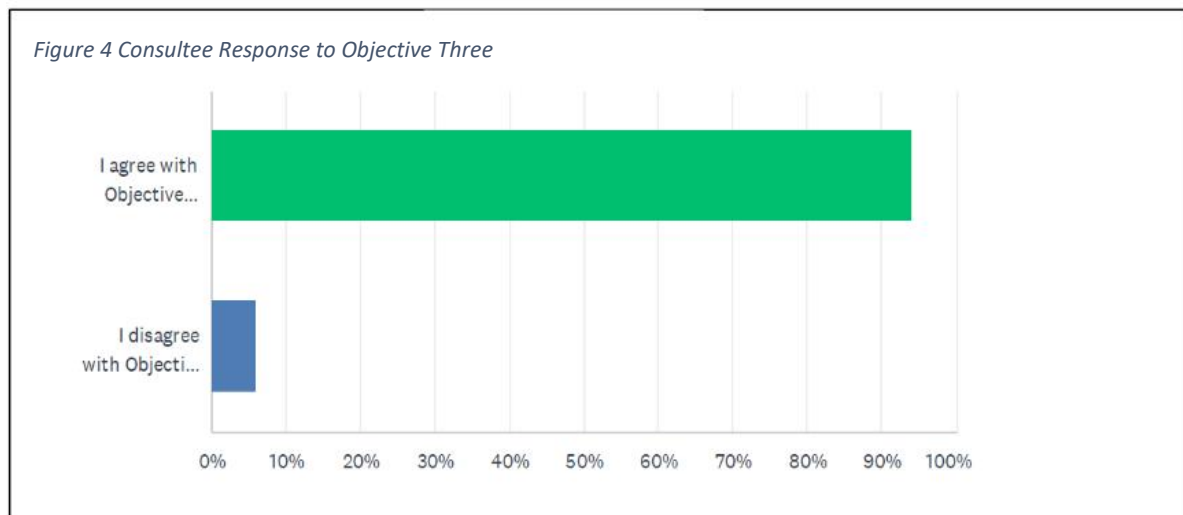
Consultees were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with objective three, and to add comments where applicable.

Improvement Objective Three.

- To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and the environment.**

Table 1.3 – Percentage of consultees who agreed or disagreed with objective three.

	Percentage
Number of Consultees agreed with objective three	93.94 %
Number of Consultees disagreed with objective three	6.06%



Outlined below are the consultees' commentary in relation to objective three. There were 12 comments received in total.

#01	We created our own dog poop bag collection points. Residents have nowhere to dispose of the waste
#02	These are money wasting ideas If you are not safe nothing else matters
#05	Mushroom factory - mid ulster council must have a responsibility for issues raised
#10	Will this include sanctions against people who do not take responsibility for their waste and the environment or will such people be simply excused on the grounds of being 'vulnerable' etc.? Have you any way of objectively measuring the extent to which this objective has been achieved?
#11	I am hopeful that the Council will develop an area based approach and natural solutions to adapt and mitigate climate change and reduce carbon footprint within the area. Lands need to be set aside by the local authority for nature, maintained, managed and monitored - see rewilding and Woodland Trust case studies. DAERA should help with financial investment and access to expertise in these areas. However there might be opportunities to partner with Woodland Trust, National Trust etc. NGOs often have better advocates and expertise
#19	More green open recreational quality spaces for leisure, recreational and food experiences needed that are modern and what people actually want to use Should invest in renewable energy sources at existing facilities
#24	This is top of the list for me, as I believe a clean environment is so so important on all levels from hygiene safety and reputation
#25	In particular recycle more waste. Crack down on illegal dumping or fly-tipping. Support and subsidise EV charging points throughout the district to encourage EV uptake which will improve air quality within our towns and villages
#27	I feel the council can do better, regarding taking the lead in setting up programmes to involve the unemployed/young offenders to create a clearer neighbourhood
#29	Is council working with local businesses in relation to corporate responsibility (both big and small) and their contribution to tackling waste especially when comes to dealing with litter
#32	This will be almost impossible to achieve I think especially for dog fouling as those responsible for disposing of their own dog's waste don't seem to understand or care about the need to leave footpaths / streets / walkways

	<p>clear of dog waste for a cleaner, safer and healthier environment for all. Not that all dog owners are irresponsible but it's the minority that give them all a bad name.</p>
#33	<p>Conventional environmentalism sought to separate the environment and society, however there is a growing recognition that the environment and society are entangled in ever increasing ways. In creating green, open public spaces it is important to listen to nature's voice and protect habitats for non-humans so that people have the best chance to enjoy and engage with the natural environment. Seek local volunteers to help with certain types of Council projects, create an experience where residents have a direct connection with their environment - they have a stake in it. This should also involve schools - educating young people on the values associated with clean neighbourhoods, waste and their environment.</p>

QUESTION 6 -

Do you agree that the proposed Performance Improvement Objectives are appropriate for our district?

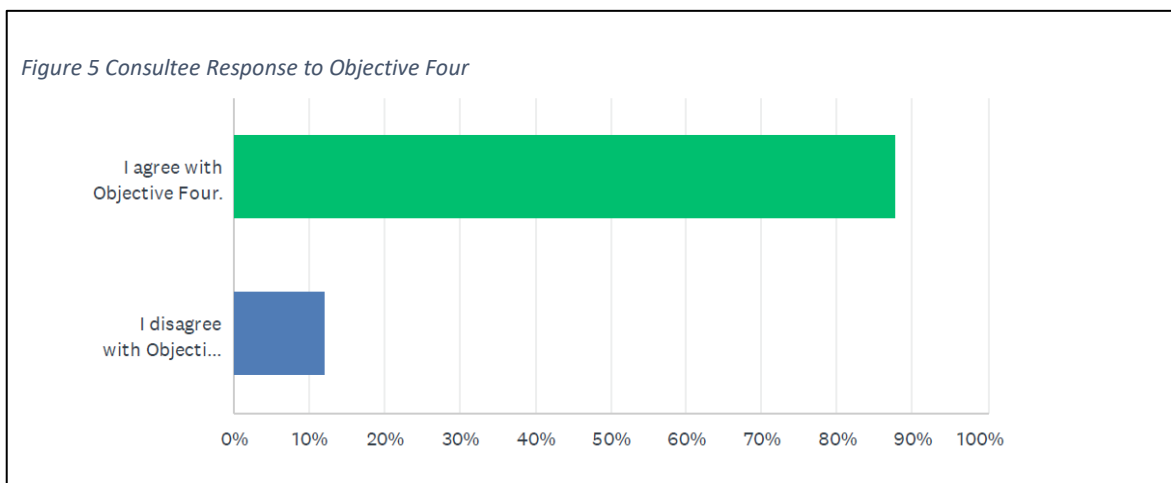
Consultees were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with objective four, and to add comments where applicable.

Improvement 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.**

Table 1.4 – Percentage of consultees who agreed or disagreed with objective four.

	Percentage
Number of Consultees agreed with objective four.	87.88%
Number of Consultees disagreed with objective four.	12.12%



Outlined below are the consultees' commentary in relation to objective four. There were 9 comments received in total.

#02	You need a shelter for men and boys. You need young men being told about abuse and told how to get help They need to be taught in schools about abuse that happens to them.
#03	I absolutely agree with this objective. Capital investment is urgently needed in the right areas
#10	The council can influence regeneration adequately through the planning process. There should be a presumption against the risk of squandering ratepayers' money other than in circumstances where the need is essential.
#11	Any proposed capital investment programme for 2023/24 and beyond must be specific, measurable, realistic, achievable and time bound. The lead in time is crucial and utilising cross directorate and multi-disciplinary teams -pulling existing expertise and staff resources works e.g. .MUDC's Planning Portal is fit for purpose while NIPP is not
#16	I'm not sure this should be an objective when we have to pay additional rates - I can understand maintenance of facilities to keep them up to standard but don't agree with brand new facilities being created just for the sake of it.
#19	The council is designing and implementing non critical white elephants like HomePlace and leisure centres that no longer reflect the needs of the community. Who is going to pay the running costs as none of these facilities deliver cost effective services, make any money or draw in any reasonable tourism or visitors Should invest capital to save in electrical charge points and renewable energies like solar, council vehicles how many are electric or even hybrid?
#25	Events in Ballyronan have been really good for the local community.
#29	Not sure how I can find where capital projects which have been completed are on web site
#33	From a personal experience, I have concerns about the longevity of town centres. I have visited countries across the globe and the thing that has stood out is the difference in night time economies. If you visited any of the towns or villages in MUDC at night, aside from some restaurants and Public Houses, there are very few reasons why people would want to gather or mix in towns and villages. If you compare that with towns and villages in Spain and Portugal, they are thriving at night, with people congregating and mixing in town squares and public spaces, they are not necessarily there for any specific activity other than being human, i.e. being social creatures - it's not cantered on alcohol consumption. The local authorities have created Pedestrianised spaces where people want to go, it's colourful, scenic and vibrant. People of all ages and backgrounds mix, with an emphasis on small,

	<p>local businesses. Although I am from Omagh, Co Tyrone, there are similarities with MUDC towns. There is a high turnover of occupants of business premises, with a proliferation of Solicitors, Estate Agents and unoccupied buildings in our high streets. The increasing cost of living has meant people have reduced disposable incomes and smaller independent shops and businesses cannot afford to be located in town centres, and thus has reduced the variety of business and footfall of town centres.</p>
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QUESTION 7.

Consultees were asked to outline any improvements that they felt could be made by Mid Ulster Council in the future.

There were 14 responses received in total in relation to question 7.

#01	Further support for community groups
#02	Fund men's Advisory to help boys and men in the area How you don't is purely a disgrace.
#03	Less focus on environmental issues that really don't impact people's everyday lives. Focus of objectives should be on customers who are at the centre of the district. The MUDC objectives should serve me as a customer, resident and business owner
#05	Protecting its residents
#06	I would like to see a more in depth look into businesses that are getting approval to manufacture goods within mid-ulster which are causing pollution and whom are actively breaking the law. I have person experience of this with factory near Ballygawley. This has been appalling from the day it opened. Local residents along with members of the council have had to pursue this. No statutory body has acted upon this regardless of thousands of complaints. I would like to see the council taking the lead in such matters and guide these issues to the correct bodies. I am sure there are a lot more companies causing similar distress to residents and they feel like they have no voice. This proposal was approved by local representatives and I am aware that letters that were to be sent out to residents on the Aughnagar Road in Ballygawley went to addresses in six mile cross. Very sloppy or sneaky. I am unsure which!!
#10	The council's overriding priority should be keep rates as low as possible by reducing waste in manpower and other resources as well as eliminating non-essential services which fail to generate sufficient revenue from users

#12	Nothing else to add other than to say that my local council should be working to ensure my rates are kept to a minimum.
#15	Lacking initiatives for teenagers.
#17	There should be Electric charging points at all council facilities and bicycle sheds - these should be able to be used by both the public and staff
#19	Litter alongside rural roadsides is not being lifted in line with the Councils own objectives and plans. Council cannot even enforce litter instead they get a third party who makes over £100k a year fining people for throwing down cigarettes in town.is this where the real problem is ?
#20	Capital being more transparent and available on line in the website with real time information on programme delivery
#24	I live in Cookstown, I am a non-drinker and I feel there should be sociable places open too late for all ages like late night classes at the weekend for arts and woodwork and hobbies
#27	Talk to and (LISTEN) to the staff on the ground and if they have any ideas to improve the quality of service that we all provide, and not to rule with an iron fist.(we're all in this together)
#33	We are part of a westernised, capitalist approach to the economy, and a market led approach to governance, is there a danger we are becoming too focused on unsustainable production and consumption behaviours? I have engaged with case studies on the widespread use of plastic globally, and how micro plastics are a significant environmental problem for coastal and marine environments. The plastics are essentially broken down into smaller and smaller pieces, ingested by marine species and become almost invisible to the naked eye. There is also a danger to public health as the plastics ingested by smaller creatures, are eaten by increasingly larger species, and potentially by humans. A brave step for MUDC, would be to prohibit plastic food packaging in all retail outlets within MUDC - with the end goal of having no new plastic products exported into or produced within MUDC in the future.

QUESTION 8

Consultees were asked to use the space provided for any further comments relating to the draft Corporate Improvement objectives.

There were 5 responses received in total relating to question 8.

#01	Keep areas clean not just towns we all pay rates
#02	Domestic abuse hurts everyone not just women and girls I am a mother and I and my son was discriminated against. We couldn't use a refuge because my son was 17 No help means no getting better.
#15	n/a
#29	Can you join as a volunteer in local parks?
#33	Minor critiques. The four draft objectives are wide-ranging and engaging, however I would like to have saw details on the types of proposed actions or potential plans that will enable meeting the objectives (I did read the word doc that accompanied). In setting draft objectives before having a list of potential and specific ways of achieving those means it's difficult to gauge their meaningfulness. I realise that this is only a draft and that specific actions may follow at a later stage once the objectives have been confirmed. I am also aware that due to commercial sensitivity, potential projects may not be disclosable as part of this consultation. Forgive my ignorance, I am unfamiliar with the process of setting the draft objectives, is there an argument for engaging or consulting stakeholders before setting the objectives, that way Councils corporate values can be entwined with wider stakeholder values to create the objectives.