

Report on	Performance Update – Exception Overview: Context and Improvement Measures Q1 – Q3 2025/26
Date of Meeting	Thursday 5 th February 2026
Reporting Officer	J Mc Guckin, Head of Strategic Services & Engagement
Contact Officer	L Jenkins, Corporate Performance & Quality Officer

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The report provides members with a performance update, in relation to members queries/comments regarding exception reporting of some 'set for us' (Statutory – Planning, Economic Development) and 'set by us', i.e. self-imposed (Absence) performance indicators in Q1 – Q2 2025/26.
2.0	Background
2.1	<u>The Statutory Framework for Performance Reporting</u> Under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, (the Act) councils are required to plan for and secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. This statutory duty provides the legal basis for performance reporting and the use of performance indicators: <i>Section 84</i> sets the general duty of improvement for councils to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. <i>Section 89</i> empowers the Department to specify performance indicators and performance standards by order, and councils must make arrangements to exercise their functions so that applicable performance standards are met.
2.2.	The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023 sets out statutory indicators and minimum standards, including in areas such as planning, economic development and waste management. <i>Section 90</i> requires councils to collect information to measure performance against statutory and self-imposed indicators (e.g. Absence). <i>Section 91</i> requires Councils to use this information to compare performance with previous years and, where reasonably practicable, with other councils, and to decide on steps for improvement. <i>Section 92</i> requires council to publish performance information/ assessments (such as Council's Annual Assessment report published by 30 th September each year), so performance is open, transparent and accessible.
2.3	Performance information and KPI's under the statutory framework are intended to support continuous improvement, transparency and accountability of council systems and processes, consistent with objectives set under the Act. There is

2.4	<p>also Guidance issued under this framework, Circular LG 21/2016 - Guidance for Performance Improvement 2016 onwards (Department for Communities). The Guidance is designed to assist Councils to meet performance improvement requirements set out in the Act. It emphasises that Councils must gather, assess and report performance data to demonstrate improvement in service delivery over time.</p> <p>During the January 2026 Policy and Resources committee meeting, there was some query/commentary, arising from some performance indicators, falling short of predefined standards as outlined in Councils Six Month Progress Update paper on the Council's Performance Improvement Plan and the associated Appendix Two - Statutory and Benchmark Performance Improvement Indicators, six-month report. The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement informed members that an additional report would be brought to the next committee, giving an overview of the context and improvement activity regarding the statutory and self-imposed indicators 'falling short of pre-defined standards', (to include statutory indicators regarding Planning, Economic Development- Jobs promoted and the 'self-imposed' indicator of Absence). The attached appendix one includes performance information/updates relating from Q1 to Q3 2025/26.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Interpreting Performance Indicators – Performance Update Exception Overview – Context and Improvement Measures (Appendix One).</u></p> <p>Key performance indicators (KPI's) such as the statutory indicators and standards relating to planning, jobs promoted and self-imposed indicator of absence are critical indicators of progress towards results. Appendix one to the attached report (Performance Update Exception Overview – context and improvement measures) contains many aspects relating to the KPI's context and interpretation. Firstly, at the bottom of each KPI template, it outlines the lead Officers managing, monitoring, reporting, and collating the KPI information and also outlines the 'purpose' of the and what its actually measuring.</p> <p>The overview, as outlined in Appendix one should be considered within the setting of the related KPI's, that is, numerical data (headline figures) must be understood in context via narrative or qualitative commentary, (such as operational challenges or policy changes affecting figures). The analysis provided under each KPI, within the appendix (the KPI reporting templates), in effect looks at contextual issues.</p> <p>The KPI templates, within the Appendix overview, also include comparison with others (e.g. benchmarking with other councils, our peers, where possible, data permitting, to look at potential issues) that might reflect local issues or wider sector trends, or sectoral averages. The KPI template overview also includes time series benchmarking (councils own data over time – historical trends which may identify patterns or seasonal effects etc) - through graphical representation of the KPI.</p>

	<p>Information is also considered as to why performance is up or down, using a 'direction of travel' arrow (signifies whether the measure is improving, declining or remaining stable by quarter). The KPI template can include context - such as service pressure and any external/ mitigating third party factors. This means in practice that even though the council reports on the KPI, it may not control every step needed to meet the standard. For example, delays can arise perhaps because applicants submit incomplete information, or statutory consultees respond late or require further information, creating bottlenecks in the process. With additional contextual information this then allows the KPI's to be read in a more dynamic way e.g. how today's inputs, early flags, affect tomorrows outputs and outcomes, as opposed to a single snapshot or number.</p> <p>KPI's that are red or amber, show emerging issues. Analysis is then provided in a narrative format, highlighting such issues as external pressures, or timing differences in data collection and verification (leading to lag times in validated data etc.). Officers highlight any root causes and in doing so include activities which endeavours to bring the standard 'back on track' that is improve the KPI (actions proposed to address issues) via the context and improvement activity section.</p> <p>The KPI templates in the overview, also highlights if a 'higher' number means 'better performance' or a 'lower' number means 'better performance'. The use of RAG reporting (Red, Amber, Green) is a quick visual summary; in brief green signifies performing as expected amber some concern or emerging risk and red, off target or requires attention. Red rating usually triggers questions (acts as a warning light) with understanding required of root causes, discussions on action to improve (as outlined in context and improvement activity sections).</p> <p>KPI's are utilised within the attached overview, in general as diagnostic tools to identify where attention is needed, such as where systems are under strain, understand where intervention or support is needed, test whether policies or resources are aligned with demand, and monitor that improvement activity is working. The attached overview provides broader review/explanation of current underperforming KPIs (as outlined in the report and associated appendix), and the overview is used to understand system performance and to inform improvement actions, with due regard to external dependencies and benchmarking where practicable.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: N/A</p> <p>Human: N/A</p> <p>Risk Management: The data quality contained in the Mid Ulster District Council's Performance Update – context and improvement activities is provisional, as</p>

	unaudited “data” and is characterised as management information. All in-year results may be subject to later revision.
4.2	<u>Screening & Impact Statements</u>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members review the performance achieved, and assess progress and performance against the standards/targets and provide commentary as necessary.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix One – Performance Update Exception Overview – Context and Improvement Measures Q1 to Q3 2025/26.