

# **Mid Ulster District Council**

## **Annual Report**

### **Performance Improvement Plan**

### **Self-Assessment**

### **2017 – 2018**

**August 2018**

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## Foreword

Improving the outcomes for Mid Ulster’s citizens and businesses is at the top of the Council’s agenda. The demand for improvement, its pace, combined with legislative requirements, have all increased dramatically in the last few years.

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 sets out a General Duty of Improvement for local Government whereby Councils must put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions, consult widely on how to do so, report publicly on the outcome and prepare a performance improvement plan. As part of effective management and working practices, performance management should drive service delivery and improvement in every area of the council.

Mid Ulster District Council faces a range of challenges and opportunities, including significantly reduced level of resources from Government to deliver key services. Married with increasingly higher expectations from customers, yet this very scenario also provides an opportunity to re-think our role, the services we must deliver against those we would like to deliver and importantly how and, where they are delivered. The Council will need effective performance management and measurement to ensure success in meeting these challenges, to provide evidence of achievements and to identify ‘what works’.

For the last two years, we have produced an annual report reviewing our performance in the previous financial year, which includes an evaluation of how well we delivered against the objectives set by Council in the previous year. We use performance indicators to monitor our performance. Some Stormont Government Departments set some of these “statutory indicators”, and are now utilised for comparison with other Councils.

Our annual improvement plan has been a central part of our planning to set our objectives for the year ahead, the specific actions we undertake and how we measure our performance. This plan evaluates how well we have delivered the objectives that councillors set in 2017 to 2018. We have evaluated performance against our local priorities and objectives, as well as regionally important issues (such as the Programme for Government) to place these regional issues in their local context. As we adapt to meet our new statutory requirements we are confident we will deliver a better Mid Ulster District for everyone.

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**Councillor Sean Mc Peake**  
Chair

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**Anthony Tohill**  
Chief Executive

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Annual Performance Report**

This Performance Report is a statutory document, which looks at how well we did during the 2017/18 financial year, in delivering the objectives and priorities as outlined in our Corporate Improvement Plan 2017- 18 (available to view on our website). The report provides an overarching self-assessment of how Council has performed and delivered against our commitments, priorities and measures. 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 - Northern Ireland Audit Office Report). We have ensured that this annual report on progress presents a fair and balanced picture of performance for the year. The annual report on progress sets out:

- Introduction, **Section 1**
- Improvement and Council’s hierarchy of plans., **Section 2**
- Choosing and consulting on our improvement objectives, **Section 3**
- Council’s self-assessment of improvement objectives , **Section 4**
- Improvement Objectives – Projects progress and Self-Assessment, **Section 5**
- Council’s self assessment of statutory indicators and standards 2017/18, **Section 6**
- Council’s self-assessment of self-imposed indicators/standards 2017/18, **Section 7**
- Overall Assessment for 2017-18, **Section 8**
- Have your Say, **Section 9**

## **2.0 IMPROVEMENT AND COUNCIL’S HIEARCHY OF PLANS?**

### **2.1 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 departments.

The Local Government (NI) Act 2014, (hereafter referred to as ‘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.

Mid Ulster District Council is committed to driving continuous improvement and performance across all service areas within the organisation. Improvement is about activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities. Council is committed to ensuring that our improvement objectives are relevant, that the best arrangements for delivering them are in place, and that we can demonstrate the impact on the outcomes for citizens. The vision to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Mid Ulster District is at the heart of everything the Council does.

## **2.2 Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Planning 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 Corporate Planning framework (refer to figure 2.1). 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.

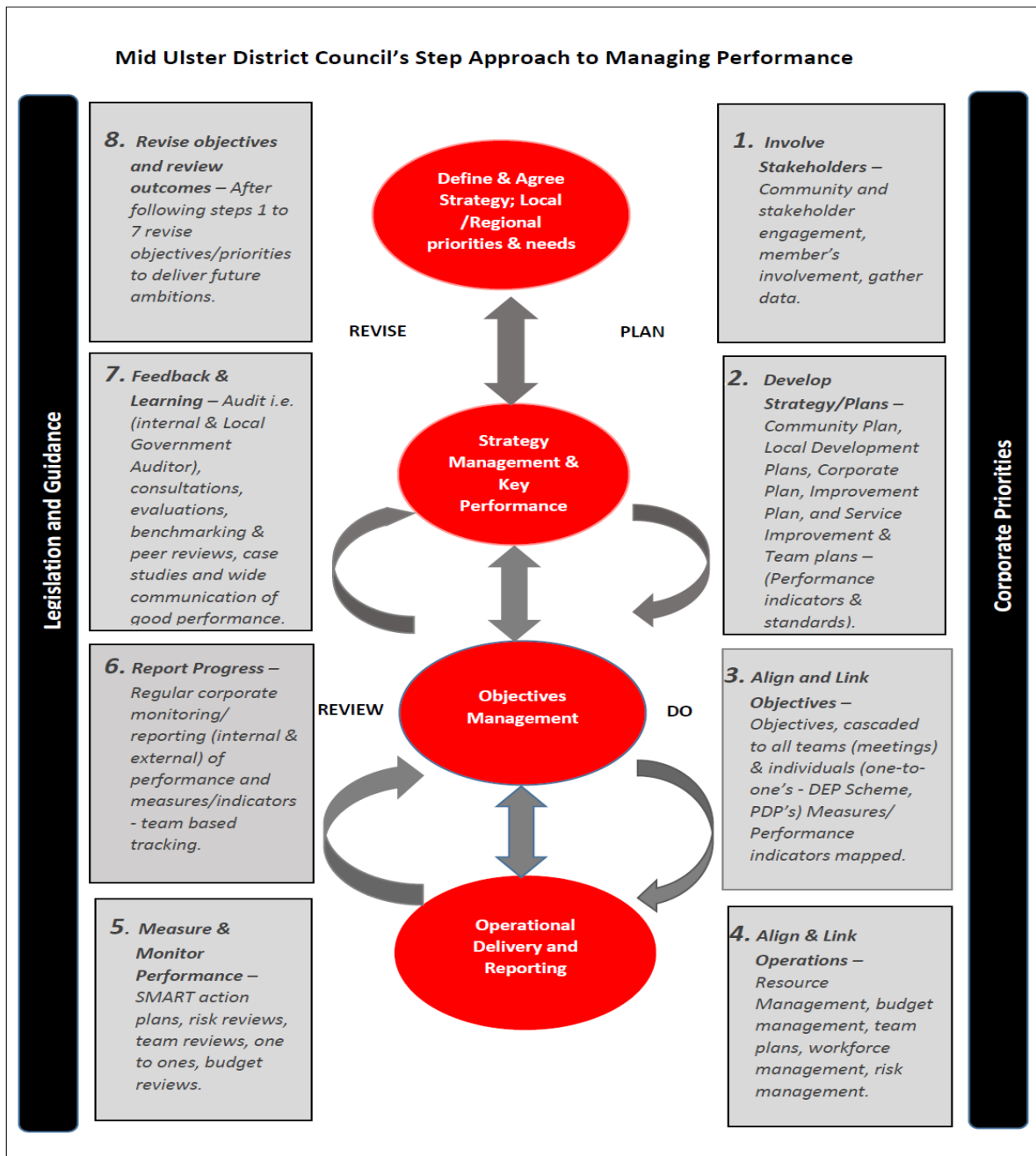
Evidence linked to existing and forecasted data will inform the Council's policy framework, which in turn will inform our planning process. It is important that elements within Council's planning and reporting activities are monitored and reviewed within an annual cycle.

Our Performance Management framework set against the statutory background of Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) 2014 Act is to:

- Issue an Annual Corporate Improvement Plan
- 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 will 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.

Figure 2.1 - Council's Step Approach to Managing Performance



### 2.3 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). Community planning is a new responsibility for Councils in Northern Ireland. This brings local authorities in Northern Ireland into line with counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales. 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.

It reflects what has been laid down at the regional level in documents like the Programme for Government Framework 2016 – 21, the regional development strategy and others. 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 and 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”.*

The Community Plan resonates around five themes (refer to figure 2.2), 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, fifteen outcomes in total:

**Figure 2.2 – Mid Ulster’s Community Plan Themes and Outcomes**

Community Plan Theme	Community Plan Outcomes
1. Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We prosper in a stronger and more competitive economy</li> <li>• We have more people working in a diverse economy</li> <li>• Our towns and villages are vibrant and competitive</li> </ul>
2. Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure</li> <li>• We increasingly value our environment and enhance it for our children</li> <li>• We enjoy increased access to affordable quality housing</li> </ul>
3. Education and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our people are better qualified and more skilled</li> <li>• We give our children and young people the best chance in life</li> <li>• We are more entrepreneurial, innovative and creative</li> </ul>
4. Health and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are better enabled to live longer healthier and more active lives</li> <li>• We have the availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time</li> <li>• We care more for those most vulnerable and in need</li> </ul>
5. Vibrant & Safe Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are a safer community</li> <li>• We have a greater value and respect for diversity</li> <li>• We have stronger communities with less disadvantage &amp; poverty</li> </ul>

The Community Plan is the key strategic document for Council and an integral element of the performance management framework and performance improvement and community planning will inform, and be informed, by each other. 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.



The Community plan must also be reviewed before the fourth anniversary on which it was published and every four years thereafter. 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. The business planning process translates high-level objectives (e.g. Community and Corporate Plan) 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).

## **2.4 Corporate Plan**

The Council’s Corporate plan 2015 – 2019 is the key Council policy document. The plan is in place for an agreed (defined) period and sets out how the Council will achieve 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. We reviewed our Corporate plan in 2017 (the Community Plan was launched in the spring of 2017) and 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.

## **2.5 Corporate Improvement Plan**

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).

Whilst 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 Improvement Plan. Each year the Council identifies, consults upon and publishes a set of improvement objectives, which set out what we will do in the year ahead to deliver on our statutory duty to secure continuous improvement. Council ensures that the improvement objectives and associated improvement activity/measurement, ideally describes the overall purpose and scope of the action to deliver it and it 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

The Improvement plan is published in two parts. Part one is to be published as soon as is reasonably practicable after the 1<sup>st</sup> of April each year and details the Council's improvement objectives, the associated narrative around the plan and is forward looking, with part two published by 31<sup>st</sup> of October (this report) detailing the Council's assessment of its performance over the past year (retrospective or backward looking).

## **2.6 Service Plans**

Service plans describe the core services and objectives/activities of services and how these are sustained and agreed within an agreed annual budget. They also provide the mechanism for further planning within services through which 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 and service reviews are progressed to the extent possible with time available resources. They can also include elements within the Community plan, Corporate Plan, and Performance Improvement plan.

Service plans provide the essential link between the Council's high-level objectives and the individual employee's contribution towards the achievement of these known as the "golden thread". The service plans are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, as "living documents" (minimum bi-monthly by Heads of Service/Directors), to ensure they are achieving their aims, and mitigating actions are developed in response to identified risks. The plans are considered (approval of draft annual service plans) and reviewed (progress reports) by the appropriate overview committee within Council, at the mid-year point to ensure that the plan is being delivered. Service plans should be placed as an agenda item for service team meetings, which should be held as a minimum on a bi-monthly basis and with staff undertaking their one to ones with line management (appraisal and personal development planning through the Council's Developing, Engaging and Performing scheme). An annual retrospective overview of the previous year's performance is detailed in the annual service plan.

## **2.7 Statutory Indicators/Standards and Self-Imposed indicators**

In addition to the improvement, objectives and associated actions used to measure our performance the Northern Ireland Government Departments has 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. Quarterly reviews and update reports relating to Council's statutory indicator performance are collated and forwarded to our Senior Management Team, respective committees and Council. Unless otherwise highlighted in the annual corporate performance improvement plan, statutory performance indicators are managed at a directorate performance management level.

## **2.8 Staff Engagement and 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 vision and objectives. Once performance expectations and targets are agreed, managers will regularly review progress with meetings throughout the year or through a short appraisal refresh meeting, with each employee six months later. Council has developed and adopted a performance management appraisal scheme, called "Developing, Engaging and Performing" (DEP's) in Mid Ulster District Council.

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 member, Heads of Service, Managers and individuals, and achievement against are discussed at regular one to ones.

Good personal development planning will result in the best use of time and resources, both for the individual, and the organisation and should deliver better performance and results. Within Council, personal development plan set out the actions staff propose to take to deliver on objectives, and how to learn/develop themselves. The Council views attaining business objectives as the core of personal development planning, as it is through the achievement of staff's personal objectives that they can apply their learning and see the results. All staff take responsibility for formulating and implementing their PDP plans (i.e. taking responsibility for their own performance), and all staff will receive support from the Council and their managers in completing them. Council envisages that Personal Development Planning will provide staff with knowledge and a portfolio of transferable skills that will help progress their careers. Further guidance and detail.

## **3.0 CHOOSING & CONSULTING ON OUR IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2017 - 2018**

### **3.1 Developing the Improvement Objectives: 2017-2018 and 2018 to 2019**

The Council's Policy and Resources Committee oversaw the development of this 2017-18 & 2018-19 Improvement Plan to ensure the plan's publication as soon as practicable following the 1st April, in line with Department for Communities guidance. The process of developing the Council's improvement objectives involved engagement between Senior Management and Heads of Service culminating in a workshop in February 2017. This engagement identified 19 potential areas for improvement across the council from which four proposed improvement objectives were identified for consideration and approved by elected members as a focus for continuous improvement. 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's) from senior management team, appointed by the Chief Executive. The improvement plan spans over a two year period and the SRO's undertake a review of their improvement projects at end of the financial year.

The proposed improvement objectives, rationale and associated links to the Community and Corporate Plan were considered and approved by elected members at their March 2017 Policy & Resources committee meeting for public consultation. Senior Management considered the outcome of the consultation undertaken throughout March to May and the associated report on the final improvement objectives. Elected members then considered the consultation report for approval at their June Policy and Resources Committee before being endorsed by Council.

Our Improvement Objectives 2017-18 and 2018-19:

- One** To assist in the growth of the local economy by increasing the number of visitors to our district.
- Two** To help manage our waste and environment by reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.
- Three** To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online
- Four** To support people to adopt healthier lifestyles by increasing the usage of Council recreational facilities

### 3.2 Consultation

Consultation undertaken on our proposed improvement objectives, a rationale for their inclusion and associated activities for the period of the plan, was undertaken between 10<sup>th</sup> March and 5<sup>th</sup> May 2017. Our consultation involved a survey made available for completion and submission online and by post to the council. To ensure maximum engagement, promotion of the process used a variety of communication channels including; council social media outlets, internal staff meetings, the council website and local press releases. 41 responses were received in relation to the consultation.

### 3.3 What the Consultation told us

- 90% of respondents agreed with Objective 1: *To assist in the growth of the local economy by increasing the number of visitors to our district*
- 98% of respondents agreed with Objective 2: *To help manage our waste and environment by reducing the amount of waste going to landfill*
- 95% of respondents agreed with objective 3: *To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online*
- 93 % of respondents agreed with objective 4: *To support people to adopt healthier lifestyles by increasing the usage of Council recreational facilities*

With such significant support for the four proposed improvement objectives, together with additional commentary provided, the council developed its 2017-18 and 2018-19 Improvement Plan around them. When reviewed, respondent commentary did not warrant the removal, amendment to or addition to the objectives proposed. Additional commentary and views provided is informing our wider improvement activity across services.

## 4.0 COUNCIL'S SELF – ASSESSMENT OF IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2017-2018 to 2018-2019

### 4.1 Council's Improvement Plan

Our Improvement Plan acts as a 'business plan' and links to the priorities in the District's Community Plan and Council's Corporate Plan (2015-2019) through our Strategic Objectives. Under each of the four improvement objectives, the council has given a clear rationale for the following:

- why the objective has been chosen
- what has been carried out thus far in relation to the objectives (performance)
- what Council's planned improvement activities are for the year (actions and measures)
- the outcomes citizens can expect from the completed activities (the difference they will make)
- ensuring improvement aspects contained within the Act are embraced in the improvements, and
- demonstrates how our improvements align with Council's strategic objectives (or our strategic effectiveness).

### 4.2 Self-Assessment

The following sections review and gives a progress commentary under each of the 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, and an overview on the impact or outcomes for citizens.

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

Where some actions have deviated from plan, there is an explanation and a narrative to explain the way forward in completing the activity (column 5 – commentary). The achievement status of each is presented on the basis of: Fully Achieved, Substantially Achieved, Partially Achieved or Not Achieved as explained below in; Figure 4.2 – *Legend for self-assessment (evaluation) of progress made on key actions and measures of achievement.*

**Figure 4.2: Legend for Self –assessment of progress made on for key actions and measures achievement (performance rating/status).**

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.

## 5.0 IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES - PROJECTS PROGRESS AND SELF-ASSESSMENT.

### Improvement Objective 1 – 14 Activities/Measures

#### 5.1 *To assist in the growth of the local economy by increasing the number of visitors to our district*

*“I strongly agree with this objective. This district has so many wonderful assets that visitors would enjoy, but I think it is often overlooked by tourists who tend to go to larger cities or coastal areas. As a new resident here, we’ve enjoyed showing our new surroundings to the visitors we’ve had since we moved here.”*

(Resident; Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey; May 2017)

**Link to District Community Plan Theme:** *Economic Growth*  
*We have more people working in a diverse economy*

**Link to Corporate Plan Theme:** *Sustaining our Environment*  
*Realising tourism potential of Mid Ulster, being clear upon the opportunities and targeting resources.*

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

*Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Efficiency, Innovation*

**Lead Officer:** *Director, Business & Communities.*

### Why have we chosen this Improvement Objective?

Tourism has been recognised as an economic driver by the Council. Enhancing the role of tourism as an economic activity will require local agencies, stakeholders and residents to understand its’ potential to sustain and increase the 3,000 plus tourism and tourism related jobs in the district. In 2014 the number of visitors to the district stood at 214,000 with a visitor spend of £27 million, equivalent to only 4.6% of NI overnight trips and 3.6% of NI spend in 2014.

In essence, Mid Ulster is a developing destination and as such has not yet fulfilled its potential. Opportunities for tourism growth lie in building on existing and new tourism propositions into a single tourism product or destination by capitalising on Mid Ulster’s central position in Northern Ireland. The challenge is to bring together Mid Ulster’s tourism assets and attributes, support the dispersal of visitor spend and investment across the area and provide an offering for visitors to visit and stay in our district.

## Overview of What We Achieved during 2017/18

- The Council has successfully applied and secured £500K in the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and £250K from Landfill Communities Fund for a “Dark Skies Observatory and Visitor Centre” at Davagh Forest. The £1 million pound project demonstrates the Council’s commitment to optimising the tourism product for Mid Ulster and builds on the national and international success of the launch of the Seamus Heaney HomePlace.
- During 2017/18 Council Visitor Information Centres achieved an average 90% rating score from the mystery shoppers visits.
- Two Council staff members have successfully attained World Host qualifications and are now licensed; this has seen the delivery of World Host training for the local Tourism Trades, with five local businesses and ten trade staff within the Clogher Valley attending learning and development sessions.
- A local tourism trade hub has been completed and went live and training sessions have been delivered for local tourism businesses. The hub offers useful material on how to grow and promote your business and a forum for discussion with other like-minded people. With easy to navigate tabs separating all the material provided into sections, the website is designed to help quickly locate all the information site visitors need. Queries are dealt with by simply using the Ask an Expert or Contact Us tabs and help will be at hand. An up-to-date business directory that can be searched by business type or name is another handy tool.
- Carleton Trail (a waymarked walk of just under 30 miles for driving, walking, cycling) has been upgraded and launched alongside a self-guiding virtual app for the trail.
- Twenty Council Corporate events attracting audience figures of 93,793 were undertaken over the last twelve months; an increase in audience attendance of 3.9% over the previous year’s figures.
- The number of local tourism trades staff upskilled in 2017/18 was 59 and included workshops and training programmes as varied as Promoting Tour Packaging, Promoting Sales and Enhancing Communications, Promotion through Attendance at Trade/Consumer Exhibitions/Shows and ten businesses signed up for a IT Skills and Social Media Mentor Programme.
- Our baseline year visitor numbers who participate in and access Council tourist, cultural facilities and natural attractions was 1,186,493 for 2017/18.
- Staff and trades within the district attended five consumer shows during the year. Local trades were able to avail of space and the marketing/promotional “bounce” from Council’s promotional stands at the consumer show events, which ranged from attending Holiday World (in both Belfast and Dublin), Garden Show Ireland (in Antrim), Balmoral Show, Clogher Valley Show and the Bloom Show in Dublin. In total 33 trades promoted their products services through the exhibition/promotional space

## Progress Status Against Performance 14 Activities/Measures – What we did?

What are we going to do?	Timescale	Outcome - What difference will it make?	Progress	Comments
<p>1. *Performance 7 Quality framework developed for all VIC's : Undertake Baseline current Visitor Information Centres (VIC's) in relation to visitor figures and develop standardised performance management reporting framework.</p> <p>Develop Corporate VIC action plan in order to improve the quality and quantity of VIC's in the district</p> <p>All Council VIC's to obtain and maintain Tourism Northern Ireland's (TNI) Minimum standards by 2020</p>	<p>October 2017</p> <p>March 2019</p> <p>March 2019</p>	<p>Fit for purpose reliable, accurate and informed visitor data</p> <p>Enhance and extend visitor information centre offering</p> <p>Centres achieve industry excellence standard and improves their mystery shopper scores</p>		<p>Baseline of current Visitor Information Centre (VICs) in relation to visitor figures in place (267,527 2017/18) standardised performance management reporting framework. A Corporate Visitor Information Centre (VIC's) audit assessment has taken place which will inform action plan development in winter 2018/19. All MUDC Visitor Information Centres have action plans in place to attain (TNI) minimum standards 2020. All VIC's achieved 90% mystery shopper rate. Funding being sought from funding streams</p>
<p>2. Achieve World Host Status for Clogher Valley &amp; Cookstown (: (i) Clogher Valley by 2019 (ii) Cookstown by 2021</p>	<p>March 2019</p>	<p>Introduce a destination wide focus on quality and service delivery</p>		<p>Two Tourism Development Officers have successfully completed training and are licensed WorldHost Facilitators.</p>



				Tourism businesses identified within defined area and targeted for first round of training now completed.
3. Mid Ulster to adopt a “Digital First” approach to Tourism delivery, marketing & promotion through implementation of digital content channels and a tourism portal	March 2019	Industry leading utilisation of digital and content channels		Industry Hub (Portal) now completed and live, private sector and industry trained on using the Hub. <b>Request to extend delivery of Mid Ulster Council Tourism Digital strategy due to Tourism NI new digital plans. During 18/19 Tourism NI plans to work with all Councils on a collective NI Visitor Digital presence.</b> Council digital plan arise from this combined effort
4. Appoint external consultancy to undertake audit of customer experience journeys : at all Heritage, Culture & Arts facilities, Visitor Attractions, Tourism Related Facilities – (phase 1) by service	October 2017	Increased understanding of customer experiences, customer journeys and customer offerings		Customer mapping journeys audit is completed at HomePlace and Ranfurly House.
5. Develop Visitor Experience & Customer Journeys improvement plan to for Council’s Heritage, Culture & Arts facilities, Visitor Attractions and	March 2018	Focused and innovative tourism facilities and products.		The MUDC Visitor Experience and Journeys Action Plan is now in place in April 2018/19, one month longer than anticipated.

Tourism Related Facilities by March 2018				
6. Lead the Heritage Lottery Fund £3 million " <i>Heart of Ancient Ulster</i> " Phase 1 & 2	November 2018	Development of Landscape Community Plan to include new and evolving products, services		2 Staff now in place for Project a partnership board has been established to oversee the project
7. Complete the Phase 2 upgrading of " <i>US Grants</i> " to achieve 4/5 star Tourism NI grading	March 2019	Creation of high quality memorable experience to include redevelopment and improvement of product to wider audience		Successful funding application for upgrade. Audit of brown and white signage completed (5 in total), 4 star grading achieved for the centre
8. Launch the upgraded " <i>Carleton Trail</i> " in Clogher Valley by September 2017..	March 2019	Enhanced visitor experience		The Carleton Trail was launched on Friday 15 September 2017 alongside the opening of the Carleton Summer School 2017, which took place from 15-17 September 2017. Carleton Trail Virtual App completed.
9. Deliver 20 Corporate Strategic events across the district per annum. and increase attendance figures by 5% by 2019	March 2019	Attract and grow hallmark events, raising the profile of the area and bringing economic benefits to the district		Over 20 Corporate Events were organised over the last 12 months. This year our total audience figures were 98,793 an increase of 3.9% from previous year
10. Extend Trade participation at major trade and consumer promotions - Undertake a series of	Annually March 2018	Enhance brand promotion, product visibility and upskill local		Trades attended 5 consumer shows with 33 local businesses represented , in

travel industry shows and familiarisation visits to upskill trade staff in sales promotion		tourism trade on a world stage.		excess of 59 local trades staff representatives undertook various learning and development programmes.
11. Generate Support & engage the Tourism Development Group and established 5 tourism cluster groups	Bi-monthly	Places tourism as an economic driver in the Mid Ulster Economy by creating stronger partnerships.		There were 6 meetings of the Tourism Development Group, engagement and communications plan in development
12. Lead the development of "Dark Skies" Davagh Forest Project heritage product plan in Davagh Forest and its hinterlands	March 2018	Develop investment in a catalyst tourism project		Baseline of potential new audiences completed, Green book economic Appraisal completed
13. Achieve as a minimum 4 and 5 star visitor attraction grading's for <i>Seamus Heaney HomePlace, Burnavon, Ranfurly House &amp; Hill of the O'Neill</i> (As designated by Tourism NI) by 2020	March 2019	Attainment of excellence standard ratings scheme recognised by the tourism industry		All Tourism NI staff have been trained to Tourism 4/5 standard during 2017/18
14. **Design , deliver and launch Seamus Heaney Ground Trails project				HLF approval received to permit extension round 2 submission until 31 <sup>st</sup> May this impacts on initial completion date identified of 1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2018. ICT preparing detailed designs

				each element of Trails project
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\* After discussion at the Economic Growth Meeting on 15 September 2017, it was agreed that the previous CIP Actions 1-3 are amalgamated to be one wide ranging action (CIP 1 A, B and C instead of 1,2 and 3) for ease of reporting by the Director in Q3

\*\* A014 was added due to the Culture & Arts service being transferred to the Business & Communities Directorate.

## Improvement residents, businesses or visitors have seen throughout the year

Council has delivered a destination wide focus on excellent customer care, Council’s Visitor Information Centre’s achieved a 90% Mystery shopper rating , intelligent quality information through our up-to-date tourism portal, enhanced product development (3 of our local trades have applied for World Host recognition) and visitors to the Carleton Trail can now use the app to enhance their visitor experience. Visitors can also enjoy enhanced and upgraded facilities at US Grants.

Improved access at our Visitor Information Centre’s through our numbers of visitors, increased visitor numbers at Council events (up 3.9 % from the previous year) and VIC’s now have a new performance management framework in place at the Centre’s. Engaging with our tourism partners; through our tourism forum meetings (we facilitated six meetings over the year) and provided a secretariat for the five Tourism cluster group meetings (the clusters include: Events, Seamus Heaney; Outdoor Recreation; Archaeology Culture and Heritage and Good Food), throughout the year (where guest speakers and leaders within the tourism industry have attended).

Our local traders have successfully participated at trade shows in conjunction with Council staff trade stands, widening their prospective pool of customers, thereby demonstrating their products and services to wider markets. Local trades through Council’s newly qualified World Host trainers have availed of world-class training on acquiring accredited quality schemes for their businesses. All of these activities has assisted placing tourism as an economic driver, by attracting investment; visitor numbers and tourism spend into the Mid Ulster economy.

## Improvement Objective 2 – 8 Activities/Measures

### 5.2 To help manage our waste and environment by reducing the amount of waste going to landfill

*“Clear advertising and education programmes should be encouraged for all households and within local schools, companies.”*

(Resident; Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey, May 2017)

**Link to Community Plan Theme:** *Infrastructure*

*We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure*

**Link to Corporate Plan Theme:** *Delivering for Our People*

*High performing services focused on customer and value for money*

**Performance Improvement Aspects that this improvement objective aims to deliver against**  
*Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Sustainability, Efficiency, Innovation*

**Lead Officer:** *Director, Environment & Property*

### **Why have we chosen this Improvement Objective?**

The UK has agreed to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill to prevent as far as possible any damage to the environment caused by landfilling. Legislation aims to reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfill by finding ways to recover value from waste and developing sustainable management practices. Disposal to landfill is the least preferred option in the waste hierarchy and is only be used as a last resort after re-use, recycling and recovery options, as an escalating scale of taxation on materials being sent to landfill has made this an increasingly expensive option. We generate tonnes of waste every year in and all councils are set targets for the amount of waste that goes to landfill and these are lowered every year. Throughout 2015 and 2016 the Council only used 72.8% of its NI Landfill Allowance Scheme allowance (15,530 tonnes) of biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste permitted to be landfilled, placing it 3<sup>rd</sup> in overall performance out of 11 Councils. It will be challenging but the Council wants to further reduce this amount.

### **Overview of what we achieved during 2017/18.**

- Achieved the highest household waste recycling rate of all eleven Councils in 2017/18. Exceeded 50% of 2020 statutory target by 4.4%. Council achieved 54.40% rate for 2017/18, which is 2.78% higher than 2016/17
- The amount (tonnage) of Biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is Landfilled, Council utilised only 52.67% of NILAS allocation in 2017/18 compared to 73.38% in 2016/17 (despite the decreasing annual tonnage allocation). There were 4,769 tonnes less of Biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste landfilled in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17.
- The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings, there was a 3.4% decrease in 2017/18 (compared to 6.6% increase between 2015/16 and 2016/17), that is 2,840 tonnes less Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17.
- To re-launch the brown bin scheme, Council distributed 54,000 recycling packs during the first quarter throughout the district and 18 of our Refuse Vehicles now carry food waste livery. Council undertook updates on the Council web-site relating to the brown bin re-launch, as well as features in the Council's magazine, photo calls, were all part of the campaign.
- Council noted that in the first quarter there was approximately a 7% reduction in waste collected in black bins with a corresponding increase in material collected in Brown bins.
- A successful funding application submitted to WRAP/DAERA to support phase 2 of the Food Waste Communication was successful for £5K, the funding was allocated to raising awareness through "No Food Waste" stickers (which were placed on all black bins across the District) and shopping bags.

- Council reviewed its' charging policy to offer a discount on the collective purchase of three bins to encourage the uptake/usage of brown bins.
- Magheraglass landfill site closed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2017, re-grading and preparatory works were completed, a contract advertised in February 2018 for the final phase of capping, with tender evaluations scheduled for July 2018.
- The Closure of the Tullyvar landfill site progressed during the year, with a landfill capacity study commissioned, phase III of the interim contract was awarded and works commenced at the end of December 2017 and the contract was completed in March 2018. A landfill capacity report was presented to the Joint committee in March with estimated closure /mothballing of the site due in September 2018.
- The construction of a waste transfer station at Drumcoo recycling centre in Dungannon received planning approval in July 2017 and a list of contractors selected to tender for construction of the facility, with an award contract endorsed at the Environment Committee in November 2017. Site works commenced on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February with an estimated completion date at the end of July 2018.
- The awarding of new contracts for the processing of residual waste, bio-wastes and mixed dry recyclables is well underway.
- Council delivered an annual Recycling Awareness Communications Plan during the year, which included; and Eco Speak competition in April (with over 20 schools participating in the competition), Compost Awareness Week 8<sup>th</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> May, a WEEE Recycling competition in July, recycle week w/b 25<sup>th</sup> of September, a Dry Recycling Communications initiative was completed and circulated to every households in the District and there was increased "door-steeping" by Recycling Officers in areas where high levels of contamination were identified.

### Progress Status Against Performance – 8 Activities/Measures – What we did?

What are we going to do?	Timescale	Outcome - What difference will it make?	Progress	Comments
<p>1. Recycle/compost at least 51% of household waste by:</p> <p>Processing additional residual waste by diverting waste from landfill and extracting more recyclates</p> <p>Diverting residual waste to other waste streams</p>	March 2018	Recycling is more sustainable than landfill. The overall cost of recycling is lower than landfill and creates greater economic benefits		Target exceeded more than 51%

2. Restrict the amount of Household Waste landfilled as a percentage of total amount to no more than 35% (26,514 tonnes based on 2016/2017 tonnages)	March 2018	Demonstrates the Councils commitment to Sustainable Development and the Circular Economy		Target exceeded less than 35%
3. Relaunch the brown bin scheme to increase the amount of food waste collected for composting through Education and Awareness Campaigns including the provision of information to all households and on vehicle advertising.	March 2018	Demonstrates the Councils commitment to Sustainable Development and the Circular Economy		Successful re-launch of Brown bin scheme, through awareness/promotion campaign, successful funding secured and revision of Council policy
4. Close Magheraglass Landfill Site (and to award the contract for the final capping of the site)	June 2017 & March 2018	Demonstrates the Councils commitment to environmental regeneration, Sustainable Development and the Circular Economy		Magheraglass Site closed May 2017; Tender is proceeding for capping works scheduled for July 2018.
5. Close/Mothball Tullyvar Landfill Site	June 2018	Demonstrates the Councils commitment to environmental regeneration, Sustainable Development and the Circular Economy		Landfill capacity study commissioned and reported to committee March, phase III, capping contract awarded works commenced December 2017 and completed March 18
6. Construct a Waste Transfer Station at Drumcoo Recycling Centre, Dungannon in preparation for the	June 2018	Demonstrates the Councils commitment to a more sustainable waste collection		Planning approval was agreed and contractor was on site early 2018, with 20

Closure of Tullyvar Landfill Site		service by reducing vehicle mileage and by bulking waste close to its source		week construction phase and estimated completion date July 2018
7. To award new contracts for the processing of residual wastes, bio-waste and mixed dry recyclates	March 2018	Demonstrates the Councils commitment to more sustainable waste treatment by utilising third party processes and contracts to increase recycling rates.		Contracts awarded, one legal challenge has a set aside, which as of July 2018 will see final company awarded.
8. To deliver the annual Recycling Awareness Communication Plans to local schools and communities	March 2108	More awareness of schools and communities to the environmental and economic benefits of landfill diversion and recycling		Delivered annual; recycling communication plan

## How will we know?

Measure	Current Performance (date)	Comparative Performance (date)	Target for 17/18	Target for 18/19
<b>How Much Did We do? (number)</b>				
Tonnes of Household Waste Landfilled	2016/2017: 26,514.04 t	2015/2016: 26,745.19 t	25,684.42 tonnes (based on 2016/2017 total)	22,015.22 tonnes (based on 2016/2017 total)
<b>How Well did we do It? (%)</b>				
% of Household Waste Landfilled	2016/2017: 36.13%	2015/2016: 38.01%	35%	30%



## Improvement residents, businesses or visitors have seen throughout the year

A high media profile in relation to recycling, composting and food waste segregation and collection has taken place, raising awareness amongst citizens and communities within the District. A reduction in the wider environmental impacts of landfill particularly in the proximity of Magheraglass landfill site (now closed) and Tullyvar landfill site closure is progressing well.

### Improvement Objective 3: - 19 Activities/Measures

#### 5.3 To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online

*“Where possible online services should be available to those who want them, but face-to-face and telephone services should also be available, as not everyone has a computer or knows how to use one.”*

(Resident; Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey, May 2017)

**Link to Community Plan Theme:** *Health and Wellbeing*

*We have better availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time.*

**Link to Corporate Plan Theme:** *Delivering for Our People*

*Increase Access to services and customer experiences across the district.*

**Performance Improvement Aspects that this improvement objective aims to deliver against**  
*Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness, Efficiency, Innovation*

**Lead Officer:** Director, Finance

#### Why have we chosen this Improvement Objective?

Our customers, communities and businesses want to experience the Council, which provides a single seamless journey from initial enquiry right through to the required support. The council wants to increase the range of on-line transactions, simplify our processes and engage with our customers, whilst providing appropriate support for those who interact with our services in non-digital ways such as face-to-face, written correspondence or by telephone. We will not leave anyone behind, however, over time, the success of better-designed digital services will allow Council to reduce the scale and profile of less convenient, less effective and less efficient contact methods

#### Overview of what we achieved during 2017/18 – 14 Activities/Measures

- Developed a report, which researched next/good practice in relation to online services, which identified further areas for Council's online presence and looked at current Council on-line capabilities.
- Introduced Committee and Council papers online through Mid Ulster's web-site
- Increased the awareness for the community of the availability to apply for dog licences and Building Control Regularisation applications on line.
- The development and implementation of customer on-line facility to pay invoices in Council is well under way with Online business gateway created and online gateway integration forms passed to design supplier to complete.
- An online facility to pre-pay and account manage commercial waste disposal at identified Recycling Centres - Cookstown, Drumcoo and Magherafelt is in place.
- An online facility to submit service requests for Building Control Inspections now available on-line.
- An e-order module is now in place within Council which allows us to transact Electronic Orders which are issued directly to suppliers in an accurate manner that enhances efficiencies of invoice payment process
- There was a smooth transition of Greenvale into Council with Exerp system purchased.

### Progress Status Against Performance – 19 Activities/Measures – What we did?

What are we going to do?	Timescale	Outcome - What difference will it make?	Progress	Comments
1. Complete scoping exercise to develop project plan on online provision	May 2018	Route map designed to achieve objective		Completed
2. Undertake an Analysis/examination of good/next practice of online services	Aug 2017	Define and design online services and systems around customers rather than ourselves		Report on next/good "on-line" practice completed
3. Undertake an Analysis/examination of good/next practice of online services and then complete a review and an assessment of Council's online service provision	Oct 2017	To understand service demand and customer transaction process in detail		review and assessment Council's online provision completed

4. Develop a prioritised programme of work through SMART Action Plan	Oct 2017	Plan to automate and make digital services online, where practicable		Draft prioritized programme prepared subject to resources
5. Implement an online facility to pay invoices	June 2018	Mid Ulster Website operating a payment interface for the customer		Implementation of customer on-line facility to pay invoices in Council well under way with Online business gateway created and online gateway integration forms passed to design supplier to complete
6. Implement an online facility to pre-pay and account manage commercial waste disposal at identified Recycling Centres - Cookstown, Drumcoo and Magherafelt	May 2018	Prepaid operational online customer portal for civic amenity site commercial waste disposal		Commercial waste disposal on -line facilities installed at 3 main recycling sites
7. Increase utilisation of existing online services in Dog Licencing	Mar 2018	Improved processing times and administration efficiencies		Achieved a 34% increase in dog licence applications issued online
8. Increase utilisation of existing online services for Building Control Regularisation applications	Mar 2018			The overall percentage of Building Notice and Regularisation applications received was 12.5%
9. Implement an online facility to submit service requests for Environmental Health Complaints and new premises registrations	May 2018	Reduced administration for back office systems and processes		Environmental Health Complaint's & registrations Pilot available for Council starting in April but this is dependent on support costs for the portal.

10. Implement an online facility to submit service requests for Building Control	Mar 2018			The online service for Building Control inspection requests now available online
11. Consistent presentation of online services	Jun 2018	Consistently presented online services which are easily found, user friendly and responsive to mobile devices		Consistency of online services have been addressed
12. Transact with suppliers electronically	August 2017 October 2017	Electronic Orders issued directly to suppliers in an accurate manner that enhances efficiencies of invoice payment process		E orders module now in place and rolled out. All departments have been trained to use e purchasing
13. Leisure services accessible online and Greenvale Leisure Centre functionality maintained from September 2017  Consistent advertising and booking opportunity for bookable activities across all facilities	Sep 2017  Sept 2018	Continuation of Greenvale Leisure Centre facility offering		Smooth transition of Greenvale Leisure Centre into Council management with Exerp system purchased.
14. Leisure services accessible online' Greenvale Leisure Centre, Meadowbank Sports Arena and Dungannon Leisure Centre	Sept 17	Consistent online leisure facility offering across all 3 leisure centres		Plan to make Greenvale Leisure Centre, Meadowbank Sports Arena and Dungannon Leisure Centre accessible has a live date of April 2018, Phase 2 will involve training for staff
15. Provision of mobile responsive tourism industry and customer related	Dec 2017  Dec 2017	The addition of an engaging tourism portal for tourism industry, visitors and		Industry Hub and Portal now live

<p>digital platforms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of digital Tourism Industry HUB project</li> <li>• Provision of Tourism Local Information Portal</li> <li>• Provision of Tourism Visitor Information Portal</li> </ul> <p>Provision of Digital Carleton &amp; Heaney trails</p>	<p>Dec 2017</p> <p>Dec 2017 (Carleton) Dec 2018 (Heaney)</p>	<p>citizens across mid ulster</p>		
<p>16. Provide work placement opportunities online</p>	<p>Mar 18</p>	<p>Consistent and online advertisement of work placement opportunities</p>		<p>Registered for Careers portal</p>
<p>17. Extend E-Tenders NI applications to all tenders</p>	<p>Sep 17</p>	<p>Consistent and online advertisement of tender opportunities</p>		<p>Now extended to all tenders</p>
<p>18. Conduct a review of SMART action plan for improving accessibility of online services</p>	<p>Mar 18</p>	<p>Fit for purpose prioritised plan</p>		<p>Review completed year 2 developed</p>
<p>19. *** Extension of Binovation App for citizens reporting dog fouling, graffiti and litter to Environmental Health</p>	<p>Nov 17</p>	<p>Extension of digital (24/7) ways to report to Council</p>		<p>In place</p>

\*\*\* New improvement activity added in Q3

### Improvement residents, businesses or visitors have seen throughout the year

Providing the platforms to support online applications is a, "must" for us as an organisation, as our customers increasingly expect "always on services". Residents, visitors and businesses will have access to a greater range of consistent and user-friendly online services, which will increase accessibility and availability 24/7, these now, include access to tenders on line for

businesses, a tourism portal with up-to-date information, on-line committee and council papers available through Council's website. Customers can utilise a self-service approach to pay, report, book and request services such as requests for Building Control inspections, enhanced on line dog licensing presence and awareness of accessing Building Notice and Regularisation applications on line, transact with our suppliers on line, citizens can pre-pay and account manage commercial waste disposal at identified Recycling Centres - Cookstown, Drumcoo and Magherafelt. The improvement objective and successfully completed actions has let members of the public interact with more of our services using the Internet at their convenience, even when we are closed.

## **Improvement Objective 4 – 8 Activities/Measures**

### **5.4 To support people to adopt healthier lifestyles by increasing usage of Council Recreational facilities**

*“Yes people should be encouraged to use Council Recreational facilities; however people should also be encouraged to live healthier lifestyles at home in terms of exercise and eating habits. Programmes could be developed to encourage this for example with school children and community groups”*

(Resident; Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey, May 2017)

**Link to Community Plan Theme:** *Health & Wellbeing*

*We are better enabled to live longer healthier more active lives.*

**Link to Corporate Plan Theme:** *Delivering for Our People*

*High quality responsive indoor and outdoor recreational services with increased customer numbers and satisfaction.*

**Performance Improvement Aspects this improvement objective aims to deliver against?**

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

**Lead Officer:** *Director, Leisure & Outdoor Recreation*

### **Why have we chosen this Improvement Objective?**

The important role that sport and physical activity plays and the availability of accessible, high quality sport and leisure programmes is recognised as enhancing the quality of life, health and well-being of our district's citizens. It is key to helping the council build strong and safe communities with active and healthy people. Participation is a major contributor to personal health and wellbeing with the potential to develop personal lifelong physical and social skills.

Locally, core wellbeing levels are below Northern Ireland averages and while 80% of the population rate their health as good (Northern Ireland wide those rating their health as good

stands at 79.5%), approximately 20% of the population have life limiting illnesses. In absolute terms, long-term health issues continue to exert pressure on communities, affect overall health outcomes and create challenges for the public services. Within our district, obesity rates in children and adults are increasing coupled with it being an area with the highest proportion of deaths due to circulatory diseases, pointing us towards a need to increase participation in local health and well-being programmes. Council wants to help people to adopt and continue to develop healthy lifestyles and is a pillar within the district's Community Plan We have chosen this objective based on what our local communities have told us, whilst taking into account our identified health inequalities within the district, accessibility opportunities and participation rates.

### **What have we done this year?**

- A baseline of current health and well-being programmes has been completed by Council. Greater numbers have attended Council's Nine Sports Development Programmes during 2017/18, with 30,032 participants, as opposed to 17,200 during 2016 to 2017.
- Mid Ulster Council has continued to work with our Community Planning Partners, the Public Health Agency (PHA) and two health trusts (Northern and Southern Health and Social Care Trusts) to continue to roll out the 'Make a Change' programmes, which work with local unemployed people to help improve their physical activity, nutrition, mental health and wellbeing. The programme in 2017 to 2018 saw an increase in participant numbers over the previous year and new programmes are in place for 2018 to 2019.
- Audits of Leisure and Parks facility usage have been compiled (by facility and per programme), with trend data now available. Overall usage rates in Council's five Leisure Centres (Cookstown, Dungannon, Mid Ulster Sports Arena, Maghera, and Meadowbank) during 2017 to 2018 saw an increase in overall rates of 6%.
- Greenvale Leisure Centre reverted to the Council on 10 September 2017, in what has been described as a 'smooth transition', with close to 90 staff transferring across to the Council after the handover. The in year figures for overall usage for Greenvale Leisure Centre were 162,901 during 2017 to 2018.
- Council conducted Mystery Shopping visits in nine Leisure and Parks facilities during 2017 to 2018. The mystery shopping visits gauge customer satisfaction and experience by looking at Council staffs' product knowledge, the availability of goods and services, compliance to standards/procedures, staffs' behaviour and passion for the job! The average ratings across all sites has increased by 7% from last year's ratings scores, with a median score of 83% in 2017 to 2018. Customer Surveys have also been developed for Council leisure and parks facilities
- Much of the modern emphasis in sport and leisure businesses is on the customer. Satisfying customers is at the centre of notions of service quality. Council has reviewed its Leisure and Parks marketing approaches as a process of identifying customer needs, wants and wishes, and how these could be satisfied. Council's Sport and Leisure services and facilities depend on satisfied customers. Marketing involves creating appropriate goods and services and matching them to market requirements. Therefore, far from being just about selling, marketing is from the beginning an integral part of Council's revised approach to business process. We reviewed and developed our marketing plans to assess the needs and wants of potential customers; analysed the internal organisational and external market environments; segments within the market; re-positioned many of our Leisure and Parks product in the market through bespoke

Marketing Action plans for our centres, in order to secure an appropriate relationship with our customers.

- Key Capital development project proposals have been moved forward during the year, with components of Gortgonis Centre under development, remedial works being undertaken to Dungannon Leisure Centre and a business case prepared for the re-development of Railway Park in Dungannon. Play parks throughout the District are being re-furnished as part of the Rural Development Programme.

### Progress Status Against Performance – 8 Activities/Measures – What we did?

What are we going to do?	Timescale	Outcome - What difference will it make?	Progress	Comments
1. Audit of planned Health & Wellbeing Programmes	Dec 2017	Increased participation and healthier lifestyles by greater numbers attending Health and Wellbeing programmes		Baseline of current Health & Well being programmes has been developed and a “Futures Plan” developed- now have monthly participant numbers from baseline of 17,200 to 33,202 at march 2018
2. Audit of facility usage:  Audit footfall visitor numbers at facilities/events/ programmes & analysis of patterns of facility usage  Identify opportunities to coordinate programming events/ attractions  Appoint sales officer  Audit of participation among traditional	March 2018	Increased participation and healthier lifestyles by greater numbers attending recreational facilities		Usage trends for year to date provides an overall increase of 2.4%. User comparative to baseline data (not including Greenvale) has been achieved at 1.63 million. Greenvale Leisure Centre transferred to Council management . Mystery visits compiled to march at facilities provides



underrepresented groups: Women and girls, People with a disability and those living in areas of greatest social need				an average of 83% an increase of 7%. New programmes are under development such as “Shred It” and “Family fun days”. There was a delay in appointing a sales advisor. A customer survey has been developed for users has been undertaken at facilities
3. Review marketing Strategy	Jan 18	Increased participation and healthier lifestyles by greater numbers attending Health and Wellbeing programmes		Marketing review has been completed for leisure and a marketing action plan being developed. Parks marketing plan has been delayed
4. Development of proposals for Key Capital Projects including (I) Gortgonis (II) Dungannon Leisure Centre (III) Railway Park  Establish programme of work for Key Capital Schemes including (I) Play Parks (II) Parks	March 2018  March 2019	Improved quality recreational facilities in MUDC		Programme of work established, Parks and Play strategy at draft stage – programme of actions will develop from this. Consultancy team has been appointed for Gortgonis and Dungannon Leisure Centre improvements and Consultancy team completing Dungannon Leisure Centre option study. Options for

				Railway Park under consideration by Management and Council
5. Improve accessibility of online services - Working with Corporate Improvement Objective 3 Group  Review completed baseline of existing services provided online	March 2019  March 2018	Improved customer satisfaction by delivering efficient 24/7 online services		XN Leisure IT system has been installed, review of baseline of online services completed, on-line booking services to follow
6. Review, revise and report end of year project plan (year one) and revise year 2 implementation	April 2018	Implementation of developed project plan on target		Year 1 review report completed year 2 project plan in place
7. Establish Greenvale Leisure Centre under Council operation  Organisation structure and process in place  Roll out customer survey	Sept 2017  Sept 2018  March 2018	Implementation of developed project plan on target. Harmonisation of service standards.		Greenvale Leisure Centre under Council management from September 2017.
8. Strategy to provide direction to Parks, Play and Outdoor Recreation facilities and Programmes Strategy developed	Sept 2017  March 2018	Improved quality recreational facilities in MUDC and accessible for all sections of society.		Strategies are in draft format and action plans are pending strategy approval.

### **Improvement residents, businesses or visitors have seen throughout the year**

An increase in Council leisure facilities provision with Greenvale under Council management, and improved planning for enhanced capital projects. Increased customer awareness of health, fitness and wellbeing programmes designed around our communities, targeted specific health inequalities and growing knowledge of how to increase physical activity and improve wellbeing.

## **6.0 COUNCIL'S SELF – ASSESSMENT OF STATUTORY INDICATORS/ STANDARDS 2017 to 2018**

### **6.1 Statutory Indicators/Standards (Set For Us)**

In addition to the objectives and aligned improvement actions, the Council is using to measure its performance the Department for Communities (Previously the department of the Environment) has set performance measures (indicators and standards) for Council on which it annually reports. The progress/status update and self-assessment of how Mid Ulster performed against the statutory indicators in 2017/18 appears in this section, as well as over time from 2015/16 and 2016/17. Commentary on how the other 10 Councils performed in relation to their statutory targets is also included.

### **6.2 The Numbers of Jobs Promoted through Business Start Up Activity in 2017/18**

The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 sets out an economic development indicator and standard. The indicator (ED1) is the number of jobs promoted through business startup activity and each Council area has been designated standards (or targets) to be achieved each financial year, each Council has its own target (number of jobs promoted through start up activity ) to achieve.

The current business start-up programme ('Go For It'), is part funded by Invest NI, the EU Investment for Growth and Jobs Fund, Invest NI and local councils and delivered by Local Enterprise Partners in Northern Ireland.

Go For It provides individuals who wish to start a business with free advice, guidance and capability to produce their own business plan. A business plan is a written document that describes your business. It covers objectives, strategies, sales, marketing and financial forecasts. A business plan helps to; clarify a business idea, spot potential problems, set out goals, measure progress and access finance to start and grow the business.

Until October 2017, this Programme was managed by Invest Northern Ireland and delivered by Local Enterprise Agencies; from 1 November 2016 to 1 September 2017, with Councils had their own interim programmes; from 1 Sept 2017.

The current NI Business Start Up Programme is managed by a lead Council (Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council) on behalf of the 11 Councils, and delivered by Enterprise NI (ENI) via Service Level Agreements (SLA's) with the Local Enterprise Agencies. The delivery, marketing and enquiry handling Contracts of the NIBSUP are 80% EU funded through the EU Growth and Jobs Fund and Invest NI and 20% through Councils. Councils also contribute towards the costs of programme management (lead: Lisburn) and MIS (lead Belfast) as these were deemed not eligible for EU funding.

The delivery agent (ENI) reports monthly to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (L&CCC) via the Management Information System (MIS) and uploads Plans to the system. L&CCC collate figures of approved Plans monthly and supply to Councils and the Department for the Economy. Plans are vouched at 20% by L&CCC; Councils review 4- 6 Plans monthly.

#### **6.2.1 Northern Ireland Business Start Up (NIBSUP) - Activity**

Department of Economy (DfE) / Invest Northern Ireland permitted Councils to use what was known as a “RSI conversion rate” (Plans - Jobs) of 0.75762 until 31/08/17. A lower conversion rate (of 0.6147) was then applied for the new NIBSUP (post 1/09/17). The reduced conversion rate effectively means that a higher number of Plans are required to achieve the same outputs (jobs promoted).

The year ending March 2017 saw 339 Plans delivered in Mid Ulster, promoting 256 jobs and exceeding the statutory target (122%); the year to March 2018 (i.e. with the lower conversion rate being applied post September 2017) saw 326 Plans delivered promoting 223 jobs (refer to figure 5,2,1). This still exceeded the statutory target (106%) but figures are lower due to the lower conversion rate and also the current relatively low level of unemployment in the region.

Nine other Councils during 2017/18 achieved the standard set by the The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015. Two Councils reported that the business plan approvals by Council area had not achieved the standard/target, namely Derry and Strabane (figures stated that out of a target of 140 jobs, 139 were actually promoted - 99%) and Belfast reported a figure of 249 out of a target of 325 (or 77%).

**Figure 6.2.1. – ED1 Self-Assessment of the Number of jobs promoted through business start up activity  
Mid Ulster District Council**

Statutory Indicator	Standard/Target	Actual Standard Achieved 2015/16	Actual Standard Achieved 2016/17	Actual Standard Achieved 2017/18
<b>ED1:</b> The number of jobs Promoted through business start-up activity**.	210	250	256	223

**\*\**(Business start-up activity means the delivery of completed client led business plans under the Department for the Economy Regional start initiative or its successor programmes).***

### 6.3 Planning – Statutory Indicators

From the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2016, Ministerial responsibility for planning transferred from the former Department of Environment to the new Department for Infrastructure following departmental re-organisation. The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the Act), sets out the legislative framework for development management in Northern Ireland and provides that from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, Councils now largely have responsibility for this planning function. Planning applications for development are categorised as being either major, or local determined by the Councils e.g.:

- Major development or (majority are multiple housing, commercial and government and civic type developments. They also have important economic, social and environmental implications).
- Local development (mostly residential and minor commercial applications received and determined).

The Department, three of which relate to planning, has set statutory targets (as outlined in the Local Government {Performance Indicators and Standards} Order {Northern Ireland} 2015). It is a statutory target for each Council that:

- P1 --Their major development planning applications will be processed from the date valid to decision issued or withdrawal date within an average of 30 weeks.
- P2 - Their local development planning applications will be processed from the date valid to decision issued or withdrawal date within an average of 15 weeks.
- P3 - That 70% of all enforcement cases dealt with by Councils are progressed to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaints.

Council undertakes to carry out benchmarking with the other 10 Councils in Northern Ireland in relation to the statutory planning indicators and this is available in the section below. Council also conducts internal time series benchmarking with all the statutory indicators. These are available in the tables presented in the following sections. The number of planning applications received annually has generally been on the decline from its peak in 2004/5 up until 2013/14; with the numbers of applications since have been fairly stable with small changes year on year. During 2017/18, 12,933 planning applications were received, a decrease of 0.8% on the previous financial year. Three quarters of the planning applications received in 2017/18 were for full planning permission (75.9%), and 12,314 planning decisions were issued (refer to <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/infrastructure/planning-statistics-2017-18-bulletin.pdf> for further information).

In 2017/18, Mid Ulster District Council received the third highest amount of planning applications -after Belfast City (1,570) and Newry, Mourne and Down respectively (1,415), between them accounting for nearly half (47.4%) of all applications received across Northern Ireland. Mid Ulster Council issued the third highest amount of decisions (1,200) compared to Antrim and Newtownabbey which issued (720) decisions. Mid Ulster Council also achieved an approval rate of for all planning applications of (97.8%), the highest of all 11 Councils were the average is,(93.8%) to the lowest Newry, Mourne and Down of (88.2%).

### **6.3.1 Major Planning Applications**

The number of major planning applications received in 2017/18 was 161. Mid Ulster in conjunction with Causeway Coast and Glens received (joint) second highest amount of applications (18) after Belfast (2). The average processing time for major applications to a decision or withdrawal was 50.2 weeks, down from 68.6 weeks reported in 2016/17.

During 2017/18 Mid Ulster Council reduced the average processing time from the previous year by 29.2% to 44.4% for the year (refer to figure 5.3.1). Mid-East Antrim met the processing time target (Mid East Antrim 29.0: 10), while Mid Ulster achieved (44.4%: 18 applications), Newry, Mourne & Down's annual processing time for major applications was (127.6%: with 15 applications). Mid Ulster was well below the average annual processing of 50.2 weeks for all councils

**Figure 6.3.1 – P1 Self-Assessment of The average processing time pf major planning applications Mid Ulster District Council**

Statutory Indicator	Standard/Target	Actual Standard Achieved 2015/16	Actual Standard Achieved 2016/17	Actual Standard Achieved 2017/18
<b>P1:-</b> The average processing time of major planning applications**	Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 30 weeks	52.3 weeks	73.6 weeks	44.4 weeks

**\*\* An application in the category of major development within the meaning of Planning (Development Management regulations (NI) 2015(a)**

#### **6.4 Local Planning Applications**

The number of Local planning applications received in Northern Ireland during 2017/18 was 12,770 representing a decrease of 1.0% in 2016.17. Across Councils, Belfast City (1,788), Newry, Mourne & Down (1,562) and Mid Ulster (1,397) received the highest number of local applications during 2017/18. These Councils also received the highest number of applications the previous year.

The number of local planning applications decided in 2017/18 was 12,317 a decrease of 4.9% compared to a year earlier. Mid Ulster received the third highest number of local applications (1,189), after Belfast City (1,779) and Newry, Mourne and Down (1,597) during 2017/18. Mid Ulster Council was below the regional average for all councils of 15.2 weeks average processing time for local planning applications during 2017/18.

During 2017/18, Belfast City (1,779), Newry Mourne and Down (1,779) and Mid Ulster (1,189) issued the most local decisions across Councils. This in part reflected the high volumes received in these Councils. During 2017/18, the average processing time to bring local applications to decisions or withdrawal was 15.2 weeks, across all the councils, an improvement of 1.0 week on the average time taken in 2016/17.

Mid Ulster (14.4 weeks). along with four other Councils; Mid-East Antrim (9.6), Antrim and Newtownabbey (12.1) Fermanagh and Omagh (2.4) , and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon (14.0); were within the 15 week statutory target, with the shortest processing time taken by Mid-East Antrim (9.6 weeks) , with Lisburn and Castlereagh having the longest processing times (21.6 weeks) and Causeway Coast and Glens (20.4 weeks). Performance has been the same for Mid Ulster Council for the past two years (refer to figure 5.4.1)

**Figure 6.4.1 – P2 Self-Assessment of The average processing time for local planning applications Mid Ulster District Council.**

Statutory Indicator	Standard/Target	Actual Standard Achieved 2015/16	Actual Standard Achieved 2016/17	Actual Standard Achieved 2017/18
<b>P2:</b> The average processing time for local planning applications**	Local applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 15 weeks	15.2	14.4	14.4

**\*\* Local applications means an application in the category of local development within the meaning of the Planning (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).**

### 6.5 The percentage of planning enforcement case processed within 39 weeks.

The number of enforcement cases opened in 2017/18 was 3,304, a decrease of over 3% on the same period last year. Across the councils Belfast City (427), Ards and North Down (410) and Antrim and Newtownabbey (408) opened the largest number of cases during the year.

Across Northern Ireland, nearly four in every five (77%) enforcement cases were concluded within 39 weeks, 7 percentage points above the statutory 70% target but a decline of almost 4 percentage points on 2016/17 performance. Ten of the eleven councils met the target with a high of 94% concluded within 39 weeks in Antrim and Newtownabbey. Newry, Mourne and Down concluded 60% of cases within the target time.

Overall the annual Mid Ulster District Council figure is 82.1% which is well in exceedance of the statutory target (refer to figure 5.5.1). This is up on the annual figure from 2016/17, which was 79.1%. It is evident that there is an increase in performance overall which is a positive position given that there has been a reduction in enforcement resources since that period.

By the end of Quarter 4 in 2017/18 Mid Ulster has also exceeded the statutory target of 70%. It was down on the previous quarters and this can in part, can be explained, by the closure of a number of older cases.

**Figure 6.5.1 P3 – Self Assessment of The percentage of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks Mid Ulster District Council**

Statutory Indicator	Standard/Target	Actual Standard Achieved 2015/16	Actual Standard Achieved 2016/17	Actual Standard Achieved 2017/18
<b>P3 - :</b> The percentage of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks **	70% of all enforcement cases progressed to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint	79%	79.1%	82.1%

**\*\* Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control under Part 5 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 (or under and orders or regulations made under the Act.)**

## **6.6 Waste Management – Statutory Indicators**

Waste can be defined as materials or products that are unwanted or have been discarded, rejected or abandoned. Waste includes materials or products that are recycled, converted to energy, or disposed. Materials and products that are reused (for their original purpose and without reprocessing) are not waste because they remain in use. Waste typically arises from three streams: Domestic and municipal—includes all household waste and waste collected in public places; commercial and industrial waste from all business and industrial activities and public institutions; and construction and demolition—includes all waste from the building and construction industry.

The key framework underpinning waste management policy and practice in the UK and Europe is the waste management hierarchy, which ranks the ways of dealing with waste in order of preferences. The waste management hierarchy ranks strategies in order of preference from avoiding the creation of waste as the most desired outcome, and disposal as the least desired outcome.

In February 2018, the UK government published ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’, which sets out a vision for achieving specific goals across waste and recycling. The plan sets the ambitious targets of zero avoidable waste by 2050 and the elimination of avoidable plastic waste by 2042. The adoption of the European Union’s circular economy package, which was enshrined into UK law in July 2018 reinforces the need to redouble efforts to achieve recycling targets. As a result of adopting this package, the UK is now obliged to reach a 55% municipal recycling rate by 2025.

Given this, and the ever-increasing drive for a more environmentally sustainable economy, it is more important than ever that local authorities, businesses, civil society and other stakeholders work together to improve the waste management by preventing, reusing and recycling waste. Failure to comply with emerging environmental standards risks the UK losing out on future trading opportunities; reducing its competitiveness and economic growth and risking further damage to our natural environment.

The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, sets out three statutory indicators relating to waste, which local Councils use to demonstrate their waste functions performance, namely:

- **W1** - The percentage of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for re-use)
- **W2** - The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled
- **W3** - The Amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings.

During 2017 to 2018 Mid Ulster District Council achieved the highest household waste recycling rate (W1) of all eleven Councils. Exceeded 50% 2020 statutory target by 4.4%. For 2017/18 a 54.40% (or 40,096 tonnes) rate achieved 2.78% higher than 2016/17.

The Council utilised only 52.67% (or 10,077 tonnes) of the NILAS allocation in 2017/18 (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled (W2), compared to 73.38% in 2016/17, (despite the decreasing annual tonnage allocation). There was 4,769 tonnes less of Biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste landfilled in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17 in Mid Ulster District Council area. Comparative data is not available with other Local Councils as the target is specific to Mid Ulster District (i.e. each Council is given a specific target by NIEA)



In 2017/18 there was a 3.4% decrease in Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings (W3) compared to 6.6% increase between 2015/16 and 2016/17. The Council had 2,840 tonnes less Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17.

**Figure 6.6.1 W1 – Self Assessment of The percentage of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling Including waste prepared for re-use) Mid Ulster District Council**

Statutory Indicator	Standard/Target	Actual Standard Achieved 2015/16	Actual Standard Achieved 2016/17	Actual Standard Achieved 2017/18
<b>W1</b> - :The percentage of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse)*	NI Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) 50% by 2020	49.7% (or tonnes)	51.6% (or 38,240 tonnes)	54.4% (or 40,096 tonnes)
<b>W2</b> - : The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	NI Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) 2017/18 19,131 tonnes	72.8% (or 15,530 tonnes)	73.38% (or 14,846 tonnes)	52.67% (or 10,077 tonnes)
<b>W3</b> - :The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	No target set	77,562 tonnes	83,132 tonnes	79,993 tonnes

\* *Household waste is 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)*

\*\* *Local Authority collected Municipal Waste is as defined in section 21 of the Waste Emissions Trading Act 2003(c).*

\*\*\**Local Authority collected municipal waste arisings is the total amount of local authority collected municipal waste which has been collected by a district council.*

## **7.0 COUNCIL’S SELF – ASSESSMENT OF SELF IMPOSED INDICATORS/ STANDARDS 2017 to 2018**

### **7.1 Performance Indicators/Standards that are Self-imposed (Set by Us)**

As already outlined previously, Council is required statutorily to compare its performance for the 2017/18 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. Without an agreed overarching Northern Ireland Local Government Performance Management Framework, this has not been possible in 2017/18.

During 2016/17, Council in the absence of an agreed region wide performance management framework, decided to concentrate on ensuring the data quality of three of its proposed “set by us” or “self-imposed” performance indicators; namely:

1. Prompt Payments
2. Freedom of Information Requests (FOI) Responded to within 20 days
3. Percentage lost time rate (sickness absence)

Performance measures including Freedom of Information Requests, Prompt Payments and Absence Information is used every day across the Council to help inform management decisions, plan services, benchmark performance and cost, and inform target setting. The three “set by us” indicators are also used in 2017 to 2018 to demonstrate internal time series benchmarking.

## **7.2 Mid Ulster District Council’s Prompt Payments**

The Council has set an indicator and associated standard as “set by us” within the Corporate Improvement Plan, in order to look at the effectiveness of Council’s payment framework.

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 “set by us” indicator sits within the Community Plan theme of (1.1) Economic Growth – “We prosper in a stronger and more competitive economy”. We as a Council and within partnerships will encourage continued support for micro and small medium sized enterprises across all sectors. Currently Council’s performance in relation to Prompt Payments for 2015/16, 2016/17 and in year 2017/18 can be viewed on our website: <http://www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Performance/Prompt-Payments>

The Department of the Environment also issues guidance on prompt payments and the recording of invoice payments (through Circular LG 19/2016 GUIDANCE ON PROMPT PAYMENTS). All public authorities are required to pay suppliers within 30 calendar days of receipt on an undisputed invoice and the circular also states that. ..” Whenever possible, Central Government bodies should endeavour to make payments to suppliers within 10 days”. The “Late Payment of Commercial Debts (interest) at 1988” binds public sector organisations, (as amended by the Late Payment of Commercial Debt Regulations 2001 (SI 1674) and Late Payment of Commercial Debt Regulation’s (SI 395). By managing public money, requires Council to pay invoices accurately and on time to avoid late payment penalties<sup>2</sup>, citizens are made aware of this through information supplied on Council’s website.

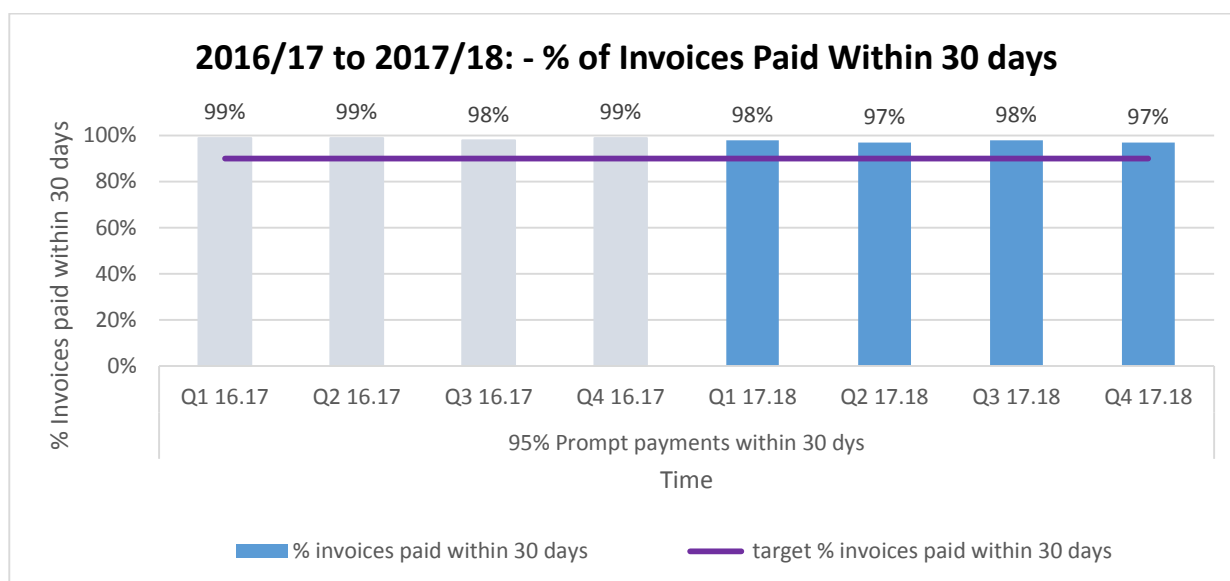
<sup>2</sup>The statutory payment of interest and other compensation recovery costs and entitlements are not compulsory, it is for the supplier to decide whether or not to use the rights made available to it.

### **7.2.1 Mid Ulster District Council’s Prompt Payments from 2016/17 to 2017/18 (% of invoices paid within 30 days).**

Council introduced a new e-ordering system in to Council during 2017/18 and performance in 2017/18 averaged at 98% over the year. There were a total of 21,306 invoices received and a total of 19, 275 invoices paid within the 30 day target (or 98%) during 2017/18. This was well over Council’s own target of achieving 90% payment within 30 days, however this dipped to 94% in the last quarter of 2017/18 due to the implementation of e ordering and difficulties with doing deliveries on the system.

There was a slight decrease from 99% (cumulative figure) achieved in 2016 to 2017 compared to 98% in 2017 to 2018 (refer to figures 7.2.1 and 7.2.2), there was a slight increase in the number of invoices received during 2017 to 2018 (21,306) from the previous year of (19,202).

**Figure 7.2.1: Mid Ulster District Council’s Prompt Payment (Invoices Paid within 30 days) Performance 2016/17 to 2017/18.**



**Figure 7.2.2 Self –Assessment of Prompt Payment (Invoices Paid within 30 days)**

Self -Imposed Indicator	Standard/Target	Actual Standard Achieved 2016/17	Actual Standard Achieved 2017/18
% of invoices paid within 30 days	95%	99%	98%

**7.3 Mid Ulster District Council’s Freedom of Information Requests.**

The Council has set an indicator and associated standard as “set by us” within the Corporate Improvement Plan to measure business efficiencies in processing information requests, made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 <sup>1</sup>. The Council must respond to requestors making such requests within 20 working days of receiving them, (a target of 90% of information requests being responded to with 20 days has been set by Council). The indicator whilst only measuring a single routine business activity, it will nonetheless give an indication of its responsiveness to customers and effectiveness of its corporate processes. The MUDC Publication Scheme lists the range of information we proactively make available without the need for specific FOI requests. It also gives details of how the information can be obtained and any charges. An outcome for citizens in relation to FOI indicator and standard makes it easier for members of the public to get information about the Council (is an accepted part of the democratic landscape).<sup>1</sup> Full text of the [FOI Act: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents)

The measure is needed to ensure that Council meets its statutory obligations and customer requests are met within a specified timeframes. Ensures that the Council is potentially locked into a positive cycle of use, learning and improvement, in which the request process and appeal system improve and the exemptions are clarified through interpretation. An outcome for citizens in relation to FOI indicator and

standard makes it easier (regarding transparency) for members of the public to get information about the Council in a timely manner.

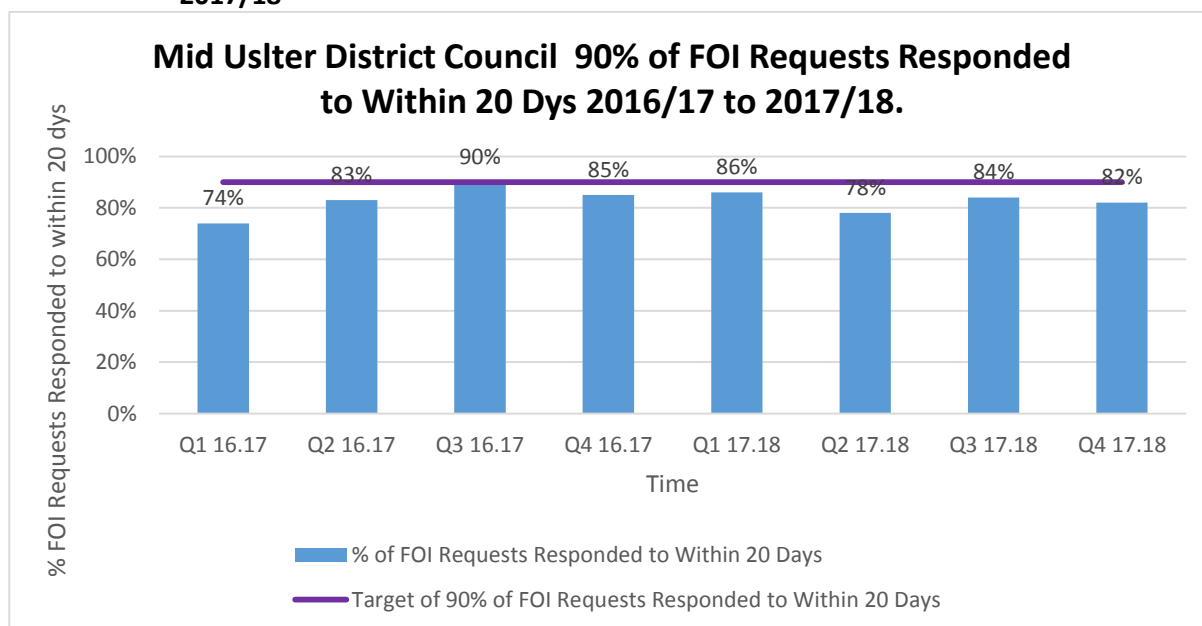
### 7.3.1 Mid Ulster District Council’s Freedom of Information Request from 2016/17 to 2017/18

The Council has set a target of 90% of information requests are responded to within 20 days. Delivery of target during 2017 to 2018, has been aided with introduction of the Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) to manage FOI requests processed in year. This has allowed the attainment to be maintained but not improved on last year.

Although the challenging target was not achieved at year-end, it was maintained on the previous year's attainment (refer to figures 6.3.1 and 6.3.2) . The number of requests remain high for an authority the size of Mid Ulster DC and the attainment of 83%, should be considered in the context of 344 requests being responded to within target. The use of the CRM has identified blockages in some business areas and the services, which need greater attention throughout 2018-19 to improve their Service area response rate.

Achievement of the target when compared with 2016-17 and the number of requests received have relatively remained the same. It is though noted there has been a 54% increase in the number received from 2015-16.

**Figure 7.3.1 Mid Ulster District Council’s FOI Requests Responded to within 20 days 2016/17 to 2017/18**



**Figure 7.3.2 Self-Assessment of the % of FOI requests responded to within 20 days**

Self -Imposed Indicator	Standard/Target	Actual Standard Achieved 2016/17	Actual Standard Achieved 2017/18

### 7.4 Mid Ulster District Council’s Percentage Lost Time rate

% of FOI Requests Responded to Within 20 Days	90%	83%	82.5%
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The Council has set an indicator and associated standard as “set by us” within the Corporate Improvement Plan, in order to look at the effectiveness of the HR function in terms of impact on the overall levels of sickness absence in the organisation through the development of processes and procedures, and training for managers. As an organisation we should aim to reduce the number of days lost through sickness absence over time.

The Chartered Institute Of Personnel Management<sup>1</sup> state that tightened policies for reviewing attendance and improved absence monitoring are, by some degree, identified as the two of the most important reasons behind reductions in absence levels. Policies and procedures if carefully considered and adapted can positively impact on the prevention of illness, management and recovery of employees within the workplace. Policies mean that practices become more formalised and hence controllable. The purpose of absence policies is to ensure compliance with legislation and those employees and managers know their basic rights, and those of the people they manage.

An outcome for citizens in relation to Lost Time Rate indicator and standard is that Sickness absence in the public sector is widely regarded as being a significant cost to councils. This indicator is important because it allows councils to compare these rates and establishes which councils are dealing effectively with this issue.

In 2015/16, we set an internal performance indicator of achieving a target absence (loss time rate) of 5% or less for, this target continued into 2016/17 and 2017/18. The indicator has been tracked since 2015/16 and as a new Council; Organisational Development (OD) had to deal with three distinct data information sets, policies, processes and procedures in relation to collecting, collating, managing and reporting absence/attendance performance data/information. During the 2016/17 year, a lot of concentrated effort was made to bring together the legacy councils absence information in order to set about a fit for purpose, robust bespoke policy and process/framework for the new Council.

<sup>1</sup> Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2007) Measuring, Reporting and Costing Absence. CIPD

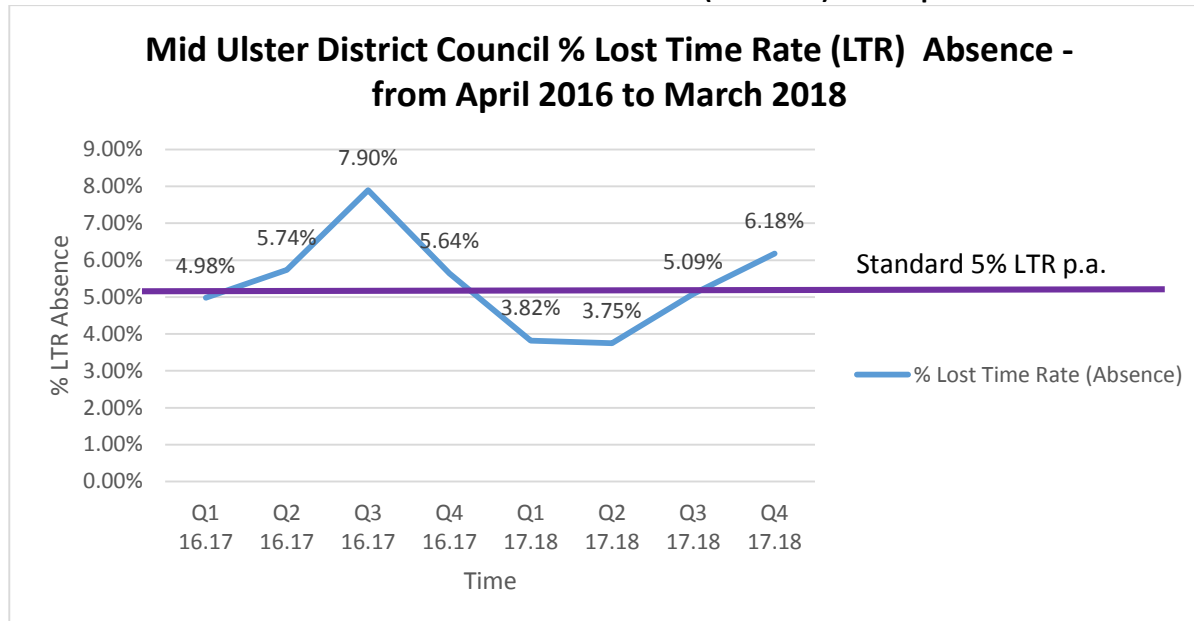
**7.4.1 Mid Ulster District Council’s Lost Time Rate Due to Sickness Absence (5% or less p.a.) from 2016/17 to 2017/18**

The cumulative Percentage Loss Rate for the period 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018 was 4.71%; 0.29% below the target rate of 5% set by Council. For the same period last in 2016/17, the cumulative Percentage Loss Rate was 6.07%. Overall, the Percentage Loss Rate has decreased 1.36% from the previous year.

A total of 8,816 days were lost due to sickness absence during 17/18. During this 12-month period, 106 employees were absent due to long-term sickness absence (long term absence is classified as a continuous period of 20 or more day’s sickness absence). Long-term sickness absence has reduced considerably compared to 124 in 16/17. The reduction of long-term sickness absence was a key focus in 16/17 and levels of long terms sick remained stable in 17/18 as employees were managed effectively through Occupational health (OH) referrals, regular meetings/capability reviews and communication with HR & Line Managers and reasonable adjustments made where appropriate.

During Quarter 4 2017/18 there was a further increase of 0.84% from Quarter 3, this was due to increase in the “flu” related absences, which spiked in January 2018. There were 158 periods of sickness absence; due to infections in 2016/17 this increased significantly in 2017/18 to 236.

#### 7.4.1 Mid Ulster District Council's % Lost Time Rate (Absence ) from April 2016 to March 2018



**Figure 7.4.2 Self-Assessment of the % of Lost Time Rate (Absence)**

Self -Imposed Indicator	Standard/Target	Actual Standard Achieved 2016/17	Actual Standard Achieved 2017/18
% Lost Time Rate Absence	=< 5% p.a.	6.07%	4.71%

## 8.0 OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR 2017 to 2018

### Overall Assessment for 2017-18

Significant progress was made in 2017-18 to not only make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of council's functions as required by the Act but activities and associated programmes of work have also been completed to deliver improvements on how services are accessed and delivered throughout the district.

Arrangements to secure continuous improvement have been made and become embedded within council internal processes. Achievements have been made across council service areas with the delivery of activities stemming from the council's 2017-18 to 2018-19 Improvement Objectives for the benefit of those receiving its services.

All project managed improvement activities/measures (year end there were 49 in total), which have contributed towards the fulfilment of the council's 2017-18 Improvement Objectives, have been achieved to varying levels of progress with the majority (100%) being Fully Achieved/Substantially Achieved. Council has also made significant improvements in its self-imposed indicator set and has been able to reduce the amount of absenteeism to under its target of 5% within the space of 2 years, while our prompt payment performance exceeds the target for a second year in a row. The Freedom of Information indicator has remains steady in its second year against significant rises in the volume of FOI requests to Council.

The Council has also excelled in the delivery of its Statutory Performance Indicators during its third year as a new local authority for the benefit of Mid Ulster District. The Council has promoted 223 jobs going above its target of 210, is one of the top performing councils in the management of its waste against targets set and continues to establish the Planning function within the district for customers, making significant achievements on targets set for it.

## **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.

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

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