



PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2025-2026

CONTENTS	PAGE
Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Duty to Improve & Continuous Improvement	5-6
Progress with Council's Improvement Objectives 2024-25	7-9
Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-2026	10-14
Additional Performance Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Indicators & Standards • Self-Imposed Indicators • Service Standards 	15-16
Management, Reporting and Governance Arrangements	17-19
Always seeking to Improve. How to propose new improvement objectives	20
Appendices	21-31

Foreword from Chief Executive

As a local Council, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has a legal duty to publish improvement objectives each year. We continue to be committed to making things better, delivering better, making services better and using our best efforts to deliver efficiently, economically and to an excellent standard.

We have conducted a comprehensive review of our services, identified key areas for improvement, and engaged in consultation to inform our approach. We have outlined the planned actions, established metrics for evaluating success, and, most importantly, outlined how our customers and citizens will benefit.

As a result, this year we have identified four Performance Improvement Objectives (PIOs) for 2025-26.

PIO 1	We will reduce the total number of days' sickness absence lost per employee
PIO 2	We will reduce Council's environmental impact through the development and implementation of a Climate and Sustainability Action Plan.
PIO 3	We will improve our Waste Management Services through the implementation of technological solutions and continued communication
PIO 4	We will improve Communications with our customers on Council services and responsibilities

We are committed to ensuring that our performance improvement objectives contribute meaningfully to enhancing the quality of life for all stakeholders across the Borough. We wish to assure residents, businesses, and stakeholders of our dedication to continuous improvement. Through the implementation of this Plan, we will strive to reduce staff absence rates, reinforce our long-term commitment to environmental sustainability, enhance waste management services, and further strengthen our communications regarding our services and responsibilities.

Successful delivery of this Plan will depend on our ability to work efficiently and collaboratively, supported by our dedicated staff and trade union colleagues. Progress against the Plan will be reported as part of our annual Performance Self-Assessment Report, scheduled for publication in September 2026.



Roger Wilson, Chief Executive 30 June 2025

Introduction

This Performance Improvement Plan explains what we hope to achieve, how we plan to deliver it and how our citizens/other stakeholders will be better off as a result. It focuses on the key areas identified for improvement through our corporate and business planning processes, data analysis and stakeholder engagement.

In this document we present our Performance Improvement Objectives for 2025 - 2026 in line with our statutory duty under the Local Government Act 2014 to publish an annual Performance Improvement Plan. As per Department for Communities (DfC) Government Guidance, Council's identified improvement objectives are based on a strong evidence base, an understanding of our citizens' needs, and were selected on basis of critical self-analysis.

In developing the Performance Improvement Objectives, due consideration was given to the Department for the Economy (DOE) Guidance (March 2016), the Borough's Community Plan, and the Council's Corporate Plan. The process was informed by a range of relevant sources, including performance data, local and regional strategic priorities, and operational delivery insights, as well as feedback received from the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) during the 2024 Performance Audit. This comprehensive approach, outlined in greater detail later in this document, led to the identification of four proposed Performance Improvement Objectives for 2025–2026. Following approval by Council, these objectives were subject to an eight-week public consultation period, which ran from 06 February to 03 April 2025.

An analysis of the consultation responses provided reassurance that the proposed Improvement Objectives for 2025–2026 are appropriate and well-founded. Comments and feedback received during the consultation have been summarised and shared with the relevant departments and business units for further consideration. Council will publish a response to all comments and feedback received via the consultation hub. Additional details regarding the consultation process and its outcomes are available in Appendix 2.

Duty to Improve & Continuous Improvement

In line with the Statutory Duty to put in place arrangements for continuous improvement, each year Council is required to develop a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The PIP identifies objectives for the year ahead and Council's actions to meet these objectives. The development and publication of this PIP assists Council in meeting its statutory obligations in relation to Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. It is aligned to the Community Plan outcomes and Corporate Plan commitments and priorities and is subject to, and informed by, public consultation.

Paragraph 45 of the current guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement (Local Government Circular 21/2016) states that councils should publish their Improvement plan by the end of June.

The NIAO Audit & Assessment Report 2024-25 relating to the Council's statutory duty for continuous improvement and Certificate of Compliance was received by Council in November 2024. The report summarizes the work of the Local Government Auditor (LGA) on the 2024-25 performance improvement audit and assessment undertaken in September-November 2024. The report considered the wider statutory duty and focused on the Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 and Self-Assessment Report for 2023-24 and sets out LGA findings and conclusions. Contained within the report are detailed observations on thematic areas and notably for 2024-25 the Local Government Auditor made no proposals for improvement.

The Certificate of Compliance outlines that Council had discharged its duties in connection with (1) improvement planning and (2) publication of improvement information in accordance with section 92 of the Act as a result of the assessment, the Council had discharged its duties under Part 12 of the Act and had acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently. It also outlines the Council had demonstrated a track record of ongoing improvement and that NIAO believe that the Council is likely to comply with Part 12 of the Act during 2024-25.

Appendix 3 outlines the Council's Strategic Management Approach, illustrating how performance improvement plans are aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan and other strategic frameworks. This integrated approach ensures that improvement initiatives are not developed in isolation but are firmly embedded within the broader strategic direction of the organisation. The Council's Performance Management Framework (2019) sets out the structures, governance arrangements, and processes that support a culture of continuous

performance improvement across all service areas. This framework provides a clear roadmap for how performance is monitored, managed, and enhanced at all levels of the organisation.

The existing Framework has been reviewed and is currently subject to internal governance approvals. It has been updated to reflect an increased emphasis on the strategic use of data. The revised framework will transition into a Performance and Quality Management Framework, reinforcing the Council's commitment to data-driven decision-making and continuous improvement. A copy of the current Performance Management Framework can be accessed [here](#).

Progress with Council's Improvement Objectives 2024-2025

As part of the process to identify Performance Improvement Objectives for 2025-2026, a review of the Council's 2024-25 objectives was undertaken during Autumn/Winter 2024. Progress against each objective was assessed, as outlined below, to provide a rationale for determining whether they should be carried forward into 2025-26.

Where an improvement objective has not been continued from 2023-2024 into 2024-2025, or where its focus has been revised, the reasons for these changes are also detailed below.

PIOs 2024/25	PIOs 2025/26	Progress /Rationale	Status
PIO1: We will reduce the average number of days' sickness absence lost per employee.	PIO1: We will reduce the average number of days' sickness absence lost per employee.	<p>The Council remains committed to reducing absence levels, as outlined in the Mid-Year Performance Report, which details the efforts undertaken so far. Significant investment in this performance improvement objective has been demonstrated through the appointment of a dedicated Lead Officer, alongside the delivery of training courses and health and wellbeing sessions across the organisation.</p> <p>At the mid-year point, notable progress has been achieved in promoting health and wellbeing initiatives. However, the Council has fallen slightly behind in meeting its sickness absence target, with the current average standing just above the pro rata target of 8 days.</p> <p>Over the past six months, absence trends have shifted, with the primary causes identified as musculoskeletal issues, work related and non work related stress. The Council continues to prioritize strategies to address these challenges and remains focused on supporting employees' health and wellbeing while working to meet absence reduction targets.</p> <p>Recognising that staff are the Council's most valuable resource, we acknowledge that reducing absence levels is a long-term objective. As such, this priority will be carried forward into</p>	<p>Retained</p> <p>This improvement objective has been retained for 2025/26.</p>

		2025/26, ensuring sustained focus and continued investment in supporting employee health and wellbeing.	
PIO 2: We will improve the processing times for planning applications.		<p>At mid-year, official statistics in relation to planning performance against the statutory targets were not available however internal monitoring indicated that the targets for major applications and enforcement cases were met however the target for local applications was missed.</p> <p>The 2024 NI Audit Office performance improvement audit and assessment report stated that Council should avoid using statutory performance indicators as an objective in themselves and should consider more varied areas of focus. This has been noted and consequently this improvement objective will not be carried forward as an improvement objective for 2025/26. The 3 statutory indicators will continue to be monitored and reported on through the Self-Assessment Report.as well as through Planning's internal monitoring and reporting systems and processes.</p>	<p>Removed</p> <p>This improvement objective has been removed.</p>
PIO 3: We will develop a Net Zero Roadmap Analysis and agree recommendations to begin to reduce Council's emissions in a cost and carbon effective way.	PIO 2: We will reduce Council's environmental impact through the development and implementation of a Climate and Sustainability Action Plan.	<p>The Mid-Year Performance Report highlighted that, while significant progress has been made, the Council has fallen slightly behind on some planned actions, notably the action plan.</p> <p>Progress at mid-year includes enhanced data capture and the establishment of baselines at specific locations, alongside implementing improvement initiatives to reduce carbon emissions across several facilities. Council is also exploring technological solutions to support energy monitoring and data collection, reinforcing the commitment to reduce its environmental impact.</p> <p>It is recommended that we revise the current improvement objective to define the focus for 2025/26. Therefore, this objective will be retained and revised.</p>	<p>Retained/Revised</p> <p>This improvement objective has been retained and revised for 2025/26.</p>
PIO 4: We will continue to improve Communications to our customers on Waste management Services.	PIO3: We will improve our Waste Management Services through the implementation of	The Mid-Year Performance Report demonstrates that this improvement objective is on target. Work has been carried out including a dedicated Communications Officer, regular communications team meetings within the Environmental Services Department, the update of the waste management	<p>Retained/Revised</p> <p>This improvement objective has been retained and revised 2025/26.</p>

	technological solutions and continued communication.	<p>section of the website and Frequently Asked Questions Section. Regular meetings have facilitated the development and delivery of a monthly communications action plan.</p> <p>However, due to operational issues several of the planned actions fell behind schedule and therefore this it is recommended that this PIO is retained and revised for 2025/26.</p>	
PIO5: We will improve Communications with our customers on Council and non-Council services and responsibilities.	PIO4: We will improve Communications with our customers on Council services and responsibilities.	<p>The Mid-Year Performance Report highlights that whilst progress has continued throughout the year, this has been at a slower pace than expected. This has primarily been due to the limited or unavailable resources within the two lead teams: the Strategy & Performance Department and the Communications and Branding Team.</p> <p>Continual assessment of communication statistics will contribute to an ongoing review of the Council's website, enabling more direct access for customers to the appropriate Council department or service for their enquiries, focussing on Council services and responsibilities. This will improve the efficiency and responsiveness in handling customer requests and enquiries.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that this PIO is retained and revised for 2025/26.</p>	<p>Retained/Revised</p> <p>This improvement objective has been retained and revised for 2025/26.</p>

Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-2026






Four Performance Improvement Objectives been identified for 2025- 2026:

PIO 1	We will reduce the total number of days' sickness absence lost per employee
PIO 2	We will reduce Council's environmental impact through the development and implementation of a Climate and Sustainability Action Plan.
PIO 3	We will improve our Waste Management Services through the implementation of technological solutions and continued communication
PIO 4	We will improve Communications with our customers on Council services and responsibilities

A detailed summary of each of the Improvement Objectives is set out at Appendix 4.






Improvement Objective 1:

We will reduce the total number of days' sickness absence lost per employee.

 Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This objective has been carried forward from 2024/25.• Trends remain largely unchanged with Chest/Respiratory, Stress/Depression Mental Health and Musculoskeletal as the main reasons for absence.• The management of absenteeism continues to receive a high focus within Council and therefore remains as an improvement objective for 2025/26.
 What Action will we take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide support to line managers enabling them to effectively manage staff absence.• Implement the updated Attendance Management Policy/Procedure and additional appropriate training for managers• Develop and implement an annual Staff Health & Wellbeing Action Plan.• Deliver initiatives / activities aligned to the main reasons for absence.• Maintain a minimum of 85% of Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) Champions within Council and provide as required provide refresher training.• Communicate MHFA Champions to staff• Develop and implement Hybrid Working procedure.
 How will we measure progress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target of 16 days or lower, for the total number of days sickness absence lost per employee.• Attendance Management Policy implemented, and training delivered by 30 September 2025• Staff Health & Wellbeing Action plan delivered by 31 March 2026.• Health and wellbeing initiatives/activities delivered across the main themes of absence by 31 March 2026• Maintain a minimum of 85% Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) provision in March 2026.• 2 targeted communications on MHFA services issued to staff by 31 March 2026• Hybrid Working procedure developed and implemented June 2025.
 Benefits to you	<p>This objective will contribute to the overall health and well-being of our Borough, as a large majority of our employees reside in the Borough.</p> <p>If progress is made, then it should also result in better continuity of service delivery.</p>
 Who is responsible	<p>The Senior Responsible Officers (SRO's) for this Objective in conjunction with the HR&OD Department are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deputy Chief Executive.• Director of Development, Community & Wellbeing• Director of Regulatory Services, Facilities & Assets• Director of Environmental Services & Sustainability






Improvement Objective 2:

We will reduce Council's environmental impact through the development and implementation of a Climate and Sustainability Action Plan.

 Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and has a statutory duty to address Climate Change.• The Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 has 5 priorities one of which is Environment & Place. This includes our commitment to actively respond to the climate crisis and support others to do likewise.
 What Action will we take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adopt & implement 'Climate & Sustainability Action Plan' aligned with the goals of Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Prioritise action required to tackle climate emergency○ Avoid new emissions & cut existing emissions• Establish a cross departmental working group, enlisting department champions.• Develop a Sustainable Procurement Policy & adopt Sustainable NI Screening Tool• Adopt 'Invest to Save' pipeline project proposals regarding renewables within the estate facility portfolio.• Through EMS & ISO 14001 – identify & improve systems & processes relating to energy usage and cost savings• Monitor & Review mandatory training for all staff
 How we will measure progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working Group Established & meetings held throughout 2025/26• Consultation Action Plan completed & submitted for approval June 2025• Initiate 4 pipeline 'invest to save' renewable project proposals (subject to review)• 5% reduction in energy consumption across estates facilities portfolio (subject to review)• Continue to update Intranet page – Climate Sustainability & EMS• 70% of staff trained by 31 March 2026 (subject to review)
 Benefits to you	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the long term there will be a reduction in energy costs• There will be a positive impact on the health and well-being of our citizens.• Our actions will support nature-recovery, enhancing biodiversity• Delivery of the action plan will support climate resilience.
 Who is responsible	<p>The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for this Objective in conjunction with the Climate, Sustainability & Parks Services Department is the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director of Environmental Services & Sustainability.






Improvement Objective 3:

We will improve our Waste Management Services through the implementation of technological solutions and continued communication

 Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This objective has been carried over and revised for 2025/26 as several planned actions were impacted by operational issues in 2024/25.• Analysis of a number of sources of data including Info@ analysis / social media /Council's Consultation Hub etc suggest that there is still an opportunity for improving communications on waste management.
 What Action will we take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement an in cab digital data information system as part of the Environmental Services improvement project.• Continue review of the Waste Management section of the Council's main website.• Provide standardisation of relevant, accurate and up to date information on appropriate communication channels• Regular Analysis of Customer communication methods including Contact Us/ complaints@/ ES reports/ Website hits/ ABC Council App Usage/social media.• Environmental Services to undertake a customer satisfaction survey
 How we will measure progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 80% of waste collection service using in cab technology by March 2026• Quarterly updates of Waste Management section on website, including frequently Asked Questions• Copies of publicity/PR posted on all communication channels as required.• Quarterly review of all communication channels• Quarterly review of ABC Council App usage statistics• Quarterly review/monitoring of the number of hits on website section• Customer satisfaction survey carried out by March 2026
 Benefits to you	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased customer satisfaction with information about Waste Management Services.• Customers will have improved accessible information on Waste Management Services on a range on channels
 Who is responsible	<p>The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for this Objective in conjunction with the Head of Environmental Services and Communications Team is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director of Environmental Services & Sustainability

Improvement Objective 4:

We will improve communications with our customers on Council services and responsibilities

 Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This improvement objective has been carried over from 2024/25.• From analysis of email communication there is an opportunity for improvement on communications around Council Services and responsibilities.
 What Action will we take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review website and include a user-friendly section that outlines the services and responsibilities that Council is responsible for.• Review, update and profile generic email addresses for Council departments and functions.• Provide contact details or links to other public bodies/ external organisations responsible for non- Council services• Use social media channels to send out communications at prescribed times in relation to Council services and responsibilities.
 How we will measure progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated user friendly section website by 31 March 2026.• Quarterly monitoring of the number of hits on website section• 5% reduction in email enquiries via the Council mailboxes and JotForm in relation to Council & non-council services• Quarterly monitoring of enquiries received by Council that relate to external organisations• Quarterly monitoring of the Social Media Posts
 Benefits to you	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A dedicated /user friendly section on the website will give customers the assurance that they are contacting the correct Department directly and the correct external organisation in relation to the service they require.• This should reduce the time Council staff spend redirecting service requests• This will improve customers understanding of the range of Council services and responsibilities.
 Who is responsible	<p>The Senior Responsible Officers (SRO) for this Objective in conjunction with Communication Team are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deputy Chief Executive• Director of Environmental Services & Sustainability• Director Of Regulatory Services, Facilities & Assets• Director of Development, Community & Well Being

Statutory Indicators and Standards

In addition to the improvement areas identified in the Performance Improvement Plan, the Department for Communities also set statutory targets for Councils in the areas of Planning, Economic Development and Waste. The Statutory performance Indicators and standards, as outlined in the Local Government Performance Indicators and Standards Order (2015), are set out below.

Statutory Indicators & Standards Performance Indicators	Standards/Targets
The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity. (Business start-up activity means the delivery of completed client-led business plans under Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's Regional Start Initiative or its successor programmes)	182 (Statutory target)
The average processing time of major planning applications. (An application in the category of major development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015 (a))	30 weeks
The average processing time of local planning applications. (An application in the category of local development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015, and other applications for approval or consent under the Planning Act (NI) 2011 or any Regulations made under the Act)	15 weeks
The percentage of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks. (Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control under Part 5 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 or any Regulations made under the Act)	70%
The percentage of Municipal waste collected by district Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse).	<p>The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 requirement for at least 70% of waste to be recycled by 2030. Interim target of 55% by 2025 has been set. The Waste (Circular Economy) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 amended the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65% of municipal waste prepared for re-use and recycling by 2035, (Interim 55% by 2025, 60% 2030) The amount of municipal waste sent to landfill to be reduced to 10% or less of the total amount of municipal waste generated (by weight) by 2035)
The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled. (Targets set via NILAS)	<p>NI Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) has not set a target for 2025/26. The scheme concluded at the end of the 2019/20 financial year with a target of 24,417T, with 6,104T being landfilled, however the continued monitoring of biodegradable waste is required for existing target commitments which specify that it must be reduced to 35% of the total amount (by weight) of biodegradable municipal waste produced in 1995. Non-Statutory Targets: measures to be taken to ensure that the amount of municipal waste landfilled is reduced to 10% or less of the total amount of municipal waste generated by 2035.</p>
The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arising (The total amount of waste collected)	No statutory target has been set for 2025/26

Self-imposed Performance Indicators and Service Standards

In addition to the statutory performance indicators, we include a series of self-imposed performance measures (performance indicators and standards/targets) within all Business Plans for 2025/26 which will be monitored and reported on in line with our existing Performance Management Framework.

Council service standards will be monitored and reviewed in line with our Quality Management System (QMS) reporting and business planning to manage risk and ensure that departments are on track allowing for remedial action to be implemented if appropriate.

Work is ongoing to align Service Standards into the new Quality Management System (QMS). The development of the system is bringing together key corporate and departmental performance data, that is relevant and informative and will assist in decision making and continuous improvement.

Performance Management, Reporting and Governance Arrangements

We are committed to ensuring continuous improvement in the delivery of our services across **all** areas of the organisation. This publication is our 'forward-looking' Performance Improvement Plan for 2025 - 2026 that fulfils, in part, the statutory requirement set out in Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

Whilst we have identified 4 performance improvement objectives, this in no way prescripts or limits Council's commitment to continuous improvement in all services/functions; it does however concentrate efforts and resources, on monitoring and review of those key areas we wish to improve on in 2025/26.

Our Strategic Management approach is aligned to a number of key strategic plans, including the Borough's Community Plan, our Corporate Plan and our Performance Improvement Plan. The approach is carried through into our Business Plans, other action plans as well as with team and individual performance development conversations. The process is supported by reporting and monitoring at corporate, department and team level as appropriate.

Council has made a concerted effort to build on the work so far and ensure that all aspects of quality management are consolidated within our Performance Management Framework. As previously mentioned, the existing Framework is currently under review and will transition into a Performance and Quality Management Framework, reinforcing the Council's commitment to data-driven decision-making and continuous improvement.

A six-monthly progress report on the 2025-2026 Performance Improvement Plan will be presented to the Council's Executive Management Team and Council's Performance and Audit Committee as part of the Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report for the Performance & Audit Committee.

By 30 September 2026, we will publish a retrospective Annual Performance Self-Assessment Report, setting out details of how we have performed during 2025-2026 against this Performance Improvement Plan; including the statutory performance indicators and standards for Economic Development, Planning and Waste, self-imposed indicators and standards, service standards and any relevant benchmarking information.

The Council has in place the following specific arrangements to monitor progress against the standards set for the statutory performance indicators and standards/targets:

- Inclusion within Performance Improvement Plan, with progress monitored and reported on bi-annual basis by the Performance & Audit Committee.
- Inclusion within relevant business plans, with progress being monitored and reported on a bi-annual basis to the relevant Council service committee.
- Data submission to Government Departments, with reports being issued/published quarterly and annually to monitor the performance of each Council, outlining regional trends and comparisons.

The Council has in place the following specific arrangements to monitor progress against the self-imposed performance indicators and standard/targets and service standards:

- Inclusion within business plans and the Quality Management System (QMS), with progress being monitored on a monthly basis by Department Management Teams, quarterly by Directorate Management Teams and twice per year by the Executive Management Team.

- Business Plan Progress reporting to relevant Council service committees. The committee reports are published on our Council website. <https://abc.public-minutes.com/>
- Progress monitored by the Council's Performance & Audit Committee through the quarterly Corporate Performance Management reports the annual Performance Self-Assessment Reports

In addition, Council is a member of the Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE), which is a public sector benchmarking organisation. This assists Council in improving our ability to compare our performance across a range of services and activities, with other councils, where appropriate.

For further information on Council's Performance, including corporate publications, self-assessment and NIAO report, please see link below:

[Performance Improvement - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council \(armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk\)](http://armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)

Always seeking to Improve. How to propose new Improvement Objectives.

We welcome on-going feedback, comments or suggestions on how we might improve our services and if you would like to propose any new improvement objectives. Please use one of the following methods to do so:

Email	performance@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk
Telephone	0300 0300 900
In Writing	Strategy and Performance Department Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Armagh Old City Hospital Armagh BT61 7DY

This document is available in hard copy format and in a range of formats upon request using the contact details above.

Identifying Performance Improvement Objectives: *how we identified improvement areas and timeline for implementation*

As per Department for Communities (DfC) Government Guidance, we identified our improvement objectives based on:

- a strong evidence base,
- an understanding of our citizens' needs,
- alignment with Council's priorities in the new Corporate Plan, and
- critical self-analysis.

When developing the proposed Performance Improvement Objectives for 2025–2026, an analysis was undertaken of a wide range of evidence sources. This included performance data, trend analysis, committee reports, service-level performance reports, and other relevant information to ensure the objectives were evidence-based and aligned with both operational and strategic priorities.

Internal analysis and engagement within Council took place during Autumn/ Winter 2024 with senior management and Council officers from across Directorates including:

- **Self-analysis** by individual Heads of Department, reviewing Departmental data and information, Business Plan progress, performance & risk management data and information, 2023/24 Mid-Year Self-assessment report
- **Peer analysis** at Head of Department and Directorate team meetings with Directors and Executive Management Team members and finally,
- **Independent critical analysis** by the Strategy & Performance Department: Performance Team.

Based on the knowledge, data and evidence sourced, 4 Performance Improvement Objectives were identified and approved by Council for public consultation. An 8-week Public Consultation exercise took place 6 February – 3 April 2025. Further detail on the consultation process and responses can be found in Appendix 2.

The timeline included provides an overview of the process for the development of Council's Performance Improvement Plan, from drafting our Performance Improvement Objectives, through to consultation, delivery, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

Timeline - Development of Performance Improvement Plan 2025/26

July – Sept 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preparation for NI Audit Office: audit fieldwork ➤ Annual Performance Self-Assessment Report for 2023-24 presented to EMT, Committee and Full Council, ahead of publication by 30 September 2024 ➤ Initiate Departmental Business Planning process for 2025-26 ➤ Review of Performance Improvement Objectives 2024/25 ➤ Initiate internal engagement to review, identify Performance Improvement Objectives for next year: 2025-26 ➤ Desktop analysis of Evidence / data/ information/ trends, performance reports, committee reports etc. examined as primary sources of evidence for identification of areas for improvement
Oct – Dec 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 6 monthly progress updates on Departmental Business Plans to Service Committees ➤ Mid-Year Performance Report on 2024/25 presented to senior management, Committee and Council ➤ Ongoing engagement & support with Departments for development of Business Planning (2024/25) Process ➤ Ongoing engagement on development of the proposed Performance Improvement objectives and Plan for 2025-26 in line with departmental business planning process across council. ➤ Ongoing Business Planning, Efficiency & Estimates Process for 2025-26 ➤ Ongoing support/ liaison with NI Audit Office and departments on Performance Audit ➤ Final NIAO Section 95 Report on Audit issued November 2024 ➤ Draft Improvement Objectives for public consultation presented to Senior Managers, recommended to Executive Management Team (EMT)
Jan – Mar 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Draft Performance Improvement Objectives reported to Governance Resources and Strategy Committee and Council for approval. ➤ Council strikes the Rate for 2025/26 (February) ➤ Ongoing engagement with Departments on development of 2024/25 Business Plans. ➤ Public consultation on Draft Improvement Objectives opened 6 February 2025
Apr – June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public consultation on Proposed Improvement Objectives closed 03 April 2025 ➤ Consultation responses collated and summary report presented to senior management. ➤ Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 reported to senior management, GRS Committee and Full Council for approval. ➤ Performance Improvement Plan 2025/26 published on Council's website by 30 June 2025 ➤ New 2025/26 Business Plans presented to Service Committees May 2025. ➤ Year End Annual Reports on 2024/25 Departmental Business Plans presented to Service Committees June 2025 ➤ Preparation of Annual Performance Self-Assessment Report for 2024/25

Consultation Process & Responses

The 4 proposed draft performance improvement objectives for 2025-26, were subject to an 8-week public consultation, from 06 February to 03 April 2025.

During the public consultation period Elected Members and Council staff as well as Trade Unions representatives were also encouraged to provide further feedback on the draft performance improvement objectives.

The proposed Performance Improvement Objectives were therefore developed taking into consideration the views of internal and external stakeholders.

- **Internal:** *Employees including the Senior Leadership Team, trade unions and Elected Members.*
- **External:** *Citizens/customers, communities, businesses and other stakeholders.*

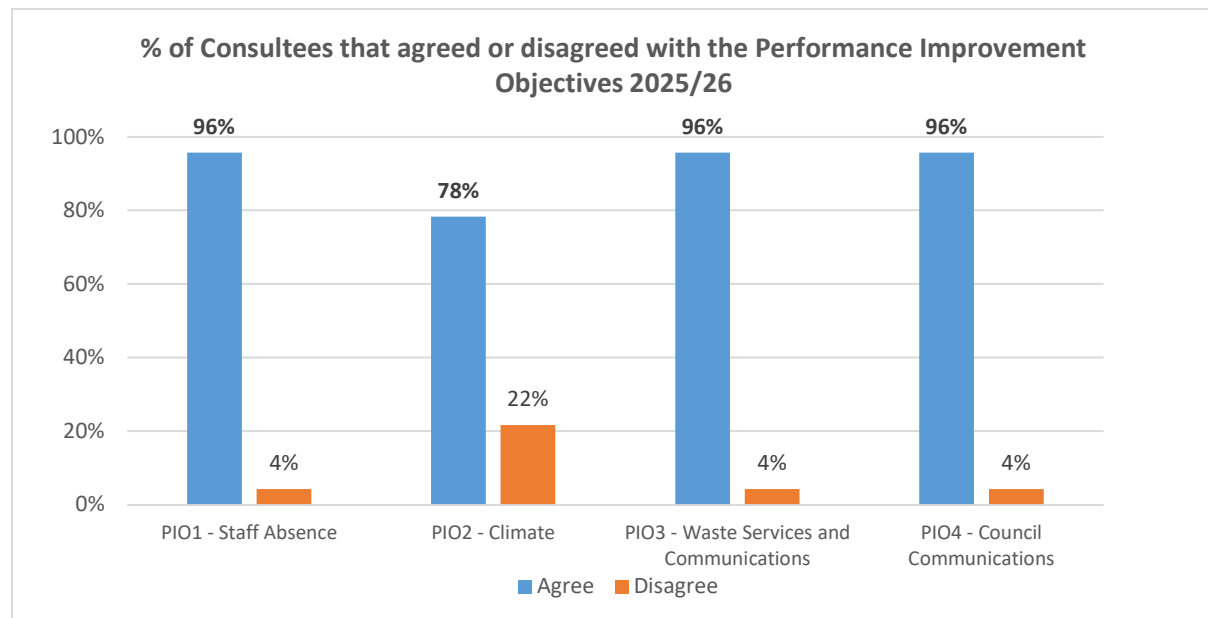
In the Consultation document we provided further detail on each of the four Performance Improvement Objectives, including:

- How each objective links with 'Connected' - our Community Plan,
- How each objective links to the themes and commitments within our Corporate Plan
- Why we have chosen the objective
- What we will do to achieve the objective – our actions
- How we will measure success – our Performance Indicators
- What success will look like – our targets
- How our Citizens and stakeholders will benefit
- Which aspects of improvement we are addressing

The timeline above outlines the internal consultation within Council that took place, exploring potential areas for improvement, and the synergies between corporate, business planning, efficiency and estimate setting processes. It also indicates that we undertook the necessary public consultation exercise in line with our Public Consultation Policy. We used social media, Community Planning partners' contacts, business e-zine, community networks, emails to Section-75 groups, other councils, staff memos, intranet promotion, informed the Trade Unions and made hard copies of the consultation document available in each of the three main Council civic buildings in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon.

A total of 23 responses were received, indicating a decline in response rates when compared with 34 responses in 2024/25. The majority of respondents were residents of the Borough,

with most indicating that they became aware of the consultation through our social media platforms. An analysis of the responses has been undertaken, and it is considered that the level of agreement expressed provides a sound basis for concluding that the proposed performance improvement objectives for 2025–2026 are appropriate. The analysis is presented below.



The diagram shows between 78% and 96% of consultees agreed with the 4 proposed performance improvement objectives. The comments received were summarised and forwarded to relevant departments for consideration in line with their business plans and service delivery. The relevant departments will provide general feedback to the comments received that will be used to provide responses via the '*We asked, You Said, We Did*' section of the Council's Consultation Hub. This will be uploaded to the Consultation Hub, thereby closing the feedback loop on the consultation process.

Link to Community Plan/Other Plans & Strategies

Identifying and communicating the Council's vision of its purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and service users.

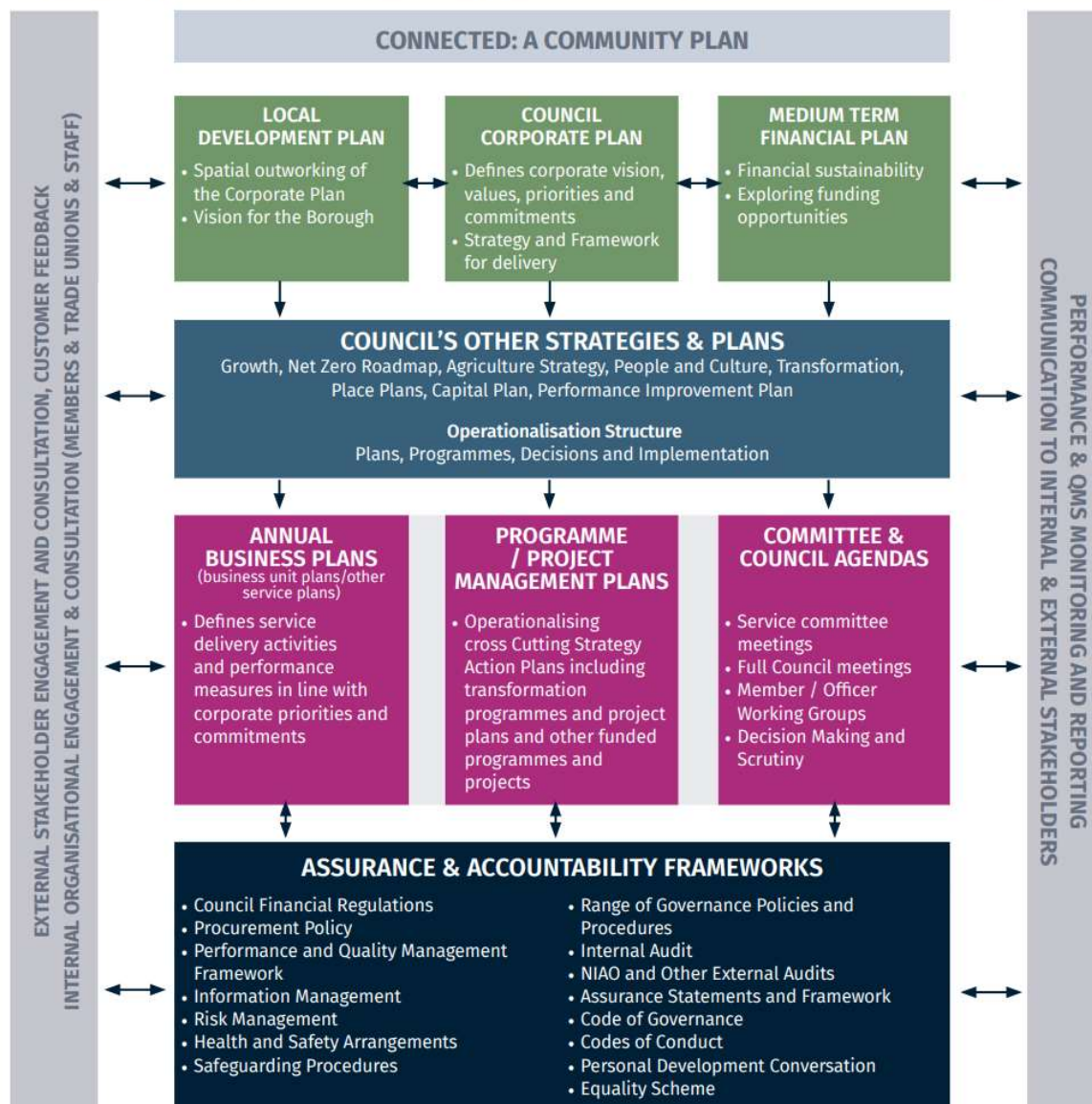
The Council's Strategic Approach to Management is represented in the diagram below demonstrating how all the component parts align and work together in the delivery of Council services. It seeks to link the overarching Council priorities and commitments to service and individual work plans, making clear the contribution individuals make towards achieving strategic outcomes. The diagram also demonstrates the other elements that make up our accountability and assurance and performance management framework supported by two-way stakeholder and customer engagement, consultation and feedback.

ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE & CRAIGAVON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT APPROACH

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Regional, National Strategies and Partnerships

Immediate Influencers - Political Stability and Direction | Health of the Economy | Labour Market - skills, capacity and availability



The diagram above illustrates the need for connections between all levels. This golden thread is supported by engagement and improvement processes. The plans listed above are illustrative of the key plans, rather than an exhaustive list.

Our Community Plan gives us the **WHY** of what we are doing, providing a holistic view of the needs and aspirations of our Borough, and articulating them in 9 long-term outcomes.

Our Corporate Plan explains **WHAT** we as the Council are doing to contribute to these outcomes as well as outlining any other key objectives for us as an organisation.

Finally, our annual business plans detail the **HOW** giving staff and Elected Members the detail on actions, which departments are taking to achieve the corporate plan commitments.

Our Corporate Plan 2023-2027 has been developed, with our vision aligned to the Community Plan 2017-2030. The new Corporate Plan identifies 5 priorities which Council will deliver.

- Environment and Place,
- Community Wellbeing,
- Economic Growth,
- Service Delivery
- Staff Leadership and Resources

A copy of Council's Corporate Plan can be found at the link below.

<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/corporate-publications/>

Performance Improvement Objectives identified for 2025-26

The tables below provide examples of actions, performance measures and potential benefits in relation to the performance improvement objectives.

Performance Improvement Objective 1	Link to Community Plan/ Corporate Plan 2023-2027	Why have we chosen this Objective?	What we will do (Actions)	How do we measure (Performance Indicators)	We will have succeeded if (Standards/Targets)	How our citizens and stakeholders may benefit	
We will reduce the average number of days sickness absence lost per employee.	Service Delivery: Continuously review to improve our services. Monitor and report our performance. Staff, Leadership and Resources: Value staff and be civic leaders. Strengthen our governance and review efficiency of our resources and assets	This objective has been carried forward for 2025/26. Non-worked related, work related stress and musculoskeletal have emerged as the main reasons for absence. The management of absenteeism remains a high priority within Council and will therefore remain an improvement objective for 2025/26.	Provide support to line managers enabling them to effectively manage staff absence.	The average number of days' sickness absence lost per employee	16 days or lower	This objective will contribute to the overall health and well-being of our Borough, as a large majority of our employees reside in the Borough.	
			Implement the updated Attendance Management Policy/Procedure and additional appropriate training for managers	Policy implemented and training delivered	30 September 2025		
			Develop and implement annual Staff Health & Wellbeing Action Plan.	Staff Health & Wellbeing Action Plan delivered	31 March 2026		If progress is made, then it should also result in better continuity of service delivery.
			Deliver initiatives / activities aligned to main reasons for absence.	Wellbeing initiatives delivered across main themes of absence.	31 March 2026		
			Maintain a minimum of 85% of Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) Champions within Council and provide as required provide refresher training.	The percentage of Mental Health First Aiders available	85% by 31 March 2026		
			Communicate MHFA Champions to staff	The number of targeted communications on MHFA services issued to staff.	At least 2		
			Develop and implement Hybrid Working Procedure.	Hybrid Working Procedure developed	Hybrid Working Procedure implemented in June 2025		
			Performance Improvement Aspects: Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness				

Performance Improvement Objective 2	Link to Community Plan/ Corporate Plan 2023-2027	Why have we chosen this Objective?	What we will do (Actions)	How do we measure (Performance Indicators)	We will have succeeded if (Standards/Targets)	How our citizens and stakeholders may benefit
We will reduce Council's environmental impact through the development and implementation of a Climate and Sustainability Action Plan.	Environment and Place: Actively respond to the climate crisis and support others to do likewise Service Delivery: Monitor and communicate our performance Staff, Leadership and Resources: Strengthen our governance and review efficiency of our resources and assets	This objective has been retained and revised for 2025/26. It is acknowledged that this is a long-term objective for Council and that there is still a significant amount of work to be carried out to ensure that Council deliver on the commitment to reduce their environmental impact.	Establish a cross departmental working group.	Working Group established	Regular meetings and reporting from Working Group throughout 2025/26.	In the long term there will be a reduction in energy costs and a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our citizens. Our actions will support nature recovery, enhancing biodiversity Delivery of the action plan will support climate resilience
			Adopt and implement the Climate and Sustainability Action Plan.	Action Plan consulted on, approved and implemented.	Approval of Action Plan by full Council June 2025	
			Feasibility studies and associated business cases completed for pipeline energy reduction projects – ‘invest to save’.	The number of pipeline energy projects identified	4 (subject to review)	
			Identify areas of improvement in terms of systems & processes relating to energy usage and cost savings.	The percentage reduction in energy consumption.	5% reduction in energy consumption across portfolio of facilities, (subject to review)	
			Updated Communications on Climate.	Internet/intranet section updated.	31 March 2026	
			Deliver mandatory staff training	The percentage of staff trained	70% of staff trained by 31 March 2026 (subject to review)	
Performance Improvement Aspects: Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness, Sustainability, Efficiency, Innovation.						

Performance Improvement Objective 3	Link to Community Plan/ Corporate Plan 2023-2027	Why have we chosen this Objective?	What we will do (Actions)	How do we measure (Performance Indicators)	We will have succeeded if (Standards/Targets)	How our citizens and stakeholders may benefit
We will improve our Waste Management Services through the implementation of technological solutions and continued communication.	Service Delivery: Continuously review to improve our services Seek and use regular customer engagement and feedback. Staff, Leadership and Resources: Communicate and engage with staff, communities and others.	This objective has been retained and revised for 2025/26. The Mid-Year Performance Report demonstrates that this improvement objective is on target. Significant work has been carried out; however, analysis of various communication channels suggests that there is still an opportunity for improving communication on waste management.	Implement in cab digital data information system as part of the Environmental Services Service Improvement Project	In Cab Technology in use.	80% of waste collection service using in cab technology by March 2026 Weekly	Increased customer satisfaction with information about Waste Management Services. Customers will have improved accessible information on Waste Management Services on a range on channels
			Continue review of Waste Management section of website	Updated Waste Management section on website, including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	Quarterly updates of Waste Management Section	Availability of real time data to deal with customer enquiries.
			Provide standardisation of relevant, accurate and up to date information on appropriate communication channels	Copies of publicity/ PR posted on all communication channels	As required, by 31 March 2026	
			Regular Analysis of Customer communication methods including Contact Us/ complaints@/ Website hits/ ABC Council App Usage/social media	Review and analysis of communications channels and enquiries across all channels to update FAQ on website ABC Council App usage statistics The number of hits on website section.	Quarterly review of communication channels Quarterly Review	
			Carry out a customer satisfaction survey	Customer satisfaction survey	Customer Satisfaction Survey by March 2026	
Performance Improvement Aspects: Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness, Efficiency, Innovation						

Performance Improvement Objective 4	Link to Community Plan/ Corporate Plan 2023-2027	Why have we chosen this Objective?	What we will do (Actions)	How do we measure (Performance Indicators)	We will have succeeded if (Standards/Targets)	How our citizens and stakeholders may benefit
We will improve Communications with our customers on Council Services and Responsibilities.	Service Delivery: Continuously review to improve our services Seek and use regular customer engagement and feedback. Staff, Leadership and Resources: Communicate and engage with staff, communities and others.	This improvement objective has been revised and carried over for 2025/26. Progress on this performance improvement objective has continued at a slower pace than expected, primarily due to resources within the two lead teams.	Review website and Include a user-friendly section that outlines the services and responsibilities that Council is responsible for.	Updated user-friendly section on the website The amount of hits/traffic on certain website sections using analytics	By 31 March 2026. Quarterly review <i>(will determine baseline)</i>	A dedicated /user friendly section on the website will give customers the assurance that they are contacting the correct Department directly and the correct external organisation in relation to the service they require. This should reduce the time Council staff spend redirecting service requests. This will improve customers understanding of the range of Council Services and Responsibilities
			Review, update and profile generic email addresses for Council departments and functions.	Departmental generic Email addresses agreed, operational and profiled on website	By 31 March 2026	
			Provide contact details or links to other public bodies/ external organisations responsible for non-Council services	Reduction in the percentage of emails coming in via the corporate Council mailboxes and jot form that relate directly to departments/services	5% Reduction in enquiries received by info@/jot forms	
			Use social media channels to send out communications at prescribed times in relation to Council services and responsibilities.	The number of enquires received by Council that relate to external organisations The number or trends in Social Media posts	Quarterly review <i>(will determine baseline)</i> Quarterly review <i>(will determine baseline)</i>	
			Performance Improvement Aspects: Strategic Effectiveness, Service quality, Service availability, Fairness, Sustainability, Efficiency, Innovation			