Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

2019-2020

armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

CONTENTS

01 \\ FOREWORD

Welcome to Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Council's Annual Report for 2019-20. This report looks back on how the Council performed, as we continued to pursue our vision to be 'a healthy, happy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and an appealing places for living, working and learning'.

It provides details on our progress in delivering our ambitious Corporate Plan 2018- 2023 and includes a self-assessment of our performance. Positives are certainly emerging as we are seeing notable improvements across many of the areas which matter to our communities, but we are not complacent and know there is much more work to do. For 2019-20 we highlighted specific functions /areas we wanted to improve, and further detail on these can been found within the Self-Assessment Report.

Reflecting on how we have performed in 2019-20 has been a beneficial exercise. No one could have predicted the extraordinary times we faced back in March 2020, with the unprecedented impact of the global pandemic and nationwide lockdown measures in response to Covid 19. Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Council rose to this significant challenge, proactively responding to an ever evolving situation, through engaging in and developing new services to deal with the challenges impacting the wider community.

During the last weeks of 2019-20, Council implemented emergency planning, business continuity and operational response to deal with this crisis situation. Our departments and employees demonstrated excellent commitment by continuing to provide the essential services to the citizens of the Borough, including waste collection, registration and burial services, communications, payments to suppliers and a range of other statutory duties.

Our response to Covid 19, does not diminish the ongoing achievements we have made during the year and the successes we have enjoyed.

Internally, after an enormous amount of work and cooperation with all stakeholders, progress was made on 4th tier management structure and marks a step forward in the process of transformation within our Council. We continued to promote the usage of our Consultation Hub as an engagement platform for seeking important feedback from stakeholders on issues that matter such as attitudes about community safety, views on public realm, and finding out what our customer think about our parks, green spaces and woodlands.

The year also brought a much welcomed UK Government announcement of £163 million allocated to the Mid, South West Region as part of the Growth Deal. As a group of three councils, we are committed to ensuring this funding is spent in the most effective possible way. The funding will play a crucial role in helping the region reach the ambitions set out in its new Regional Economic Strategy.

Work continued on our flagship South Lake Leisure Centre, Northern Ireland's newest public leisure facility which will officially open in November 2020 following a multi-million-pound investment. The new multi-use sports and leisure complex represents a major new flagship health and wellbeing destination.

There are uncertain times ahead but as we continue with recovery whilst still dealing with the ongoing impact of the pandemic, we will embark on a review of our medium to longer term priorities.

Finally I would like to express a special word of thanks, in what has been an extraordinary and exceptional year, to our Elected Members, our dedicated staff, our supportive partners and the Borough's public who continue to work so positively with us to make Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon such a vibrant and welcoming borough to live, work and visit.

Roger Wilson,
Chief Executive,
Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

02 \\ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our Corporate Plan: 2018-2023: Making it Happen, sets out our vision to be "A healthy, happy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning".

To ensure Council deliver quality services and become more efficient and effective in everything we do - we highlighted 4 main themes: Economy, Place, Community & Committed Council, across which Council will deliver services and activities.

As we approach our half way mark of the 2018-2023 Corporate Plan, it is time to look back at how the Council has performed against these ambitions.

This report highlights each of the corporate priority areas, summarising some of the key successes during 2019/20, and also draws learning from where challenges still exist and areas for improvement. These challenges, and how the council and our partners across the borough will address them, will be further explored and learnt from in our future Corporate Planning processes. When we review and analyse on our service delivery during 2019-20 – we committed to 340 strategic actions all linked to one of 15 Departmental Business Plans.

In June 2020, Annual Progress Reports on all 15 Departments were reported to Council. Council met or exceeded 66% of corporate business plan delivery, 25% fell slightly short/ behind schedule at Year end and only 9% of targets were not achieved/missed.
For those areas for which targets were not achieved/missed - a number of influencing factors impacted upon service delivery and hence

performance. For example: realistic target setting for first time strategic actions; the Covid 19 pandemic and the rapid lockdown of services/activities caused difficulties in capturing final data for example: user numbers/ participants and hosting and delivering planned events. Other influencing factors included instances where staff resources had to be redirected to deal with emerging issues or an in-year reduction in funding.

In terms of learning, the Council acknowledge the importance of setting meaningful performance measures and realistic but ambitious targets.

A detailed overview of performance during 2019-20 is provided in our Self-Assessment Report at Appendix 1.

Corporate Performance Summary 2019/20
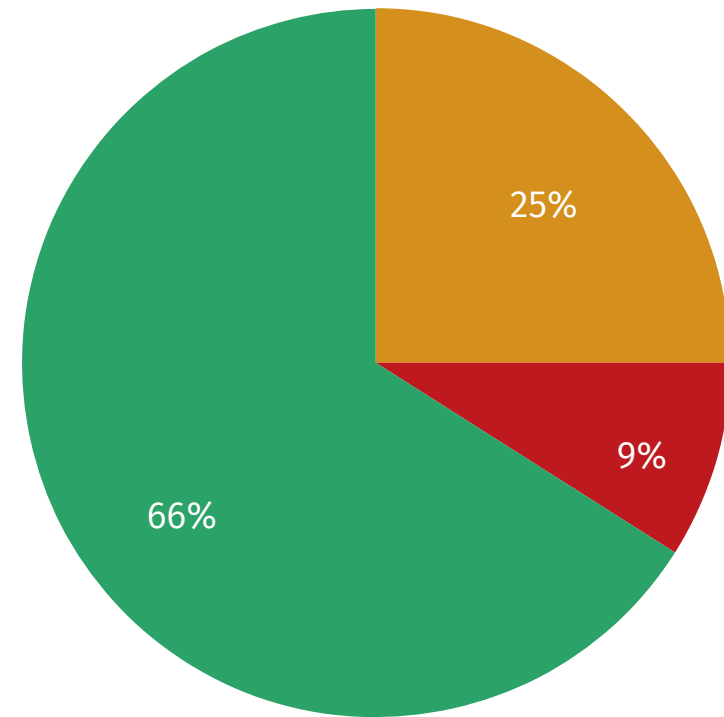
25%

9%

66%

RAG Rating:
GREEN [Standards/targets on track/being met/exceeded]
AMBER [Standards/targets fallen slightly short/behind schedule]
RED [Standards/targets not achieved/missed]

03 \\ PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

We collect information on our performance for two reasons:
- So we know how we are doing and how we can improve what we do.
- To keep us accountable to the people of the Council area and others with an interest in the Council.

Our Elected Members represent the interest of their constituents and ensure the views of their electoral areas and the entire population of the Borough are reflected in the decisions that the Council take. Council is tasked with making strategically important decisions that will affect future generations. Integral to that decision making is the use of performance data and how it plays an increasing role in designing, delivering and transforming public services to improve outcomes and drive efficiencies.

We must continue to learn from our previous performances and delivery - essentially, making things better and focusing on ensuring sustainable, continuous improvements to the way we as a Council work and deliver our services.

Council's Annual Self-Assessment Report 2019/20 (Appendix 1), provides further detail on 3 key areas were we have assessed our performance. It uses a traffic light rating system or BRAG status definition as a visual cue to performance.

Performance Key

Our Self-Assessment Report 2019-20 uses a traffic light rating system or BRAG status definition as a visual cue to performance. The key below provides definitions for the four Black, Red, Amber, Green (BRAG) status levels which have been chosen to measure progress.

RAG Status		Definitions
BLACK	●	Information not available at time of Reporting
RED	●	Standards/targets not achieved/missed/ well below previous year
AMBER	●	Standards/targets fallen slightly short/behind schedule/below previous year
GREEN	●	Standards/targets on track/being met/exceeded/better than last year

Financial Performance

Before we highlight the achievements of Council, it is important to reference the financial overview of the Council, and how expenditure is allocated. To deliver services to the citizens of the area, Council rely on a number of sources of funding (i.e. government grants, domestic and business rates).

The diagram below shows how this expenditure is allocated between Council Directorates. More detailed information on Council's Income & Expenditure is presented in the Annual Statement of Accounts: **armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/finance-information**

£64.3m RATES

£7.3m GRANTS

£7m POSITION

£6.6m PLACE

£38.3m PEOPLE

£8.2m PERFORMANCE

£12.2m CAPITAL PROJECTS

ECONOMY

We are working to help create a strong vibrant economy with a range of employment opportunities. Our tourism sector is an important and growing part of this. below are examples of what has been achieved.

485
Businesses Supported
via Programmes

15 **Environmental Health initatives**
delivered to enhance & support regulatory compliance programmes

Multi Million £
Growth Deal secured

28 Full time
rural jobs created

180
property/business owners
engaged in funding initiatives

229 Jobs
promoted though Business start up

PLACE

We are working to enhance and revitalise the city and borough. Making it a place people want to live, work, visit and live in. Here are some examples of what have been achieved.

1,210 planning applications processed

4 Key sites undergo Streetscape scheme

54.7% of household waste sent to recycling

181,018 visitors to Council owned Tourism, Arts & Cultural facilities

£850,000 investment for Gosford Park

96% customer satisfaction in waste management/cleanliness

9 Green Flag Awards maintained

COMMUNITY

Working closely with local communities and other parties we are striving to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of everyone. Below are expels of what has been achieved.

21,600
enquiries to Community Development Advice Services

8,358 participants
involved in Everybody Active Programme

683 Financial Assistance Programme applications

A range of targeted acitivites to address health inequalities

13,973 bookings
in our Community Centres/Town Halls

5.5 million
users to leisure centres & facilities

COMMITTED COUNCIL

We continue to look at how we can improve the day to day experiences of using our services. Here are some examples of what has been achieved.

100% Domestic & non-Domestic full applications assessed within legislative target by Building Control Department

10 Institute of Leadership & Management Customer Care projects

45 surveys undertook on Consultation Hub

495 FOI/EIR requests processed within 20 working days

£12.2m Capital investment

4th tier management structure progressed

Continuing to improve on the rate we pay our suppliers

05 \\ CONTACT US

We welcome your ongoing feedback and comments or suggestions on how we might improve any of our Council services.

Elected Members:

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has 41 democratically elected members, representing 7 District Electrical Areas.

Further details on each elected members can be found at: **armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk**

Please use one of the following ways to contact us:

Website: **armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/contact-us**

Email: **performance@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk**

Telephone: 0300 0300 900

In Writing: Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
Armagh Old City Hospital
Abbey Street
Armagh
BT61 7DY

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

Appendix
SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This document presents a self-assessment of the performance of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (the Council) in discharging the general duty under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) in relation to performance improvement arrangements.

It sets out an assessment of the Council's performance against the following three requirements:
- statutory performance improvement indicators and standards for the functions of Economic Development, Planning and Waste for 2019-20, including comparison with the previous year[1]
- performance improvement objectives set out in the 2019-20 Performance Improvement Plan
- self-imposed indicators and standards collected during 2019-20 and the previous year(s)

By publishing this information, the Council fulfils the statutory requirement under Part 12, Section 92 of the Act.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) will undertake an audit of how Council has implemented the statutory performance improvement duties and will produce an independent audit report, which will be available on the Council website: **armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/performance-improvement**

Throughout the Performance Self-Assessment Report, we have referenced statistical evidence and supporting narratives to demonstrate how we performed in 2019-20 against a number of set targets/standards, as well as bench marking with previous years and other councils where appropriate. This Report provides evidence of how as a Council we are implementing our performance framework and have put in place performance improvement arrangements.

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1   contained within The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015

SUMMARY OVERVIEW

Reflecting on how we have performed has been a valuable exercise, and will influence and inform future decision making, whilst supporting our Community Plan and Corporate Plan outcomes.

When we reflect and analyse on our service delivery during 2019-20 – we committed to 340 strategic actions all linked to one of 15 Departmental Business Plans.

In June 2020, Annual Progress Reports on all 15 Departments were reported to Council. Council met or exceeded 66% of corporate business plan delivery, 25% fell slightly short/ behind schedule at Year end and only 9% of targets were not achieved/missed.

Corporate Performance Summary 2019/20
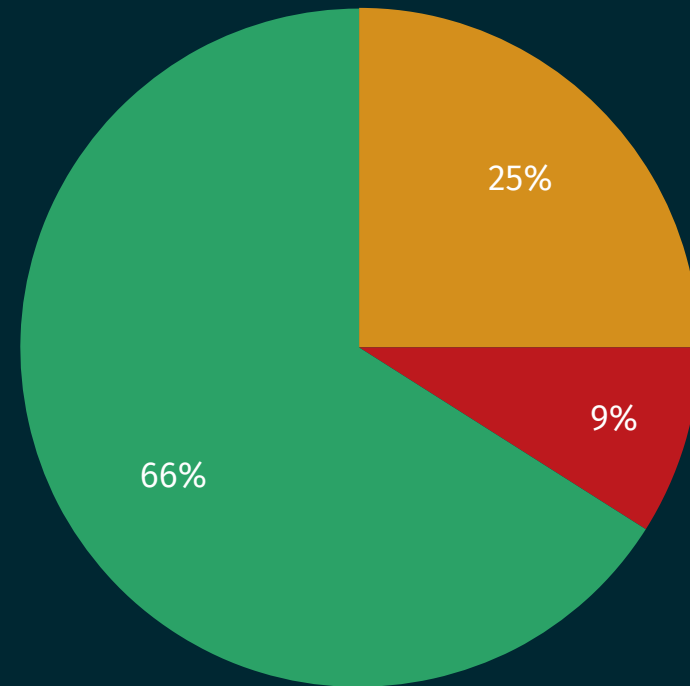
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For those areas for which targets were not achieved/missed - a number of influencing factors impacted upon service delivery and hence performance. For example: setting realistic targets for first time strategic actions; the Covid 19 pandemic and the rapid lockdown of services/activities caused difficulties in capturing final data for example: user numbers/participants and hosting and delivering planned events. Other influencing factors included instances where staff resources had to be redirected to deal with emerging issues or an in-year reduction in funding.

In terms of learning, the Council acknowledge the importance of setting meaningful performance measures, realistic but ambitious targets. This will be integral and taken on board as part of our annual Corporate Planning/ Business Planning and Performance Management processes. The implementation of our Performance Manager software system during 2019-20 has also been key to ensuring a consistent 'One Council' approach across the organisation in terms of performance and progress reporting. It has provided a better alignment to the Corporate Plan 2018-2023 and our Corporate Commitments. It ensures work is reflective with the scheme of delegation and also includes detail of agreed collaborative actions, ensuring Departments role (lead or supportive) are captured within Business Plans.

The performance software system is now in use by all departments and includes management reporting of progress against business plans. 2019-20 marked the first year whereby all Business Plans for 2019-20 are managed and reported on through the Performance Manager system.

In addition to streamlining and improving our corporate planning process, in our Performance Improvement Plan 2019-20, we highlighted specific functions /areas we wanted to improve. During 2019-20 we have been reviewing, monitoring and assessing how we have performed on these.

The Self-Assessment Report 2019-20 (in compliance with Local Government Performance Improvement Guidance), gives detail on issues identified through monitoring and review, as well as reference to any planned/implemented improvements. In line with new Guidance and as part of good governance, more emphasis and due consideration continues to be given to this area in our future Corporate /Performance Improvement Planning for 2021-22. It should be noted in light of current circumstances and the impact of Covid 19, the Department for Communities have confirmed by letter on 25 August 2020 that they will liaise with Councils to look at performance requirements going forward on changes to the performance planning arrangements for 2021-22 and beyond with no requirement to produce a Performance Improvement Plan for 2020-21.

Since 2015, Council has continued to show progress in a number of areas including consistently high performance in achieving our statutory Indicators and an upward trend in delivery of actions contributing to performance improvement objectives. For those actions that fell behind target, this report includes an accompanying narrative.

The Self-Assessment Report is sub-divided into three keys areas where we have assessed our performance. It presents our results against the standards/targets set and the resulting trends over a 4-year period (2016/17 – 2019/20). This report also shows additional benchmarking information in relation to sickness absence and prompt payments on a regional basis. These trends are illustrated in accompanying appendices.

1. **Statutory performance indicators and standards**, including Economic Development, Planning and Waste.

6 ACTIONS   **1** ACTIONS

2. Gathering data from across all departments, Council has carried out an analysis of the **Performance Improvement Objectives** agreed for 2019/20. The main body of this report contains detailed information and narrative on the achievement of these objectives during this period. Performance data from previous years (were relevant) has also been included to identify trends in continuous improvement.

1 ACTIONS   **23** ACTIONS   **6** ACTIONS   **4** ACTIONS

3. A number of **Self-Imposed Indicators** were monitored for 2019-20. It should be noted that within Council's Performance Management Framework /Software and governance structure, review and monitoring of all business plans and associated performance measures are reported on a quarterly and 6-monthly basis. Each Departmental Business Plan contain their specific self-imposed indicators relevant to their business delivery.

Performance Key
Our Self-Assessment Report 2019-20 uses a traffic light rating system or BRAG status definition as a visual cue to performance. The key below provides definitions for the four Black, Red, Amber, Green (BRAG) status levels which have been chosen to measure progress.

RATING:
BLACK   [Information not available at time of reporting]
GREEN   [Standards/targets on track/being met/exceeded]
AMBER   [Standards/targets fallen slightly short/behind schedule]
RED   [Standards/targets not achieved/missed]

It should be noted we have allowed for a 10% deviation rate when analysing data/ performance measures

STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS & STANDARDS

Under the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, a number of performance indicators and standards are set for each of the 11 Northern Ireland Councils. These indicators and standards will continue to apply until an amending order or new order is enacted and include the functions of Economic Development, Planning & Waste Management.

The aim of the performance measures is to promote the improvement of service delivery in these three service areas. A summary table of the Councils performance in these three areas can be referred to in Appendix A.

Economic Development:

The Department of Economy set the Economic Development indicators and standards as part of the governance and performance management arrangements for the Economic Development functions, which has transferred to local councils. Information on the 11 Councils performance for 2019-2020 is set out in Appendix B.

Planning:

The Department of Infrastructure set the Planning indicators and standards as part of the governance and performance management arrangements for the Planning functions transferred to local councils. The Department publishes performance by council area on a quarterly basis through the NI Planning Statistics Report. Information may be accessed using the following link: www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-april-2019-march-2020

Waste Management:

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEARA) set the Waste Management indicators and standards. The Department publishes performance by council area on a quarterly basis through the NI Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics report. Information may be accessed using the following link: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-local-authority-collected-municipal-waste-management-statistics-january-march-2020

This section of the report details how Council has performed over the 4 year period (2016/17 – 2019/20) in relation to the statutory performance indicators for Economic Development, Planning and Waste Management. The accompanying narrative provides a rationale and an analysis of the activity within each area.

Economic Development

This indicator relates to the number of jobs promoted by Council through business start-up activity[2]. There were 229 jobs promoted through business start-up activity in 2019-20. This was 8 more than 2018-19 and the highest number recorded since 2016/17 when 232 jobs were promoted. Council has maintained its overall ranking as the 2nd best performing council within Northern Ireland in 2019/20.

It is noted the Business Start-up Programme statutory target of 165 jobs is a historic target imposed by the Department for Economy. Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Council have continued to exceed this target each year. Through the NI Regional working group, all Councils provide feedback to the Department on realistic target setting, the value of measurement alongside the outcomes for citizens. At the time of this report, there is currently a new programme under development. A new statutory target of 182 jobs per year has been approved by Council and is under consideration by the Department.

Jobs Promoted Through Business Start-up Activity

- 2016/17
- 2017/18
- 2018/19
- 2019/20

Planning

During 2019/20, the average processing time for the Council to decide major planning applications was 45.2 weeks, outside the 30 week statutory target, which is below the NI average of 52.8 weeks. Only 2 councils managed to meet the statutory target of 30 weeks. This was an increase of 21.6 weeks on 2018/19 (23.6 weeks) when the statutory target was met.

The average processing time for the Council to decide local applications during 2019-20 remained consistent at 14.6 weeks, the same time taken in 2018-19 and within the 15 week target. The NI average is 14 weeks. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council is one of only seven councils who achieved the statutory target of 15 weeks.

The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks was at its highest level of the last four financial years, 5.9 percentage points higher in 2019/20 (85.9%) than 2018-19 (80.0%) and above the 70% target.

During 2019-20:
- 1,263[3] applications were received (4th highest across Northern Ireland) –a decrease of just over 6% on the previous year.
- 1,120 decisions on local development applications (4th highest across Northern Ireland) were made.
- 19 Major applications were received (13 in 2018/19).
- 398 enforcement cases were concluded – a decrease of 6% on the previous financial year. This represents the 5th highest number of cases across Northern Ireland. 85.9% of cases concluded were within 39 weeks.

2 Business start-up activity means the delivery of completed client-led business plans under the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's Regional Start Initiative or its successor programmes
3 The number of planning applications received in Northern Ireland in 2019/20 was 12,207, a decrease of nearly 3% on the previous year. Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council processed just over 10% of the overall applications received.
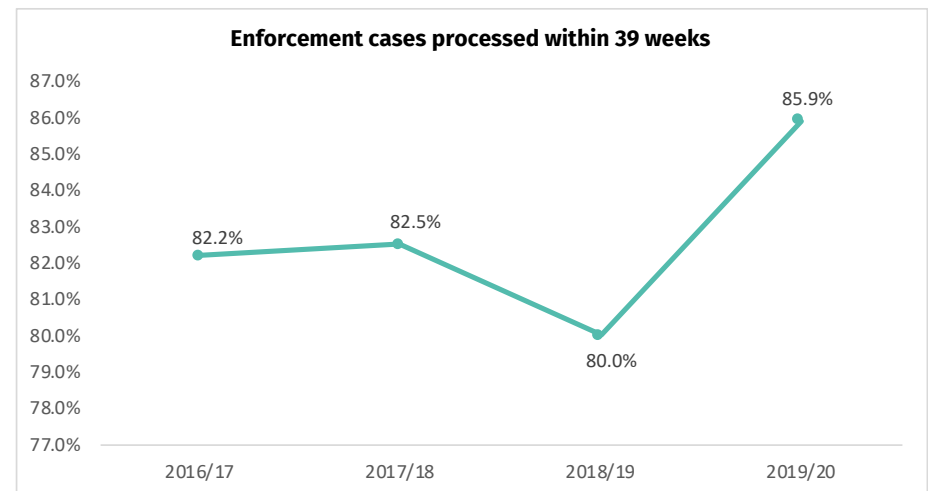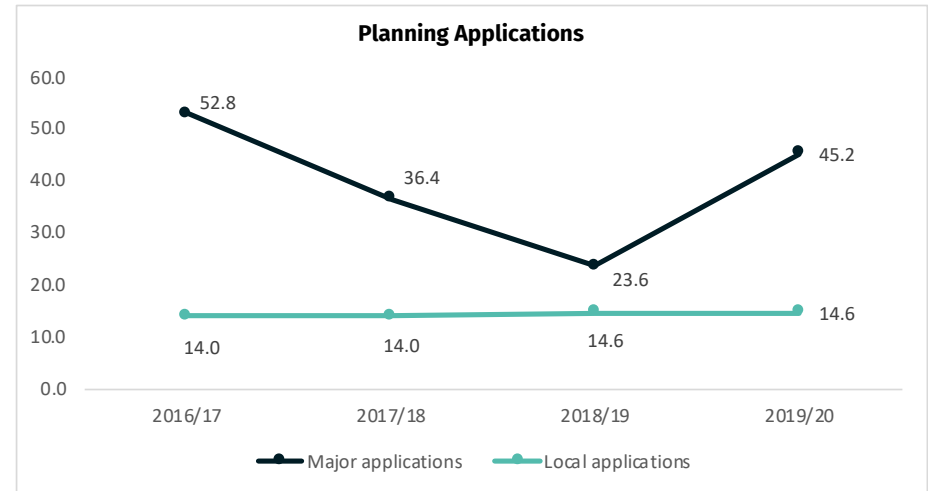
Whilst we reported last year, Council's continued focus and investment to date in the transfer of function can be evidenced in our achievements over the past number of years, this year (2019-20) it is noted that Council's Planning Department has been successful in meeting 2 out of 3 of its standards during 2019-20.

We fell behind in meeting the average processing times for major planning applications, this was due to a number of factors such as the department issuing decisions for 3 legacy applications, as well as 2 legacy applications being withdrawn by the applicant during the period.

The number of major applications received increased in 2019/20 by 6 to a total of 19 applications. These included:
- 7 major housing schemes
- 2 large scale industrial schemes
- 3 community proposals
- 1 new school
- 2 tourist related proposals
- 1 major mixed use retailing/housing
- 3 Quarry related applications

The applications above represent not only major investment into the regeneration of the Borough, but extensive work from our Planning Department.

Planning Applications

Year	Major applications	Local applications
2016/17	52.8	14.0
2017/18	36.4	14.0
2018/19	23.6	14.6
2019/20	45.2	14.6

Enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks

Year	%
2016/17	82.2%
2017/18	82.5%
2018/19	80.0%
2019/20	85.9%

Waste Management

The percentage of household waste sent for recycling (W1) has been increasing year on year, with provisional results for 2019-20 showing an increase of 3.1 percentage points on 2018-19 figures. The total amount of waste collected (W3) has also increased over the last four financial years with provisional figures for 2019-20 show an increase of 0.9% (914 tonnes) on the previous year. The amount of biodegradable waste being landfilled (W2) has decreased over the last four financial years, with provisional figures for 2019/20 being 45.0% lower than 2016-17.

The efforts of the Environmental Services Department recycling teams have also contributed to improving indicators W1, W2 and W3 (see Appendix A). In particular, the provision of more food/organic waste collections to households in the Borough and the inclusion of glass in co-mingled collections.
Looking forward to 2020-21 we hope to undertake a public consultation and options appraisal to help decide on a single collection system for recycling from all households in the borough, harmonising the service, whilst also continuing to improve on our recycling targets.

Waste Collected and Landfilled (W3)

Legend: Waste Collected / Biodegradable Waste Landfilled

Household Waste Sent for Recycling (W1)
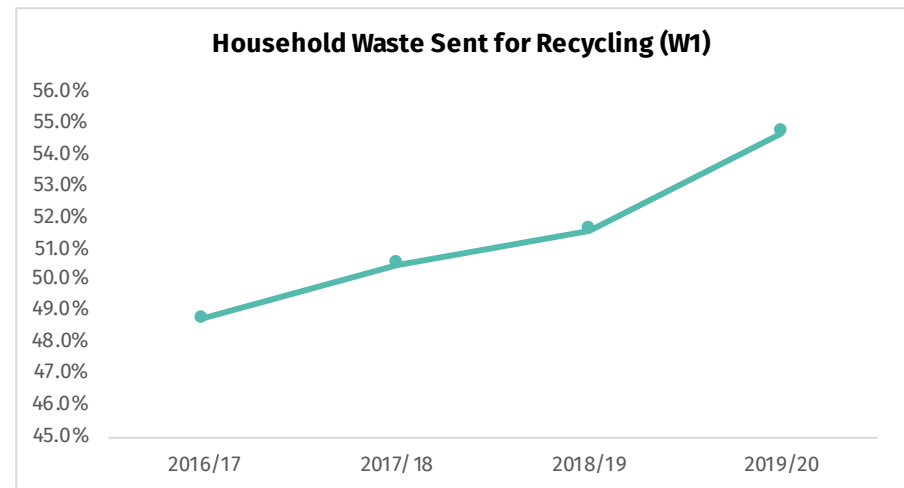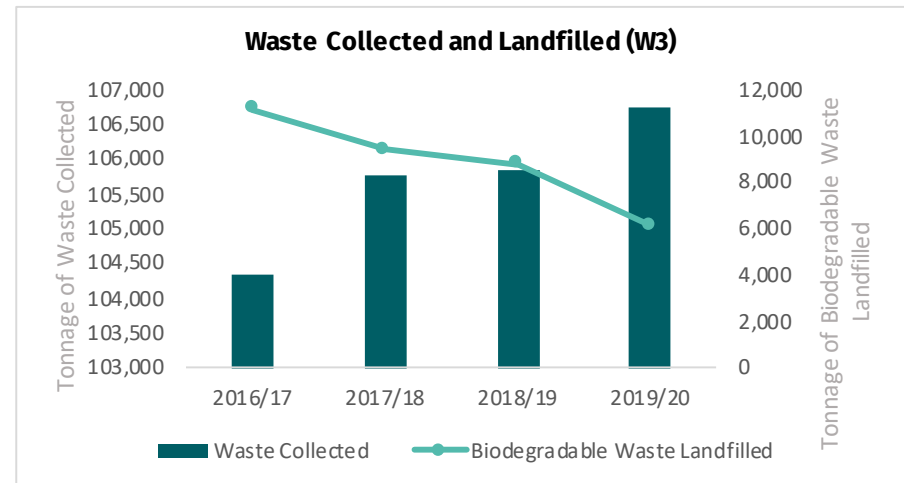
PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2019-2020

In June 2019, the Council published its Performance Improvement Plan for 2019-20. The Plan contained five performance improvement objectives as set out below.

Performance Improvement Objective 1 (PIO1):
We will support businesses to improve economic growth across the borough.

Performance Improvement Objective 2 (PIO2):
We will improve the physical appearance and maintain above average levels of cleanliness for our urban and rural areas.

Performance Improvement Objective 3 (PIO3):
We will improve our methods of obtaining customer feedback and increase the numbers of departments with baseline satisfaction levels.

Performance Improvement Objective 4 (PIO4):
We will implement recommendations from Planning and Building Control Service Reviews.

Performance Improvement Objective 5 (PIO5):
We will increase participation in Council led health, cultural and social activities.

In agreeing the above Objectives, Council selected a number of key actions and associated performance measures that would ensure we measure our progress and achieve the improvements and benefits residents, businesses and visitors expect.

This section of the self-assessment report provides information on how these performance objectives have been achieved or progressed, using a range of statutory and non-statutory performance indicators and standards/targets. We also reference, where relevant, data compiled from previous years to show trends to ensure continuous improvement. Please note some of the statutory indicators and standards reported on in the previous section, and are relevant to Performance Improvement Objectives 1, 2 and 4 as measures of performance in relation to achievement of these particular objectives.

Performance Improvement Objective 1 (PIO1):
We will support businesses to improve economic growth across the borough.

To measure the success and outcome of achieving PIO1 objective, Council agreed a key set of actions. Each action had an associated performance indicator: a standard and/or target set by Council to demonstrate and measure the success of the action and towards the achievement of the objective. At the end of March 2020, data collected by relevant Departments demonstrate all of the targets (100%) were met.

The Public Consultation exercise conducted for the 2019-20 Performance Improvement Objectives, re-confirmed 'support to the economy' remained a high priority for the citizens of the Borough. Council acknowledged and recognised whilst we have consistently achieved a continuous upward trend in past years, we have revised and increased annual target setting, to ensure continuous improvement. The key actions for PIO1, outlined in the Performance Improvement Plan 2019-20 are detailed below. As part of our self-assessment, and to fulfil, the statutory requirement set out in the Local Government Act, we have included, where appropriate, indicators and standards collected in previous years to demonstrate trends.

The table below reflects the data /information captured in relation to PIO1.

Key Actions to Deliver PIO1	Performance Indicators (19/20 standard/target)	2016 -2017	2017-2018	2018 – 2019	2019-2020	How did we do? (RAG)
Promote & facilitate new business start-ups by delivering the 'Go For It' business start- up programme	Number of new jobs promoted through 'Business Start-up' activity (Statutory target 165) (Council target set in PIP 182)	232 jobs	185 jobs	221 jobs	229 jobs	🟢
	Number of Business Plan Applications approved (the Northern Ireland Business Start Up Programme) (TARGET 266)	307 Bus Plans	276 Business Plans	360 Business Plans	373 Business Plans	🟢

Key Actions to Deliver PIO1	Performance Indicators (19/20 standard/target)	2016 -2017	2017-2018	2018 – 2019	2019-2020	How did we do? (RAG)
Support the growth efforts of our indigenous Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), micro enterprises and social enterprises, by delivering a range of Council led support and training programmes	The number of businesses participating in Council led programmes (TARGET 348)	N/A	121 SMEs supported	122 SMEs supported	485 businesses	🟢
Enable rural businesses, Via the SOAR Rural Development Programme, to access funding to assist businesses to grow and diversify	The number of new rural jobs created through the SOAR Rural Development Programme (TARGET 25)	68 full time 5 part time	13 Full Time	26 Full time	28 Full Time 7 part time jobs created	🟢
Delivery of a range of initiatives for businesses to enhance and support regulatory compliance	The number of Environmental Health initiatives delivered. (TARGET 10)	N/A	N/A	N/A	15	🟢

How Have We Performed?

The Economic Development Department delivers a number of business support initiatives e.g. Business Engagement Programme, Growth Driver, Digi Transform, Export Programmes.

During the year 2019-20 most of the business support initiatives exceeded the projected targets. An overall projected target of businesses was set at 348 – this was exceeded with a total of 485 businesses supported.

In particular the Economic Development Department saw most interest in its Business Engagement, Growth Driver and Digi-Transform programmes- specific programmes that contribute to the economic growth of the borough.

The **Business Engagement Programme** offers tailored 1-2-1 mentoring support specific to the business needs. This year 136 businesses from across the borough participated in this programme. Feedback from participants has been positive, illustrating the benefits to citizens:

"*met with me over the course of a matter of weeks and provided me with an insight into social media, deeper than I realised existed, which has undoubtedly boosted my social media presence in a competitive market. ....Even after the programme finished, we have kept in touch sharing best practice and success stories.* „

The **Growth Driver** programme assists local businesses to grow by utilising innovation: "*.......through Growth Driver we quickly went online and developed an e-commerce store.* „

The **Export Programmes** support local businesses to develop sales opportunities outside Northern Ireland.

"*.......This is my first time participating in a support programme like this and I found it really helpful. Going out and selling your products is very different to what I'm used to and the support provided was excellent.* „

The Council's Rural Development Programme, via SOAR (Southern Organisation for Action in Rural areas) has met and exceeded its job creation target for 2019/20 with 28 Full Time and 7 part time jobs created. An example of the job roles created and the economic growth in the rural areas include Machine Operatives, Marketing Officer, Mechanical Engineer, Maintenance Officer, Production Staff and Technical Operatives.

Since the programme's inception in 2015 a total of 119 jobs have been created in the rural areas of the borough to date. This has outperformed the original strategy objectives of the programme which was for a total of 95 jobs to be created.

Council also recognise the importance to provide ongoing support to businesses in terms of regulatory compliance and assisting them with their potential and future growth plans.

During 2019-20, the Environmental Health Department delivered a total of 15 interventions to businesses to enhance and support regulatory compliance.

The interventions focused on
- Consumer Protection with advice to businesses on compliance with legislation and the sale of safe products spanning the following: the sale of aerosols; safety of blind cords and home inflatables in efforts to reduce fatal home accidents of children; electronic cigarettes and the supply of safe products; the sale and readiness in the event of product recalls for electrical appliances; the safety of goods sold at key events as well as a review of existing product safety information and the need for a resource on product safety for business.
- Advising food businesses and capturing data in preparation for EU Exit.
- Health and Safety including: the promotion of skin safety to raise awareness of skin cancer and early detection including legislation in relation to the sale and hire of sunbeds to those under 18 years; the safe use of welding equipment as well as advice and guidance for businesses and partner agencies in relation to crowd management.

Towards the end of 2019-20 - the focus for support to businesses undertook a seismic shift as the UK Government announced lockdown measures to deal with the global pandemic. The Economic Development, Regeneration and Environmental Health Departments (supported by other Departments), demonstrated their continued commitment to supporting the local economy.

Rapidly responding to the change in need of our businesses, a Business Support Hub, specifically designed to help small local businesses, was established. The Hub manned by Officers, provided much needed support, advice and assistance, as well as a Frequently Asked Questions resources in response to the Covid 19 pandemic in those early weeks.

The vital support services provided by Departments clearly illustrates how Council provide support to businesses to improve economic growth, to protect both our local businesses as well as the health, safety and welfare of the population. This support continued, evolved and adopted as we moved through lockdown measures during 2020-21.

Performance Improvement Objective 2 (PIO2):

We will improve the physical appearance and maintain above average levels of cleanliness for our urban and rural areas.

To measure the success and outcome of achieving PIO2 objective, Council agreed a key set of actions. Each action had an associated performance indicator: a standard and/or target set by Council to demonstrate and measure the success of the action and towards the achievement of the objective. At the end of March 2020, data collected by relevant Departments demonstrate 75% of the targets were met.

The table below reflects the data /information captured in relation to PIO2.

Key Actions to Deliver PIO2	Performance Indicators (19/20 standard/target)	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2018/19	How did we do? (RAG)
Implement the Clean Neighbourhoods Action Plan: borough wide grass cutting schedule and a borough wide cleansing model	Levels of cleanliness as per Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) survey (TARGET: Top quartile)	N/A	N/A	Equal to the NI average of 68. Joint 5th	Data not available at time of report	●
	Number of high quality parks/green spaces (those holding Green Flag Award status or similar) maintained (TARGET 10 Flags)	11*	11*	11*	9* (accumulative figure = 17 Green Flags)	●
Establish baseline customer satisfaction levels for cleanliness, through a customer survey	Customer satisfaction survey undertaken. (TARGET: baseline established)	N/A	N/A	N/A	**Recycling** 92% **Organic** (Brown bins) 96% **Residual** (Black bin) 96% **Street cleaning** 88%	●

*previous years figures includes or 'similar status' for parks/green spaces. Figure for 2019/20 relates to Green Flags only.

Key Actions to Deliver PIO2	Performance Indicators (19/20 standard/target)	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2018/19	How did we do? (RAG)
Implement Town Centre Taskforce Action Plan. **New Action**	Number of actions implemented within relevant timescale from Town Centre Taskforce Action Plans including: (TARGETS: Empty to Occupied Scheme is open for Stage 1 applications	N/A	N/A	N/A	Presentations made to all Task Force meetings February 2020.	🟠
	2 gateway projects at design stage	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	🟢
	4 vacant /derelict properties/sites shrouded / screened	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	🟢
	2 potential new town centre businesses	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	🔴
	Number of property owners/retailers engaged in funding initiatives (TARGET: 50)	110 property owners/ business/ retailers	180 property owners/ business/ retailers	129 retailers engaged in masterclass funded via DfC	180 property owners/ business/ retailers	🟢

How Have We Performed?

Ensuring that the urban and rural areas of the Borough for which Council is responsible, are well maintained is fundamental if we are to fulfil our corporate commitment to ensure our neighbourhoods are more attractive, healthier, safer and cleaner. Whilst Council is performing extremely well in terms of the statutory recycling rates, (54.7% achieved in 2019-20 Statutory Performance indicators for Waste Management) we still face increasing challenges in relation to cleanliness impacted by littering, graffiti and dog fouling.

To ascertain the feedback from citizens and to establish a baseline customer satisfaction on the levels of cleanliness, in June 2019, we conducted a door-to-door residents' survey to around homes in the Borough. The survey was designed to determine resident satisfaction with: Recycling Collection Services,

Street Cleaning, Litter & Dog Fouling Bins, Promotional campaigns aimed at behavioural change, Community Engagement initiatives and fines for littering and dog fouling. Interviews were undertaken door to door across each of the 4 areas detailed above, 400 residents were spoken to at their doorstep.

The survey concluded that households were satisfied/very satisfied with waste (96%) and recycling (92%) collection services provided in terms of it meeting their needs, delivering to a consistently high level and having staff that are courteous.

The survey also indicated there is a great desire amongst householders that the Council run promotional campaigns to discourage littering by car owners, dog owners and pedestrians. Both our Environmental Services and Environmental Health

Departments have taken on board these recommendations and in 2020-21 will continue to jointly organise targeted promotional campaigns, to engage and work along with local communities, schools etc. to help reduce litter and clean up neighbourhoods, and will review and explore the provision of litter/dog fouling bins in the Borough.

In addition to this positive feedback, Council continues to make strides with further improvement measures, in 2020-21 we will be introducing a fully harmonised service for the kerbside collection of dry recyclable materials and will be going out to consult with the public on options available to them.

Council also continue to support and utilise the services of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) including their annual survey (2019/20) to help inform and improve the cleanliness

of the Borough. It is noted with regards to Local Environmental Audit & Management System (LEAMS) levels of cleanliness figures – these relate to 2018-19 and are therefore one year behind the figures in the rest of KNIB annual report. Because of careful auditing and the public presentation process public finances go through, the approved figures are only made available in late autumn of the following year.

This performance objective also sought to improve the physical appearance and attractiveness of our urban and rural areas. Our Environmental Services Department has continued to maintain the requisite high standard at each location to ensure 9 Green Flags awards are achieved each year. The standards/management plans for each of the sites continue to be maintained outside of the green flag process. This results in an

accumulative figure of 17 Green Flags awarded within the council area.

A huge amount of work has been delivered by our Regeneration Department throughout the year towards achieving this objective.

Prior to launching the Empty to Occupied scheme, all processes for the scheme were prepared, finalised, and presented to the Task Force in February and Economic Development and Regeneration committee in March 2020. Unfortunately the timing of the launch was then influenced by Covid 2019. The scheme will be reviewed and reassessed in line financial pressures in 2020-21. Despite the Empty to Occupied scheme being delayed, the Regeneration Department continued to support economic, social, physical and environmental regeneration for the businesses and town centres in the Borough. In response to the

pandemic, Officers were redeployed to support the Covid 19 Business Support function and provide support to businesses operating in town centres. Engagement with stakeholders during March 2020 and into 2020-21, identified key areas of focus which the Department is developing in line with the Executive pathway to recovery. A Regeneration Action Plan will enable Council to support the businesses, promote the urban centres as safe spaces and open for business and promote animation of the urban centres to entice people to visit and use them again, supporting local businesses, particularly those within key affected sectors including hospitality and retail.

A number of physical regeneration projects were delivered in 2019-20, this included the River Lagan Improvement Scheme, Dromore which included vegetation clearance

at River Lagan, installation of a River Lagan Walk entrance sign and wayfinding, upgrade of Historic Dromore Trail, these interventions have improved the sense of arrival at this point for users and highlights the start of the River walk, improving connectivity for citizens between Dromore town centre and Dromore Town Park. Two welcome sign-features have been manufactured representing linen heritage of Lurgan and are awaiting installation at William Street and High Street, Lurgan, the welcome signs will improve the sense of arrival for visitors and citizens alike.
4 key sites identified in the across Borough have also benefited from decorative shrouding of prominent sites improving the streetscape.

The first site shrouding on the Former Police Station, Banbridge depicts the story of Captain Crozier and exploration of the North West

Passage, this is in an interpretive form for visitors and provides a sense of arrival to Banbridge.
The second site close to the train station in Portadown, Obins Street shrouding captures the history of the railway in Portadown. It has been extremely well received by the local community and has been featured in Heritage Railway magazine. The third site also in Portadown, the shrouding round Calvin's Mill conveys the role the building played in the riverside industry. The building sits along a key gateway into Portadown and provides a historical account of the significance of this key site.

The fourth key site developed in 2019-20 was Church Walk in Lurgan – the boundary fence was very dilapidated, unsightly and a health and safety risk to the public. This has now been replaced by a paladin fence which is much more secure and aesthetically pleasing for users of the car park.

Continuing to promote and improve economic growth throughout the borough, the Go to Market event was a proposed half-day reception to showcase the Borough as a potential investment location for private sector property developers, open to do business and proactively seeking new investment and economic growth prospects, in terms of regeneration, economic development and tourism. It was anticipated that the audience would consist of major decision makers and intermediaries in the UK and international property markets, who currently invest in development opportunities particularly hotel, retail and residential, and who had not yet to date invested in the Borough. Preparations were underway and arrangements in place, however the event was postponed due to Covid 19 and government guidelines. Whilst the event itself was postponed, the Regeneration Department were actively involved in providing support to the local economy via the Business Support Hub.

Finally, the Shop Front Grant Scheme (SFGS) has been highly successful and well received with more interest than anticipated at the initial call for applicants. In response to this demand, additional funding was made available, allowing Council to issuing 180 letters of offer to successful property/business owners. To date 75% have been completed and the remaining 25% will be completed in 2020-21. The Shop Front Schemes have had a very positive impact on the streetscape of our city, towns and villages increasing visibility of businesses in the Borough.

Performance Improvement Objective 3 (PIO3):

We will improve out methods of obtaining customer feedback and increase the numbers of departments with baseline satisfaction levels.

To measure the success and outcome of achieving PIO3 objective, Council agreed a key set of actions. Each action had an associated performance indicator: a standard and/or target set by Council to demonstrate and measure the success of the action and towards the achievement of the objective. At the end of March 2020, data collected by relevant Departments demonstrate 50% of the targets were met. However it is noted, upon approval of relevant guidance, and re-engagement of recruitment- these actions can be progressed and achieved in 2020-21.

The table below reflects the data /information captured in relation to PIO3.

Key Actions to Deliver PIO3	Performance Indicators (19/20 standard/target)	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2018/19	How did we do? (RAG)
Develop internal guidance for Council departments on methods to obtain customer feedback | New Action	Internal guidance developed on methods to obtain customer feedback (TARGET: 1 Guidance document)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Draft Guidance prepared, Awaiting approval	🟠
Provide training on guidance for all Council departments | New Action	The number of departments trained on guidance (TARGET: 15)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Training has not taken place, and is dependent upon approval of the above Guidance.	🔴
Develop and agree a plan for departments to obtain customer satisfaction information	The number of departments with baseline customer satisfaction levels (TARGET: min 50% of Dept.'s = 8)	1	4	6	8	🟢
Maximise use of Council's Consultation Hub	Guidance and training provided to all departments on the use of the "You said, We did" facility on the Council's Consultation Hub (TARGET: in use by Autumn 2019)	N/A	N/A	N/A	In use from Sept 2019	🟢

How Have We Performed?

During 2019-20 we can evidence an increased number of Departments are utilising the Consultation Hub. There has been a steady increase from 4 Departments using the Hub in 2017-18 to 8 Departments in 2019-20. 45 consultation surveys were posted during the year. These ranged from Departments seeking feedback/ views from stakeholders on attitudes about crime, community safety in the Borough, views on new and existing public realm our town centres, levels of cleanliness standards in our community centre, views on how to engage everyone in physical activity and get them moving, and finding out what our customer thinks about our parks, green spaces and woodlands.

This demonstrates how the Consultation Hub is continually being embedded as a one council approach across the organisation. As we strive to encourage all 15 Departments to use the Hub, additional refresher training planned for Q1 2020-21 to ensure all Departments have a champion for the usage of the Consultation Hub. This is also aligned to the Customer Care Action plan and enhances the business continuity for the organisation.

To further enhance and improve our external communications with the public and to improve our methods of obtaining customer satisfaction, work progressed on drafting the internal guidance, with approvals awaited. A target of Autumn 2019 was set, however due to reprioritisation of work plans within the Department the target timeline was not achieved. Council note the need to give due consideration to the wider Consultation agenda, particularly in light of recent pandemic and any implications for future consultation /feedback exercises.

Performance Improvement Objective 4 (PIO4):
We will implement recommendations from Planning and Building Control Service Reviews.

To measure the success and outcome of achieving PIO4 objective, Council agreed a key set of actions. Each action had an associated performance indicator: a standard and/or target set by Council to demonstrate and measure the success of the action and towards the achievement of the objective. At the end of March 2020, data collected by relevant Departments demonstrate 62.5% of targets were met.

The table below reflects the data /information captured in relation to PIO4.

Key Actions to Deliver PIO4	Performance Indicators (19/20 standard/target)	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2018/19	How did we do? (RAG)
Implement short term (6mths) and medium term (12mths) recommendations from the Building Control Service Review **New Action**	The number of short term and medium term recommendations implemented from the Building Control Service Review (TARGET: 4 recommendations are implemented for Building Control within 6 months.	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	🟢
	5 recommendations are implemented for Building Control within 12 months	N/A	N/A	N/A	Training has not taken place, and is dependent upon approval of the above Guidance.	🟠
Develop and implement administration model for Building Control **New Action**	Building Control administration model developed and implemented TARGET: by Sept 2019)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Model developed. Implementation ongoing.	🟠

Key Actions to Deliver PIO4	Performance Indicators (19/20 standard/target)	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2018/19	How did we do? (RAG)
Planning Department to appoint an Action Plan Implementation Manager **New Action**	Implementation Manager appointed (TARGET: by Q3 2019)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Post filled in end of Q3/Jan 2020	🟢
Implement recommendations from the Planning Service Review **New Action**	Commence delivery of Planning Action Plan recommendations relevant to 2019-2020 (TARGET: by Q3 2019)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Commenced	🟢
	The average processing time of major planning applications (statutory) (TARGET:30 weeks)	52.8 weeks	36.4 weeks	23.6 weeks	45.2 weeks	🔴
	The average processing time of local planning applications (statutory) [4] (TARGET:30 weeks)	14 weeks	14 weeks	14.6 weeks	14.6 weeks	🟢
	The percentage of planning enforcement cases progressed within 39 weeks (TARGET:70% within 39 weeks)	82.2%	82.5%	80%	85.9%	🟢

4 Statutory indicator as required under The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015

How Have We Performed?

During 2019-20, the Building Control Department progressed with ongoing development, reviewing and testing of the administration model. The implementation and operations of the model is heavily dependent upon appropriate administration resources, unfortunately during the year delays were experienced in the recruitment process, however work has progressed during 2020/21 to ensure this process is back on track and continues to be a priority for the Department.

With regards to the implementation of the recommendations from Building Control's service review, progress has been made on a number of actions. Examples of the short terms actions implemented within the first 6 months of 2019/20, include: the introduction of the on-line Building Control applications system, the harmonisation of communications/procedures across 3 sites, centralisation of Property Certifications system, and ongoing development of a Mobile App.

Positive feedback has been received from both customers and staff on the improvements experienced, resulting in more efficient and prompt turnaround times for applications.

Work has also progressed on the medium term actions identified as part of the service review. The Building Control Department have established a generic Building Regulations 3 list, and in partnership with the Planning Department an Enforcement pilot was established and to date has proved to be a more effective management process. Workloads and current outputs across all 3 sites were also reviewed to ensure a balanced approach and improved performances against KPIs for assessment of Building Regulations applications.

Building Control report at year end 2019/20 the recommendation on conducting a qualitative and quantitative audit of plan checking & site inspections is partly completed. Plan checking has been actioned however the site inspection element was not completed. The Department intend to complete in 2020-21, however recognise influential factors such as successful recruitment and social distancing requirements.

Towards the end of 2019/20 with the successful appointment of a designated resource, the implementation of recommendations from the Planning Department's service review has increased in pace. At March 2020 40% of recommendations have been implemented and delivery on these will continue into 2020/21. For example, the Department are preparing an updated Scheme of Delegation for Committee consideration, which will assist in improving the service delivery of the Department. The Department also plans to pilot a new Validation process in 2020/21 and in partnership with Building Control, this will enhance the early identification of on-site planning breaches.

The Council's Planning department issued 12 Major planning decisions during the period, which was 4 more than the previous year. Whilst we failed to meet the target of 30 weeks (Council's processing time = 45.2weeks) this was significantly lower than the NI average of 53 weeks. The Planning

Department note and acknowledge the influential factors towards this target including: bringing to conclusion a number of complex legacy cases- this had a significant impact on performance by negatively skewing the average processing time. In addition during 2019/20, as aforementioned the Planning Department experienced a significant increase in the number of major planning applications received, a 46% increase in major applications received. Notwithstanding this, 3 major applications were processed within the target standard.

The average processing time across Northern Ireland to decide local applications during 2019-20 was 14 weeks. The average processing time in this council was 14.6 weeks. It should be noted that only 7 councils managed to meet the statutory target of 15 weeks.

During 2019/20 the Council's Planning department brought 398 enforcement cases to a conclusion which is a decrease of just over 6% on the previous financial year and was the 5th highest number of cases concluded across all council areas and 15.9 percentage points above target.

Performance Improvement Objective 5 (PIO5):
We will increase participation in Council led health, cultural and social activities.

To measure the success and outcome of achieving PIO5 objective, Council agreed a key set of actions. Each action had an associated performance indicator: a standard and/or target set by Council to demonstrate and measure the success of the action and towards the achievement of the objective. At the end of March 2020, data collected by relevant Departments demonstrate all of the targets (66%) were met.

The table below reflects the data /information captured in relation to PIO5.

Key Actions to Deliver PIO5	Performance Indicators (19/20 standard/target)	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2018/19	How did we do? (RAG)
We will continue to deliver, develop and promote leisure and recreation activities and health improvement programmes **New Action**	The number of targeted activities aimed at those sectors of the community that experience health inequalities. (TARGET: increase number of targeted activities by 5%)	N/A	N/A	103	128	🟢
	The number of participants on the Everybody Active Programme (TARGET: 8350 participants on Everybody Active Programme)	8,424	8,380	8,739	8,358	🟢
	The number of users to leisure centres and facilities (TARGET: increased annual users of leisure centres by 1% to 5m+)	4,331,366	2,070,899 (leisure centre numbers unavailable for 17/18)	5,104,859	5,500,900*	🟢
	The number of leisure centre memberships (TARGET: annual membership of 4,700)	3,868	4,557	4,663	5,798	🟢

Key Actions to Deliver PIO5	Performance Indicators (19/20 standard/target)	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2018/19	How did we do? (RAG)
We will provide and support a range of cultural and social activities	The number of residents and groups utilising Council Community Development services (TARGET: 620 groups assessed Financial Assistance Programme) The average processing time of major planning applications (statutory) (TARGET:30 weeks)	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	693 Commenced 21,600 Commenced	🟢 🟠
	The number of community centre and town hall bookings (TARGET: increased the number of bookings for community centres and town halls by 3%)	15,033 bookings	14,360 bookings	14,764 bookings	13,973 bookings	🔴
	The number of users of Council owned tourist/cultural venues (TARGET: attracted 210,000 users to Council owned tourist/cultural venues)	180,553	179,376	191,518	181,018	🟠
	Customer satisfaction levels with Council owned tourist/cultural venues (TARGET: achieved the highest score from 95% of customers on customer satisfaction surveys of our Tourism and Cultural venues)	N/A	N/A	N/A	91%	🟢

How Have We Performed?

The Environmental Health Department adopted a targeted approach in the delivery of health improvement programmes across the Borough, aimed at those that are most in need and experiencing health inequalities. Health improvement programmes aimed at improving physical and mental health included nutrition and how to cook healthy meals on a budget, cancer awareness and prevention, physical activity, falls prevention, emotional wellbeing, stress and relaxation, lifesaving skills and the Take 4 message of: connect; be active; take notice; keep learning and give.

Every Body Active 2020 is a physical activity intervention programme part funded by Sport NI. In 2019/2020 Council met this target by engaging with 8,358 participants, including those least likely to participate i.e. women and girls, people with a disability and those living in areas of greatest need.

'Love to Move' is an age and dementia friendly seated gymnastics programme and is one example of the type of physical activities that the Every Body Active 2020 coaches deliver. The benefits to citizens from these types of programme can be easily illustrated with the quote below from a coordinator:

"...., each week X visits and delivers the Love to Move programme to maintain physical and social interaction for our residents. X has many personal qualities, confident, bubbly and fun loving. She has built up a rapport with the residents and knows them individually and they look forward to her weekly visits. Staff also participate in the programme and remark about the enjoyment on residents' faces.,,

*With regards to the number of users to leisure centres and facilities, the pandemic and rapid lockdown of facilities at the year end, had an impact on collection and analysis of actual figures, as people counters etc. have continued to operate since the end of March. However, the third quarter figure was ahead of target, giving indications of on track to achieve the target.

Throughout 2019-20, a steady rise in the number of memberships has been recorded, the increase in marketing activity and the previous restructuring of membership prices, playing a key factor in this. Understandably, when the facilities were closed due to lockdown there was a dramatic fall off in memberships –hence it is not possible to give an accurate year end figure. However Officers are confident that the membership numbers were in excess of the target whilst the facilities were operational, recording a steady rise to a maximum of 5,798 in June 2020.

The use of our parks and outdoor spaces continues to rise modestly, thanks to the retention of our green flag status for a number of our parks and the outdoor events.

The Community Development Department provides a wide range of services which seek to empower communities, improve quality of life and build on connecting communities. This includes the Financial Assistance Programme and Advice Services.

The Financial Assistance Programme has made 693 funding awards to a diverse range of groups throughout the Borough to enable the delivery of

community based activities in response to need as identified by local groups. Support has been provided for running costs, programme costs, events and capital costs to support the wide variety of groups throughout the Borough. The Community Development Department also oversees the funding for the provision of Advice Services which have provided information and support in relation to queries around accessing benefits, dealing with debt, housing issues, immigration, legal concerns, family relationships and Employment support. The bulk of enquiries received in the 19/20 period were benefit and employment related. In terms of the age demographic more queries are raised by those in the 25-59 age bracket while in terms of gender - more females seek support from Advice Services than their male counterparts. On average 1,800 calls are responded to each month.

Community centres also provide the opportunity for a diverse range of community based activities to take place, these have included wide ranging activities from programmes for olds people, health & wellbeing programmes, arts & crafts for all ages and men's programmes. These activities act as a catalyst to bring people together to engage, socialise and build friendships. Within the 2019/20 period, there were a total of 13,973 bookings within the community centres. Council recognise this is below the annual target set for bookings, however this was due to several cancellations throughout the year across all community centres as a result of clients relocating to their own premises, finding alternative accommodation, cancellation of events and/or groups closing down.

Back in April 2019, Council held its third annual tourism conference, bringing together local businesses and industry leaders in a significant event designed to underline local strengths and new areas of focus. Delegates discussed local, national and international tourism trends, opportunities and challenges and the collective ambition and commitment to continue to not only raise the borough's fast-growing profile but to also focus on further enhancing the visitor experience.

Council was quick to capitalise on this ambition and in June 2019 hosted the prestigious UK Pipe Band Championships for the first time. Over 100 bands from the UK and Ireland, Europe, Canada and the USA took part in the event helping boosting tourism in the local area.

Throughout the rest of year the Tourism, Arts and Culture Department delivered a number of events / signature events hosted both inside and outside a range of facilities/venues all of which contribute to increasing our users/visitor numbers to the borough.

It was once again a very busy and successful year for the tourism, arts and culture venues with the highly acclaimed Penumbra, a critically acclaimed exhibition of 8 female Irish painters, hosted at FE McWilliam Gallery. Gallery Guides at the Banbridge based facility were declared the Friendliest Guides in the Thrive Audience Delight Awards 2019-2020.

Meanwhile, The Market Place Theatre & Centre had one of its busiest years since opening with in excess of 52,000 programme and performance attendees. Satisfaction levels were at 98% and the venue retained its Customer Care Excellence Award during the year. The Navan Centre & Fort continued to attract international tour groups with the re-invigorated living history offer, which was introduced to high acclaim and the centre was awarded Trip Advisor's Travellers Choice Award.

At the Armagh County Museum the year's major exhibition was Stray Sod by Armagh born Artist Orlaith Cullinaine, with associated guided tours and life drawing classes taking place over the period. This exhibition was also the inspiration for the flash fiction event, which ran at the beginning of 2020, and one-off events such as Museum Lates were a feature of the Museum's busy, annual programme.

In addition, 'Connected', Council's partnership project was successfully rolled out. The focus of the project was building active creative relationships between professional artists, community groups, schools, and the local community through mutually enriching processes, and developing partnerships between cultural venues, artists, and local audiences. 1,841 adults and children participated in Connected with 7,627 visitors to the project exhibitions.

Together with the Armagh Food & Cider Festival, another one of the key successes was the Armagh Georgian Festival. Held on the last weekend in November it has grown over the years from a 1-day event to a 4-day Festival. This is a well-established Festival with 2019 being the 16th anniversary. At the heart of the Festival is Georgian Day, this event is a celebration of food, craft and Armagh City's Georgian architecture and heritage. This year (2019/20) Georgian Day attracted approximately 25,000 visitors. 29% of visitors were from outside the Council area.

Feedback was actively sought from visitors, retailers, hospitality and stallholders, and was overwhelmingly positive. 76% reported that it had a positive impact on business transactions, 100% of Georgian Day stallholders felt the event was well organised, 90% considered it worthwhile for their business. From the face-to-face visitor survey conducted on Georgian Day itself, 90% of visitors rated overall atmosphere, event organisation, and uniqueness of the event and the range of things to see and do as Extremely Good/Good.

Importantly, 99% of visitors would likely revisit the event or recommend to family/friends.

With the onset of the pandemic, rapid lockdown measures played a major factor with Council's tourism, arts and culture venues closing in March and the Home of St Patricks Day festival also having been curtailed.

Council are well aware the tourism and hospitality industries have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic Covid -19 with travel restrictions imposed, consumer confidence challenged, and the visitor infrastructure such as airlines, accommodation providers, attractions and tour operators have all been negatively impacted.

The trading landscape for tourism for 2020-21 looks difficult and uncertain with an increased emphasis on the domestic market and preparing for the UK and International markets in 2021 and beyond.

Council will continue to actively pursue all opportunities and support for the sector; a service review in 2020-21 will explore all aspects of operations for our tourism, arts and cultural facilities and we will continue to work with colleagues in the national agencies such as Tourism Ireland and Tourism NI to further the agenda of the industry in the Borough, to engage with the private sector to explore 'new' development opportunities.

SELF-IMPOSED PERFORMANCE INDICATORS & STANDARDS 2019-2020

In addition to the Corporate Performance and self-imposed indicators contained within Departmental Business Plans, Council measured 2 further self-imposed standards/targets. In 2019/20 Council improved on the time it takes to pay suppliers and has reduced times for a 4th consecutive year. 76% of all FOI and EIR requests within 20 working days.

Self-Imposed Indicators	Standards/Targets 2019/20	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2018/19	Performance Key (RAG)
Average number of calendar days to pay suppliers	22 days	28.5 days	24.8 days	21 days	19.26 days	🟢
Percentage Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests responded to within 20 working days.	100% within 20 working days (or agreed appropriate timescale).	79%	68%	78%	76%	🔴

How Have We Performed?

Council's Finance Department has made significant progress on reducing the average time it takes the Council to pay invoices. At 31st March 2020 the average days was reduced to 19.26 days, below the target set of 22 days and at an increased rate of almost 2 days from the previous year (2018-19). This will be reported in our annual accounts.

Prompt Payment information is published on the Council's website and details for the 2019/20 financial year can be found at:
www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/finance-information/#2020

During 2019-20, Council received 651 FOI requests. Plans to further develop the Information Requests database to assist in monitoring and reporting of FOI/Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) activity has been delayed (scheduled for March 20 – delayed due to pandemic). Guidance will be issued to staff as part of ongoing training to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities when processing requests and to ensure that they have a better understanding of the legislation and associated timescales.

Each of the 15 Departmental Business Plans contain bespoke self-imposed indicators and standards relative to the delivery of their service area. Each Department reported their Annual Progress to Council in June 2020. This is available to view using the following link abc.public-minutes.com

BENCHMARKING

Understanding current levels of performance is a prerequisite to understanding what improvements might be possible in the future. Benchmarking is one approach that can be used to identify both efficient and inefficient activities in the public sector. During 2019/20, a regional multi-stakeholder Performance Group consisting of representatives from the 11 Northern Ireland Councils, the Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Audit Office was established to work on terms of reference for the development of an NI Regional benchmarking framework.
In compliance with the Statutory Guidance on the General Duty, benchmarking/ comparison information forms part of our assessment report this year.

As such, we have included comparisons with other Councils relating to the statutory indicators and standards, and comparisons on prompt payment and staff absenteeism data. These are attached in Appendices C and D.

Appendix C shows detailed Staff Absenteeism figures for our Council in comparison with all Councils across Northern Ireland. While the trend will show an increase each year in the number of days lost, there has been a consecutive improvement in the last 2 years in the level of short term absence. Long term absence continues to be a challenge. Stress and mental health continues to be the main factor, and this is closely followed by cancer related illnesses and musculoskeletal conditions.

The management of absenteeism receives a high focus within the Council and will continue to do so. For the year ahead, we have committed to a number of priority actions which include, the roll out of a new Attendance Policy and targeted training for line managers, the appointment of a dedicated lead officer within the HR team and the roll out of a number of wellbeing measures through our new Health & Wellbeing Committee.

Appendix D shows Prompt Payment figures for our Council alongside figures for other Councils across Northern Ireland. From 2015 to date there has been a fluctuation in terms of number of processing days for invoices. Influential factors include e.g. increase in application of anti-fraud measures, changes in staff, ongoing review of process, and maintaining business continuity. However Council continues to work to reduce processing times. We have established an internal support mechanism and reviewed Purchase Order numbering. Correspondence was also issued to all Council's suppliers reminding them to adhere to Terms and Conditions of Goods & Services to the Council, ensuring all relevant documentation was quoted upon invoicing. This will continue to be monitored. Council has met its own Self Imposed indicator for the average number of days to process an invoice, reducing this time to 19.26 days.

COMMITTED TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & GENERAL DUTY TO IMPROVE

The Council wants to assure all residents, businesses and all other stakeholders that it is fully committed to using its best endeavours to deliver services that are efficient, economical and of an exemplary standard. Council looks forward to working with residents, local businesses, our statutory partners and all other stakeholders to ensure that this happens.

As the second largest Council in Northern Ireland, we are now expected by Elected Members, local residents, businesses and other stakeholders to provide services which are better, more efficient and effective than they were before Local Government Reform in 2015, as we continue on our transformation journey.

Our Corporate Plan 2018-2023 outlines our ongoing commitments to provide high quality, efficient and effective public services, facilities, projects and programmes.

Council's Corporate Plan focuses on how the Council will deliver its contribution to the Community Plan and deliver the Council's priorities. The Departmental Business Plans show how services will deliver the Corporate Plan and service priorities. Departmental Business Plans are reported to each Strategic Director and also on a 6-monthly basis to relevant Service Committees internally. A Mid-Year report and Annual 'Self-Assessment' Report on progress made towards our Performance Improvement Plan is presented to Council's Performance and Audit Committee.

As we continue with our transformation and reform journey, we continue to ensure that all of our services continually improve their performance in relation to what they do, how they do it and the cost involved. Even more so, as we emerge from the pandemic, it is vital we provide the right services in the right way to meet the needs of our customers and to improve customer experience and satisfaction. Service reviews are an important part of that journey and a number of service reviews are ongoing or will be commenced throughout 2020/21.

In terms of continuous improvement and our General Duty to improve, Council acknowledge the importance of setting meaningful performance measures, realistic but ambitious targets. This will be integral and taken on board as part of our annual Business Planning processes. The implementation of our Performance Manager Software system during 2019/20 has also been key to ensuring a consistent 'One Council' approach across the organisation in terms of performance and progress reporting. It has provided a better alignment to the Corporate Plan 2018-2023 and our Corporate Commitments. It ensures work is reflective with the scheme of delegation and also includes detail of agreed collaborative actions, ensuring Departments role (lead or supportive) are captured within Business Plans.

The performance software system is now in use by all departments and includes management reporting of progress against business plans. 2019-20 marked the first year whereby all Business Plans for 2019-20 are managed and reported on through the Performance Manager system. Business Plans for 2020-21 were also developed on the system.

A copy of the Council's Corporate Plan is available to view using the following link: armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov. uk/download/45/corporate-publications/29788/corporate-plan-2018-2023-2.pdf You may also wish to view other Council performance related documents on our website: armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/performance-improvement

Summary Table: Statutory performance improvement indicators and standards for the functions of Economic Development, Planning and Waste.

REF.	STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	STANDARDS/ TARGETS 2018/19	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	PERFORMANCE KEY (RAG)
ED1	Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity.	165	232	185	221	229	🟢
P1	Average processing time of major planning applications.	Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 30 weeks.	52.8 weeks	36.4 weeks	23.6 weeks	45.2 weeks	🔴
P2	Average processing time of local planning applications	Local applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 15 weeks.	14 weeks	14 weeks	14.6 weeks	14.6 weeks	🟢
P3	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.	82.2%	82.5%	80%	85.9%	🟢
W1	Percentage of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse).	NI Landfill Allowance Scheme (50% by 2020)					🟢
W2	Amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled.	NI Landfill Allowance Scheme 2015/16: (30,759 tonnes) 2016/17: (29,173 tonnes) 2017/18: (27,588 tonnes) 2018/19: (26,002 tonnes) 2019/20: (24,417 tonnes)	11,107 tonnes	9,401 tonnes	8,771 tonnes	6,104 tonnes	🟢
W3	Amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arising (the total amount of waste collected).	No statutory standard has been set	104,342 tonnes	105,778 tonnes	105,828 tonnes	106,742 tonnes	🟢

Economic Development:
Statutory Indicators & Standards Performance: 11 Councils April 2019 - March 2020

BUSINESS PLAN APPROVALS BY COUNCIL AREA

COUNCIL AREA	APR-19	MAY-19	JUN-19	JUL-19	AUG-19	SEP-19	OCT-19	NOV-19	DEC-19	JAN-20	FEB-20	MAR-20	TOTAL
Antrim & Newtownabbey	20	17	16	13	17	12	15	16	12	14	15	6	173
Ards & North Down	16	11	20	16	11	19	18	15	17	15	6	7	171
Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon	33	35	31	27	26	36	32	31	25	36	33	28	373
Belfast	28	37	40	36	41	40	36	38	21	43	36	23	419
Causeway Coast & Glens	17	17	13	20	20	11	15	20	13	20	21	8	195
Derry & Strabane	8	13	20	14	20	14	18	18	14	16	24	38	217
Fermanagh & Omagh	22	21	26	21	18	26	22	22	14	25	27	35	279
Lisburn & Castlereagh	18	14	19	15	16	16	18	17	14	13	15	7	182
Mid & East Antrim	14	21	21	18	14	18	19	18	11	19	17	9	199
Mid Ulster	28	30	26	23	23	28	24	21	23	22	29	24	301
Newry Mourne & Down	26	25	25	25	18	29	28	27	20	25	29	21	298
TOTAL	**230**	**241**	**257**	**228**	**224**	**249**	**245**	**243**	**184**	**248**	**252**	**206**	**2,807**

END OF YEAR TO PERFORMANCE VERSUS STATUTORY

	Actual BPA to Year End	Actual Jobs Year End	Statutory Jobs Target	Deficit Jobs versus Statutory	% Jobs Vs Statutory Target
Antrim & Newtownabbey	173	106	80		133%
Ards & North Down	171	105	85		124%
Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon	373	229	165		139%
Belfast	419	258	325	67	79%
Causeway Coast & Glens	195	120	125	5	96%
Derry & Strabane	217	133	140	7	95%
Fermanagh & Omagh	279	172	170		101%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	182	112	85		132%
Mid & East Antrim	199	122	85		144%
Mid Ulster	301	185	210	25	88%
Newry Mourne & Down	298	183	155		118%
Total 2019-20 (Financial Year)	**2,807**	**1,725**	**1,625**	**104**	**106%**

Staff Absences Report

COUNCIL ABSENTEEISM	2019-20			2018-19			2017-18			2016-17		
	LONG-TERM	SHORT-TERM	TOTAL	LONG-TERM	SHORT-TERM	TOTAL	LONG-TERM	SHORT-TERM	TOTAL	LONG-TERM	SHORT-TERM	TOTAL
Antrim and Newtownabbey							8.89	2.99	**11.88**	11.8	2.6	**14.4**
Ards and North Down							12.16	4	**16.16**	10.88	3.74	**14.62**
Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon	14.72	3.56	**18.28**	13.11	3.62	**16.73**	12.22	3.84	**16.06**	9.62	3.45	**13.07**
Belfast City							8.81	4.91	**13.72**	8.09	4.35	**12.44**
Causeway Coast and Glens							12.92	2.87	**15.79**	13.32	2.55	**15.87**
Derry City and Strabane							11.3	2.7	**14**	12.92	1.97	**14.89**
Fermanagh and Omagh							8.88	3.99	**12.87**	9.09	3.71	**12.8**
Lisburn and Castlereagh							14.2	2.5	**16.7**	12.85	2.15	**15**
Mid and East Antrim							13.96	3.12	**17.08**	14.68	3.64	**18.32**
Mid Ulster							8.1	4.27	**12.37**	11.4	4.3	**15.7**
Newry, Mourne and Down							12.58	4.58	**17.16**	13.04	4.29	**17.33**
AVERAGE SICKNESS ABSENCE							**11.27**	**3.62**	**14.89**	**11.61**	**3.34**	**14.95**

Source: Unaudited data from Annual Audit Letters
Split of short and long term absenteeism for the 2015-16 financial year is not held by NIAO.

Quarterly Prompt Payment Reports

Council Name	2015/16			2016/17			2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days
Antrim and Newtownabbey	11,435	17,180	6,444	13,433	22,573	4,546	18,320	22,505	3,772	17083	21799	4924	18390	22760	3810
Ards and North Down	6931	13731	8194	10657	18347	4134	9575	17478	4047	6931	13731	8194	14560	20174	1414
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	3,000	17,656	7,376	6,611	21,555	8,057	5,200	18,352	12,282	6,504	25,201	5,547	5,713	20,105	10,120
Belfast City	44240	52231	9592	43898	53600	7492	39355	51403	6916	44240	5223	9592	50885	63385	4425
Causeway Coast and Gelns	10219	18403	4022	11314	21624	3923	11964	23430	5056	10219	18403	4022	12066	23786	6216
Derry City and Strabane	9049	19585	6078	8234	18024	6070	12584	18163	4005	9049	19585	6078	12078	21643	4979
Fermanagh and Omagh	8836	13900	2679	9914	16487	2395	10692	15935	2367	8836	13900	2679	15332	17715	1111
Lisburn and Castlereagh	10204	18651	3405	10742	20383	4869	11864	20685	6440	10204	18651	3405	13957	19570	1888
Mid and East Antrim	12491	21517	3690	12227	22563	3050	8597	21194	4015	12491	21517	3690	13082	22550	3609
Mid Ulster	10714	15785	221	15979	18554	271	16676	19275	469	10714	15785	221	15148	17141	1025
Newry, Mourne and Down	1967	14443	7527	2081	19086	3214	1979	21554	3653	1967	14443	7527	8320	21647	2447
Total	129,086	223,082	59,228	145,090	252,796	48,021	146,806	249,974	53,022	161668	268,777	40,875	179531	270476	41044
			282,310			300,817			302,996			309,652			311,520

Council Name	2015/16			2016/17			2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	3,000	17,656	7,376	6,611	21,555	8,057	5,200	18,352	12,282	6,504	25,201	5,547	5,713	20,105	10,120
Total	129,086	223,082	59,228	145,090	252,796	48,021	146,806	249,974	53,022						
			28,032			36,223			35,834			37,252			35,938
	10.7%	63.0%	26.3%	18.3%	59.5%	22.2%	14.5%	51.2%	34.3%	17.5%	67.7%	14.9%	15.9%	55.9%	28.2%

For further information please contact
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