

Derry City and Strabane District Council

Annual Performance Report 2025-26

www.derrystrabane.com

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1

Introduction



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSraitha Bál
Derry Cittie & Strabane
Destrict Cooncil

Performance Improvement under the Local Government Act 2014

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 puts in place a framework to support continuous improvement in the delivery of council services, in the context of strategic objectives and issues that are important to those who receive those services. Councils are required to gather information to assess improvements in their services and to issue a report annually on their performance against indicators which they have either set themselves or that have been set by Government Departments.

The Act also places a responsibility on councils to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions and in doing so, highlight the following improvement areas /criteria: Strategic Effectiveness; Service Quality; Service Availability; Fairness; Sustainability; Efficiency and Innovation.

What is Improvement?

'Improvement' means more than just gains in service output or efficiency, or the internal effectiveness of the Council. It is about an activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities. Derry City and Strabane District Council is committed to ensuring that our improvement objectives are relevant, that the best arrangements for delivering them are in place, and that we can understand and demonstrate the impact on the outcomes for citizens.

In our 2025-26 Corporate and Improvement Plan, Derry City and Strabane District Council set out a number of improvement objectives and commitments under the headings of:

- Business and Culture
- Environment and Regeneration
- Health and Communities
- Cross functional Support Services

and identified a number of local improvement indicators as well as the seven statutory performance indicators/standards.

Recording and Reporting Progress

Section 90 of the Act requires each council to collect information which will allow it to assess its performance in achieving its improvement objectives and to measure its performance indicators or standards set by the Department or any other indicators or standards which the council chooses to use.

Accordingly, Derry City and Strabane District Council collects evidence of progress in achieving our improvement objectives during the year. Evidence may include one or more of the following:

- Performance indicators, both those set by the Council and by Government Departments
- Qualitative information such as citizen satisfaction surveys conducted by the Council or by other bodies
- Progress in introducing or completing programmes, facilities or ways of working which contribute to the attainment of improvement objectives
- The outcome of governance or scrutiny enquiries and other evidence from Members
- Any other sources of evidence, (including Council's annual governance, value for money and sustainability statements etc., that appear to be relevant
- Summary and analysis of the actions and progress to date relating to Council motions and resolutions. (See Appendix 2)

Derry City and Strabane District Council will use this information to determine if action is required to improve performance by assessing, where appropriate, its performance against:

- A previous year's performance, and
- as far as is practicable, with the performance of other councils in the exercise of the same or similar functions.

The Council will publish the assessment and comparison information, where appropriate, relating to its performance before 30th September immediately following the financial year to which it relates.

Engaging Our Stakeholders

The Council is committed to engaging with our stakeholders, including seeking views and keeping people informed about our services and initiatives. During 2025-26, we undertook consultations and engagement on a number of issues, including:

- Public consultation undertaken during March & April 2025, for the four technical assessment documents of the LDP – Habitats Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal, Equality EQIA and Rural Needs RNIA
- Public consultation on 18 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents to support implementation of the LDP Plan Strategy
- Consultation for Strabane–Sion Greenway (28 October 2025)
- Consultation for new Strabane Skate Park (16 October 2025)
- Strabane Public Realm (4 March – 25 May 2026)
- Public invited to shape the future of Ballyfattan pitch (19 March 2026)
- Top of the Hill Master Plan consultation (27 January 2026)
- Community Climate Conversations completed as part of the Net Zero Derry & Strabane Programme
- Good Relations Audit was undertaken between November 2025 and January 2026 through a consultation process
- Local Community Plans reviewed, updated and republished with local area engagement
- Consultation carried out with children and young people as part of the UNICEF Child Friendly Community accreditation
- Ongoing consultation and engagement as part of the 'Age Friendly' programme with: Age Friendly Alliance; Over-50s Reference Group; Co-Design Steering Group and the Smart Moves transport event
- Business, Skills & Employment: Schools engagement and survey feedback exercise on Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), identifying: Employer engagement priorities; Demand for careers fairs; Need for work experience opportunities
- City Deal / Digital Innovation: Nine stakeholder engagement workshops/meetings were held (17-19 February 2026) regarding the Digital Enabling Infrastructure outline business case
- Tourism Strategy and Action Plan: Ongoing engagement with key stakeholders and workshops and consultations undertaken as part of Shared Island and Causeway Coastal Route initiatives
- Arts & Culture: Development of the updated Arts & Culture Strategy through consultation with the Co-Delivery Group and sector stakeholders

- Engagement with the North South Ministerial Council in the co-design of the North West Strategic Growth Plan
- Corporate Improvement Objectives (30 March – 27 April 2026)

The Improvement Objectives for 2025-26 were subject to public consultation and reflected two updated objectives, one unchanged and a new objective relating to PeacePlus - a new multi-million pound initiative which aimed to have a strategic impact on communities.

Further review of the Objectives for the 2026-27 year saw the replacement of the PeacePlus objective due to the significant progress made and to enhance strategic effectiveness, with two new objectives reflecting the Council's strategic priorities relating to capital and economic development.

It is noted that the Council has a number of campaign sites which attracted digital traffic.

2025-26 figures:

Website	Page views
Council	1,735,901
Leisure	509,162
Halloween	417,785
Recycling	214,878
Foyle Maritime Festival	12,856
Jazz Festival	129,922
	3,020,504

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Planning, Improvement and Performance Review Framework



Planning, Improvement and Performance Review Framework

The Council has many plans at strategic and operational levels, some of which are based on local needs and others that are required because of legislation.

The highest-level plan is the Community Plan, entitled the “Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017-2032” for the Derry City and Strabane District Council area. This strategy recognises that community planning is about people and organisations working together to improve services and to bring about sustainable improvements in the quality of life of local citizens, businesses and other stakeholders. As well as the Council, the Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017-2032 also involves the commitment and resources of multi-agency partnerships whose purpose is to deliver the community plan objectives. Delivery of the vision and objectives set out in the Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017-2032 will be supported through the expression of objectives, priorities and actions in the Corporate Plan of Derry City and Strabane District Council (and the corporate plans of other stakeholder organisations).

The Council agreed a Corporate Plan for 2015-16 following a wide-ranging engagement process. The Corporate Plan 2025-26 continued to reflect the mission and objectives set out in the Corporate Plan 2015-16.

Annual Directorate Delivery Plans were prepared to help ensure that those priorities set out at a corporate level are cascaded to the rest of the organisation and actioned.

The Council also prepares an annual Improvement Plan containing improvement objectives and monitors its performance throughout the year. Progress on the achievement of these objectives is set out in this report and is made available publicly.

In addition to these corporate management plans, plans will also continue to be developed in relation to thematic/service specific issues, for example, in relation to our capital development programme. Furthermore, the Local Development Plan (LDP) will guide the future use of land in the Council area and inform developers, members of the public, communities, government, public bodies, representative organisations and other interests, of the policy framework that is used to determine development proposals.

The LDP will take account of the Council's Community Plan, providing a spatial expression to the Community Plan and thereby linking public and private sector investment through the land use planning system.

The planning and improvement framework, comprising of the Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017-2032, Corporate Plan and Performance Improvement Plan and Directorate Plans, is augmented by a performance review framework which includes:

- At a district wide level – a two-yearly Statement of Progress Report which measures the district's performance against the shared outcomes set out in the Strategic Community Plan
- At a Council level, an Annual Performance Report which sets out what we have achieved in the previous year and how we have met our performance improvement duty
- At a directorate level, six monthly progress reports and directorate service delivery plans provide information on how we are performing
- At an individual level, annual personal development and appraisal reviews

The diagram overleaf shows the key elements of the planning, improvement and performance review framework.

Corporate Planning, Improvement & Performance Review Framework

Integrated hierarchy aligning long-term strategic growth with individual performance reviews



Measuring Performance and Improvement

The Council continues to implement and embed arrangements to secure continuous improvement through variety of mechanisms. Performance is reviewed using a range of qualitative and quantitative measures.

- A two-yearly Statement of Progress Report which measures the district's performance against the shared outcomes set out in the Strategic Community Plan
- An Annual Performance Report which sets out what the Council has achieved in the previous year and how the Council met its performance improvement duty
- Performance indicators are identified within our annual Directorate Plans and whilst our performance measurement approaches, data collection and analysis systems are evolving and baselines are being established, there is evidence of quantifiable improvements being made across a number of areas.
- Six monthly progress reports and Directorate service delivery plans
- Annual personal development and appraisal reviews

The Council uses a range of methods of benchmarking performance, including seeking out regional and national organisations with whom we can compare performance.

In addition, the Council is a member of the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE), including its Performance Network, which is a public sector benchmarking organisation. Work is currently being progressed, in liaison with other Councils APSE to identify relevant indicators for performance measurement, benchmarking and process improvement purposes.

The Council also uses a wide range of awards, accreditations, organisation development frameworks, and best practice organisations to benchmark performance.

The following bodies issue reports which form the basis for reviewing comparative performance during 2025-26.

- Go Succeed I Start Initiative) - Business dashboards, circulated by the Regional Project Management Office
- Department for Infrastructure – quarterly and annual planning reports
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs – quarterly and annual waste and recycling reports
- Department for Communities – quarterly reports of prompt payments
- NIAO – annual Local Government Auditor report

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How we have performed: Review of Performance 2025-26



How we have performed - Review of Performance for 2025-26

This section sets out details of how the Council performed in 2025-26, in seven areas:

- 1 Progress in delivering our Improvement Objectives including complaints handling
- 2 Financial performance for 2025-26
- 3 Corporate Plan Objectives - Key Achievements 2025-26
- 4 Inclusive Growth Plan: Statement of Progress Update
- 5 Statutory Indicators
- 6 The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
- 7 Progress in relation to General Improvement Duty

Improvement Objective 1

To assist a return to healthy lifestyles through regrowing participation in high-quality leisure, sport and physical activity

Sub Objectives

- Support and deliver Sport & Physical Activity programmes that achieve targets of 8,000 participants per year including:*
 - Female participants - 4000
 - Children & young people – 3000
 - Those living in the most deprived areas - 3000
 - Older people - 2000
 - People living with disabilities - 1000
 - Ethnic Minorities – 500
- Achieve 1.5 million paid leisure centre user visits.
- Achieve 7,000 paid gym memberships (includes direct debits, advanced payments, corporate and staff membership schemes).

*Please note that participants may cover a range of target areas and will be included in each of these categories when compiling attendance and participation

Why we have selected this objective?

Derry City and Strabane's Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017-2032 sets out the strategic community planning partnership's vision for health and wellbeing and the overall outcome to support people live long, healthy and fulfilling lives. Four key areas for improvement have been identified: active ageing and more independent living; reduced health inequalities; increased physical activity; improved mental health.

Why we have selected this objective (Continued)

Engaging users in leisure, sport and physical activity has become an increasing priority at World, National, Governing body and local level. Notably at a Northern Ireland level both the Department for Communities and Sport NI have published new strategy documents and in addition APSE has published a report on Securing the Future of Public Sport and Leisure Services. All of these confirm the need for increased physical activity levels to address individual and societal health and wellbeing benefits.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) sets out a global Action plan which includes a focus on physical activity as a leading factor in health and wellbeing. According to the WHO, 4-5 million deaths per year could be averted if the global population was more physically active. Estimates indicate that 27.5% of adults and 81% of adolescents currently do not meet the 2010 WHO recommendations, with almost no improvement seen during the last decade. The key target is to reduce world physical inactivity by 10% in 2025 and 15% by 2030 through delivery of Active societies. There are significant differences in levels of physical activity between higher and lower income groups, and between countries and regions. The WHO's guidelines for staying fit and healthy are broken down by age group. For example, WHO recommends 150 - 300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week for all adults; and an average of 60 mins of moderate aerobic activity per day for children and adolescents.

Council has a specific role in providing a range of publicly accessible, universal, and targeted services and activities. We provide significant sports infrastructure to include leisure centres, community buildings, outdoor sports facilities including pitches and water-based access. This is augmented by the very substantial provision by the voluntary sports sector and sports governing bodies along with schools and higher education providers.

The NI Programme for Government has moved to an outcomes focused delivery-based approach which encourages cross departmental working to deliver on 9 key themes, including 'We all enjoy long, healthy, active lives' which most closely aligns to the outcomes for lifelong participation and engagement in sport and physical activity. However, the strategy will also contribute to the PFG outcomes of 'Children and Young people have the best start in life' and 'Everyone can achieve their potential.'

Why we have selected this objective (Continued)

The Department for Communities in March 2022 published Active Living, the new strategy for Northern Ireland, which 'through its vision and associated key themes and goals, seeks to create a vibrant, welcoming, enjoyable, inclusive and successful sector for everyone, contributing significantly to a healthier and more resilient society.' The Active Living strategy overall vision is to have 'More people, More Active, More of the Time.' The strategy framework sets out this overall vision and the interconnectedness of the cross-cutting themes of anti-poverty, wellbeing and inclusion, sustainability and inclusive growth, agility and innovation. The strategy themes include Recovery from the impact of the pandemic on sport and physical activity; promoting participation, inclusion, and community engagement; Promoting excellence in sport; promoting partnership and integration, providing inclusive and shared spaces and places and promoting the benefits of sport and physical activity.

There are inequalities, with girls and women being less active than boys and men in most countries. Sport NI has recently launched a campaign to encourage women and girls to participate in sport through their 'Be Seen, Be Heard, Belong'. The campaign focuses on levelling the playing field and ensuring women and girls have the same opportunities as men and boys to take part in sport and physical activity. 51% of the population is female, but women are less likely to take part in sport and physical activity than men, and female participation and club membership lags behind their male counterparts. Focus has been outlined within the Council's Be Active Physical Activity, Wellbeing and Sport Strategy to encourage participation from women and girls and under-represented groups into sport, with some of this year's actions and indicators focusing on this to ensure we achieve targets set. DCSDC are currently working with Ulster University in research looking at gender budgeting within leisure and sport.

Derry City and Strabane District Council has published their 'Be Active Physical Activity, Wellbeing and Sport' Strategy which was informed by a consultation process which sought views about participation in sport and physical activity including barriers to participation with residents, schools and activity providers. Among the findings of the study the following are issues Council along with partners need to address:

Why we have selected this objective (Continued)

- Only 29% of respondents indicated that they achieved the WHO daily physical activity guidance of 30mins on 5 days per week; and some 19% indicating that they achieved this on one or no days.
- All respondents agreed with the statement that 'being physically active can improve my general health and wellbeing.
- 71% indicated they participated in walking for recreation; 34% in jogging; 31% in aerobics; 29% in weight training and swimming; and 26% in cycling.
- The top three responses as to why residents take up physical activity were. 75% to improve health and fitness; 67% to make me feel better; 61% to maintain my mental health.
- The top reasons for not being physically active were. 42% due to lack of time or family commitments; and lack of facilities in my area. Other lesser rated reasons were poor weather, cost, being self-conscious, bored with what's on offer; and 1% just not interested.
- 71% of schools have delivered sport and physical activity in partnership with Council.
- A high percentage of schools would consider making their facilities available for community use if the barriers of insurance and staffing were addressed.
- Nearly half of schools have plans to expand their sports estate, with a strong interest in artificial turf pitches.
- 53% of sports providers had delivered activity in partnership with council e.g. local sports clubs, community groups, disability groups have used Council leisure facilities and coaches.
- 78% of providers had a willingness to deliver more activity; however, the need for more qualified instructors including those with skills to deliver to disability groups was noted as a need.
- There is a network of facilities used for delivery including their own facility, community centres, green spaces.

There are 4 themes contained within the strategy that reflect the priorities emerging from the consultation process and linked to the wider PfG Sport and Physical Activity Framework (as illustrated overleaf).

Why we have selected this objective (Continued)

Themes

Four strategic themes have been created to reflect the priorities emerging from consultation



THEME 1

BE ACTIVE - SPORTS CLUBS

Working directly with the district's sports clubs and activity programmes aimed at the community beyond the club's membership.

OUTCOME

More people across the district feel they have opportunities to get involved in sport and/or be physically active.



THEME 2

BE ACTIVE - EVERYDAY

Promoting lifestyle habits in being active from an early age and through the stages of adulthood. Highlighting the health benefits – physical, mental and emotional – to individuals, family groups and the community.

OUTCOME

Barriers understood and solutions created. Greater awareness of opportunities for sport and physical activity and the benefits of being active.



THEME 3

BE ACTIVE - TOGETHER

Council continuing to work in partnership with key regional and local agencies, government departments and organisations, to complement and supplement similar sports and physical activity initiatives with Council-operated programmes.

OUTCOME

More achieved across society by working together.



THEME 4

BE ACTIVE - SPREADING THE WORD

Messaging the benefits of being active in sport and physical activity is a vitally important element of Be Active. The challenge is to present the opportunities and benefits in a way that jolts people into action and to keep at it, especially those who are inactive.

OUTCOME

The perception that sport and physical activity is 'not for me' is reduced.

The Sport and Physical Activity Framework

Programme for Government Outcomes and Indicators

VISION

'Lifelong involvement in sport and physical activity will deliver an active, healthy, resilient and inclusive society which recognises and values both participation and excellence'

KEY THEMES

THEME:	THEME:	THEME:	THEME:	THEME:	THEME:
Recovering from the Impact of the Pandemic	Promoting Participation, Inclusion and Community Engagement	Promoting Excellence in Sport	Promoting Partnership and Integration	Providing Inclusive, Shared Spaces and Places	Promoting the Benefits of Sport and Physical Activity

CROSS-CUTTING PRINCIPLES

Developing Inclusive, Shared Communities	Developing Capacity and Governance	Developing National and International Linkages
Supporting sport and physical activity to be more inclusive and diverse while reducing the barriers to participation and ensuring the participation gaps for specific target groups continue to narrow	Developing an agile, well governed, adaptable and progressive sport and physical activity infrastructure, which is collaborative, driven by evidence and enabled by transformative technology	Ensuring that Northern Ireland is recognised as a competitive and attractive place of choice for world class events with high standards of sporting governance and integrity

DEPARTMENTAL CROSS - CUTTING THEMES

ANTI-POVERTY	WELLBEING & INCLUSION	SUSTAINABILITY & INCLUSIVE GROWTH	AGILITY & INNOVATION
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Why we have selected this objective (Continued)

Physical Activity Guidelines as set out by CMO



The UK Chief Medical Officer activity guidelines set out an exemplar on how commonly delivered sports and physical activity can improve muscle function, bone health and balance.

These range from pre-natal swim classes; crèche facilities; swimming lessons; holiday school clubs; teenage activities; multi sports clubs and fitness classes; fitness for well-being and older people; plus, exercise programmes for long term conditions, cancer patients and overweight individuals.

The graphic provides a diagrammatic representation on the types of activities that can deliver these benefits and contribute to meeting the physical activity guidelines.

Why we have selected this objective (Continued)

The Sport NI Corporate Plan 2021-2026 sets out in its mission its commitment to the development of sport, 'We are passionate about maximising the power of sport to change lives. By 2026 we want the power of sport to be recognised by all.' This acknowledges that the power of sport individually and societally has become more important as a result of the pandemic. The emotional, physical, mental wellbeing derived from participating is seen as an important element of Covid recovery and Regrowth. The plan recognises the need for increased participation in sport across the wider community and the need to focus on parts of society that are underrepresented. Two outcomes have been defined:

- People adopting and sustaining participation in sport and physical activity.
- Our athletes are among the best in the world.

The key strands which will support the achievement of these outcomes include accessible quality infrastructure and safety; physical literacy development; supporting clubs and governing bodies; developing people to include coaches and referees; strategic partnership collaborations; promoting culture and good governance; delivery of events programme; and supporting high performers.

UK Government Funded Projects

The Levelling Up paper notes the contribution of sport to delivering on 4 of its six capitals including physical, human, social and institutional where investment is needed to address inequalities and restore local pride. It recognises that sports can:

- Contribute to individual health and wellbeing including a broad range of physical and mental benefits.
- Public facilities provide a place-based infrastructure through which services can be delivered across the most deprived communities.
- Sport and leisure facilities are seen as a significant factor in determining a local community's sense of belonging and pride of place.

Why we have selected this objective (Continued)

Daisyfield Community Sports Hub

This project will see the regeneration of the Daisyfield pitches with the development of a single storey sports centre with facilities for fitness classes, boxing, snooker and social area; six block changing room facility; upgrade to the existing natural 100m x 50m grass pitch; a FIFA 1 Star synthetic multi use games area; and car park and associated supporting infrastructure.

Derg Active

The project is an integrated economic, health and well-being, social and environmental project focused on the rural town of Castlederg. Works have been completed in the Diamond area including high-quality public realm, and the Castle Park play facility. Greenway areas and the Castle Park event have also been completed. Construction is due to begin in March/April 2025 on the development of the 3G pitch and associated area at Mitchel Park.

Acorn Farm St Columb's Park

The project will see the regeneration of the former Ministry of Defence site off St Columb's Park into an urban growing space (Acorn Farm) within the city, a new gate lodge (handed over to Council in March 2025), enhanced car parking, wider environmental improvements to include play provision, enhanced biodiversity signage and landscaping. The focus will be to develop a high-quality innovative urban food growing hub; learning and skills development centre (Green Skills Academy); sustainable food events venue; high quality sustainable visitor infrastructure and experience; and support infrastructure.

Integrated Care System

The planned development of Integrated care systems (ICSs) within Northern Ireland with the Partnership structures to be developed by 2024 provide the opportunity for increased health collaboration. Over recent years there has been a growing importance of the need for collaboration with health partners, and the introduction of ICSs provides a new mechanism to focus on addressing inequalities and maximising prevention.

Why we have selected this objective (Continued)

Councils and the community sector have already shown that they can play their part in this by successfully collaborating on initiatives such as GP referral, Couch to 5K walking and running initiatives and the Macmillan Move More cancer rehabilitation programme which supports those with chronic conditions; and additionally, by a range of secondary prevention programmes which support people with different health and wellbeing needs.

There is an imminent opportunity to transition both perception and the delivery of sport and leisure activities to those of an active wellbeing service. Among such examples might include the co-location of services perhaps to leisure and community venues to increase accessibility, increased provision of existing partnership programmes to target a specific neighbourhood, step up programmes as part of preventative care and more social prescribing. These opportunities will evolve as the outcomes of the Integrated Care Partnerships become established over the coming year requiring a focus on systems, behaviours, and places.

Derry City and Strabane District has been selected by the Department for Health and Public Health Agency as one of the early adopter sites exploring a Whole Systems Approach to Obesity Prevention which is being developed in Northern Ireland.

This follows the publication of a report: A Whole Systems Approach to obesity prevention; a rapid synthesis of evidence to inform the Northern Ireland Strategy Project Board which focuses on improving the systems within which we are born, grow, live, work and age. The latest data shows that one in four adults (27%) and around one in sixteen children (6%) are living with obesity in Northern Ireland. Official data shows that the development of obesity is strongly linked to deprivation status.

There has been a 12% increase in child obesity between 2011/12 and 2018/19 within primary one children living in the most deprived areas (36%) by comparison to those living in the least deprived areas. It is recognised that obesity increases the risk of developing chronic diseases, such as colon cancer, high blood pressure or type 2 diabetes, and is linked to substantial direct and indirect costs - estimated to be £370m in NI.

Why we have selected this objective (Continued)

The Council is working alongside PHA in the development and implementation of the project phases. We are currently at Phase 1, and working with other NI Councils in reviewing mapping of activities and resources which will be available to the public in terms of access and locations of leisure activities, greenways, health services etc.

A governance structure as illustrated has been developed to include PHA, WHSCT, DSDC and the local delivery partner Developing Healthy Communities.

Governance Structure: Whole System Approach (WSA) for Derry City Strabane District Council (DCSDC)

Regional Structure/ Accountability – ROPIG

Regional WSA Workstream Group

Role: Oversee and direct the process and implementation of a Whole Systems Approach to Obesity Prevention in each early adopter site in NI

Public Health Agency (PHA)

Connection
Organisation
to / from
Regional to
Local

LOCAL Structure/Accountability - SGP



DCSDC WSA LEADERSHIP GROUP (Functions include) (Senior representation from Council, PHA and Trust and Facilitatory body)

- Strategic Oversight function
- Establish and support governance and monitoring
- Building relationships and promote the WSA Concept to strategic partners and agencies
- Building the local picture
- Agree relevant sub-systems
- Lead on Mapping and Action Planning
- Monitoring impact and lead on relevant research eg PHIRST.
- Agree structure/process of reporting back to SGP on progress (Accountable to SGP on progress).

DSDC WSA Advisory Group (new group) (Functions include)

- Ensure senior representation/engagement with local partners/stakeholders
- Be a means to communicate and encourages support and involvement in WSA work across Derry City and Strabane District Council area.
- Provide advice and support on sub system(s) to be prioritised
- Participate in mapping exercises to enable the development of a local action plan.
- Support the work of the Leadership Group
- Source potential resource/budgets
- Ensure long term commitment from stakeholders.

Leadership Group and Advisory Group requires facilitation/enabling body e.g. Developing Healthy Communities to ensure functions are delivered.

Why we have selected this objective (Continued)

DOH 2022 health inequalities report shows that health outcomes in 26 of the 52 measures are worse than the NI average. The overall health status of the District with life expectancy lower than the NI average- men living in the top 20% deprived areas have life expectancy nearly 6 years less and women nearly 3 years less; prescription rates for mood, anxiety disorders, obesity and cancer are 13% higher; in school Year 8 obesity is significantly more prevalent; and 26 of the 52 health outcomes in the DOH 2022 report on health inequalities are worse than the NI average. The WHO state that physical inactivity is one of the risk factors in non-communicable diseases and death worldwide. It increases the risk of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke by 20-30%. It is estimated that 4-5 million deaths per year could be averted if the global population was active.

As a result, the delivery of the Council strategy will focus on the vision of 'more people, more active, more often' with associated objectives around participation across all ages and abilities; supporting the sports clubs as key delivery partners; and developing further partnership working to grow participation and promote the role of sport and physical activity as a key part of a healthy lifestyle.

Developing Healthy Communities Northern Ireland have over 30 years' experience improving peoples' lives. The innovative programmes focus on improving mental, physical and social wellbeing. DHC supports communities, families and workplaces through mentoring, training and funding programmes, and champion healthcare needs with decision makers. Part of a global wellbeing initiative, DHC connect people and facilitate conversations in order to share best practice.

Part of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) initiative, Derry City & Strabane District Healthy City & District project brings health, housing, transport, environment, and community together to collaborate on a holistic health and wellbeing approach within the district. Derry and Strabane first joined this global network of cities in 2009 and remains one of only a handful of areas in Ireland and the UK to be leading the way through participation in this political movement which is designed to make health and wellbeing a central strategic approach.

Looking beyond the traditional approach, the Healthy Cities framework looks beyond statutory services and care providers as the sole means to deliver health. It brings together the concepts of **People, Place, Participation, Planet, Prosperity and Peace**.

Why we have selected this objective (Continued)

In our Improvement Plan for 2025-26 we set ourselves a number of target outcomes in respect of this Improvement Objective.
An overview of what we have done / achieved is set out overleaf.

Objective 1: To assist a return to healthy lifestyles through regrowing participation in high-quality leisure, sport and physical activity.

What did we aim to achieve?	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 Target	2025-26	Target Delivered?
Target Outcomes							
Leisure user visitor numbers (paid visits)	542,733	1,350,144	1,522,132	1,781,518	1.5 million	1,735,332	Achieved
Paid gym membership numbers			7,040	8,190	7,000	8,471	Achieved
Number of participants per year for sports and physical activity targeted programmes:		5,235	5,328	5,210	8,000 ¹	13,925 ²	Achieved
Female participants				2,440	4,000	4,200	Achieved
Children and Young People (new)					3,000	3,200	Achieved
Those living in the most deprived areas (new)					3,000	3,400	Achieved
Older people (new)					2,000	2,100	Achieved
People living with disabilities				412	1,000	1,225	Achieved
Ethnic Minorities (new)					500	627	Achieved

¹ Please note that participants may cover a range of target areas and will be included in each of these categories when compiling attendance and participation.

² As Above

Number of completed Physical Activity Referral Programme (PARP) (targeting designated special populations)	494	605	712	640	550	600	Achieved
Number of athletes enrolled in the Elite Athlete Membership Scheme	71	63	74	82	60	72	Achieved
User satisfaction/Net Promoter score	Covid affected	50	50	Not completed	50	50	Achieved

What has been achieved

To achieve the leisure visitor target, the Council combined:

- Significant investment in modern leisure infrastructure.
- Expansion of health, fitness and sports programmes.
- Growth in memberships and fitness class participation.
- Enhanced swimming provision and water safety programmes.
- Greater inclusion and accessibility measures.
- Hosting of major sporting and community events.

These actions resulted in **1,735,332 million paid leisure visits** and demonstrating strong progress against this improvement objective.

The Council successfully increased participation in leisure services through its membership offer, exceeding the target for paid gym memberships during 2025-26. This growth was supported by continued investment in leisure facilities, expanded fitness and wellbeing programmes, enhanced wellness facilities at Derg Valley, and a strong programme of sports and physical activity opportunities across the City and District.

The Council achieved **13,925 participants** in sports and physical activity targeted programmes against a target of **8,000**, representing **174.1% of the annual target** and exceeding the target by **5,925 participants**.

This was achieved through the delivery of a comprehensive range of targeted sports and physical activity programmes throughout 2025-26, including Healthy Towns, Summer Activity Schemes, Physical Literacy, GP Referral and Cancer Referral programmes. These initiatives increased participation opportunities for children and young people, older people, females, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and those living in disadvantaged communities, contributing to the overall sports and physical activity participation target.

These results demonstrate the Council's success in promoting inclusive participation, improving access, reducing barriers to participation and physical activity opportunities, thereby supporting wider health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Council continued to deliver the Physical Activity Referral Programme (PARP/PARS), providing structured physical activity interventions for people with health risks associated with obesity, diabetes and musculoskeletal conditions. During 2025-26 the programme supported **600 clients through GP referral**, exceeding the completion target of **550 participants** and contributing to improved health outcomes and increased physical activity levels amongst residents with identified health needs

The Council exceeded its target for the Elite Athlete Membership Scheme during 2025-26, enrolling **72 athletes** against a target of **60**. This represents **120% achievement** and reflects the Council's continued commitment to supporting talented local athletes through access to high-quality leisure and training facilities. Additional support was provided through the Elite Travel Bursary Scheme, which awarded **£10,351** to local athletes.

The Council achieved its User Satisfaction/Net Promoter Score target during 2025-26. This result reflects continued investment in leisure facilities, improved customer experience, enhanced accessibility measures, expanded health and wellbeing programmes, and high levels of participation across leisure services.

Further Information and links to Directorate Delivery Plan

Further information on the work progressed in 2025-26 is available at Section 3.3 of this document and also contained in the Health and Community Directorate Delivery Plan for 2026-27 which is available on the Council's website.

[Derry City & Strabane - Your Council](#)

Overview / Assessment

In summary, this objective was successfully delivered, with performance having met or exceeded expectations.

The results demonstrate strong recovery and growth in leisure participation, effective delivery of targeted physical activity programmes, and positive progress towards improving health and wellbeing across the district.

Some examples of initiatives taken forward in 2025-26 related to this Improvement Objective are illustrated overleaf:

Official opening of £4.2m Daisyfield Sports Hub



The Daisyfield Sports Hub was officially opened on 13 November 2025 marking the completion of a major regeneration project delivered with significant support from the UK Government.

The Daisyfield Sports Hub project received £4.2 million in funding support from Levelling Up Fund, transforming a key community asset into a modern, state-of-the-art facility designed to nurture local talent and promote health and well-being across the community.

The new Hub facilities are comprehensive, providing a first-class home for local sporting life.

Key features include a fully upgraded Grass Pitch, a floodlit 4G Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), a new Brandywell Sports Centre with a dedicated Changing Pavilion.



Recognised UNICEF Child Friendly City and Community and District

The Derry City and Strabane District Council area has become the first region in Northern Ireland and only the second in the UK to receive international recognition as a UNICEF Child Friendly Community.

The prestigious status signifies that UNICEF publicly recognises the significant and sustainable steps a local area has taken towards advancing the human rights of children and young people growing up in their city and communities.

It follows a seven-year journey where all four partners: The Western Health and Social Care Trust, the Education Authority Youth Service, the Youth Justice Agency and the Council worked with the UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) to develop and deliver a comprehensive action plan to prioritise and uphold children's rights across six priority areas.

Walking for All: To Inspire Health, Inclusion and Community

Derry City and Strabane District Council has welcomed the launch of "Walking for All", a new cross-border initiative aimed at improving health, wellbeing and community connections in rural areas. The programme is funded through PEACEPLUS.

Designed to improve health and well-being in rural communities by making walking more accessible, enjoyable, and social for everyone to explore and participate in, Walking for All, will deliver short, regular walks in local community spaces.

The programme is open to adults, regardless of age, background, or ability. By fostering a focus on connection, inclusion, and well-being, Walking for All seeks to build sustainable, healthy communities and address issues such as social isolation, wellbeing and inactivity.





State-of-the-Art Wellness Facilities opens at Derg Valley Leisure Centre

Derg Valley Leisure Centre officially opened its new, state-of-the-art Wellness Suite - a major enhancement to local health and wellbeing facilities.

The new Wellness Suite at Derg Valley Leisure Centre introduces modern wellness therapies that have not previously been available locally. The facilities include a CryoSpa, infrared therapy cabin, and steam room, providing both members and visitors with access to high-quality recovery, relaxation, and wellbeing experiences.

The completion of the new Wellness Suite at Derg Valley Leisure Centre is a significant milestone for Castlederg and the wider Derg Valley area. This investment demonstrates a strong commitment to improving health and wellbeing while also delivering modern, high-quality facilities for local residents.

The Derg Active Project is helping to drive positive change, and this new suite will ensure people can access excellent wellness services close to home.

Fun for Just £1 This Summer at Derry and Strabane Leisure Centres

Derry City and Strabane District Council brought back its popular **£1 Summer Offer**, giving young people under 18 access to a range of leisure activities for just £1 between **1 July and 31 August 2025**. The initiative aims to help children and young people stay active, try new sports and enjoy affordable summer activities.

The programme ran across across eight Council leisure centres, providing an affordable way for families to keep children active and entertained during the summer holidays, while also helping to reduce financial pressures on households.

A promotional poster for the '£1 Summer Offer'. The top half features a close-up photograph of three children's faces. Below the photo, the text 'July and August is' is in a purple script font, followed by a large white '£1' inside a purple circle. The word 'Summer' is written in a large, bold, white font with a thick purple outline. Below this, 'All Activities £1' is written in a bold purple font. A line of text lists activities: 'Including: Swimming, Squash, Basketball, Badminton, 5-a-side, Table Tennis and many more!'. A purple box at the bottom contains the text 'Participating Centres:' followed by a list of eight locations. At the very bottom, the website 'derrystrabane.com/leisure' is displayed in a white font on a purple background.

July and August is **£1**
Summer

All Activities £1

Including: **Swimming, Squash, Basketball, Badminton, 5-a-side, Table Tennis and many more!**

Participating Centres:
Bishop's Field • Brooke Park • City Baths • Derg Valley Leisure Centre
Foyle Arena • Melvin Sports Complex • Riversdale Leisure Centre
Templemore Sports Complex

derrystrabane.com/leisure

Improvement Objective 2. To create a greener, cleaner more attractive district

Sub Objectives:

- To protect and promote our natural and built assets
- To protect and enhance our environment

Why we selected this as an Improvement Objective

This improvement objective relates directly to the Strategic Growth Plan objective that we live sustainably – protecting the environment, under the theme of Physical and Environmental Regeneration.

This was a key theme that emerged during the significant engagement process carried out as part of the development of the Strategic Growth Plan.

The improvement objective will allow us to pull together the actions that will demonstrate that we are protecting and enhancing our local environment and the partnership approach that we have taken to maximise effect.

In our Improvement Plan for 2025-26 we set ourselves a number of target outcomes in respect of this Improvement Objective. An overview of what we have done / achieved is set out overleaf.

Objective 2: To create a greener, cleaner more attractive district

What did we aim to achieve?	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2025-26	Target Delivered?
Target Outcomes					Target		
Total number of applications processed by Building Control	4,195	4,196	3,897	3,136	Demand Led	3960	Achieved
% household waste arisings sent for preparing for reuse and recycling (including composting) (W1)	45.1%	46%	48.2%	48.4%	50%	48.3%*	Not Achieved
Biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste sent to landfill (tonnes)	8,299	5,310	4,076	4,071	Reduce	5707*	Not Achieved
Total amount of local authority collected waste (tonnes)	83,540	79,114	81,207	83,236	No target	86,343*	Achieved
The average processing time of local planning applications	15.6 weeks	21 weeks	23.4 weeks	20.7 weeks	<15 weeks	25.2 weeks	Not Achieved
Average processing time of major planning applications	51.6 weeks	78 weeks	68.6 weeks	55 weeks	<30 weeks	39.7 weeks	Not Achieved
% of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks	77.9%	74.9%	75%	83.3%	70%	72.5%	Achieved
Total number of local and major planning applications received (New)					Demand Led	617	Achieved

*Subject to verification by DAERA

What has been achieved

Performance in relation to the **Total Number of Applications Processed by Building Control** remained strong during 2025-26 and demonstrated an improvement on the previous year. The Building Control Service processed 3960 applications during the year, reflecting sustained development activity across the district and the continued ability of the service to respond effectively to customer demand.

Performance against the indicator measuring the percentage of household waste collected that is sent for recycling, remained strong during 2025-26, with the Council achieving a recycling and composting rate of 48.3%, which is **96.6%** of the target. While the target was narrowly missed, performance remained close to the desired level and reflects the continued effectiveness of the Council's waste management and recycling initiatives.

The achievement reflects the significant activity delivered throughout the year to encourage waste reduction, reuse and recycling, with the delivery of approximately **30 targeted campaigns and engagement initiatives** promoting recycling, waste prevention and the circular economy. These included clothing swap events, repair and reuse initiatives, support for Repair & Share Foyle and a range of public awareness programmes designed to increase recycling participation and reduce waste going to landfill.

Local authority collected municipal waste increased by 3.7% from the previous year. This increase is reflective of continued growth across the City and District, including a growing population, the occupation of new housing developments and increased commercial and economic activity. Additionally, biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste sent to landfill increased during the year. This increase is considered to reflect population growth, the occupation of new housing developments and increased economic activity across the City and District. Consequently, while recycling initiatives continued, the growth in households and businesses likely contributed to higher overall waste volumes. This performance can be viewed in respect of the Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme targets which were set until 2019-20 for all Councils. Whilst there was no target for 2025-26, it is the expectation that levels of biodegradable waste landfilled should remain within this allowance. The Council **only used 32% of this allowance**.

All properties have access to bio waste collection schemes across the district to increase the volumes of bio waste collected for composting. Multiple marketing campaigns have also been undertaken promoting sustainable waste management including affixing warning stickers to residual bins stating that bins may not be emptied if they contain bio wastes that could be processed through 'brown' bin collections.

During 2025-26, the Council continued to promote waste reduction and recycling through a range of marketing campaigns, social media activity and community engagement initiatives. These focused on the benefits of recycling, the cost-of-living impacts of waste reduction, reuse and upcycling, and encouraging residents to apply the principles of the 4R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover).

Initiatives included support for upcycling workshops, paint reuse schemes at Recycling Centres, food waste reduction campaigns, promotion of brown bin usage, and partnership working with Repair Café Foyle to encourage the repair and reuse of small electrical items. The Council also maintained active engagement with schools to promote recycling and environmental awareness. Although the total volume of waste collected increased during the year, this is largely attributable to growth in housing development across the City and District.

Overall, the Council received external recognition for its innovative approach to waste management, securing the **APSE Waste, Recycling and Circular Economy Innovation Award**, highlighting good practice in promoting reuse and sustainable waste management.

The Council also continued to manage a substantial planning caseload throughout the year. During 2025-26, a total of 617 planning applications were received. (599 local and 18 major). This new measure provides an indication of development activity and planning demand across the district, complementing the existing planning performance measures.

A significant achievement during 2025-26 was the official **adoption the Local Development Plan 2032**, following an extensive process involving widespread public and stakeholder engagement. As part of this process all planning applications that had not yet been determined were assessed against the relevant policies of the adopted Plan Strategy before decisions were made contributing to planning performance.

It should be noted that a significant factor in the determination of planning applications is the statutory consultation process. While councils are responsible for managing and assessing applications, they are unable to directly control the timescales within which statutory consultees provide their responses. During 2025-26 the Council has encountered delays in consultation responses with key stakeholders which has affected the time taken to reach planning decisions.

In relation to the average processing time for major applications, while the target has not been achieved, performance has improved substantially from 55 weeks in 2024-25 to 39.7 weeks in 2025-26, the lowest average processing time recorded in the last five reporting years. These **improvements indicate that the Council is making progress in reducing determination times and addressing complex major application caseloads.**

During 2025-26, **599 local applications were received, and 494 local applications were determined.** At the end of the reporting year there were 698 live planning applications, including 307 applications that had been in the system for more than one year. This level of workload continued to place pressure on processing times. Whilst the target was not achieved, performance has remained relatively stable over recent years despite increasing application complexity. As previously noted, a significant factor in the determination of planning applications is the statutory consultation process. Planning decisions by have been impacted during 2025-26 by delays in the consultation responses, which is outside the control of the Council.

The Council has **achieved the target of concluding 70% of enforcement cases within 39 weeks** during 2025-26, achieving a performance level of 72.5% (91 cases concluded, of which 72.5% were concluded within the target period). The Council has continued to focus on the targets, and efficient case management.

During 2025-26 the Council developed a Quality Submissions Guide and accompanying Planning Application Validation Checklist to improve the quality of planning applications submitted, reduce delays arising from requests for additional information and support more efficient decision-making.

Further Information and links to Directorate Delivery Plan

Further information on the work progressed in 2025-26 is available at Section 3.3 of this document and also contained in Environment and Regeneration Directorate Delivery Plan for 2026-27 which is available on the Council's website.

[Derry City & Strabane - Your Council](#)

Overview / Assessment

Performance under Objective 2 has demonstrated **evidence of improvement during 2025-26**.

Building Control activity increased and the council continued to demonstrate commitment to environmental improvements and sustainable development.

Importantly, the Council received external recognition for its innovative approach to waste management, securing the **APSE Waste, Recycling and Circular Economy Innovation Award**, highlighting good practice in promoting reuse, recycling and sustainable waste management across the city and district. Waste collected increased by 3.7%, reflecting the growth across the City and District, 96.6% of the recycling target was achieved and the Council only used 32% of the NILAS target.

The Council also made important strategic progress through the adoption of the **Local Development Plan Strategy**, providing a long-term framework for sustainable development and regeneration throughout the district. Planning demand remained strong, with the introduction of a new indicator measuring the total number of local and major planning applications received.

The Planning service continued to operate in a high-demand environment, supporting a substantial programme of housing, commercial, industrial and regeneration development across the Council area. Despite these pressures, performance in the processing of major applications improved substantially, **achieving a 15.2-week reduction (27.8%), resulting in the lowest average processing time in the last five years.**

Additionally, performance exceeded the statutory target, with **72.7% of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks**, surpassing the target of **70%**. This reflects the effectiveness of ongoing case management and performance monitoring arrangements.

Some examples of initiatives taken forward in 2025-26 related to this Improvement Objective are illustrated overleaf:



Council teams scoop prestigious award at Waste, Recycling and Circular Economy Awards

In securing the award, Council representatives highlighted the research and impact behind initiatives such as the Halloween Costume Swap and the dedicated recycling stations at the event.

They also showcased how compost made from brown bin waste gathered across the Derry and Strabane District area has been used to grow pumpkins at Acorn Farm and demonstrating the full circular journey of waste for the pumpkins.

"They demonstrated a truly holistic approach, setting a real example that can be applied to other events and festivals all year round and nationwide."

Council wins prestigious Planning Excellence Award

Derry City and Strabane District Council won the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Northern Ireland Award for Planning Excellence 2025 in the Excellence in Planning for Heritage and Culture category.

The Council received this prestigious regional planning award for regenerating the historic Clooney Cannon site, successfully combining heritage conservation, community collaboration and public realm improvements to create a valuable local asset.

The £215,000 scheme was delivered in partnership with the Bonds Street Community Association and Clooney All Saints Church of Ireland, with funding from the Department for Communities.

Improvements included:

- Restoration of the historic Crimean War-era cannon
- New seating, planting and lighting
- Interpretive signage
- A new pathway linking the cannon site to the church garden
- Enhanced access points and boundary railings.



Blooming Success Celebrated at Britain and Ulster in Bloom Awards

The Council received significant external recognition for its environmental improvement and horticultural excellence during 2025-26.

Derry City and Strabane District Council secured **first place in the Large Town/City category at the Ulster in Bloom Awards**

Foyle Street Bus Station received the **Station Award**.

The Council also achieved a **Britain in Bloom Gold Award**, recognising the quality of its floral displays, biodiversity initiatives, environmental stewardship and community involvement in maintaining attractive public spaces across the district.



**Derry City and Strabane District Council
officially adopted the Local Development
Plan 2032 – Plan Strategy**



Derry City & Strabane District Council

**Local
Development
Plan**

(LDP) 2032



Improvement Objective 3. Implement letter of offer from SEUPB for PEACEPLUS Theme 1.1 – Local Co-Designed Action Plan

Why we have selected this objective

The local designed action plans will be designed to complement the community planning structures. The plans will be centred around three core themes:

1. Local community regeneration and transformation
2. Thriving and peaceful communities
3. Building respect for all cultural identities

PEACEPLUS partnerships will self-determine and deliver priority projects on a cross-community basis. These will result in improved, shared and inclusive local services, facilities and spaces; and make a significant and lasting contribution to peace and reconciliation.

The PEACEPLUS Action Plans will benefit the Council through the:

- Creation of sustainable, inclusive and cross-community partnerships, which will make a significant contribution to the community planning process and peacebuilding;
- Community ownership of the PEACEPLUS Action Plans and ongoing engagement throughout their delivery; and
- The management of significant and sustained cross-community collaboration at the local level to deliver established development priorities.

We set ourselves a number of target outcomes in respect of this Improvement Objective. An overview of what we have done / achieved is set out overleaf.

Objective 3: Implement Letter of Offer from SEUPB for PEACEPLUS Theme 1.1 Local Co-Designed Action Plans

What did we aim to achieve?	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2025-26	Target Delivered?
Target Outcomes					Target		
% of total spend submitted in claims to SEUPB (Programme overall target - €9,254,427 (£8,047,327) (New)	N/A				15%	67.2% (€4,597,747.58)	Achieved
Number of participants registered on projects. (New)	N/A				9,254	19,321	Achieved

What has been achieved

Significant progress has been made in implementing the PEACEPLUS Theme 1.1 Local Co-Designed Action Plan during 2025-26. All **58 projects within the Local Co-Designed Action Plan were successfully contracted, launched and progressed into delivery**, with comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, financial management and reporting systems established to support programme implementation.

Performance against key programme targets exceeded expectations. Financial claims submitted amounted to almost €4.6 million, significantly **surpassing the annual target** of 15% of programme expenditure, while 19,321 participants were registered on funded projects, **more than double the target** of 9,254 participants. Both targets were fully achieved.

Further Information and links to Directorate Delivery Plan

Further information on the work progressed in 2025-26 is available at Section 3.3 of this document and also contained in the Business and Culture Delivery Plan for 2026-27 which is available on the Council's website.

[Derry City & Strabane - Your Council](#)

PEACEPLUS
Northern Ireland - Ireland

Co-funded by the



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All 58 projects now up and running!



Community Regeneration and Transformation



Thriving and Peaceful Communities



Celebrating Cultural Diversity



Strengthening Community Leadership in Peacebuilding



Improvement Objective 4. To deliver improved customer satisfaction by improving customer support services and processes

Sub Objectives:

- To monitor and report on the Complaints Handling Process within all service areas
- To provide accessible services / information

Why we have selected this objective

The Council's mission is to deliver improved social, economic, and environmental outcomes for everyone. This is supported by corporate values, including to be a centre of excellence and innovation with a clear focus on outcomes and delivery.

In delivering on these aspirations, Derry City and Strabane District Council recognises that today's citizens and stakeholders expect a high level of services and to be able to deal with the Council across a multitude of communications channels, including phone, e-mail, the Web, mobile devices, social media, as well as in person at our offices / facilities.

Citizens and customers are at the heart of what we do as a public service organisation. Consequently, we need to continuously strive to provide more responsive and accessible services, better collaboration with customers, increased transparency to the general public, and more proactive efforts to improve customer satisfaction.

The Council adopted the Model Complaints Handling Procedure³ developed by the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman (NIPSO) in January 2024.

³ [Final-published-LG-MCHP.pdf](#) (Section 3)

This aims to establish a consistent and streamlined approach to complaints handling throughout public bodies. NIPSO as part of their guidance has developed specific complaint performance statistics to be measured and published. As a result of this guidance some of the performance indicators and measures have been modified from previous years.

In our Improvement Plan for 2025-26 we set ourselves a number of targets in respect of this Improvement Objective. An overview of what we have done / achieved is set out in the table below:

Objective 4: To deliver improved customer satisfaction by improving customer support services and processes

What did we aim to achieve?	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2025-26	Target Delivered?
Target Outcomes					Target		
Total volume of external calls received (Council overall)	N/A	N/A	302,685	292,546	Demand Led	210,628	Results under review
Average time to answer external call (seconds) (Council overall)	27.3	23.3	22.8	22	10 sec	16 sec	Results under review
% abandoned external calls	5.4%	5.1%	5.4%	5.3%	5%	9.7%	Results under review
Number of complaints received				76 49 (Stage 1) 27 (Stage 2)	Demand Led	59 27 (Stage 1) 32 (Stage 2)	Achieved

Objective 4: To deliver improved customer satisfaction by improving customer support services and processes

What did we aim to achieve?	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 Target	2025-26	Target Delivered?
Target Outcomes							
Number of complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2 (New)					Demand Led	0	Achieved
Number of complaints closed in full ⁴ at stage 1 within 5 working days as a percentage of all stage 1 complaints responded to in full. (New)					100%	100%	Achieved
Number of complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2 within timescale. (New)					Demand Led	N/A	Achieved
Number of complaints closed in full after escalation within 20 working days as a percentage of all complaints responded to in full after escalation. (New)					100%	N/A	Achieved
Number of working days to respond in full to complaints at stages 1, 2 and after escalation to stage 2 (New)					Stage 1 < 5 days	2.9 days	Achieved
					Stage 2 < 20 days	18 days	Achieved

⁴ This is where a full response has been given to the customer / resolution has been reached – and includes those complaints where action is still to be taken once the complaint is closed.

Objective 4: To deliver improved customer satisfaction by improving customer support services and processes

What did we aim to achieve?	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2025-26		Target Delivered?
Target Outcomes					Target			
Number of complaints (and their determination) at stages 1, 2 and after escalation to stage 2 (New)					Demand Led	Stage 1	Stage 2	Achieved
Resolved						22	4	
Upheld						1	2	
Partially Upheld						1	4	
Not Upheld						3	22	
Number of complaints at stages 1 and 2 where an extension was authorised (New)					Demand Led	Stage 1	Stage 2	Achieved
						0	5	
Number of compliments received				79	Demand Led	67		Achieved

What has been achieved

The Council introduced a new telephony measurement software during 2025-26 which is in the early stages of implementation and as such the figures are unverified. The Council is working in partnership with the supplier to refine the recording and reporting of telephony statistics. This will continue to be a focus for 2026-27. The Council has identified customer service improvements, telephony training and the development of a Customer Service Framework/Strategy to be developed during the 2026-27 year. This aims to provide a clearer understanding of customer contact trends and support future service improvements.

The Council continues to promote the use of alternative communication channels and providing services through multiple channels and improving accessibility to information and services such as online services, email, social media and digital self-service options as part of its customer service improvement agenda.

The Council received 59 complaints during 2025-26, compared with 76 complaints in 2024-25, representing a reduction of 17 complaints (22.3%). The continued implementation of the NIPSO Complaints Handling Process, together with enhanced monitoring and reporting arrangements reflect the ongoing efforts to improve customer support processes and monitor service performance across Council services.

No complaints were escalated from **Stage 1 to Stage 2 during 2025-26**. This exceeds expectations and indicates that complaints were successfully addressed at the initial stage of the complaints process.

The absence of escalated complaints demonstrates that service areas were generally effective in resolving customer concerns promptly and satisfactorily at the first opportunity. It also suggests improved complaint handling practices and stronger engagement with complainants during the resolution process.

2025-26 Performance	
Changes to systems and processes that facilitate customer service	- Continued to engage with other Councils on best practice approaches to customer care (complaints handling, data protection and freedom of information) to enhance performance - Implemented new safeguarding policies
Greater staff awareness of policies relating to customer care	- Delivered refresher complaint handling training - Delivered refresher freedom of information training to new and frontline staff - Delivered Equality Duties training to 165 staff/elected members and other equality related training to over 200 staff
Customer Satisfaction	Achieved a 94% customer satisfaction rating in respect of Council's Irish language services. 100% of respondents said they would use the service again. 100% said they would recommend the service to others
Accessible Services & Information	- Implemented Age Friendly and Child Friendly plans - Updated Equality Scheme - Annual Rural Needs Report submitted to the Department of Environment and Rural Affairs - Performance Improvement Plan issued by the statutory deadline - Annual Performance Report issued by statutory deadline

Further Information and links to Directorate Delivery Plan

Further information on the work progressed in 2025-26 is available at Section 3.3 of this document and also contained in the Strategic Planning & Support Unit Delivery Plan for 2026-27 which is available on our website.

[Derry City & Strabane - Your Council](#)

Overview / Assessment

In summary, this objective was successfully delivered and demonstrates positive progress during 2025-26, particularly in relation to complaints management and customer support processes.

While telephony performance data remains subject to verification following the implementation of new measurement software, the Council has continued to strengthen its customer service arrangements and complaint handling procedures. Overall, performance during 2025-26 demonstrates **strong progress towards improving customer support services and processes.**

Some examples of initiatives taken forward in 2025-26 related to this Improvement Objective are illustrated overleaf:



£81,400

raised for PIPS Suicide
Prevention Ireland Charity
and
The Castlederg Patient
Comfort & Terminally Ill Fund

Throughout his term, Mayor,
Cllr Ruairí McHugh led a
range of fundraising
activities in support of these
vital local organisations, with
a focus on raising both
awareness and much needed
funds.





Disability Awareness Training aims to make hospitality businesses more accessible

A group of Strabane hospitality businesses successfully completed Disability Awareness Training.

The training, delivered by Disability Action aimed to improve accessibility, inclusion and overall customer experience.

The initiative was supported by Strabane BID who engaged with local hospitality providers and encouraged them to attend the training to increase staff and customer confidence as well as business footfall.



Barry City & District Council
Council Office &
Community Centre
Barry, South Wales

A Guide to Making Comments, Compliments and Complaints

Policy and Guidance

February 2024

Customer Service Update

In compliance with the Model Complaints Handling Policy the Council must externally publish complaints information on an annual basis.



Customer Trends

Complaints relating to the perceived quality of service represent the largest category of complaints received. This reinforces the importance of continued ongoing service improvement and customer-focused practices.

Directorates with the highest levels of direct interaction and engagement with the public continue to record the greatest number of complaints. Given the volume and frequency of customer contact within these service areas, this trend is consistent with expectations and provides valuable insight into customer experiences across frontline services.

Providing an explanation remains the most common method of resolution at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the complaints process. This demonstrates the significant role that clear, timely and effective communication plays in addressing concerns, improving understanding and achieving satisfactory outcomes for complainants.



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Learning & Improvement:

The Council remains committed to using complaints as a valuable source of feedback to inform service improvement and strengthen complaints handling practices. During the reporting period, a number of improvements have been implemented in response to lessons learned from complaints and the analysis of complaints performance.

- **Enhanced monitoring arrangements have been introduced through fortnightly communication with Directorates regarding outstanding complaints.** This has strengthened oversight, improved accountability and supports the timely progression and resolution of complaints.
- **Ongoing training and support have been provided to staff involved in complaints handling, with particular emphasis on frontline staff.** This has helped to reinforce understanding of the Complaints Handling Procedure and promote a consistent approach to managing customer concerns.
- **Training activities have focused on the importance of early resolution and compliance with prescribed timescales.** Staff have been encouraged to address concerns at the earliest opportunity, ensuring that complaints are handled promptly, effectively and in accordance with the Complaints Handling Procedure.
- **The Council has continued to promote the importance of effective communication throughout the complaints process.** By providing clear explanations, regular updates and timely responses, services are better equipped to manage expectations, improve customer experience and achieve resolution at the earliest possible stage.

This learning and improvement activity supports the Council's commitment to continuous improvement, organisational learning and delivering high-quality services to the public.



Planned Service Improvements for 2026-27

- The Council has identified customer service improvements, telephony training and the development of a Customer Service Framework/Strategy.
- These aims to provide a clearer understanding of customer contact trends and support future training programmes and service improvements.

3.2

Financial Performance 2025-26



Financial Performance 2025-26

For the year ended 31st March 2026, Council approved a net expenditure budget as part of the rates process of £81.850m. The sources of funding were as follows:

District rates income (including de-rating grant)	£79.910m
Rates Support Grant	£0.578m
Transferred Functions Grant	£0.462m
Council reserves/ District Fund	£0.900m
Total Net Expenditure Budget	£81.850m

A 4.92% rates rise for 2025-26 was set at a Special Meeting of Council on Monday, February 10, 2025, and comprised a 3.42% baseline increase to cover the significant statutory financial challenges and service demands facing Council along with a 1.50% rates investment towards the financing of Council's hugely ambitious and exciting capital strategy.

In terms of the baseline increase, this consists of a range of statutory pressures and new service demands facing Council services including pay pressures, increase in employer's national insurance costs and cost inflation which have been partially offset by some rate-base growth, additional waste income and continued efficiencies across Council services. Facilitated by new waste income, the baseline rates position also includes investment of £1.266m (1.64%) towards the reinstatement of previously implemented service cuts as well as new service pressures and demands. These include costs associated with assuming the responsible reservoir manager role at Creggan Reservoir; addressing budgetary and resourcing pressures within our key core front line services e.g. grounds maintenance, refuse collection, street cleansing and cemeteries; additional investment into grant aid programmes within sports development, community centre venues, consensual local growth partnerships, advice and cultural organisations; additional resources within community services to address emerging and immediate priorities e.g. Whole Systems approach to Obesity and Ending Violence against Women and Girls strategy; as well as additional tourism resource focused on screen and food tourism.

This year's budget will therefore allow Council to continue to provide critical frontline services to ratepayers with a clear focus and commitment to protecting jobs as well as the continued provision of funding to organisations who rely on Council support to deliver community services and projects.

The budget has also seen a 1.5% rates investment towards Council's ambitious £700m capital programme including City Deal/ Inclusive Future Fund. With exciting projects being progressed across the district including Acorn Farm, Derg Active, Daisyfield Sports Hub, new Northwest cemetery provision at Mullenan Road, as well as the DNA Museum, Council now has financing of up to £100m in place towards its 2 key strategic leisure aspirations in Templemore and Strabane. This will enable the 2 projects to progress to detailed design, consultation and planning with some further rates investment in 2026/27 and 2027/28 allowing the projects to progress to construction.

Year-end financial outturn summary 2025-26

Area	Annual budget £000	Annual budget (inc transfers to/from reserves) £000	Actual £000	Surplus/ (Deficit) £000	Summary Surplus/ (Deficit) £000	
Cross Cutting Corporate Services	9,650	9,995	9,836	159	3,723	Services
Health & Community	16,443	14,677	14,453	225		
Business & Culture	9,175	8,994	8,593	401		
Environment & Regeneration	31,935	32,515	29,577	2,939		
Capital and loan charges	12,829	5,094	5,094	0	(2,111)	Capital/ Other costs
Other costs/ income	274	(822)	(1,416)	594		
City of Derry Airport	1,545	1,663	1,662	1		
Transfers to/ (from) reserves		9,734	12,440	(2,706)		
Funded by:-						
Rates income	(76,694)	(76,694)	(75,858)	(835)	(550)	Rates income
Derating grant	(3,566)	(3,566)	(3,501)	(65)		
Non domestic rates provision	350	350	0	350		
Rates Support Grant	(578)	(578)	(660)	81	(819)	Grants/ Reserves
Transferring Functions Grant	(462)	(462)	(462)	0		
Reserves	(900)	(900)	0	(900)		
Total	(0)	0	(243)	243	243	

3.3

Corporate Plan Objectives: Key Achievements 2025-26



Introduction

Our Corporate Plan 2025-26 identified four strategic objectives:

- 1 Protect our environment and deliver physical regeneration
- 2 Grow our business and facilitate cultural development
- 3 Promote healthy communities
- 4 Provide effective and facilitative cross functional services

These corporate objectives align to the three pillars of the “Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017-2032”, namely environmental wellbeing, economic wellbeing, and social wellbeing.

Key achievements, under each of the Corporate Plan Objectives are highlighted throughout this Section and demonstrate significant achievements across all four Directorates.

Objective: Protect our Environment and Deliver Physical Resources

Planning

Major/Strategic and Local Planning Permissions Granted in 2025-2026

Council Projects Approved

- New Greenway on the site of the former Ebrington Primary School
- 10 Nos. Additional car parking Spaces Mitchell Park Playing Fields, Castlederg
- Installation of car parking canopies with roof mounted solar panels at 4 Acorn Farm, St Columbs Road, Londonderry
- Installation of 50 No. 6-Metre-high columns and resurfacing of existing greenway path along Foyle Valley Greenway, 1 Foyle Road, Derry
- Public realm improvements including re-surfacing of existing footways with natural stone & concrete block paving, realignment and alterations to existing roads and car parking, upgrading of street furniture and associated landscaping in Strabane town centre.

Economically Significant Approvals

- Building to provide assembly area for recycling machinery, Campsey
- Battery Energy Storage System Magherakeel substation, Castlederg
- Replacement telecommunication tower, Maydown Industrial Estate
- 4 No Start Up Units to include one General Industry Use Class B3 Unit and three Storage and Distribution Use Class B4 Units and parking, Newbuildings Industrial Estate
- Light industrial building Strabane Business Park Melmount Road
- Erection of 1 building to facilitate Offices for Strabane Ambulance Station
- Proposed redevelopment lands at Meenan Square to provide a mixed-use regeneration scheme comprising community, commercial and retail uses with landscaped open space/'square' and amenity areas and associated car parking and service area with controlled access/egress via Westland Street and Meenan Square and alterations / upgrade of surrounding public footpaths, landscaping and parking spaces.

- Proposed upgrades to increase capacity at existing Culmore Wastewater Treatment Works, including 2 No. final settlement tanks, associated civil, mechanical and electrical infrastructure, temporary stock piling and construction compound on adjacent land, and landscaping works at Culmore Wastewater Treatment Works, Coney Road, Culmore.
- Wastewater Pumping Station Buncrana Road
- Additional waste streams approved at River Ridge Recycling, Electra Road, Londonderry.
- Change of use from office to teaching rooms and ancillary areas at Timber Quay Building for University of Ulster
- Student accommodation (281beds), Strand Road
- Proposed farm and equestrian (include animal feed) suppliers, in new purpose-built unit at the Former Robert Smith and Co (Derry) Ltd site 72-76 Glenshane Road, Drumahoe
- Erection of retail unit (Tesco) with associated service yard and car park on lands adjacent and to the West of Home Bargains, Unit 1, 11 Melmount Road, Strabane
- Replacement retail unit including cafe/deli, ATM, petrol filling station, and car parking at Hamilton's Spar Strabane Road, Newtownstewart
- Petrol filling Station, Holdens Agriculture, Artigarvan, Strabane

Renewable energy approvals:

- 2x Replacement wind turbine Whitehouse Road, Castlederg,
- 248No. photovoltaic panels to the roof of existing Frylite buildings, Orchard Road Industrial estate Strabane
- Installation of 28 no. ground mounted solar PV panels Victoria Bridge, Strabane

Residential approvals:

- Residential development consisting of 161no dwellings and associated site works to include flood alleviation scheme at New Buildings.
- Residential development comprising 23 no. dwellings (mix of semi-detached & detached dwellings) Whitehouse Road, Derry
- Residential development comprising 15 units at Meadowview Park, Newtownstewart
- Four storey building consisting of 22 No. self-contained apartments and 1 No. commercial unit, Bridge Street Strabane
- Residential development comprising 8 no. social housing units at Meenan Square, Derry
- Reserved matters for full design/layout and enabling works for 259 No. affordable units at Springtown

- Reserved Matters for full design, layout, enabling works for 480 No. residential units, 7 No. retail units and associated service area in a single storey block, 2 No. three storey office blocks, communal open spaces including allotments, multi-use games area, landscaping, car parking on lands between Upper Galliagh Road, South of Beragh Hill Road, West of Beraghvale and North of Skeoge Link Road (A515) Derry

Local Development Plan (LDP)

- Public consultation undertaken during March & April 2025, for the four technical assessment documents of the LDP – Habitats Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal, Equality EQIA and Rural Needs RNIA. The 4 documents were finalised and, along with the final version of the LDP Plan Strategy (PS), were approved by the Planning Cttee on 4th June 2025. That resolution was then formally approved by the Full Council at its meeting on 25th June 2025. The LDP Plan Strategy was formally adopted on 10th July 2025.
- Twenty-four Supplementary Planning Guidance documents (SPG) have been written, to support the implementation of the LDP Plan Strategy, with 18 of them having gone out to public consultation, ongoing from July 2025 to 2026.
- Capacity building sessions were delivered to Council Members and staff (up to end of May 2025) to assist on the implementation of the LDP Plan Strategy, which has now become the prime policy document used in determining Planning applications. The implementation has been reviewed at 6 months.
- The formal commencement of preparation of the LDP Local Policies Plan (LPP) was publicly advertised in July 2025. The LDP Steering Group met in October 2025 and Project Management documents were considered, as well as a draft LDP Timetable and Workplan for the LPP preparation. Staff resources are being put in place for this LPP project. Methodology documents have been prepared and work initiated for some of the key topics of the LPP, namely Housing land, HMO Management Areas, Economic Development sites, Open Space land and Historic Environment sites.
- The Housing Monitor (HM) 2023-24 Report was completed and published online. The HM surveys were undertaken for the 2024-25 year, and the Housing Monitor 2024-25 Report was also produced and published online. There is an ongoing monthly HMO Monitor, with monitoring tables of Planning applications and decisions throughout 2025-26.

- Ongoing management of the tree-protection system, administering Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and related queries and Tree Works Requests, in accordance with the Council's draft TPO Tree Strategy. From 1st April 2025 to end March 2026, 5 requests for new Provisional TPOs were processed, 2 TPOs were confirmed, 12 requests for Tree Works Consents were processed, and 145 Tree Queries were considered. Conservation Area meetings have been attended, and internal consultation advice has been issued on planning applications.

Implementation of Independent Planning Review 2025-2026

- The Independent Planning Review made 12 recommendations, which included 22 actions in total. To date 10 actions have been completed, 5 are ongoing, and 7 will be taken forward in 2026-2027.
- The most significant of the 9 actions completed has been the review of the Scheme of Delegation and the revised Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee.

Environment & Building Control

Environment

- Progressed the development of new cemetery at Mullenan, works to complete Spring 2026. Maintained over 41,000 M² of land with 10 active and 20 historical cemeteries, to include burial services.
- Winner - APSE Waste, Recycling, and Circular Economy Innovation Awards - Local Authority Circular Economy - Sustainability at Derry Halloween
- Gold Award - Britain in Bloom – Small City, Ulster in Bloom – City Winner
- Completed maintenance in excess of 250,000M² on roadside grasslands and on over 55 football pitches equating to over 600,000.00 M² of groundworks. Maintained Synthetic pitches: 37 segments equating to over 90, 375 M² Secured sponsorship and completed maintenance to 30 roundabouts in and around the City & District.
- Maintained over 41,000 M² of land with our 10 active and 20 historical cemeteries, to include burial services. Resurfacing works to Cemeteries – at Tender Evaluation.

- Regularly serviced 1032 litter bins and 800 dog waste bins throughout the City & District. Carried out litter and detritus removal from over 1,100,942 linear m of kerb line. Completed street cleansing operations within City and Town centres 7 days per week 52 weeks of the year. Completed clean-up operations after all the major events throughout the year, such as St Patrick's Day and Halloween.
- Refuse Collection including Bulky Waste Collection services provided across the city and district to domestic and business users to include 3.5 million bin collections, 120,000 Assisted Bin Collections and 18,300 Bulky Waste jobs completed.
- Ongoing promotional activity across all service areas with regard to anti – litter and fly tipping promotions, waste and recycling etc. Recycling centre pages remain the most visited pages on the recycling website followed by bin collections and bulky lifts. Furthermore, users are staying on the website 31% longer.
- Circa 30 targeted campaigns of various sizes were delivered throughout the year to include Repair Week, Food Waste Action Week, Repair Week, Recycling Week, European Week of Waste Reduction utilising a number of tools such as traditional, digital, radio and out of home advertising to support waste reduction and best practice recycling.
- Implementation of reuse initiatives amongst Council staff such as clothing swaps & drop offs to promote clothing sustainability and to initiate a preloved consideration rather than buying new, to stimulate behavioural change
- Supporting initiatives delivered by Repair & Share Foyle through their Repair Cafes and any other reuse programmes that are in line with Council's objectives
- 1450 posts (images, reels, stories, videos) were published on social media garnering a reach of around 6.2M views for updates & recycling/waste related campaign messaging, representing an increase of 26% in engagement on previous year
- Profiling community clean ups and litter picks on social media and in press
- Launch of the Green Dog Walkers scheme and supported with the delivery of a dog fouling campaign to encourage responsible dog ownership

Building Control, Street Naming & Postal Numbering

- 3,627 Building Control Applications processed, 9,547 site inspections completed, 2,058 property Certificates Issued, 465 number Land and Property Services queries dealt with,
- 1866 requests for postal numbering and street naming requests processed, 187 New or replacement street signs erected,
- 40 number bilingual street name requests processed with circa 2861 residents consulted,

- 1 No. New Bus shelter installed as a replacement, 1 No Bus shelter refurbished and reallocated, 15 No. Bus Shelters refurbished on site, 3 No. Bus Shelters repaired due to storm damage.
- For the 11 months up to the end of February 2026, the Building Control Department received applications with a construction value of £180.5m.

Energy

- On Street Charging Project (EV)- Tender awarded works to commence March 2026 (Creggan, Irish Street, Shantallow)
- Derg Valley Internal LED light replacement complete
- Peace Bridge Lighting – at Tender Evaluation

Property / Compliance

- Completed maintenance works to council estate to include leisure centre, community centres, play areas etc
- Asset Management System (AMS) has developed into a corporate tool and is used daily by officers across all Directorates to Manage Maintenance, Certification, Premises Inspections, Play Park Inspections, Legionella, Contractor Control, Insurances, and the newly developed Health & Safety Hub.
- AMS is used as a means of reviewing certification in line with statutory obligations and relevant Codes of Practice in compliance with ISO 45001
- 700+ Assets listed to include Open spaces, Greenways, Pathways, Public Art, Skips etc.
- 160+ Assets includes certification management.
- 55+ Types of Certifications – Examples: EICR, Emergency Lighting, legionella, Fire alarms, Fire Fighting equipment, LOLER, Gas etc.
- 1625+ certificates on the system, averaging 180 Certificates monthly.
- 115+ ROSPA Safety Inspections annually.
- 95+ Contractors managed through Control of Contractor Procedures.
- Bi-annual Internal Property Inspections for 160+ Premises
- 6000+ Jobs managed annually
- Legionella Control averages 1800PPMs monthly

Green Infrastructure

GI Regeneration

- £6.2m UKLUF Acorn Farm Gate lodge complete (£0.5m) and Urban Farm at St Columb's Park progressing on site for summer 2026 completion
- Clooney Masterplan planning applications lodged and Area 1 approved
- Urban Skate Park designer appointed, and draft concept plans engaged on with residents
- Boomhall Masterplan complete and presented to Council for endorsement.
- Top of the Hill Masterplan complete and presented to Council for endorsement.
- £1.2m Ballynagaard Community Park complete and allotment management arrangements in place.
- Funding secured to progress the development of 9 play areas across the district. Design development commenced.
- £3m Business Case secured for the REALM project in the Fountain/Bogside from TEO towards a phase 1 project cost of £6m.
- Planning approval secured for lighting projects at Drumahoe, Bay Road and Foyle Valley Parks and funding package of £1.44m secured from DfI Active Travel Fund and Council.
- Planning approval secured for the Acorn Farm Solar Market Place for a future Farmers Market in the city.
 - Riverine Project (in conjunction with Donegal County Council) in Lifford and Strabane awarded €16.7 Million from SEUPB Peace Plus inclusive of a. €660,000 engagement programme

GI Climate Action & Biodiversity

- UK Funded (£300,000) Net Zero Derry & Strabane Programme ongoing complete
 - Derry & Strabane Sustainability & Climate Commission established (2 Additional cluster groups – Health/Community & Education) Vision & Roadmap complete
 - DCSDC Greenhouse Gas Emission Baseline and Mitigation Plan developed
 - DCSDC Responsible Procurement Strategy Developed
 - DCSDC Climate Screening Tool Developed
 - Community Climate Conversations complete (Support secured from Involve UK)

- Climate Justice Modelling Report Complete
- Green Investment Plan Complete
- Creative Ireland funded (€50,000 funding) Blueprint project delivered and showcase events held
- Green Club (PeacePlus) programme funding secured £200,000 and projects underway 5 Clubs included in cohort 1
- Lottery funded Artitude project secured further £1,099,320 of funding for stage II. Ongoing work as project partner with delivery during 2025-26.
- Secured Shared Island Funding (Project completed)
 - Derg Valley Leisure Centre €18,105
 - Acorn Farm Solar Petal €50,000 and installed on site
 - Sigersons GAA €50,000
- Shared Biodiversity Project – Donegal County Council Shared Island Funding – Funding secured (€11,000) Cross Border Schools Project
 - DAERA Statutory Public Body Reporting – Mitigation Report & Adaptation Report submitted

GI Services & Management

- Brooke Park – secured Green Flag & Heritage Award
- Retention of the Bronze Award from Sustainable Food Places for the City & District
- Acorn Farm Lead Horticulturalist appointed with external Lottery Funding through CFNI
- Ongoing Development of the Acorn Food Network, working in partnership with a wide range of public and private sector partners to further develop Council Area as a sustainable food place and continue to build the food movement within the city and district.
- Participation in NI Science Festival alongside Community Partners Acorn Farm programme ongoing partnership support and delivery of £2.0m funding from the Climate Action Fund Lottery Programme, in particular continuing to support the I Can Grow, I can Cook and Growing Challenges programmes.

Regeneration

- Completion of the £2.5m Covid Recovery Small Settlements Programme comprising delivery of environmental improvements, commercial façade painting schemes and active travel interventions across targeted rural settlements
- Contractor appointed for the DfC-funded £6m Strabane Public Realm Scheme (DFC funded), and delivery of two public engagement workshops with works commencing in May to strengthen connectivity between existing and proposed public realm and the town centre, and to upgrade pavements with high-quality materials and finishes.
- Appointment of design teams to advance the £650k PEACE+ funded heritage restoration and improvement projects for war memorials and historic cemeteries to include appointment of consultants to commence delivery of the respective community animation elements
- Appointment of consultants to prepare a Car Parking Capacity Study for Newtownstewart Town Centre
- Completion of the regeneration masterplan for the former Strabane Grammar School and advancement of key due diligence processes (legals, valuations, technical) as part of any proposed acquisition by project partners
- Progression of a conservation-led condition assessment for the Council-owned Mortuary Chapel at Derry City Cemetery
- Completion of Phase I designs for a Cathedral Quarter heritage-led façade painting scheme and submission of funding application for Phase II capital implementation
- Advancement of the Architectural Heritage Fund's Heritage Development Trust Programme working with lead partner Inner City Trust to identify and scope key heritage-led regeneration projects in Derry's Walled City to include the former Austins Department Store
- Funding secured and approvals sought to take forward a regeneration masterplan for identified lands at Gransha Estate with partners Department of Health and Choice Housing Association
- Completion of the Glenowen Taskforce, with the action plan delivered and ongoing engagement maintained with key stakeholders.

Objective: Grow our Business and Facilitate Cultural Development

Business Development

- £9.2m secured from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to continue delivery of the NI Enterprise Support Service (NIESS) Go Succeed programme, supporting the 11 Councils in driving enterprise creation, business growth and economic development.
- £1.3m in direct grant funding to DCSDC businesses secured through Go Succeed, DAERA and DTFF to support early-stage and established businesses in achieving growth ambitions. This has contributed to a total investment of over £2m into the local region, directly supporting 245 businesses.
- To strengthen the regional business ecosystem, the Business Support Team has actively forged strategic partnerships with regional business hubs, academic institutions and industry leaders, delivering 35 events to over 1,600 participants this financial year. Key collaborations have included Awaken Hub, BITC, Catalyst, City Centre Initiative, Enterprise North West, GEMX, Invest NI, Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, North West Regional College, Strabane BID, Strabane Enterprise Agency, The Amp, Ulster University, Women in Business, Women in Enterprise and Young Enterprise.
- The team has placed strong emphasis on inclusivity and accessibility within the region's entrepreneurial landscape, delivering targeted outreach initiatives to inspire entrepreneurship among underrepresented groups & rural communities. The initial target of engaging 640 individuals was significantly exceeded, with engagement reaching 250% of target (1,600 individuals).
- 506 individuals supported through Business Advisory and Mentoring Programmes across start-up, growth and scaling stages, including social enterprises. This included tailored advice, one-to-one mentoring, specialist consultations and comprehensive business planning to assist businesses to overcome barriers and capitalise on growth opportunities.

- Digital transformation remains a key priority and catalyst for economic growth. The team has actively promoted adoption of advanced technologies to improve efficiency, reduce costs, enhance competitiveness and enable scalability. In this financial year, over £500k has been invested across 32 businesses to support the adoption of advanced digital technologies.
- The team have contributed to the development of key regional economic projects that promote alignment with business support activity and wider economic development objectives. Projects have included Smart Villages Network (SVNP), €4.9m secured via PEACEPLUS and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Employment, Training and LMP:

- Progressed the 2025-26 Labour Market Partnership Action Plan.
- The 2026-27 Action Plan received final approved for delivery.
- Delivered 9 LMP Board meetings which included 1 AGM. Hosted capacity building sessions for members on Labour Market and Skills Outlook and NWRC overview of delivery and funding.
- Over 300 people assisted through employment academies and programmes.
- Managed the Apprenticeship NI Regional Working Group for Derry and Strabane in partnership with DfE.
- Developed and delivered an apprenticeship marketing campaign council wide to highlight apprenticeships as careers for all ages and genders.
- Actively participated in NI Apprenticeship Week 02-06 February 2026 by hosting 2 Apprenticeship Fairs and an online employer webinar. Maintained Council's bespoke getapprenticeships.me website.
- Partnered with DfC on the delivery of 2 major Job Fairs: Derry Cross Border Fair in the Foyle Arena and Strabane Job and Apprenticeship Fair held in the Melvin Sports Complex. Overall, over 800 people attended with 50 employers and 25 support organisations exhibiting.
- Supported 7 events (mini job fairs, information events, roadshows) across Derry and Strabane. CEIAG Engagement Following engagement with schools and survey feedback:
- Over 80% of schools prioritised careers education and employer engagement.
- Careers fairs with employer panels were the most requested format.
- KS4 and post-16 pupils were identified as priority groups.
- Significant unmet demand for work experience was highlighted. The Council responded by positioning itself as a strategic convener and enabler, focusing on employer engagement and pathway awareness rather than direct placement delivery.

Social Value & Capital Investment

- Active participation in the Social Value Working Group
- Contributed to embedding skills and employability within City Deal capital projects
- Supported alignment between contractors, education providers and community organisations

Community Wealth Building

- Ongoing contribution to the Community Wealth Building Partnership
- Strengthening links between local procurement, skills development and employment outcomes

Education & Skills Delivery Partnership

- Continued facilitation of ESDP
- Sector subgroup engagement across key growth areas.
- Alignment of education and employer demand within construction, digital, manufacturing and heritage sectors

City Region Investment and Opportunity

- Hosted 16 inward visits raising the profile of the city region to an international audience.
- Hosted 9 inward investor visits.
- 10 location searches completed to accommodate new and expanding companies.
- Development of 11 value propositions for potential investors (life sciences, renewables, AME, Tech, Professional Services and Aviation).
- Coordination and delivery of 3 x RegTech Cluster Events.
- Planned and coordinated the Ireland Northwest Trade & Investment Mission programme to Boston, New York and Philadelphia.
- Planned and coordinated the annual Golden Bridges transatlantic conference at Babson College, Boston.
- Coordinated and delivered the Lead2Grow Programme in partnership with Donegal County Council, Donegal Local Enterprise Office and IESE Business School empowering 13 MDs/CEOs of 13 NW companies with the skills, insights and strategies to scale their businesses.
- Secured Financial Times fDi Investment Impact Awards for Vertiv Campsie Investment placing in the Top 10 Operational small projects (with committed and deployed investment below \$50m).

- The NW Learning City Region was relaunched in partnership with the Northwest Tertiary Education Cluster, strengthening regional learning and innovation and creating opportunities for all and coordination of the inaugural NW Learning City Region Festival in partnership with UU and NWTEC partners
- Support to secure PeacePlus funding of €9.45 million for Innovate+ a project will focus on supporting SMEs across NI and border region on their innovation journey. Council is an associate partner.
- Launch of NW DEPTH Pace Plus programme for upskilling and reskilling in digital and cybersecurity skills. Council is an associate partner.
- Diaspora engagement via 4 quarterly ezines.
- City & Growth Deals Skills Assessment Task & Finish Group - Life & Health Sciences Report for NI completed and shared with all stakeholders.

Off-Street Car Parks

- Completion of Phase II of the Car Parks Capital Works Scheme re-surfacing and improving the layout of a further 5 off-street car parks across the city and district (Simpson's Brae Waterside, Market Square Claudy, William Street Castlederg, Railway Street Strabane and Mill Street Strabane).
- Re-lining an additional 4 off-street car parks improving customer experience.
- Additional 18 accessible parking spaces created to ensure improved parking for people with a disability with a total of 85 accessible bays and the introduction of 23 new family friendly bays.
- 93% of the off-street street car parks now provide accessible parking for people with disabilities (2019: 60%).
- Provision of free parking scheme in partnership with Strabane BID to incentivise town centre footfall in the lead up to Christmas 2025.
- Facilitation of Council's signature festivals and events in council's car parks in 2025-26

Local Economic Partnership

- Establishment of LEP for Derry City & Strabane and co-design of an action plan in line with DfE's economic focus and the city and district's place-based challenges and barriers to economic development
- Agreement by LEP on their mission, vision and values
- Receipt of letter of offer for £4.4m under the DfE Regional Balance Fund to deliver a scheme of funded projects across three key themes: strategic place-making, enterprise growth and support and clustering

PEACE Plus Programme

- All 58 projects within the Local Co-Designed Action Plan now contracted (Procurement Phase complete).
- All 58 projects within the Local Co-Designed Action Plan now launched (Project Initiation Phase complete).
- All 58 project now in delivery phase with all monitoring, evaluation, financial and reporting systems in place.
- Appointment of KPMG as first-control / audit function for the programme in July 2025 from SEUPB list.
- Submission of 10 quarterly written and financial claims from July 2025 – March 2026 to catch up fully with the backlog of financial claims caused by the delays in the SEUPB 'call-off' list for appointment of control/audit function.
- Maintenance of an excellent audit rating for the programme and steady reimbursement of funds from SEUPB.
- Design, testing/pilot and establishment of end of project reporting systems for all projects.
- Presented to UNICEF Child Friendly awards team as part of the DCSDC successful effort to win Child Friendly status.
- Designed printed and distribution of 2nd PEACEPLUS Magazine in Autumn 2025.
- Creation and broadcast of promotional video on Local Co-designed Action Plan co-design process and early delivery.
- October 2025 Networking conference held (Public event) 65 attendees including cross-border and cross-council.
- December 2025 Delivery of Smartphone video training to projects to enhance communications skills.
- December 25 Completion of first annual equality update showing statistically the diversity engaged in the programme
- Delivery of a 1-day training event on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls for community leaders (Feb 26).
- Delivery of a 'Building Community Capacity for Peacebuilding' networking conference for PEACE projects (Mar 25).
- Continued servicing of the monthly PEACEPLUS Partnership Board and 3 thematic steering groups.
- Collaboration with NWRC Film students to produce 6 short films of funded PEACE projects.
- Recruitment of a new Finance Officer.
- Completion of all detailed financial forecasting exercises for SEUPB.
- Pro-active communications including maintenance of website, monthly e-mailouts, social media and press releases.
- NEET young-adult 6-month placement with the PEACE Team now doing a Community Development Degree at Ulster University

Strabane BID

- **Strabane Gift Card:** The initiative has continued to grow despite losing our highest selling agent, The Alley, temporarily. The gift card continues to provide a tangible benefit to town centre businesses, locking spend directly into the local economy and encouraging footfall.

- **Street Art:** Funding and delivery of Strabane town centre's first two pieces of street art on Castle Place, improving the vibrancy, vitality and footfall on the street.
- **Schools Campaigns:** Working with schools to promote a 'Love Local, Shop Local' ethos in children and young people. This year's 'Nominate Your Christmas Star' was very popular and achieved our highest views and engagement across social media.
- **Events:** Town centre events proved very successful with 48 businesses engaging directly in Summer Jamm, the highest number to date. The new Music Trail, funded by elected members, was well received and proved beneficial for all participants. BID established a new working relationship with The Vintners which has developed into further support included Disability Awareness Training. Delivery of 'Strabane From Here, For Here' event showcased local businesses and was a successful, positive, celebratory event.
- **Love Strabane Social Media:** Social media engagement has increased significantly over the past year with more diverse posting and other organisations seeking to collaborate. It has become the go-to digital hub of the town, providing information, celebrating achievements, showcasing and promoting business, the gift card and the town as a whole.
- **Strabane BID Business of the Year:** This year the award went to J. Arthur Electrical Ltd, with The Thirsty Filly and Medicare, Main Street receiving short-listed status. The award focuses on the importance of celebrating and recognising the contribution of our local businesses to the community.
- **Business Photography:** A further 11 businesses received bespoke business photography, used in promotional campaigns and outdoor advertising. Businesses received a copy of the photos for their own use and BID is currently building up a considerable portfolio of local business imagery, ensuring they feature at the heart of promotion and marketing.
- **Engagement with Strabane Town Centre Regeneration and Public Realm Schemes:** These transformational projects are set to change the landscape for our local businesses in the near future, both aesthetically and economically. BID is a key stakeholder in both projects and are working closely with council officers, facilitating delivery of information and consultation sessions.

Museum & Visitor Services

- Achieved strong visitor numbers throughout the year pushing high levels outside traditional peak months.
- Continued delivery of high-quality guided tours and front of house service standards.
- Visitor Services income up on previous year.
- Successfully hosted major civic occasions including the visit of Irish President Catherine Connolly.
- Delivered inclusive events showcasing culture, arts and storytelling supporting place-based participation. Successfully delivered Deaf Association Conference.
- Played a central role in Halloween, St Patricks Day and Jazz Festivals with family friendly activities and high quality music.

- Contributed to sustainability practices and targets by improving waste and energy use and supported Councils climate commitments.
- Worked closely with Visit Derry TNI, local schools, community groups and event partners to expand engagement and increase access to cultural heritage.
- Maintained strong visitor satisfaction scores and positive reviews with Tripadvisor Travellers Choice Awarded to Tower Museum and Guildhall, and 31 written complements received.
- Completion of mandatory staff training, 100% compliance in external health & safety audit, Visitor Services staff trained in Active Bystander Training, 10 staff completed OCN level 2 Tour Guide training through NWRC.
- Guildhall shortlisted for APSE Service Award.
- Guildhall staff successfully leading on Heritage Venues Working Group.
- Successful operational delivery of programme of events in the Guildhall including music, conferences and weddings.
- Retail offering consistently developing with new lines added and revenue generation.
- Derry Girls Experience – milestone of 68,000 visitors from 96 countries since opening and additional features added.
- European Heritage Open Days tours at Tower Museum and Guildhall.
- Archive & Genealogy programme included events with PRONI, North of Ireland Family History Society, RootsIreland, NI Libraries, plus a range of sessions with local, history and community groups and professional organisations.
- Learning programme included Reminiscence sessions through the HeART programme and Loan Box sessions delivered with schools plus a series of schools' tours during the months of January and February prior to the closure of the 'Story of Derry' exhibition.
- Derry Girls Experience – 97,000 visitors since installation in July 2023 close to 100,000 milestone from almost 100 countries. Additional features added to enhance experience.
- Planning and completion of the decant of La Trinidad Valencera collection to National Museum Northern Ireland (NMNI) for conservation prior to the objects returning for installation to the DNA Museum.
- Early-stage planning for the decant of the 'Story of Derry' collections, including the returning of loans to other repositories and conservation of selected objects.
- Digitisation contractor procured as part of the NLHF revenue strand to digitise a range of archive collections for gallery use, graphic support and for increased access in the Archive Discovery Zone (May).
- Capital Grant received to deliver 'Stitched' a conservation and quilting project to ensure long term sustainability of the shirt factory quilt collection (Jan).
- National Archives 'Archives Revealed' successful grant application with the appointment of an Assistant Archivist to work on the shirt factory collections.

- National Archives successful grant application for funding for a 'Scoping Report' for the John Hume archive collection (complete Feb) • Hosting and facilitation of Museum Association NI Members Group Meeting in Tower Museum (June).
- Official launch with key stakeholders and partners of DNA Museum at Ebrington – 24 September 2025 and launch of DNA Museum website www.dnamuseum.com/
- Delivery of Museum Service Annual Plan 2025-26
 - Art of Triumph with the National Gallery & The Playhouse at the Guildhall.
 - Workers' Rights Social Justice Week Programme – Museum Service Programme @the Alley – Ann's Journey Honouring the life and legacy of Strabane's Trade Union Pioneer.
 - Quilt Fayre at Everglades Hotel; St Columb's Hall exhibition event; Creggan Country Park for sustainability event Loan of textiles & 'Shirts, Singers & Sewing' exhibition).
 - Unlocking Our Silent Heritage Project launch and 3 cemetery site visits delivered in partnership with Creggan Enterprises – Enagh/Old Glendermott and Urney.
 - Project completion with the National Gallery London (200th anniversary programme) resulting in a one-day event at the Guildhall celebrating music and creativity (June).
 - Temporary exhibitions – 'Showbands' and 'Shirts, Singers & Sewing' - loaned to a range of community groups.
 - Continued project work with Conflict Textiles and Ulster University, NMNI team with an event for Universal Human Rights Day and confirmation of two textiles to be loaned for DNA Museum.
 - Successful event delivered on 17th May to mark 80th anniversary of the end of WWII and the Battle of the Atlantic in Ebrington. Approx. 8000 attended with re-enactments, museum displays, children's activities and music. This event was also part of the National Gallery Ireland's Drawing Day. Social media boasted 6,065 Interactions with a Reach of 91,185 and on content posted. The resulting in an average of £500,795.
 - Amelia Earhart 93rd Anniversary Landing – Presentation at the Tower Museum and item presented for loan to DNA (21 May).
 - Loan of Museum Service collection for Culmore Community partnership launch of Culmore Fort.
 - Museum Service Programme @the Alley Exhibition - Lines of Inheritance – The Art of Micheál Ó Nualláin and the legacy of Flann O'Brien.
 - Loan of stained-glass fragment for Conflict & Legacy Interpretive Network exhibition in the NMNI Ulster Museum's Troubles and Beyond Gallery (27 June)
 - Development & delivery of DNA Pop Up exhibition for EHOD / Culture Night & Tourism Fam visit.

- European Heritage Open Days tours at Tower Museum and Guildhall and promotion of the DNA Museum pop up exhibition
- Culture Night at Tower Museum with a pop-up DNA Museum exhibition and living history characters with the Makey Uppers

Tourism

- Review and development of new Tourism Strategy and 5-year action plan (2026-2031).
- 29% increase in Visitor Spend and 10% increase in overnight trips (NISRA 2024).
- Supported 50+ businesses with experience development, ongoing training and promotion.
- Delivered 1 experience development programme which supported the creation of 5 new experiences.
- Delivery of 15+ food events/experiences as part of the Love LegenDerry Food month February 2026. PR and digital marketing campaigns, and a LegenDerry Food media showcase, hosting 10+ food media.
- LegenDerry Food Village delivered as part of the City's 2025 Halloween Festival.
- Ongoing engagement maintained with Hat Trick Productions, Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland and Screen NI in relation to the Derry Girls project. Continued promotion of the Derry Girls Exhibition and £350,000 secured to deliver a Derry Girl immersive trail.
- Supported Coast to Coast Shared Island project – Media opportunities, Derry's inclusion in the Causeway coastal Route Strategy which includes the development of a Signature and Discovery point within the city.
- Investment in an additional officer within team to develop Food and Screen Tourism initiatives.
- Development and delivery of strategic cross border projects to support to enhance the Walled City where WAW meets CCR, NW marketing initiatives and the development of PeacePlus funding bid.
- Ongoing support for City Deal projects - Walls Experience & DNA City Deal Projects.
- 6 venues supported with £69,600 through the Heritage Animation & Visitor Servicing Fund 2025-26.
- 14,702 visitors Sperrin Heritage Site/Giant Sculpture (April 1, 2025 to Dec 31, 2025) and £260,000 secured for enhanced play provision onsite.
- Management plan and action plan developed for the Sperrin AONB

Arts & Culture Summary

Strategic Development & Implementation

- Continued rollout of the Arts & Culture Strategy, supported through:
 - NW Audience Development Programme Collaborative Resilience Programme
 - Development of updated A&C Strategy in consultation with the Co Delivery Group
 - Active co-delivery with local partners, practitioners, and statutory stakeholders

- Delivery of Arts Development and Access & Inclusion functions to reduce participation barriers, especially for the pan disability community

Arts Development Initiative

- Sperrin Scarecrow Arts Trail – £8,025 funding to deliver a community arts project engaging rural communities.
- 25 inclusive arts workshops in rural Strabane (Autumn 2025–Spring 2026). Creative Sector Forums & Collaboration.
- Artist Studios support for successful launch of Creative Village Arts Guildhall Taphouse Studios.
- Support for civic events inc Halloween, Derry Strabane Culture Night 25, One World Festival.
- Festival & Event Organisers Forum: sessions on event management, health & safety and collaborative programming.
- NW Music Makers Forum: sessions on Venues Collaboration, Musicians Union Fair Play.
- NW Theatre Makers Forum: events including Networking and Collaboration cross border and with regional and national support organisations TDNI, ITI, PAF • IACP Awards 2025-26 delivered for 19 recipients.
- Agreed principles and guidelines for Associate Artist Programmes, consensual pilot programme in development.
- Derry Creative Healthy City & NI Creative Health Network support including cross border collaboration on Shared Island programme.
- Civic events: fostering Arts & Business collaboration.
- Moor Area Test & Learn programme.

Access & Inclusion Programme Highlights

- Successful completion of Access Grant Aid Programme with evaluation completed to support next step in prioritising access and inclusion and removing barriers to engagement for the pan-disability community.
- Delivery of Disability Awareness Training within hospitality in Strabane to support adults with learning disabilities who want to go out in the evening socially without facing barriers as part of Mayors Initiative in partnership with BIDS.
- FestivALL 2026 returned with over 400 participants with outreach and performance opportunities for disabled participants.
- Partner with Tourism team to support their pathway to prioritising accessibility while also promoting access and inclusion best practise that has been developed within DCSDC Arts and Cultural venues and expanding it into the wider tourism sector.
- Continued to explore opportunities for the implementation of accredited continuous improvement initiatives for access and inclusion including ACNI All-In and University of Atypical Arts and Disability Access Award (ADAA) initiative. Following a pilot project of ADAA Millennium Forum has been awarded Accessibility Champion Status with the Alley Theatre planning to go through the process on reopening later in 2026.

Festivals and Events

- Delivered the full complement of events including City of Derry Jazz and Big Band Festival, Derry and Strabane Halloween, Walking Festival, North West Angling Fair, Strabane Lifford Half Marathon, Waterside Half Marathon, Summer Jamm, Craft Fair, Christmas Switch On Derry and Strabane, St Patricks Day Derry and Strabane.
- Delivered Strabane Lifford Half Marathon (1509 registrations, 1105 individual runners 62 relay teams 2000 spectators); Mayors Events (2300 attendees); Jazz Festival (92,000 attendees); Summer Jamm (10,000 attendees); Waterside Half Marathon (3504 registered); Halloween Derry (100,000); Strabane (13,000 attendees); Christmas Switch Derry (12,000 attendees); Christmas Strabane (7,500 attendees); St Patrick's Day, Derry and Strabane (16,900 Derry; Strabane 8,700 attendees).
- 6 senior staff attend Event Control and Crowd Management accredited Training by UK Resilience Academy.
- 8 reps from external organisations attended the Event Control and Crowd Management accredited Training by UK Resilience Academy.
- Supported the Mayor's Christmas events, Afro beat events and Supercar event with all proceeds in aid of the Mayor's charity.
- Delivered a new Strabane Lifford Half Marathon route to include a new start at the Alley Theatre and to run first few miles in town. There were a record number of participants.
- Advised and enabled a series of external events including the All-Ireland Bands Championship, International Cricket Series and the Triumph of Art event.
- Managed Headline and Community Festival funds with a total of £116,000 awarded through Community Festivals Funding, £30000 through National Events Funding, £240,000 awarded through Headline Events funding.
- Secured in 2025 £100,000 through Tourism Northern Ireland for funding for Derry Halloween. Secured a further £60,000 in sponsorship from Diageo and the Lycra Company.
- Led the development of a business engagement programme, working in collaboration with teams across Business and Culture.
- Supported the Executive Office with the roll out of the large-scale events process for Ebrington Square

Marketing

- Designed, developed, delivered and supported 214 integrated marketing campaigns for Council services, festivals & events, funded programmes and cross-cutting projects across three Directorates and Strategic Support Units, supporting delivery of key Council priorities.
- Achieved a 12.5% increase in overall online community size across all social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram & LinkedIn), resulting in a total combined audience of 446,173.
- Successfully attracted 100,000 visitors to Derry Halloween 2025 over three nights, reinforcing its position as a leading international Halloween destination.
- Generated an estimated £13 million PR value for Derry Halloween, delivering significant global media exposure and destination profiling.

- Successfully attracted 90,000 visitors to the City of Derry Jazz & Big Band Festival, representing a 15% increase on 2024 attendance.
- Secured £70,000 sponsorship in-kind to support the development of the new Derry Halloween website, enhancing digital visitor experience and campaign reach.
- Achieved Runner-Up at the NI Social Media Awards for Best Campaign in the Hospitality & Tourism Sector, recognising excellence in digital campaign delivery.
- Delivered a high-impact regional marketing campaign (NIESS) across TV, radio, outdoor, press and digital platforms, complemented by localised campaigns across all 11 council areas. Independent tracking (quarterly surveys of 1,000 adults across NI) demonstrates consistent growth in service awareness across all regions.
- Successfully delivered a stakeholder engagement strategy for NIESS, strengthening relationships with key political stakeholders across the NI Executive and UK Government, supporting programme visibility and alignment.
- Delivered 'The Ultimate Pitch' campaign and event series, achieving a 25% increase in applications, alongside strong campaign performance including 343,703 impressions, 25,896 e-zine clicks, 17,714 website sessions and 158 PR placements within a four-month period.
- Delivered 1,450 social media posts (including video, reels and stories), achieving a reach of 6.2 million views and a 26% increase in engagement year-on-year, supporting key behaviour change for environmental campaigns.
- Delivered 30 targeted environmental campaigns including Repair Week, Food Waste Action Week, Recycling Week and European Week of Waste Reduction.

Objective: Promote Healthy Communities

Community Development Achievements:

The Community Development section has managed and administered a wide range of Community Development and Advice Services programmes. Further details of the specific programmes are outlined below:

Community Centre Venues Fund (CCVF)

Open call process for non-Council Owned Community Centre(s) / Facilities to apply for financial assistance under Tier one – (Maximum award of £12,000) targeting primarily Rural Centre(s) and Tier Two (Maximum award of £12,000) targeting primarily Urban Centre(s). 18 Community Centre / facilities financially supported. Total amount of funding awarded - £195,000.00. In the rural areas, additional funding was secured to fund three additional centres during 2025-26 financial year only, at a cost of £30,000.

Community Support Fund (CSF)

The consensual process was adopted for this fund in the urban areas, however, an open call process to C&V Sector groups within the rural DEAs of the DCSDC area to deliver programmes in line with the Community Support Programme (CSP) to address high level objectives outlined above. 19 community and voluntary sector groups financially supported the rural DEAs. Total amount of funding was awarded through the open call process for the Rural DEAs £67,115.00 with an overall total of £214,499.00 administered through the Community Support Fund. During this financial year the rural DEAs planned towards the full implementation of the consensual process for 2026-2027 with the development of consensual action plans to meet the needs within their communities.

Strategic SLA

- Rural Community Support (RAPID) - £70,000
- Newtownstewart 2000 Centre - £51,300
- Developing Healthy Communities - £15,000
- Foyle Search and Rescue - £15,000

Advice Services Programme

Currently Derry City and Strabane District Council fund five Advice Service providers, Advice North West, Dove House Community Trust, The Resource Centre Derry, Creggan Community Collective and Leafair Community Association Ltd. Advice support has been provided under the following three categories:

- Generalist Voluntary Advice
- Welfare Reform Mitigation Tribunal Representation
- Welfare Reform Mitigation Face to Face

All five Advice Providers deliver services to an agreed DCSDC specific Quality Standard, which is independently monitored with the last Quality Control Audit completed in 2025-2026 financial year.

The total allocation of funding for Advice Services for the 2025-26 financial year is £1,227,716.80.

Advice Service	Allocation
Generalist Voluntary Advice	£916,101.14
Welfare Reform Mitigation Tribunals	£98,661.35
Welfare Reform Mitigation Face to Face	£135,790.18
Integrated Advice Partnership Fund	£77,164.13
Total	£1, 227,716.80

Integrated Debt Advice Partnership Fund 2024-2026

Community Development administrates the DfC's Integrated Debt Advice Partnership fund, which has allocated £114,548.04 over two years until 31st March 2026, with £77,164.13 being administered in the 2025-2026 financial year to focus on enabling better integration of funding and services, collaboration for early intervention and prevention to increase the reach of debt advice. This service locally aligns to addressing the needs of persons most at need of this integrated advice and aligns to other key areas of work within the section, particularly in relation to the Social Supermarket programme delivered by two providers across the DCSDC area, providing a wider wraparound level of support in relation to debt advice. A range of referrals and promotion elements have been identified and implemented to ensure that as many people are aware of the advice

available in relation to advice services. During 2025-26 a promotion campaign enabled a social media promotion of the services and also included a leaflet campaign within local press to reach households and promote the services.

Neighbourhood Renewal (Strabane Town)

The Community Development Section coordinates the Department for Communities Neighbourhood Renewal Fund in the Strabane Town area and provides technical assistance support in order to implement the key agreed priorities in the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan alongside the Local Growth Plan for the area.

The Co-ordinator facilitates the Neighbourhood Renewal / Local Growth Partnership, which has responsibility for the delivery of the Local Community Plan and Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan across Strabane town. The Partnership brings together a representative mix for the area comprising of key community, political, statutory and private sectors, to take the lead in local planning, identification and implementation of agreed priorities and actions.

The Community Development section have been liaising closely with the Partnership and DFC in relation to a Working Group established to review and explore structures and future arrangements in line with DFC and the stakeholders involved.

Good Relations Programme

Good Relations policy is directed by The Executive Office (TEO), through the implementation of the Together: Building A United Community (TBUC) Strategy, and TEO is responsible for the delivery of the District Council Good Relations Programme across all 11 Councils. Councils made a bid to a competitive fund for resources on a three-year basis.

Aligned to the Together: Building a United Community (TBUC) Strategy, the Strategic and Local Growth Plans, the Councils' Good Relations Strategy, work is categorised into four key themes:

Our Children and Young People

This theme includes good relations projects for primary and engaging young people in their communities

Our Shared Community

This theme covers the Good Relations Grant Aid Programme for groups, leadership programme and a Special DEA initiative

Our Safe Community

Under this theme, there is an interface and contested spaces initiative

Our Cultural Expression

Covers the One World festival that is in conjunction with the Council's Festivals Team, the Let's Talk programme, our Good Relations Week activities, traveller awareness projects and a support programme for BME communities

The Executive Office (TEO) funded £340,764.29 for the 2025-2026 District Council Good Relations Programme. The core funding contribution received is 75% contribution to programmes, with an additional 25% coming from Council. Following funding reductions from TEO in recent years, the revised action plan now includes 16 programmes instead of the 19 programmes that was originally submitted to TEO in January 2024.

The completion of a Good Relations Audit during the November 2025 to January 2026 period by Council through a consultation process has informed the development of a new three year Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan for 2026-2029 period, and providing an evidence base to develop a range of programmes and actions aligned to key themes and meeting the priorities and need identified in the Action Plan for 2026-2027 and submitted to TEO for next financial year.

The Community Development section has been instrumental in taking forward DCSDC commitment to formally adopt the North West Anti-Racism Charter endorsing a strong message that the City and District stands firmly and collectively pledges to say no to racism in every form and to promote a culture of respect, inclusion, and equality.

During 2025-2026 the Good Relations programme held an open funding call under their Strategic Priority Fund theme Safe Communities, which allocated £43,190 towards four groups leading on programmes and actions to address this Good Relations Priority theme.

Ending Violence Against Women & Girls (EVAWG)

Support for The Community and Voluntary Sector groups with delivering on a number of key prevention-based outcomes within the Ending Violence Against Women & Girls (EVAWG) Strategic Framework during 2025-2026 period through funding received from TEO, equating to £378,815 for the period 1st December 2024 to 31st March 2026.

The LCGPB's developed consensual plans for allocation of £104,000 for EVAWG Tier 1 & 2 programmes of activities through the consensual process and a total of £163,894.64 allocated to 7 groups through the open call for programmes within Tier 3 of the Change Fund. In addition, a number of key events, campaigns and initiatives have been supported by the section to address the outcomes of the EVAWG Strategic framework locally, including Reclaim the Night event and Active Bystander Training and support for accredited training initiatives, a shared learning event and plans to mark International Women's Day 2026.

Racial and Social Unrest Funding

Delivery of £30,000 funding received from TEO to address Racial and Social Unrest and to Improve Social Cohesion with a number of actions and programmes to address this area by 31st March 2026. These actions build on the initial phase of funding which targeted the three DEA's of Ballyarnett, Moor and Waterside.

Full Dispersal Funding

Full Dispersal Allocation to support projects which will support Asylum Seeker integration within the DCSDC area for the 2025-2026 financial year. During this financial year some of the funding was 100% utilized to support initiatives and events like Africa Day celebration held on 24th May and an event on 26th June to mark Refugee Awareness Week in conjunction with the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

Asylum Funding 2025-2026 (Phase III)

A funding allocation of £92,773 was received from The Executive Office for the establishment of a Community in Practice Hub to support Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Minority Ethnic Groups, and other Newcomers to integrate and access essential services within Derry City and Strabane District Council as part of Phase III of the Support and Integration Programme.

Phase three of the programme has built on the work carried out to date to support Asylum Seekers and Refugees, minority ethnic groups and newcomers to integrate and access essential Services. Working closely with the Western Health and Social Care Trust, the allocation will enable the re-instatement of the Community in Practice Hub, which will meet regularly and involve key statutory agencies, C&V sector representatives and existing service users with lived experiences in addition to providing the wider support and integration programme.

Council Owned Community Managed Community Centres (COCMC)

Management of 19 Council Owned Community Centres. The Facilities Officer works closely with the C&V sector group who carries out the day-to-day operational management of the Centres to ensure that the Centres are operating in line with Council 45001 H&S management systems, with a programme of work to undertake essential maintenance on the centres at a cost of £100,000.

Local Community Planning

Attendance at the Local Community Growth Partnership Boards (LCGPB). Officers provided support to the local community planning process, including assisting to deliver on actions relation to Community Development within each of the 8 Local Community Growth plans. The Local Community Plans were reviewed, updated and published during this year.

Officers work closely with the community and voluntary sector groups in each of the areas to provide advice and support with project planning, funding application and governance advice including charity commission registration. Information pertaining to Community Development and potential funding opportunities is circulated regularly on the 8 LCP databases.

Pride of Place Awards

Co-operation Ireland, its local authority partners and its headline sponsor IPB Insurance hosted the Pride of Place Awards Ceremony on 7th November 2025 in Limerick. The IPB Pride of Place Awards is an all-island competition that acknowledges and celebrates the work that communities are doing all over the island of Ireland. The selection process undertaken for the Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) entries was carried out in consultation with the Local Community Growth Partnership Boards (LCGPB). The LCGP Boards were invited to put forward agreed nominations for the urban and rural areas respectively.

This year's nominations saw the submission of two local community groups providing a diverse range of services to our communities. The category headings that DCSDC Community Development put forward nominee groups to are as follows:

Cities Competition - Inclusive Communities - Waterside Shared Village - Overall Winner
Main Competition - Community Youth Initiative: Enagh Youth Forum – Recognition of Nomination

Social Supermarket (SSM)

During the 2025-2026 year the funding for the SSM transitioned from DfC to Council for the Social Supermarket service, with a Letter of Offer received from the Department for Communities (DfC) for £399,456.50 for 2025-26. Strabane Community Project covers Strabane Town, Sperrin and Derg DEAs and the Foyle Network Foundation covers the Ballyarnett, Moor, Waterside, Foyleside and Faughan DEAs. This ensures access to services and support regardless of where one lives within the Council area.

This approach has resulted in addressing the gap in provision within the Rural DEAs previously identified in the three-year Action Plan for a Food Support/Wraparound Service Model report completed by EOS Community Consulting.

Engagement will continue with local community groups to raise awareness of the service available to anyone who needs support. During the year the team and a number of community and voluntary sector groups and LCGPBs have been facilitated with Familiarisation Visits to the services to help raise awareness and understanding to promote referrals from the CVS.

Age Friendly – Core funding of £54,584 for 2025-2026 (annually from PHA)

Derry City & Strabane District Council is an affiliate of the WHO's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC) and the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities (UK Network) which supports the GNAFCC mission and aims to stimulate and enable UK cities and communities to become increasingly age-friendly.

The Age Friendly Co-ordinator continues to address actions outlined within the older persons outcome of the Strategic Growth Plan in addition to the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan. The Public Health Agency provides annual funding (£54,584) and an in-year contribution of £8,000 towards the Age Friendly programme, which contributes to the salary costs for the Age Friendly Co-ordinator post and programmes.

The Age Friendly Alliance, Over 50's Reference Group, Co-Design steering group meet regularly, and representatives attend the NI Age Friendly Network quarterly meetings and UK Network of Age-friendly Communities peer calls.

Recent achievements have included the delivery of:

- Positive Ageing Month 2025 with sixty-five different events and activities delivered across the eight LCGPB areas including some key events like the Chat Tea Train and Chat Tea Ball in partnership with the WHSCT to tackle social isolation

- Support employability workshops
- Age Friendly Summit & Planning Group - The Age Friendly Co-ordinator was involved with the planning and delivery of the Age Friendly Summit and the associated planning in advance of this, with the PHA and all relevant stakeholders held on 4th November in Belfast. A number of key representatives from Council were in attendance and the feedback from the event was very positive.
- Age Friendly Employers Pledge – Council has signed up to join a number of other workplaces across the UK through the Age Friendly Employers Pledge
- Smart Moves Event - The Age Friendly Co-ordinator arranged an event in partnership with Easilink in relation to transport and community access. A dedicated event was held at the Fir Trees Hotel on 14th October in Strabane, which focused on older residents' views on transport, mobility and community transport services, highlighting the importance of accessible transport for social participation and independence.
- City Deal Stakeholder Engagement - The Age Friendly Co-ordinator has been involved with partners involved with both the Strabane and Derry City Deal Stakeholder Engagement process and plans to include the voice and representation from older people as part of this regeneration process across the two areas.
- Appointment of Age Friendly Champions from DCSDC Elected Members
- The Age Friendly Co-ordinator has continued to build partnerships with key stakeholders as part of the age friendly programme of work and in addition helps communicate with through ongoing issue of Age Friendly Newsletters and joint chairing of the cross departmental working group for Age Friendly within Council.

Mayors Initiative 2025-2026

As part of his Mayors Initiative for 2025-2026 a showcase of the work of the smaller grass roots community and voluntary sector groups across the DCSDC including visiting each LCGPB area on a rotational month basis. The focus has been to recognise the valuable contributions which these groups make, often on a voluntary capacity to the fabric of DCSDC community.

The Mayoral visit has given the groups formal civic recognition and media coverage to the important role they play within their communities.

Children & Young People

During this year the Council alongside its multi-agency partners, WHSCT, EA and Youth Justice Agency were successful in achieving the UNICEF UK Child Friendly Cities and Communities recognition for 2025-2028. This culminates in the area being the second in the UK and the first area

regionally to receive this award. The highlight of the achievement was marked with an event in the Guildhall to announce the event, followed closely by a Celebration Event for Children and Young People in November to mark World Children's Day.

The programme has now entered the sustainability phase, and partners are working collectively and collaboratively to deliver key actions in the Sustainability Plan. Other key events and initiatives held include the joint campaign to promote child rights to young children through a joint initiative with NICCY, Council and WHSCT targeting Year 1's and their parents and guardians across the DCSDC area. Furthermore, Care Day 2026, held in February was a celebration day with a range of activities planned with WHSCT and DCSDC to support children and young people in care within the Council area.

The voice of children and young people is key to influencing decisions and Engagement and recruitment have been facilitated with key partners to recruit new members for the North West Ministry of Youth as the lived voices for the area. Opportunities this year with current members has involved engaging directly with Elected Members to provide a voice for decision makers to understand the issues faced. Key highlights have included Local Democracy Week 2025 and ensuring children and young people have a voice in relation to influencing plans being taken forward with City Deal projects.

The Children & Young Peoples Co-ordinator has undertaken training to equip the section with the skills to roll out training in Child Rights across the Council area and help build awareness and capacity.

Addressing actions outlined within the children and young person's outcome of the Strategic Growth Plan has been achieved in relation to embedding a child rights-based approach in the design, delivery and review of action plans, SLA's contracts and tenders developed across the wider section. In addition, the section has been leading with the implementation of the Child Rights Impact Assessment (CIRA) as part of the pilot competed through the delivery phase of UNICEF UK CFC journey, which has been embedded across DCSDC directorates.

Governance meetings include Child Rights and Youth Participation Board, Cross Departmental Working Group, Political Champions. This year has seen the roll out of the Child Friendly Mapping across each of the 8 LCGPB areas, expected to be delivered by March 2027, with Moor and Waterside areas progressed to date.

Links have been established with the University of Ulster in relation to the co-design of future courses to help shape and embed Child Rights within this course for the future and also providing support to other cities and communities continuing on their UNICEF CFC UK journey.

Active Communities Through Sport Programme

DfC's Active Communities Through Sport programme which administers £56,753.26 grant aid from DfC Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) to 5 groups across the DCSDC NR areas aims to enhance the levels of physical activity programmes through promoting volunteering and active citizenship and building capacity where needs are high to help improve the lives and communities of residents in the area.

Pilots Row Community Centre

The Community Development section co-ordinate the Pilots Row Working Group which is made of Elected Members, Management and representatives from the Education Authority.

LGBTQIA+ Working Group

The establishment of the LGBTQIA+ Working Group in 2024 for Council area meets bi-monthly to take forward key actions and provide insight and lived experience to various areas of work which Council are progressing.

Foyle Race Equality Forum

Advisory support is offered to the group which aims to advocate for BAME communities in the city and district.

Foyle Housing Advisory Group (FHAG)

Advisory support is offered to the group which is established to share information and address housing and Good Relations Issues. This group is attended by various statutory agencies. Community & voluntary organisations, housing associations and Elected Members.

The Group shares information on Housing Association updates, Good Relations Initiatives and ensuring Good Relations action plans are aligned.

Rural Housing Association Advisory Committee (RHAAC)

Provide advisory support to the committee which is attended by various statutory agencies, community & voluntary organisations, housing associations and elected members. The committee is also a forum that addresses community concerns or needs on the ground. The committee shares updates on community initiatives and programmes for the Rural area.

Traveller Action Group / NI Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues

DCSDC is represented on this grouping along with other statutory agencies with the aim to work in partnership to address issues faced by Travellers.

Community Development

- Co-ordination of funding to deliver EVAWG programmes and actions to address prevention-based outcomes and societal change
- Development of the new Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan for 2026-2029
- DCSDC has been awarded UNICEF UK Child Friendly Cities and Communities recognition for 2025-2028, becoming only the second place in the UK to receive this designation and the first Council regionally
- Promoting and embedding child rights-based approach across Council
- Delivery of Mayors Initiative to support grassroots community and voluntary sector groups
- Continuous support of the SMART moves event to address transport with Easilink as part of the Age Friendly programme
- Provision of funding to the C&V Sector across the 7 DEAs and Strabane Town
- DCSDC endorse and sign up to the Age Friendly Employers Pledge
- Delivery of services including Advice, Integrated Debt and Social Supermarket service to meet needs of citizens
- Support community planning across the 8 LCGPB areas and support rural areas to transition to the consensual model

PCSP

- External funding support of 662,292.88 secured during 2025-26
- £17,560 of Small Project Support (open call) allocated to 2 local groups to enhance the community safety of the city and district
- £181,600 allocated via Consensual Grant Aid to 8 Local Growth Partnership Boards in the city and district
- 128 homes fitted with additional home security equipment under the Safer Homes Initiative (to December 2025)
- Support for 45 Neighbourhood Watch schemes covering 3,500 homes
- 11 Multi-Agency Support Hub meetings held with 376 referrals dealt with through the Support Hub (April 2025 to February 2026)
- 8,145 anti-social behaviour (ASB) hotspot patrols carried out by the Community Safety Wardens (April to December 2025)
- Community Safety Wardens received and actioned 774 ASB referrals (April to December 2025)

- 127 CCTV cameras monitored and independently dealing with 337 missing person reports, 156 attempted suicides and 631 suicide welfare concerns (April to December 2025)
- 23 RAPID (Remove All Prescription and Illegal Drugs) Bins installed across the district to remove and destroy unwanted tablets/pills. 12,790 pills were deposited in the RAPID Drugs Bins in the DCSDC area (April to September 2025)

Capital Projects

UK Government Funded Projects

The Levelling Up paper notes the contribution of sport to delivering on 4 of its six capitals including physical, human, social and institutional where investment is needed to address inequalities and restore local pride.

It recognises that sports can:

- Contribute to individual health and wellbeing including a broad range of physical and mental benefits
- Public facilities provide a place-based infrastructure through which services can be delivered across the most deprived communities
- Sport and leisure facilities are seen as a significant factor in determining a local community's sense of belonging and pride of place

Council has benefitted from the national Levelling Up Fund (total of £16m), now known as UK Government Funded Projects for significant infrastructural projects within the district which are now well underway with construction completed at some stages of each project:

Daisyfield Community Sports Hub

This project opened in early 2026, with the regeneration of the Daisyfield pitches and development of a single storey sports centre with facilities for fitness classes, boxing, snooker and social area; six block changing room facility; upgrade to the existing natural 100m x 50m grass pitch; a FIFA 1 Star synthetic multi use games area; and car park and associated supporting infrastructure.

Derg Active

The project is an integrated economic, health and well-being, social and environmental project focused on the rural town of Castlederg. Works have been completed in the Diamond area, including high quality public realm and the Castle Park play facility. Greenway areas and the Castle Park event have also been completed. Construction began in Spring 2025 on the development of the 3G pitch and associated area at Mitchel Park.

Replacement 3G Pitches & Review of MUGAs

Works are ongoing on replacement 3G carpets in a number of facilities including Bishops Field, Foyle Arena and Leafair. A condition assessment of Council's MUGAs has been commissioned. The surface assessments were requested to determine the current life expectancy of each sports surface, identifying any refurbishment work or intensive maintenance programme that may be required going forward.

Community Centre Works

- Glenview Community Centre is moving to RIBA design stage 4, with preliminary report. PQQ tender package being prepared.
- Ballymagroarty and Hazelbank project is ongoing at RIBA stage 4 with resubmission of planning due.
- Prehen grounds and pitches are currently being scoped by H&C and E&R directorates to publish a draft outline masterplan
- Top of the Hill grounds are currently being scoped by H&C and E&R directorates to publish a draft outline masterplan
- Melvin Multisport Hub works have been completed.

Strategic leisure projects in Strabane and Templemore site are progressing, with ICT appointed for both projects and currently at RIBA Stage 3 design.

Skeoge Health Impact Assessment

A proposed cooperative taskforce in relation to the Skeoge housing development in the Ballyarnett Ward has been identified. The proposal has come about as a result of action research work undertaken in 2025 by the Skeoge Health Action Research Project (SHARP), in support of the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership, which pointed to a lack of social infrastructure in the area having a detrimental effect on the current population of the area, which is set to double in the next few years.

Sports Development

- Delivery of £60,000 Support for Sport Grant Aid Programme
- Delivery of £30,000 Playing Pitch Maintenance Fund
- Pilot launched for Strategic Sports Partnership Investment programme with five Governing Bodies
- Cater for 600 clients through the GP Referral PARS
- Completion of the DCMS funded resurfacing of Foyle Arena 3G Pitch • Achieve 25% retention rate in relation to membership sales amongst the above clients

- Delivery of 'Be Active' Cancer Referral Programme catering for 100 clients annually
- Deliver Healthy towns programme to include minimum of 15 partnership programmes and 10 council led programmes to include physical activity programmes for young people, females, people with disabilities and older people. As part of programme delivered Couch to 5K and Couch to 3K running programmes, Cycling Balanceability, Chair based exercise and Walking football
- Roll out of Coach Education programme to include CPD training. Target at least 60 foundation/introductory qualifications per year 30 level1 and 10 higher level qualifications.
- Deliver Sport and physical activity opportunities across a variety of settings achieving a number of key targets
- Deliver Summer Schemes targeting rural and urban setting with 7 weeks of delivery in July and August. Over 250 children every week across 4 different sites
- Delivered Sports Awards celebrating the success of our local sporting community
- Launched new physical literacy programme for young people
- 72 Elite Athlete Gym Memberships
- Supported our talented athletes through our Elite Travel Bursaries - £10,351

Leisure Services

- Delivered upgrade to lighting and ecological planting at Derg Valley leading to greater energy efficiency and greater biodiversity on the site; thereby contributing to Council's Climate Pledge
- Delivered upgrade to wellness suite at Derg Valley including Council's first Infrared Treatment Cabins and installation of Cryospa
- Delivering on active ageing, mental health benefits, active recovery
- Delivering on opportunities for health and well-being for rural communities
- Delivered new 3G Pitch at Foyle Arena
- Worked in partnership with RNLI to integrate the "Float to Live Campaign" initiative in our learn to swim and schools' swim programme in all our facilities with swimming pools
- Hosted 5,000 competitors at the National Irish Cross Country Championships at Templemore Sports Complex
- Hosted RNIB Technology Fair at Foyle Arena
- Hosted World Children's Day at Foyle Arena

- Blind Awareness training hosted for staff, with attendances from all sites
- ONUS training completed as part of our annual mandatory training
- Disability Awareness Training completed in conjunction with Mencap
- Delivered on new multi-sports hub at Melvin Sports Complex including new 3 court multi-sports hall with dedicated boxing facility, upgraded changing and parking infrastructure on-site
- Recorded 1,735,332 million paid leisure visits – surpassing the target
- 4,719 children have taken part in school swimming programme (up to qtr3)
- Surpassed the paid memberships target achieving 8,471 memberships
- 90K+ attendances at fitness classes • 225 attendees at water safety courses
- All leisure centres registered with Breastfeeding NI as breastfeeding friendly locations
- Inclusive swim sessions continue at all wet centres

Health and Community Wellbeing Services

The Health and Community Wellbeing section has ensured the ongoing delivery of statutory Environmental Health and other services relating to Housing, Public Health Protection and Development, Food Safety, Port Health, Health & Safety, Consumer Protection, Environmental Protection, Planning Consultation, Licensing, Safety Advisory Group, Animal Welfare, Dog Control and Registration Service (Births, Deaths, Marriages) with a key focus on 'promoting health, safety and wellbeing, and safeguarding the environment by supporting communities and businesses through education and enforcement'.

Environmental Health Service Delivery (1st April 2025 – 20th March 2026)

- 3857 Environmental Health service requests investigated and actioned in accordance with Council enforcement policies

Housing Service (Private Rented Sector) (1st April 2025 – 20th March 2026)

- Participated in the DfC's Affordable Rent Project Board and Intermediate Rent Working Group
- Participated in the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Regional Monitoring Group regarding the delivery of the HMO function
- 230 HMO's licensed in the DCSDC area to date (20th March 2026)
- 289 Home Safety visits undertaken (to 20/03/2026) with a resultant 427 signposting's to other schemes/services, and referrals to other services such as PCSP, NIFRS, Social Services, Occupational Therapy and assisted bin lift in council

- 296 service requests related to the private rented sector investigated (to 20/03/2026)
- Service Level Agreement in place with the Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland in relation to private water supplies. Samples and risk assessments of registered supplies were undertaken in accordance with the SLA
- Data Sharing Agreement in place with the Make the Call Team in DfC to enable referrals to be made to Make the Call and for Make the Call to refer into the Home Safety team
- Response to flooding incidents and assessment of homes in accordance with the Department for Communities Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance

Public Conveniences

Continue the implementation of a Community Toilet Scheme

Health Development

Alcohol, Drugs Mental Health and Homelessness

- Civic Forum (Alcohol, Drugs, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing and Homelessness) brings together a range of organisations to collaborate and share best practice, map current services and develop the scope of services, which may be required to support communities.
- 3 Meetings held up to 20/03/2026

Obesity Prevention

- Continued to work with partners to contribute to the delivery of obesity prevention objectives outlined in the regional obesity strategic framework. For example, working in partnership with the FSA in NI to implement the Calorie Wise scheme in the district and the continued promotion of MenuCal to businesses in the district
- Provided a consultation response on the new obesity strategic framework, Healthy Futures'

Funded Programmes

- £122,345.28 external funding secured to support Home Safety (£51,712) and Tobacco Control (£70,633.28) programmes (to 31 March 2026)
- Continued delivery of 'Life Project' (tree sapling provided/planted for each life event) through our Registration Service

- Partnership Agreement in place with Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service and 36 eligible households referred for a Home Safety Fire check and to have smoke detectors installed where necessary. (to 20/03/2025)
- The Home Safety Service attended the schools' education programme - Youths Educated in Safety (YES) Programme 21st–23rd October 2025, 17th–19th November 2025 and 17th–19th February 2026 - P6 & P7 pupils and school staff members in attendance

Food Safety and Port Health (April 2025-20th March 2026)

- Food Hygiene (FH) and Standards (FS) Work Conducted 372 Food Hygiene inspections and 162 Food Standards Inspections
- 132 Food Hygiene and Food Standard inspections carried out in new premises
- Provided support and guidance to 100% of all new food registered premises i.e. 130 new food business operators, before they opened
- 505 other (non- programmed/alternative enforcement) FH interventions completed
- 252 other (non-programmed/alternative enforcement) FS interventions completed
- Investigated 664 Requests for Service, including 9 food incident reports from the Food Standards Agency (FSA)
- Continue to operate the mandatory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) with 94% of all premises having a 5 or 4 rating
- Conducted 100% of all requested revisits under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Undertook a National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Consistency exercise
- Liaised closely with the Councils Business section in the planning and operation of events (which included a food safety aspect) within the district. Inspections carried out of high-risk food stalls at Halloween markets
- Investigated 90 notifications of Infectious Diseases including participation in an out-of-hour rota with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
- Assisted the Public Health Agency in the investigation of a Salmonella outbreak
- Procured 271 microbiological food samples; 185 chemical food samples, including participation in national surveys
- Informal Alcohol sampling undertaken in 25 licensed premises during December 25
- Contaminant sampling undertaken to comply with EU requirement
- Representation on Environmental Health Northern Ireland (EHNI) food subgroups- NI Food Managers Group, Food Standards and Food Fraud, Food and Nutrition, Fish and shellfish, Food imports, exports and Port Health
- Food Service was the subject of a NI wide FSA audit in 2025 in relation to Food Service Plans. The audit was successful, with only one minor recommendation

Support to Businesses

- Food Safety Workshop delivered for Food Businesses in the DCSDC area delivered in April 2025 in association with Safefood
- Assisted Angel Eyes, a charity aiming to help young people with sight issues, in a QR code project for food businesses. Angel eyes attended the above training, and the Food Team have promoted the scheme to all premises inspected since April 2025 through letters
- Utilised council's social media channels to signpost businesses to sector specific guidance developed by team on Food Safety messages. Included promotion of the Safefood Food Safety workshop in April 2025, and Christmas food safety messaging in December 2025
- Updated Council website with links to Food Hygiene guidance, forms and training materials

Enforcement

- 2 Voluntary Closures of a business undertaken until suitable works were completed

FSANI Related Work

- Completed 2 update returns to the FSA on team's performance in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice
- Implemented the FSA's new official controls programme for Food Standards, the Food Standards Delivery Model, in May 2025
- Continued to work with partners to contribute to the delivery of obesity prevention objectives outlined in the regional obesity strategic framework. For example, working in partnership with the FSA in NI to implement the Calorie Wise scheme in the district and the continued promotion of MenuCal to businesses in the district
- Contributed to consultations on the Food Law Code of Practice and Grey Market goods

Food Imports/Exports

- Continue to participate in Foyle port working groups with FSA, DAERA, DEFRA and DEFRA Organics
- Undertook 9 Certificate of Inspection (COI's) Organic SPS checks at Foyle BCP. (Designated by EU as BCP in Feb 21 for Importation of Organics)
- Responded to all verification queries from DAERA regarding Approved Premises for food export
- Contributed to an EU audit of the food inspection facility and procedures at Foyle BCP on 1/7/25

Port Health

- Reviewing of incoming ships to Foyle Port to verify health conditions of crew and validation of ship sanitation certificates. 132 shipping notifications dealt with
- Inspection of vessels on request for Ship Sanitation Certificates as required under the Public Health (Ships) Regulations (NI) 2008
- Checking the quality of water provided to and stored on ships
- Engagement with the Public Health Agency on the implementation of their Port Health Plan and monitoring Maritime Declarations of Health submitted by vessels arriving at Foyle Port
- Work with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency on mutual areas of interest so as to protect the welfare of crew and ensure vessels are safe

Health & Safety and Consumer Protection Services (01 April 2025 – 20th March 2026)

- Joint Strategy between Councils and the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) and working with the Health and Safety Liaison Group (HSLG) to progress implementation of the 2025-26 workplan
- Working with the Northern Ireland Consumer Protection Sub Group to progress implementation of the 2025-26 work plan
- Participated in regional working groups for Health and Safety and Consumer Protection, including development and delivery of joint plans
- 636 health and safety and consumer protection visits carried out (01 April 25 – 31 Dec 25)
- 432 health and safety and consumer protection requests for service were received (01 April 25 – 31 Dec 25)
- 47 workplace accident notifications were received and responded to in accordance with relevant guidance (01 April 25 – 31 Dec 25)
- Funding of up to £49.5k accepted from the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS)
- 218 new businesses were emailed to signpost to guidance on health and safety and Consumer Protection
- All new premises visited were provided with Consumer Protection and/or Health and Safety guidance
- Agreed associated action in the Northern Ireland Consumer Protection Sub Group 2025-26 workplan regarding coordinated joint work on Construction Products
- Worked with council's Business Team and Events Safety Advisory Group and other agencies in relation to signposting event organisers to health and safety and consumer protection guidance during key events
- Promotion/follow up of OPSS product safety alerts, where possible
- Sports Grounds Safety regulatory work carried out with the Ryan McBride Brandywell Stadium and Celtic Park Stadium. This included stadium visits and participation on the Sports Grounds Safety Advisory Group and multi-agency work regarding the new North Stand at Brandywell

- Use of Council social media platforms and website to post guidance and information on Health and Safety and safety of consumer products including in the lead up to the Christmas period
- Participated in a major tattoo convention held in the district regarding health and safety advice and regulation
- Legionella Guidance produced and sent to 56 residential premises
- Advice and Guidance sent to 130 Beauty salons and 4 wholesale distributors in relation to the ban of TPO in gel nail polish
- Visits carried out to 30 second-hand retail premises and guidance booklets, posters and plug checkers provided for the safety of second-hand electrical goods
- Provided guidance to businesses regarding Sunday Trading
- Liaison with the OPSS regarding the provision of safe consumer products and the Health and Safety Partnership Officer regarding joint work between the 11 councils and HSENI
- Consumer Protection visits were carried out to costume shops in the lead up to Halloween

Environmental Protection Services (01 April 2025 – 20 March 2026)

Air Quality Management

- Continued monitoring of local air quality throughout the Council district as part of Local Air Quality Management framework which includes 6 continuous air monitoring sites air monitoring stations located at Rosemount, Dales Corner, Newtownstewart, Castlederg, Strathfoyle and Springhill
- Servicing air monitors in the Brandywell area for the Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH) network and at Springhill for the black carbon network
- Calibration of air monitoring equipment undertaken in accordance with Technical Guidance to achieve data capture of 90%
- £35,033.50 funding obtained from DAERA to support Councils Air Quality duties. Funding for continued maintenance of air quality monitoring stations and new PM monitor at Castlederg & portable PM monitor to be located at Jon Clifford Bull Park
- Installed and initiated new air quality monitoring station at Castlederg Leisure Centre. Data collection commenced in 2025
- Continued delivery of 'Life Project' (tree sapling to be planted for each life event) through our Registration Service. Local oak sapling growing initiative with North West Regional College Horticultural Unit and Creggan Country Park

- Continue to support the Northern Ireland Radiation Monitoring Group's (NIRMG) continuous Argus gamma monitoring network and Environmental radiation sampling programme. Industrial Pollution Control Continued response to service requests in relation to noise and air quality from commercial and industrial premises
- Planned inspections of Local Air Pollution Prevention and Control (LAPPC). 41 installations permitted with associated annual subsistence fee income
- Ongoing discussions with NIEA on the review and transformation of Local Air Pollution Prevention and Control is regulated in Northern Ireland
- Participated on NIEA regulatory Forum in relation to Pesticides and F-Gases
- Participated in Coal Sampling Programme through NIEPG to identify Sulphur content
- Initiated formal discussions with A5 WTC Principal Contractor and attended online Placeholder meetings

Noise Control

- Continued response to service requests in relation to noise from commercial and industrial premises
- Attended Safety Advisory Group in respect to large scale music events
- Staff undertook acoustic qualifications to maintain professional competence

Planning Consultations

- Environmental Health staff assess proposed development including impacts associated with air quality, dust, odour, noise, contaminated land and artificial light
- 559 planning consultations received between 1 April 2025 and 20 March 2026
- Participated in Planning Appeal Commission hearings, and Public Inquiries

Licensing Services (April 2025 – 20 March 2026)

- 281 Licenses/permit/registration applications received.
- 279 licenses/permits/registrations issued.
- 13 Road Closure applications received • 13 Road Closure applications issued.
- 124 consultations under the Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 and Betting, Gaming, Lotteries & Amusements (Northern Ireland) Order 1985

- Continued development and review of policies, procedures and guidance relating to the licensing function, including:
- New Entertainments Licensing Policy
- New, revised Street Trading Policy
- Development of new online entertainments licence application facility
- Revised pavement café licensing guidance, reflecting latest DfI guidance
- New procedure for road closures for special events
- New guidance on making representations
- Representation on Licensing Forum Northern Ireland

Safety Advisory Group (SAG) for Events (April 2025 – 28 February 2026)

- Continued administration of multi-agency Safety Advisory Group, promoting best safety practices for public events
- Provision of advice and guidance in support of 53 planned public events
- 1 Special Safety Advisory Group meeting held in relation to The Foyle Cup

Animal Welfare Service (1st April 2025 – 28th February 2026)

- The animal welfare service is delivered through the lead Council Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC).
- There were 449 service requests received resulting in 413 animal welfare cases with 40 cases were referred to other agencies.
- There were 541 visits, 32 Improvement Notices served, 3 seizures, 0 Formal Cautions, and 0 prosecutions

Dog Control Service (April 2025 – 20th March 2026)

- 1096 Service requests, including 124 dog attacks (63 people, 20 livestock and 41 domestic pets), 304 stray dog complaints.
- 6885 dog licenses issued (including 40 block licenses) achieving approximately £34,000 income.
- Schools' education programme - Youths Educated in Safety (YES) Programme 115 presentations to 1,492 P6-P7 pupils, 172 staff members from 33 schools. Pupils are provided with bespoke stationery to reinforce the responsible dog ownership message, including a QR code linked to council webpages
- 3 Community Presentations
- £3080.00 in Fixed Penalty payments (Dog Licensing/straying/fouling)

- Quarterly Cross Departmental Dog Control Working Group meetings held to promote better communication and cooperation in jointly tackling irresponsible dog ownership
- 50,000 dog foul bags handed out to dog walkers by dog wardens, litter/enforcement officers, park rangers and cleansing staff to promote responsible dog ownership
- Dog Wardens continue to use CCTV, where appropriate, to supplement monitoring of areas where dog fouling is an issue
- Engagement with Media to promote the following messages: XL Bully Ban, keeping dogs safe during summer heat, Halloween, Fireworks during winter period, Christmas Message – *"A dog is just not for Christmas"*, Sheep Worrying information during the lambing season. The Dog Control Service has also participated as part of a joint regional wide initiative with DAERA to promote responsible animal ownership and care
- XL Bully Ban – continued proactive monitoring of the council area for the presence of such dogs, prompt response to all cases reported of suspect banned breeds including XLs. Ensured that the 36 XL Bully dogs currently exempt continued to adhere to all their exemption conditions i.e. dog kept in a secure area, always muzzled and walked on a lead when in public, licensed and insured
- Dog wardens continued to monitor compliance of Dog Control Orders implemented (Dogs on Leads; Dogs on leads by direction; Dog exclusion). Pavement stenciling has been carried out in parks and along popular pathways to promote compliance of DCOs. Dog Wardens proactively patrol areas and investigate all complaints of non-compliance
- Joint dog fouling initiative with Streetscape, including the relaunch of the Green Dog Walker Scheme with 1,000 bespoke dog collar keyrings created with QR codes illustrating Dog Control Orders, and Green Dog Walker leads.
- "Walk this Way Initiative" - two pathways in Derry and Strabane continued to be monitored to determine their effectiveness
- Council continues to maintain the Council owned dog shelter which is subject to a further tendering exercise. Council works closely with a range of animal rehoming charities. No unclaimed stray dogs were humanely put to sleep except for those determined to belong to a banned breed list of "dangerous dogs", and those that were seriously ill or had a history of aggression as these are not deemed capable of being rehomed.
- The Service works along with other councils, DAERA, PSNI, HMRC and Harbour Police in the "Paws for Thought" scheme aimed at tackling rogue dog breeder and pup traffickers transporting low welfare pups via the two main ports in Northern Ireland. Dog Wardens check all suspect addresses given where false declarations are suspected.

- Dog Wardens also monitor social media and current block licences to determine if there are any unlicensed breeding establishments within the council area.

Registration Service (Births, Deaths, Marriages) (April 2025 - March 2026)

- 1478 births registered within the district
- 3 still births registered
- 1,165 deaths have been registered
- 490 Marriages registered – religious 273, civil 146, belief 71
- 471 Marriage Notices and 1 Civil Partnership notice administered
- 3 Civil Partnership Notices
- 14 Approved Marriage/Civil Partnership venues inspected

Objective: Provide Effective and Facilitative Cross Functional Support Services

Our strategic support services have also made significant progress during the year and we have delivered the following:

Assurance – Key Achievements

- Maintained ISO 45001 Health and Safety Management System Accreditation and delivered ISO 45001 awareness training across key service areas.
- Reduced the number of RIDDOR reportable incidents compared to the previous year.
- Continued to review and update Health and Safety Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work, ensuring safe environments for employees, Elected Members, service users and visitors.
- Developed a Health and Safety Audit Module within the Council's Asset Management System to strengthen compliance and monitoring.
- Responded effectively to emergency situations across the district, including major storm events, and contributed to regional resilience and recovery planning.

- Participated in multi-agency emergency planning exercises and collaborated with neighbouring councils to deliver Emergency Support Centre training for Council officers.
- Supported community resilience initiatives and contributed to the development of the Building Resilience in Communities Project.
- Developed a Business Continuity Management Policy to strengthen Council preparedness and ensure continuity of critical services during disruptive incidents.
- Ensured the timely payment of employees and Elected Members and the submission of all payroll statutory returns within required deadlines.
- Delivered an effective Internal Audit function, providing independent assurance on governance, risk and control arrangements, achieving full management acceptance of recommendations, and progressed organisational readiness for compliance with the new Global Internal Audit Standards.
- Completed the Annual Governance Statement and associated governance requirements.
- Continued effective management of the Council's Self-Insurance Programme and ongoing review of Corporate and Service Risk Registers.
- Led and supported procurement activity across a range of strategic Council projects, ensuring compliance with the Procurement Act, building organisational capacity through staff training, and maintaining efficient supplier payment processes in line with contractual obligations.
- Provided training for Elected Members in key areas including Audit Committee governance, Emergency Planning and Health and Safety.

City of Derry Airport

- Secured £12 million in operational funding from the Department for the Economy for the period 2025-26 to 2028-29, providing long-term financial sustainability for the City of Derry Airport and enabling Council resources to be redirected towards other strategic priorities.
- Secured full funding from the Department for Transport and the Department for the Economy for the Public Service Obligation (PSO) air service route through to March 2027, including the successful drawdown and management of grant funding during 2025-26.
- Successfully completed the required Subsidy Control Assessment for PSO funding and facilitated the provision of the annual operating subvention to CODA, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and supporting the continued operation of the airport.

Strategic Finance and Funding

- Successfully completed and secured audit sign-off of the 2024-25 Annual Accounts within statutory timescales, with no Priority 1 audit recommendations identified.
- Completed the rolling revaluation of the Council's property portfolio, strengthening asset management and financial reporting.
- Prepared and delivered the 2026-27 rates estimates process within statutory deadlines, securing Council approval of a balanced budget and a 4.48% district rate increase.

- Secured Council approval for an updated Capital Funding Strategy, including a 1.63% rates investment contribution towards the delivery of the Council's £681m capital programme and the development of a further £30 million of community capital projects.
- Maintained a £5.035 million contingency reserve to mitigate financial pressures and support organisational resilience.
- Implemented alternative financing arrangements for capital projects, avoiding the need to draw down approximately £13.49 million in borrowing and generating estimated lifetime interest savings of £48.43 million.
- Maintained a positive financial position, supporting delivery of the Council's savings targets and revised reserves strategy.
- Strengthened treasury management arrangements through the approval of a new Treasury Management Policy and the delivery of investment income.
- Established robust financial governance arrangements for City Deal and Inclusive Future Fund investments, supporting the successful drawdown of programme funding.
- Provided strategic economic intelligence and performance reporting to Council through regular updates on growth indicators, economic trends and regional outlook data.
- Enhanced economic monitoring and evidence gathering through the deployment of smart counting technology and the collection of baseline data across key regeneration, tourism and greenway sites.
- Led research and stakeholder engagement activities relating to Council's Unity Motion, including cross-border consultation and independent academic analysis.
- Supported the community and voluntary sector through the publication of regular funding bulletins, proactive funding intelligence, and ongoing training and support on the Open4Community funding portal.
- Leveraged over £4.55 million in external funding for community organisations through Council's investment in the Open4Community platform.
- Co-ordinated the successful submission of a £780,464 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Communities and Place bid.
- Continued engagement with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to progress the Council's £20 million Long-Term Plan for Towns investment programme.

City Deal, Legacy and Rural Development

- Progressed the delivery of the City Deal and Inclusive Future Fund Programme, which has grown from the original £250 million package agreed under the 2021 Heads of Terms Agreement to a current value of £307.5 million.
- Strengthened programme governance through the implementation of updated governance arrangements, fully operational Pillar Programme Boards and Project Boards, and robust project and financial reporting mechanisms agreed with partners and the Department of Finance.

- Established a comprehensive programme management and risk framework, including project, pillar and portfolio risk registers, supported by a dedicated Programme Management Office.
- Developed and agreed a Benefits Realisation Framework to monitor, measure and maximise economic, social and community outcomes across the City Deal and Inclusive Future Fund portfolio.
- Completed Equality Impact Assessment screening for the overall programme and supported project-level screening to ensure inclusive and equitable delivery.
- Enhanced partner capacity through training in Gateway Reviews and Potential Risk Assessments, strengthening programme assurance and governance.
- Established a Social Value Working Group to embed social value principles within procurement and contract delivery, maximising wider community benefits.
- Continued progress on business case development, funding agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, design team appointments and project approvals across the programme.
- Delivered coordinated stakeholder engagement and communications activity, including regeneration workshops, partner events and ongoing collaboration with government departments and delivery partners.
- Completed a high-level skills analysis to identify future workforce requirements, informing education and training providers in preparation for programme delivery.
- Supported rural development priorities through the facilitation of the Rural Issues Group, promoting collaboration on rural policy, funding, connectivity, poverty and community development challenges.
- Provided technical and development support to rural Local Community Growth Partnership Boards, contributing to the successful securing of circa. £8 million in PEACEPLUS funding.
- Supported the development of a Rural Audit of Need, hosted a Rural Symposium on capacity building and continued delivery of the Rural Technical Assistance Programme to advance community-led capital projects.
- Led and coordinated Council engagement on anti-poverty initiatives, including responses to regional policy consultations, development of implementation and reporting frameworks, and the identification of resources to support delivery of anti-poverty actions.
- Promoted cross-departmental collaboration on sustainable procurement and circular economy initiatives, supporting both environmental sustainability and poverty alleviation objectives.

Democratic Services

- Supported civic engagement and community participation through the **Mayor's Programme, facilitating 917 mayoral engagements and direct engagement with 6,165 citizens, while raising £81,400** for the Mayor's chosen charity.
- Enhanced support for Elected Members through the introduction of a new SharePoint-based Member Resource Library, improving access to key information, guidance and resources.
- Strengthened Member development and governance capacity by scheduling 15 training courses and progressing the development of online learning modules through Skillgate.
- Improved committee and decision-making processes through the development of new Officer Report Templates and supporting training resources, promoting consistency, quality and efficiency in Council reporting.

Policy, Performance, Equality, Languages and Improvement Team

- Provided effective leadership and oversight in relation to statutory equality, rural needs, performance and improvement responsibilities, including the submission of the Annual Rural Needs Report to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).
- Continued **implementation of the Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan**, supporting the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion across Council services.
- Enhanced organisational awareness and compliance through the delivery of staff training programmes covering safeguarding, equality duties and language policies.
- Promoted safeguarding awareness and best practice through the delivery of dedicated Safeguarding Weeks and associated engagement activities.
- Met all statutory performance reporting requirements through the timely publication of the Performance Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report.
- **Achieved an unqualified audit opinion in respect of the Council's Performance Improvement duties**, demonstrating compliance with legislative and performance improvement requirements.
- Maintained high standards of Irish language customer service, achieving **a 94% satisfaction rating in the annual Irish Language Customer Services Survey**.
- Delivered a comprehensive programme of hybrid events across the district to **celebrate Irish Language Week and Ulster-Scots Language Week**, promoting linguistic diversity and cultural inclusion.

- Expanded engagement with Irish language communities through continued growth of the Council's Irish Language social media platforms, increasing awareness, participation and access to services and events.

Information Management and Services Support

- Continued implementation of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) Complaints Handling Procedure, ensuring a consistent, transparent and effective approach to managing customer feedback and complaints.
- Introduced revised complaints resolution guidance in line with NIPSO requirements, strengthening consistency and improving customer outcomes.
- Monitored and reported on complaints handling performance to identify trends, lessons learned and opportunities for continuous service improvement across Council.
- Enhanced compliance with Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation through the delivery of targeted refresher training to 38 staff members across relevant service areas.
- Supported high standards of customer service through the delivery of telephony etiquette training for reception staff.
- Engaged with local government partners to share best practice and drive continuous improvement in customer care, complaints handling, data protection and Freedom of Information processes.

Facilities Management

- Enhanced staff welfare facilities through the completion of upgraded canteen facilities at the Strand Road offices and progression of preparatory works for upgraded facilities at the Derry Road offices.
- Improved site management and operational safety through the development and implementation of a traffic management plan for the Derry Road offices.
- Continued proactive monitoring and management of energy consumption and costs across Council office facilities, supporting efficiency improvements, cost control and sustainability objectives.

Business Support and Strategic Partnerships

- Led the co-design and establishment of governance arrangements for the **£20 million Pride in Place Fund, delivering a 10-year Regeneration Plan and 4-year Investment Plan** within government timescales.
- Strengthened relationships with central government through the coordination of Ministerial and official visits, including two Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government visits and engagement on key regional priorities.
- Supported the governance and delivery of the Pride in Place Programme through the facilitation of Board meetings, development of transparency and accountability mechanisms, and implementation of a communications and stakeholder engagement framework.
- Progressed the visioning and redevelopment of the North West Strategic Growth Plan, including engagement with the North South Ministerial Council to support a collaborative and shared regional approach.
- Secured approximately **€500 million in funding commitments** from The Executive Office and the Department of Foreign Affairs through Round 2 of the North West Development Fund, supporting transformational cross-border investment opportunities.
- Provided strategic and administrative support to the North West Regional Development Group, facilitating partnership working, consultation and delivery across a range of regional development priorities.
- Successfully managed the expenditure and financial administration of both Round 1 and Round 2 North West Development Fund programmes.
- Facilitated extensive stakeholder engagement with regional partners, government agencies, educational institutions and business representatives to inform strategic planning and investment priorities.
- Coordinated Ministerial engagement on the All-Island Strategic Rail Review, supporting advocacy for enhanced regional connectivity and infrastructure investment.
- Provided secretariat support to the Strategic Growth Partnership, facilitating effective governance and delivery of the Strategic Growth Plan through regular partnership meetings.
- Developed and published the fourth Statement of Progress, demonstrating achievements and progress against Strategic Growth Plan objectives and priorities.
- Facilitated collaboration between Local Growth Partnerships, Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships and Council through the Strategic Engagement Forum, strengthening community engagement and place-based delivery across the district.

Legal Services

- Provided specialist legal advice and governance support across Council functions, including the delivery of training for Elected Members on governance, planning and Standing Orders.
- Successfully represented Council in a range of complex judicial review proceedings relating to mineral prospecting licences, planning matters, regulatory issues and the operation of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.
- Represented local government interests at a regional level through participation in the Public Inquiry into the COVID-19 response on behalf of Northern Ireland councils.
- Contributed to the development of environmental and climate policy through representation on the Law Society of Northern Ireland Climate Justice Group.
- Reviewed and updated the Council's Planning Protocol and Scheme of Delegation, strengthening governance and decision-making arrangements.
- Provided legal support for the implementation and adoption of the Local Development Plan Strategy, helping to underpin the long-term sustainable development of the district.
- Progressed the second phase of the digitisation of the Council's property portfolio, improving accessibility, efficiency and asset management processes.
- Supported the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) in delivering training on conflicts of interest, promoting high standards of governance, transparency and ethical decision-making.

Human Resources

- Promoted employee health and wellbeing through a range of initiatives, including Health Week, flu vaccination clinics, the Active Travel Challenge and the Cycle to Work Scheme, supporting a healthy and engaged workforce.
- Delivered a dedicated 10-year staff engagement and development event, recognising workforce contributions and strengthening organisational culture.
- Hosted the annual Staff Recognition Event, celebrating employee achievements and service excellence across the organisation.
- Developed and delivered a comprehensive programme of compliance, leadership and capacity-building training to support employee development at all levels.
- Successfully relaunched the Performance Development Process (PDP), supported by targeted training to enhance performance management, goal setting and professional development.

- Delivered Learning and Development Month, providing a wide range of opportunities for employees to develop new skills, share knowledge, build future-ready capabilities and access practical learning resources.
- Maintained positive and constructive industrial relations through ongoing engagement and partnership working with Trade Unions, supporting effective employee relations and organisational stability.

Capital Development

Progressed delivery of a significant capital investment programme across the district, enhancing community, leisure, environmental and public infrastructure assets.

- Nearing completion of the £6.65 million Levelling Up Fund/Council-funded Acorn Farm project at St Columb's Park, creating a major new community and educational asset.
- Nearing completion of the new £5.23 million Mullenan City Cemetery, increasing burial capacity and supporting future service needs.
- Advanced the £3.5 million Derg Active project at Mitchell Park, Castlederg, including a new floodlit full-size 3G synthetic training pitch for soccer and GAA, with completion expected shortly.
- Completed the £1.3 million Ballynagard Community Allotments and Play Park project, providing new recreational and community growing facilities.
- Delivered the new £350,000 Stradowen Greenway in Strathfoyle, improving active travel, connectivity and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Completed a £300,000 upgrade of the entranceways at 98 Strand Road offices, enhancing accessibility, appearance and visitor experience.
- Delivered £250,000 of reservoir safety improvement works at the Creggan Reservoirs, enabling the Council to achieve Responsible Reservoir Manager status and strengthening public safety compliance.
- Enhanced leisure facilities through the completion of a new £210,000 steam room and sauna at Derg Valley Leisure Centre and upgraded sports flooring at Brooke Park Leisure Centre.
- Completed a £165,000 upgrade of Railway Street and Claudy car parks, including associated landscaping improvements to enhance the public realm.
- Delivered a £164,000 refurbishment of the Multi-Use Games Area at Patrician Villas, Strabane, including resurfacing and new ball-stop netting to improve community sports provision.

Capital Projects Commenced or Continuing on Site

Progressed the delivery of approximately **£26 million of capital investment projects** across the district, supporting regeneration, community development, sport, leisure and tourism infrastructure.

- Commenced construction of the **£14.4 million City Deal-funded DNA Museum at Ebrington**, with both the main construction contract and specialist fit-out contract now in place.
- Advanced the **£7.3 million** Department for Communities and Council-funded **public realm regeneration scheme in Strabane town** centre following contractor appointment.
- Began construction of the **£1.5 million New Gate Apartments project** within the Fountain Estate, funded through the Urban Villages and Shared Island programmes, supporting housing and community regeneration.
- Progressed the **£1.44 million refurbishment programme for 3G pitches at Foyle Arena, Bishop's Field Leisure Centre and Leafair Community Hub**, enhancing sports infrastructure across the district.
- Commenced Phase 2 of the **Castlederg Public Realm Scheme, representing a £690,000 investment** in the enhancement and regeneration of the town centre.
- Worked in partnership with Derry City Football Club to deliver a new hybrid grass playing surface and integrated irrigation system at the Brandywell Stadium, with works underway on the **£1 million-plus investment to improve sporting facilities** and performance standards.

Capital Projects Attaining Key Delivery

- Progressed approximately **£305 million of strategic capital projects**, supporting the transformation of community, leisure, regeneration, tourism and civic infrastructure across the district.
- Appointed design and consultant teams for a number of major strategic projects, including the £14.2 million Riverine Project, £100 million Templemore Leisure Centre and £42 million Strabane Leisure Centre, advancing these schemes into the next stages of development.
- Completed detailed design for the new £2.7 million Glenview Community Centre and progressed the £892,000 Springhill Community Pavilion project to the next phase of design development.
- Continued to support delivery of the £75 million Derry and Strabane City Deal and Strabane Regeneration Programme, including the £7 million Public Realm and Enabling Works project.
- Worked collaboratively with Derry City Football Club to progress plans for a new £10 million-plus Football Academy and wider sports infrastructure investment.
- Advanced a range of community, heritage and leisure projects through the appointment of design teams, including war memorial refurbishment schemes, new health and wellbeing facilities, community centre developments and sports infrastructure improvements.

- Progressed the development of new infrastructure projects through the procurement of design teams for floodlighting, car parking, play parks and outdoor recreation facilities across the district.
- Completed a range of in-house design projects, including greenway lighting enhancements, improved accessibility at historic cemeteries, a new Household Recycling Centre in Castlederg, and cemetery extension works to support future service needs.
- Undertook technical appraisal work for the proposed £35 million Foyle Street Civic Offices project, supporting future accommodation planning and service delivery requirements.
- Provided technical assessment support for applications to the Pride in Place Fund, helping to advance potential investment projects valued at £12.7 million.

Corporate Communications: Continued to enhance the Council's profile and reputation through a comprehensive communications, media and digital engagement programme. Between April and December 2025, the team secured **10,554 media placements** across print, online and broadcast platforms, generating an estimated **£61.5 million in equivalent PR value** and promoting Council services, projects and events to local and regional audiences.

The team managed **765 media enquiries** and produced **437 press releases and editorial features**, while maintaining strong relationships with media partners and achieving consistently positive coverage, with media sentiment reaching **91% positive** during the year. In addition, the team delivered strategic communications support across Council programmes and initiatives, working collaboratively with key partners to ensure consistent and effective messaging.

Digital engagement continued to grow significantly, with the creation of **more than 14,000 social media posts** across Council and Mayoral channels, generating a total audience reach of **over 676 million, 274,000 interactions, 142,000 likes** and **30,000 shares**. The team also continued to strengthen internal communications through the production and distribution of the Council's staff newsletter, supporting employee engagement and organisational awareness.

Overall Assessment of Performance – Corporate Plan

During 2025-26, the Council made strong progress in delivering the four Corporate Plan Objectives through the coordinated efforts of all Directorates.

Significant achievements were realised across environmental regeneration, economic growth and cultural development, health and community wellbeing, and the provision of effective corporate support services.

Key successes included the adoption of the Local Development Plan, continued delivery of major regeneration and capital investment projects, expansion of leisure and wellbeing programmes, successful implementation of the PEACEPLUS Local Co-Designed Action Plan, support for business growth and job creation, and the achievement of UNICEF Child Friendly Community status.

Strategic support services also continued to provide robust governance, financial stewardship, customer support, and organisational resilience, enabling the effective delivery of frontline services and long-term priorities.

Overall, performance during 2025-26 demonstrates tangible progress towards the Council's mission of delivering improved social, economic and environmental outcomes for all and reflects a strong commitment to continuous improvement and community-focused service delivery.

3.4

Inclusive Growth Plan



Introduction

Derry City and Strabane District's inclusive Strategic Growth Plan/Community Plan was developed as a result of a significant 24-month codesign process and launched in November 2017 (a reviewed Plan was published in October 2022).

The Plan seeks to improve the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of citizens across the Derry and Strabane Council Area and details 9 long-term outcomes measured against a series of population indicators to track progress over time, with the aim of achieving the Plan's overall vision of ***"a thriving, prosperous and sustainable City and District with equality for all"***.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation of the Plan there is a statutory requirement (Local Government (NI) Act 2014) to publish a 'Statement of Progress' to provide transparency and report on performance in its implementation.

The most recent Statement of Progress was issued in November 2025. Please see attached link:

[Statement of Progress - Grow Derry Strabane](#)

The Strategic Growth Partnership agreed that the Plan will undergo a review and a statement of progress published in 2027. This will be completed after the Council and NI Assembly Elections in May 2027.

3.5

Statutory Indicators



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin
Derry Cittie & Strabane
Destricks Council

Introduction

In September 2015, under the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, statutory performance indicators and standards have been set as part of the performance improvement arrangements for district councils. Performance measures have been specified for the functions of economic development, planning and waste management. The aim of the performance measures is to promote the improvement of service delivery.

Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards

The Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards have been set by the relevant Central Government Department. In order to ensure consistency and reliability of performance data, reporting on these performance indicators and standards will be carried out centrally so as to allow for accurate comparison between councils across performance indicators and standards. Central reporting will also ensure that the relevant Department continues to meet its statutory obligations under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics when reporting performance at the regional level.

Derry City and Strabane District Council is committed to meeting the following seven statutory performance indicators / standards as illustrated overleaf.

This section of the report details how the Council performed against these statutory indicators and illustrates comparisons against previous years and where available how the Council has performed in relation to other Northern Ireland Councils.

Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards: Waste & Economic Development

Ref	Statutory Indicator	Standard to be met (annually), where applicable
ED1	The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity (Business start-up activity means the delivery of completed client led business plans under the Council led Northern Ireland Business Start-up Programme (NIBSUP) or successor programmes.)	140
W1	The percentage of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse). [Household waste is as defined in Article 2 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997(a) and the Controlled Waste and Duty of Care Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013(b)]	50% by the end of 2020
W2	The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled. [Local authority collected municipal waste is as defined in section 21 of the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003(c)]	<17,929 tonnes in 2019-20
W3	The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings. [Local authority collected municipal waste arisings is the total amount of local authority collected municipal waste which has been collected by a district council]	No target

Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards: Planning Service

Ref	Statutory Indicator	Standard to be met (annually), where applicable
P1	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 (Northern Ireland) 2015(a)]	Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 30 weeks.
P2	The average processing time of local planning applications. [Local applications means an application in the category of local development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, and any other applications for approval or consent under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (or any orders or regulations made under that Act)]	Local applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 15 weeks.
P3	The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks. [Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control under Part 5 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (or under any orders or regulations made under that Act). (b).]	70% of all enforcement cases progressed to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint

WASTE MANAGEMENT: The percentage of household waste collected that is sent for recycling (W1)

Standard to be met (annually)	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Status
Within the NI Landfill Allowance Scheme (Statutory Target 55%)	45.1%	46%	48.2%	48.4%	48.3%*	Not Achieved
NI Average	50.1%	50.7%	51.1%	51%	51.3%*	Not Achieved

What have we done to improve?

The Council achieved a recycling and composting rate of 48.3%, which is **96.6%** of the target. Whilst the target was narrowly missed, performance remained close to the desired level and reflects the continued effectiveness of the Council's waste management and recycling initiatives.

Council has completed the roll out of brown bins to all properties across the City and District supported by marketing and social media campaigns to reinforce the importance of food and garden waste recycling. A number of awareness exercises have been completed to advise members of the public that no food or garden waste is to be put into the black bin in an attempt to drive up recycling rates.

The achievement reflects the significant activity delivered throughout the year to encourage waste reduction, reuse and recycling, with the delivery of approximately **30 targeted campaigns and engagement initiatives** promoting recycling, waste prevention and the circular economy.

Council has progressed with a number of reuse projects such as the Paint Reuse scheme at our recycling centres where the public can donate their unwanted paint for reuse. There is also an ongoing "repair your electricals" campaign where people can visit "POP UP" repair cafes with their broken electricals to see if they can be repaired rather than disposed of.

Council has been actively engaging with schools to promote key recycling and reuse messages in a bid to continue diverting waste from landfill and increase composting.

Future actions we will be taking to improve

Council will continue to push positive environmental messaging and promote all reuse / recycling projects through social media and other channels promoting positive environmental behaviours.

Additionally, the Council will work with all relevant statutory and non-statutory stakeholders in driving forward circular economy and zero waste principles and benefits. Specific emphasis will continue to be placed on the growing student accommodation within the City ensuring that all properties have the appropriate number and type of bins.

*Subject to final verification by DAERA

WASTE MANAGEMENT: The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable waste that is landfilled. (W2) (KPI g)

Councils are under direction to reduce the volumes of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill in consideration of Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme and EU Landfill Directive targets.

Standard to be met (annually)	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Status
Within the NI Landfill Allowance Scheme (17,920 tonnes)	8,299	5,310	4,076	4,071	5,707*	Achieved
	(Landfill allowance 17,920)	(Landfill allowance 17,920)	(Landfill allowance 17,920)	(Landfill allowance 17,920)	(Landfill allowance 17,920)	
	46%	30%	23%	23%	32%	

What have we done to improve?

The Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) has set targets up to 2019-20, and whilst the scheme is no longer operational, the Council will continue to monitor and report to NIEA the levels of biodegradable waste sent to landfill. The Council used 32% of this allowance during 2025-26.

All properties now have been given access to bio waste collection schemes across the district to increase the volumes of bio waste collected for composting. Multiple marketing campaigns have been undertaken promoting sustainable waste management including affixing warning stickers to residual bins stating that bins may not be emptied if they contain bio wastes that could be processed through 'brown' bin collections.

Future actions we will be taking to improve

The Council will continue to push positive environmental messaging through social media and other channels promoting positive environmental behaviours. Specifically, a number of targeted campaigns are planned for poor performing areas over the next twelve months e.g. recycling initiatives such as paint reuse schemes and also repairing electrical items. Additionally, it will continue to actively take part in recycling and reuse initiatives in order to divert from landfill.

The Council will continue to work with all relevant statutory and non-statutory stakeholders in driving forward circular economy and zero waste principles and benefits.

*Subject to verification by DAERA

WASTE MANAGEMENT: The amount of municipal waste arisings (tonnes) (W3) (KPI j)

This indicator shows the total amount of local authority collected municipal waste (LACMW) which has been collected by the Council and includes both household and commercial waste.

Standard to be met (annually)	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Status
In line with the Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme	83,540 tonnes	79,114 tonnes	81,027 tonnes	83,236 tonnes	86,343* tonnes	Achieved (Based on waste arisings per head of population)
NI Average	1,034,637	971,936	1,000,681	1,010,410	1,026,341*	

What have we done to improve?

In keeping within our improvement objective, we aim to reduce this figure over time, however, as economic activity increases, the population expands, new housing developed etc. waste arisings may also increase and our actions will minimise this as much as possible. For this reason, Council is committed to putting in place programmes to encourage consumers to reduce waste at source.

During 2025-26, the amount of municipal waste collected by the Council increased only marginally on the previous year. This can be attributed to the continued growth across the City and District, including a growing population, the occupation of new housing developments and increased commercial and economic activity.

What have we done to improve?

The Council has been actively undertaking multiple marketing and social media campaigns highlighting benefits of recycling in terms of climate action, costs of living etc. campaigns included focusing on waste reduction, reuse of materials and discarded items through the 4R's, Life Cycles, charity shops etc. in addition, the Council also supported upcycling workshops held across the City and District.

Additionally, the Council has been reinforcing food waste reduction and using the brown bin. Paint reuse schemes have been introduced at the Recycling Centres. Council are working in conjunction with Repair Café Foyle and holding pop up repair cafes for the repair of small electrical items and encouraging people not to throw out their electrical items. There is continual active engagement with the schools where key recycling messages are being delivered. Although the total amount of waste has increased, this can be attributed to the increasing number of houses that are being built across the City and District.

Future actions we will be taking to improve

Council will continue to push positive environmental messaging through social media and other channels promoting positive environmental behaviours. Council will work with all relevant statutory and non-statutory stakeholders in driving forward circular economy and zero waste principles and benefits.

*Subject to verification

PLANNING: The average processing time of major planning applications

Standard to be met (annually)	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Status
Average processing times in weeks for major planning applications processed within the 30-week target	51.6 weeks	78.0 weeks	68.6 weeks	55 weeks	39.7 weeks	Not Achieved
NI Average	49.8 weeks	57.8 weeks	46.5 weeks	39.6 weeks	41.1 weeks	

Why this is important?

Effective processing of planning applications can have a positive impact on investment and regeneration activity in the Council area which in turn may lead to positive outcomes with regard to job creation/employment.

Why have we not achieved our target?

The Council continues **to improve its planning performance** with the average processing time for major applications reduced substantially from 55 weeks in 2024-25 to 39.7 weeks in 2025-26.

While the Council has not achieved this target, it represents a **15.2 week reduction (27.8%)** and the **lowest average processing time recorded in the last five reporting years**.

A significant achievement during 2025-26 was the official **adoption the Local Development Plan 2032**, following an extensive process involving widespread public and stakeholder engagement. As part of this process all planning applications that had not yet been determined were assessed against the relevant policies of the adopted Plan Strategy before decisions were made contributing to planning performance.

It should be noted that a significant factor in the determination of planning applications is the statutory consultation process. While councils are responsible for managing and assessing applications, they are unable to directly control the timescales within which statutory consultees provide their responses. During 2025-26 the Council has encountered delays in consultation responses with key stakeholders which has affected the time taken to reach planning decisions.

What have we done to improve?

Significant improvements have been achieved during 2025-26. The average processing time for major applications reduced substantially from 55 weeks in 2024-25 to 39.7 weeks in 2025-26, the lowest average processing time recorded in the last five reporting years.

These **improvements indicate that the Council is making progress in reducing determination times and addressing complex major application caseloads.**

Major applications continue to be carefully managed and progressed as quickly as possible. During 2025-26 18 applications were received (2024-25:14), with 50% of these turned around within the 12-month period.

During 2025-26 the Council developed a Quality Submissions Guide and accompanying Planning Application Validation Checklist to improve the quality of planning applications submitted, reduce delays arising from requests for additional information and support more efficient decision-making.

Future actions we will be taking to improve

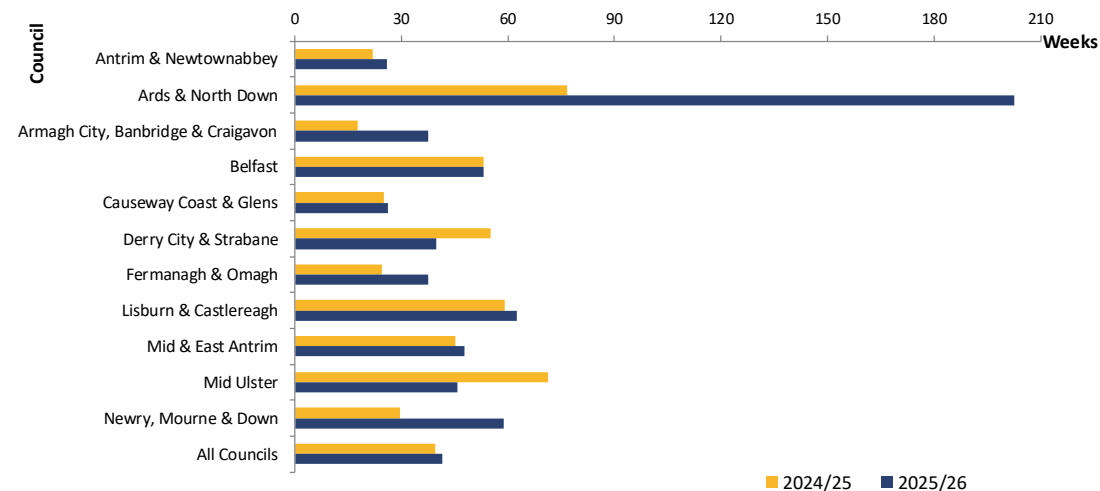
The Council will continue to progress the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Independent Planning Review, with the aim of improving the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of the planning service.

In addition, the Council will implement the Quality Submissions Guide and Planning Application Validation Checklist, approved in June 2026, to improve the quality of planning applications at the point of submission, reduce requests for additional information and minimise avoidable delays in the determination process.

Recognising that service performance is closely linked to available resources, the Council will continue to monitor staffing levels to support timely decision-making and effective service delivery. The Council will also seek to enhance engagement with prospective developers and applicants through the Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process, particularly for major development proposals, to identify key issues at an early stage and facilitate more efficient application processing.

Through these measures, the Council aims to progressively improve planning performance, reducing average determination times towards the Northern Ireland average and, ultimately, achieving the statutory targets for planning application determinations.

Major Development average processing times by council, 2024-265 & 2025-26



PLANNING: The average number of weeks taken to process local planning applications

Standard to be met (annually)	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Status
Average processing times in weeks for local planning applications within the 15-week target	15.6 weeks	21.0 weeks	23.4 weeks	20.7 weeks	25.2 weeks	Not Achieved
NI Average	17.2 weeks	19.0 weeks	20.8 weeks	19.0 weeks	19.6 weeks	

Why this is important?

Effective processing of planning applications can have a positive impact on investment and regeneration activity in the Council area which in turn may lead to positive outcomes with regard to job creation/employment.

Why have we not achieved our target?

The Council also continued to manage a substantial caseload throughout the year. During 2025-26, **599 local applications were received, and 494 local applications were determined.**

At the end of the reporting year there were 698 live planning applications, including 307 applications that had been in the system for more than one year. This level of workload continued to place pressure on processing times. Whilst the target was not achieved, performance has remained relatively stable over recent years despite increasing application complexity.

A **significant achievement during 2025-26 was the official adoption the Local Development Plan 2032**, following an extensive process involving widespread public and stakeholder engagement. As part of this process all planning applications that had not yet been determined were assessed against the relevant policies of the adopted Plan Strategy before decisions were made contributing to planning performance.

As previously noted, a significant factor in the determination of planning applications is the statutory consultation process. Planning decisions by have been impacted during 2025-26 by delays in the consultation responses, which is outside the control of the Council.

What we have done to improve

Local planning applications continue to be actively managed and progressed as efficiently as possible through robust case management and the ongoing implementation of a targeted performance improvement programme.

During 2025-26, the Council developed a Quality Submissions Guide and accompanying Planning Application Validation Checklist to improve the quality and completeness of planning applications at the point of submission. This initiative is intended to reduce delays associated with requests for additional information, enable earlier engagement with consultees and support more timely and effective decision-making.

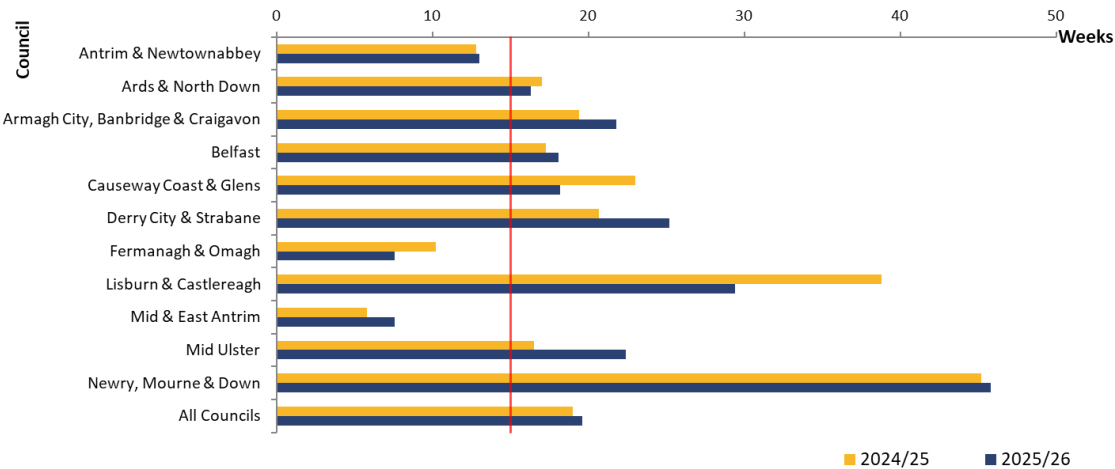
The Council has also continued to monitor planning performance and identify opportunities to streamline processes, improve customer engagement and enhance service delivery.

It is recognised that staffing levels have contributed to performance pressures during 2025-26. The Council has continued to monitor resource requirements to support the efficient processing of applications and improve determination times.

Future actions we will be taking to improve

The Council will continue to progress the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Independent Planning Review and the continuation of a focused performance project designed to improve caseload and output management targets. Additionally, the Council will continue to monitor staffing levels to support timely decision-making and effective service delivery.

Local Development average processing times by council, 2024-25 & 2025-26



PLANNING: The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks

Standard to be met (annually)	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Status
70% processing times for enforcement planning cases within the 39-week target	77.9%	74.9%	75.0%	83.3%	72.5%	Achieved
NI Average	70.4%	74.2%	76.4%	70.7%	75.1%	

Why this is important?

This indicator shows how quickly Enforcement cases are concluded. It is important to demonstrate that appropriate and proportionate action in dealing with alleged breaches of planning control.

What we have done to improve

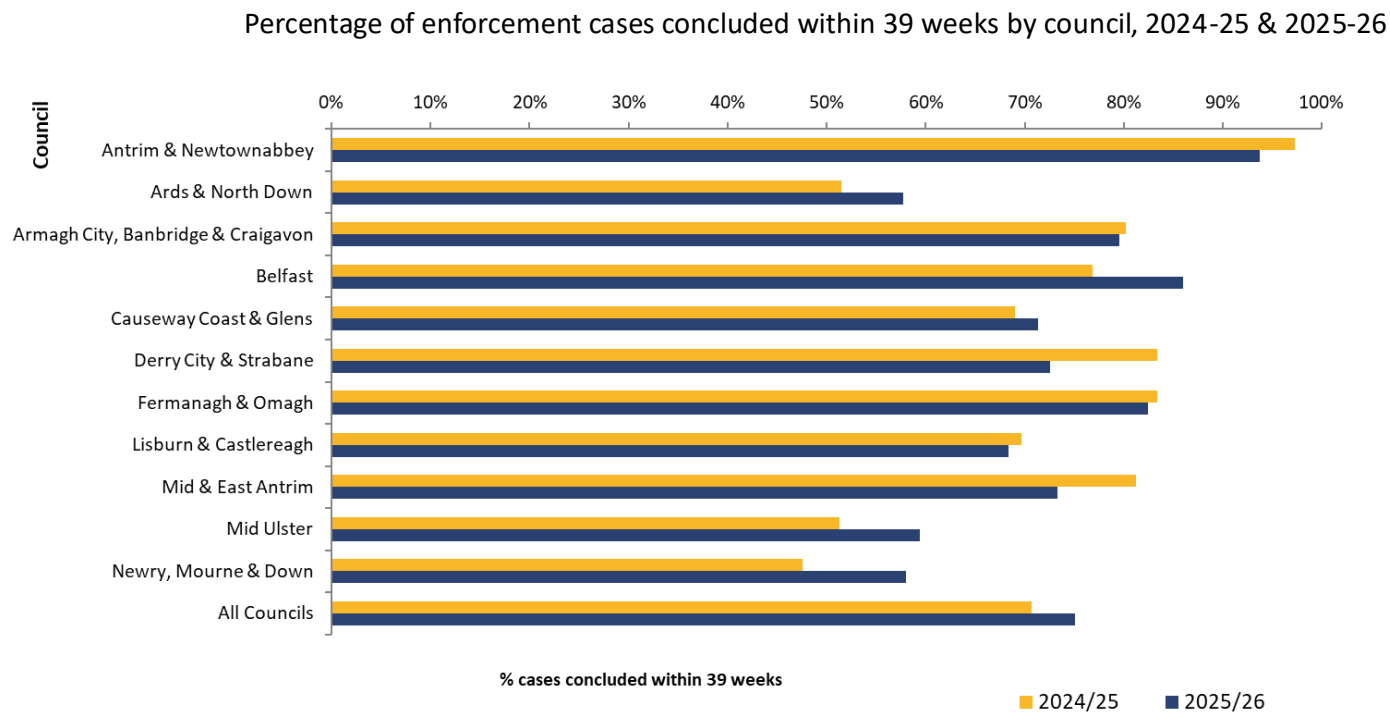
The Council delivered a strong performance against this indicator, achieving **72.7% of enforcement case closures within 39 weeks**, exceeding the statutory target of **70%** and demonstrating continued improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the enforcement service.

The Council has continued to focus on targets and efficient case management.

Despite staffing challenges, performance improved significantly throughout the year. The proportion of cases concluded within 39 weeks increased from 54.5% in Quarter 2 and 61.1% in Quarter 3 to 93.3% in Quarter 4, contributing to an overall annual performance of 72.5%, above the statutory target of 70%.

Future actions we will be taking to improve

Ongoing focus on the targets, and efficient case management. The Council will attempt to maintain reasonable level of staff cover and continuity over the year.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity (ED1)

Standard to be met (annually)	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Status
(Go Succeed programme Statutory target 140)	143 102% of target	150 107% of target	71 (6 months only)	147 105% of target	188*** 135% of target	Achieved
NI Average	169	162	81	136	196***	Achieved

Why this is important?

Job promotion is key to improving economic activity in the Council area. This indicator illustrates the support provided to new business starts.

What we have done to improve

There has been an ongoing focus on the targets, efficient case management and operational excellence.

Future actions we will be taking to improve

The Council will continue to focus on the targets, efficient case management and operational excellence.

***Undergoing verification by DfE.

Overall Assessment of Performance – Statutory Indicators

During 2025-26, the Council delivered a positive overall performance against the statutory performance indicators, demonstrating progress across a number of key service areas. The results provide evidence of continued improvement, sustained service delivery and a strong commitment to addressing service delivery.

The performance demonstrate that the Council continues to deliver positive outcomes for residents, businesses

The Council remains committed to continuous improvement and will continue to implement targeted actions to further enhance performance in those areas where statutory standards have yet to be achieved.

3.6

The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016



The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (the Act) came into operation for government departments and district councils on 1 June 2017.

The Act requires policy makers and public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing and implementing policies and when designing and delivering public services.

A core dimension of these initiatives has been ensuring that engagement processes have specifically included rural stakeholders in co-design processes.

The Council is committed to ensuring that due regard is given to rural needs when developing and implementing policies and when designing and delivering public services and in this context, work is continuing to be advanced in terms of:

- embedding rural needs impact assessment with the Council's decision-making processes
- developing training programmes and policy guidance / templates
- identifying and sharing best practice and
- improving the monitoring of services and outcomes.

Further information on how the Council has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service is provided in **Appendix 1**.

3.7

General Improvement Duty

Assessment of improvement in functions and services



The Council is committed to and has worked to discharge its general duty to secure continuous improvement in 2025-26.

Section 85 requires the Council, for each financial year, to set improvement objectives for improving the exercise of its functions and to have in place arrangements to achieve those objectives. The Council must frame each improvement objective to bring about improvement in at least one of the specified aspects of improvement as defined in Section 86 of the Act:

Strategic Effectiveness; Service Quality; Service Availability; Fairness; Sustainability; Efficiency and Innovation.

There is evidence of good practice and improvement in across several functions and services across the Council as illustrated overleaf:

Trend Analysis: Key

-  Performance improving
-  Performance declining
-  Performance stable or no significant change
-  New indicator or insufficient trend data available

Improvement Area	Performance Indicator	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Trend
Strategic Effectiveness	Number of leisure users	542,733	1,350,144	1,522,132	1,781,518	1,735,332	●
Service Quality	User Satisfaction/Net Promoter Score (Leisure)	Covid Impacted	50	50	Not Completed	50	●
Service Availability	Total number of applications processed by Building Control	4,195	4,196	3897	3136	3960	●
	% dog attacks investigated within 1 day	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	●
	% FOI responded to within 20 days	92.8%	91.8%	87.2%	85.1%	85%	●
	Business Capital Grant Scheme – funding allocated	£118,316	£144,108	£ 56.7*	£731k	£1.3m	●
Fairness	Number of participants per year for sports and physical activity targeted programmes.		5235	5328	5210	13,925	●
Efficiency	% of staff receiving pay slips via email	87.3%	90.3%	91.5%	91.5%	93.71	●
	% server uptime	98%	90%	95%	95%	95%	●
Sustainability	% household waste arisings sent for preparing for reuse and recycling (including composting)	45.1%	46%%	48.2%	48.4%	48.3%*	●
Efficiency	Paid gym membership numbers			7,040	8,190	8,471	●
Innovation	Number of international markets activated	3	2	2	2	3	●
	Trade mission – local companies recruited	0 Covid Impacted	6	6	7	16	●

Improvement Area	Performance Indicator	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Trend
	Digital and social media innovation website views	1,514,227	2,963,903	1,984,949	3,199,238	3,020,504	●

*Subject to final verification by DAERA

Performance Indicators – comparative figures

Further analysis of comparative is outlined in Appendix 3. This list contains details of additional indicators which are collated as well as Northern Ireland comparative information, where available.

Comparative information is also available in the Statutory Indicator Section (3.5).

4

Overall Assessment in relation to Performance Duty



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin
Derry Cittie & Stràbane
Deistrick Cooncil

Overall Assessment of Performance 2025-26

Derry City and Strabane District Council remains committed to fulfilling its statutory duty under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions, having regard to the improvement characteristics of strategic effectiveness, service quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability, efficiency and innovation. There is clear evidence of good practice and improvement in a number of areas.

Throughout 2025-26, the Council continued to embed these principles across its services, delivering a broad range of positive outcomes for residents, businesses and communities while responding to a complex and evolving operating environment.

Overall, the evidence presented throughout this Annual Performance Report demonstrates that the Council has discharged its Improvement Duty during 2025-26 and has made meaningful progress.

The Council remains well placed to build on these achievements; address identified performance challenges and continue delivering improved outcomes for citizens through effective, sustainable, innovative and community-focused local government.

6

Publishing our Performance and How to get involved



Publishing our Performance

Our Annual Performance Report 2025-26 will be published on the Council's website at www.derrystrabane.com as soon as is practical and by 30 September 2026 in line with statutory requirements.

Members of the public will also be able to access this information at the Council's offices and can comment on our Performance Report by emailing us at: improvement@derrystrabane.com.

How to get involved

We are keen to get your feedback on any of the issues covered in this document. You can also propose new Improvement Objectives or make comments on the existing ones by emailing the Council at: improvement@derrystrabane.com.

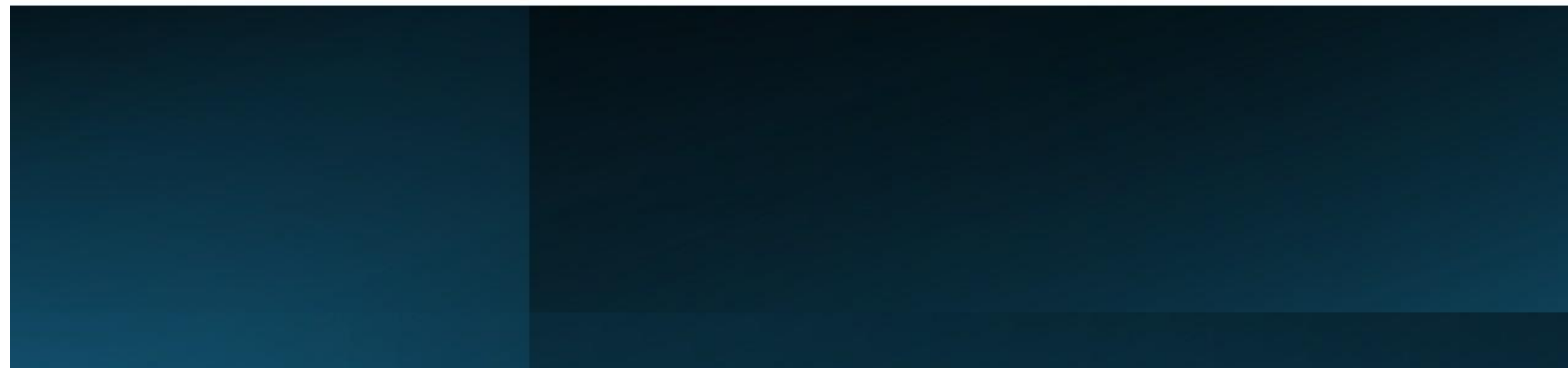
We also have a dedicated Equality Assurance and Oversight Group which provides the opportunity to engage directly with council officers regarding the Council's activities. If you have any queries or would like to become a member, please email: equality@derrystrabane.com or simply contact the Policy Officer (Equality) on 028 71 253 253, Ext 6705.

The consultation web pages publish all current consultations being undertaken by the Council and give information about how people can participate.

7

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - **Information to be compiled by Public Authorities under Section 3(1)(a) of the Rural Needs Act (NI)2016**
- Appendix 2 - **Progressing Council Business**
- Appendix 3 - **Performance Indicators – comparative figures**



Appendix 1

Information to be compiled by Public Authorities under Section 3(1)(a) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

(To be completed and included in public authorities' own annual reports and submitted to DAERA for inclusion in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report).

Name of Public
Authority:

Derry City and Strabane District Council

Reporting Period:

April

20

25

to

March

20

26

The following information should be compiled in respect of each policy, strategy and plan which has been developed, adopted, implemented, or revised and each public service which has been designed or delivered by the public authority during the reporting period.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
Review of Counter Fraud Policy	Other - internal	This policy dictates best practice in ensuring accountability and transparency in delivering Council services. It is driven by legislation, and it is applied universally, with no rural needs identified.
Review of Anti-bribery Policy	Other- internal	This policy dictates best practice in ensuring accountability and transparency in delivering Council services. It is driven by legislation, and it is applied universally, with no rural needs identified.
Review of Raising Concerns Policy	Other-internal	This policy dictates best practice in ensuring accountability and transparency in delivering Council services. It is driven by legislation, and it is applied universally, with no rural needs identified.
Development of Local Development Plan 2032	• Rural businesses • Rural tourism • Rural housing • Jobs or employment • Education or training • Broadband and or mobile communications • Transport services or infrastructure	The aims, objectives and Planning policies within this Local Development Plan have been developed with due regard to rural needs. They have been designed to encourage sustainable growth across the rural area in an effort to sustain vibrant rural communities and resist economic and social decline. Details of how policies will do that are available in the Rural Needs Impact Assessment 2019 and its addenda of 2021 and 2025.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
	• Health or social care services • Poverty • Deprivation • Rural crime or community safety • Other - Minerals, coastal development, renewable energy and vulnerable landscapes	
Development of Child Friendly Derry and Strabane Sustainability Plan	• Education or training • Health or social care services • Poverty • Deprivation • Rural crime or community safety	Due regard has been given by: • Consulting with children and young people from rural areas and identifying their needs through the development of the UNICEF Child Friendly City Multi Agency Action Plan • Involving children and young people from rural areas to influence and shape the Sustainability Plan • Considering services and transport for children and young people in rural areas throughout the Child Friendly City journey and also in the development of the sustainability plan • Establishing a gap in human resources in rural District

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
	• Rural development • Other - Children and young people's rights in rural areas	Electoral Areas and offering advice and support from the Children and Young People's Co-Ordinator and the wider Community Services team to address that gap (social and economic). • Recognising that the three rural District Electoral Areas lack social and economic resources to co-ordinate action and filling that gap by funding a Rural Support Network. • Recognising the gap in participation in public life for people living in our rural areas and continuing to service the Rural Issues Group to fill that gap.
Development of Sports Delivery Plan 2025-26	• Health or social care services • Other sports development	Due regard has been given by: • Recognising the need to consult with Local Community Growth Partnership Boards and recording their feedback in connection to health and sport. Examples include travel difficulties to some facilities, a gap in capacity to bid for funding, poorly lit areas making exercise more challenging, off-putting costs and leisure capital development having a focus in urban areas. • Recognising the need to consult with activity providers, and collating the 42 responses

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
		• Hosting public consultation sessions to determine key issues (such as suggested increase use of existing school facilities) • Reaching out to the community and collating their survey responses • Giving consideration to: a) provision of additional programmes in rural areas to increase opportunities to participate b) building in transport/travel time to facilities to make start times more suitable for participants c) provision of suitable facilities in or for rural areas
Development of Strabane Leisure Centre project	• Health and social care services • Other- sports / leisure facility improvement	Due regard has been given by: • Conducting postcode analysis on users of the existing centre (Riversdale Leisure Centre), indicating that users are from rural areas, neighbouring towns and Co. Donegal. These same users will benefit from the improved facilities once they replace Riversdale.
Development of Templemore Leisure project	• Health and social care services • Other- sports / leisure facility	This leisure centre will be a replacement for Templemore Sports Complex, which is located in an urban area. Due regard has been given by:

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
	improvement	Conducting postcode analysis on users of the existing centre, which revealed users from neighbouring rural areas including Co. Donegal. The new facilities will be located on the same site and are expected to attract the same users.
Development of Proposal for pitch replacement at Ryan McBride Brandywell Stadium	- Sports facility improvement in the City - Other- sports / leisure facility improvement	Due regard has been given by: Considering the impact the proposal has on people in rural areas in terms of relocation. It was concluded that some groups will be relocated as a result of Council agreeing the decision however none of these groups will be relocated outside a three-mile radius of the Ryan McBride Brandywell Stadium.
Development of Melvin Arena upgrade (floodlighting)	- Sports facility improvement in Strabane town - Other- sports / leisure facility improvement	Due regard has been given by: Confirming this project will have no impact on rural dwellers, other than visiting rural dwellers
Review of Treasury Management Policy	Other – internal	There have been no rural needs identified.
Review of Minimum Revenue Policy	Other – internal	There have been no rural needs identified.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
Development of Financing Plan – capital strategy and community projects updates	• Other- Cross-cutting • Other-internal	Due regard has been given by: • Consulting extensively with rural stakeholders to inform community plans • Analysing relevant statistics for rural areas • Seeking and agreeing endorsement of the Local Growth Plans and the Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan by Derg, Sperrin and Faughan District Electoral Areas • Liaising with the Rural Issues Group
Development of Rates estimates 2026-27	• Other -internal	There have been no rural needs identified.
Implementation of Applications to erect Memorials in Castlederg, Ardstraw and Urney cemeteries	• Other- internal	There have been no rural needs identified.
Implementation of DAERA Bovine TB Regionalisation project	• Rural businesses • Rural development	Due regard has been given by: • Recognising the need to support local farmers and the agriculture sector in reducing bovine TB.
Development of Social Supermarket Service Action Plan	• Jobs or employment • Education or training • Transport services or infrastructure • Health or social care services	Due regard has been given by: • Requiring each Social Supermarket partner to ensure provision, access and reach across rural areas • Using feedback from the Community and Voluntary Sector and the 8 Local Community Growth Partnership Boards

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
	• Poverty • Deprivation	
Development of Internal Audit Plan 2026-2027	• Other - internal	There have been no rural needs identified.
Development of City of Derry Airport Budget 2026-2027	• Rural businesses • Rural tourism • Jobs or employment • Education or training • Transport services or infrastructure • Poverty • Deprivation • Rural development	Due regard has been given by: • Consulting with rural stakeholders • Analysing published statistics • Considering feedback from Elected Members and staff
Review of Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy	• Other-internal	Due regard has been given by: • Considering whether there are different issues or needs for different groups of staff, including those who live in, work in and/or travel on council business to rural areas. • Identifying the need to ensure safety for staff who may be lone working in a rural area. Provisions to ensure they are protected are included in the sections general Safe Systems

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
		of Work and associated Risk Assessments carried out for all staff.
Development of a proposal to appoint Vacant Properties Officer	• Rural housing • Rural businesses	This is an initiative of Department for Communities, and the pilot seeks to identify vacant properties within the council area. Due regard has been given by: • Acknowledging that rural needs may be identified as part of the data gathering exercise conducted by this member of staff.
Review of Council Property Certificate fees 2026	• Other-internal	There have been no rural needs identified.
Review of administration fee for refunds on Council Property certificates submitted in error	• Other- internal	There have been no rural needs identified.
Development of an Asset Acquisition and Disposal Policy	• Other -internal • Other - Potentially transport services or infrastructure in rural areas • Other – potentially Rural development	Due regard has been given by: • Reviewing a range of Council consultations on key strategies and plans • Reviewing published statistics • Seeking feedback from Elected Members who represent rural area • Collating information shared by Council staff who work with rural stakeholders

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
		• Committing to considering whether proposed acquisitions would address shortcomings in access to services for people in rural areas, or have any negative impacts (including lack of transport and travel distance for example).
Development of the Directorate Delivery Plan 2026-2027 (Strategic Planning and Support Services)	• Rural tourism • Rural crime or community safety • Transport services or infrastructure • Other – internal • Other - Community and recreational	Due regard has been given by: • Reviewing the Rural Local Growth Partnerships' priorities (within their local plans) • Reviewing the draft Rural Audit commissioned by Rural Area Partnership In Derry • Considering feedback from stakeholders and Elected Members who represent rural areas through the Rural Issues Group • Considering feedback on the City Deal Programme from our three rural District Electoral Areas • Considering the ongoing review of Department for Communities' People and Place – A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, the Department for Environment, Rural Affairs and Agriculture's Rural Policy Framework • Considering Rural Community Network research projects and current funding programmes including the National

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
		Lottery Fund, Peace Plus, Sustainable Places and Council funding streams.
Development of a Council Meeting Schedule 2026-27	Other-internal	There have been no rural needs identified.
Review of the Citizen Recognition Policy	Other - internal	There have been no rural needs identified. This corporate policy is not related to social or economic needs in rural areas.
Review of Vending Services contract for one more year	Other - internal	There have been no rural needs identified. This contract extension is not related to social or economic needs in rural areas.
Review of Street Trading Policy	Other-internal.	The licensing regime is governed by a statutory framework. There have been no rural needs identified.
Development of Corporate Plan 2025-2026 and Improvement Plan 2025-2026	- Cross-cutting potentially all listed rural policy areas - Other-internal	Due regard has been given by: - Considering the need for equitable provision of sport and leisure/wellbeing activities for rural dwellers - Recognizing the need to ensure that information is accessible to those who are digitally connected - The resulting service programming taking into account the needs of people living in rural areas
Review of Safeguarding Policy (Children and Young People)	Other – internal	There have been no rural needs identified
Review of Safeguarding Policy (Adults)	Other – internal	There have been no rural needs identified

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
Development of an Anti-poverty action plan	Poverty	Due regard has been given by: - Consulting with stakeholders through meetings with the three Rural Local Growth Partnerships, the Rural Area Partnership in Derry, the Rural Community Network, the Rural Issues Group and local support organisations - Considering lack of access to and awareness of support services, limited access to public transport, unreliable or poor coverage of Broadband and volunteer burnout and lack of human resources for the delivery of services - Recognising the need to identify and include actions in the draft Plan that will enable residents to access relevant support services - Recognising that communications must be tailored and available in a range of formats
Implementation of the Age-Friendly employer's pledge	- Jobs or employment - Health or social care services - Other- Access to services and facilities	Due regard has been given by: - Consulting with other organisations, such as the Centre for Ageing Better - Reviewing research papers, surveys and questionnaires, including those from the Public Health Agency - Reviewing Council's Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan and its Local Community Growth Partnership Plan

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
		Identifying social and economic needs of rural dwellers through the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan – Lived Experiences (such as flexible working hours)
Implementation of Oakland Park Pitch improvement works	Other- internal	There have been no rural needs identified.
Implementation of Good Relations: Additional funding for racial and social unrest 2025-26	- Education or training - Poverty - Rural crime and community safety - Rural development	Due regard was given by: - Engaging with the community and voluntary sector and the eight Local Community Growth Partnership Boards - Considering feedback from consultation sessions, including from previous project beneficiaries and BAME representatives - Considering feedback from Elected Members - Rural District Electoral Areas having their own protected funding allocation to design and deliver locally available programmes and services - Recognising that Council's three rural District Electoral Areas have less funded human resource than the urban District Electoral Areas and therefore Council's Good Relations team offering advice and support to Council's three rural District Electoral Areas to facilitate delivery - Council funding an external Rural Support Network to assist

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
		community and voluntary sector groups • Council co-ordination of a Rural Issues Group
Review of Street Trading Policy 2.0	• Other- internal	There have been no rural needs identified.
Development of City Deal and Inclusive Future Fund / Social Value	• Other- cross cutting	Due regard has been given by: • Consulting with rural stakeholders • Consulting with other organisations, including rural Local Growth Partnerships • Researching published statistics • Reviewing Council's Strategic Inclusive Growth Plan, North West Community Wealth Building Partnership Prospectus and associated equality and rural needs assessments • Reviewing the Programme for Government, DAERA, DfC and DfI Departmental strategies • Considering feedback from Elected Members who represent rural areas • Reviewing the response submitted by Rural Area Partnership In Derry on behalf of Council's three rural District Electoral Areas, particularly concerning community priorities and the delivery of social value through the City Deal Programme
Development of a Pride of Place Investment Plan	• Other - Internal	Due regard has been given by:

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 ¹	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to ²	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service ³
		• Recognising that any interventions that naturally extend beyond the boundary (and into rural areas) will be in line with the Strategic Growth Plan priorities, which were agreed after consulting with rural communities. • No rural needs specifically identified as the relevant geographical boundary for this programme is defined as 'Derry City', based on NISRA 2015 urban settlement data. Interventions, particularly those aimed at developing thriving places, such as enhancements to active travel infrastructure, may naturally extend beyond the urban area and also deliver meaningful benefits to surrounding rural communities.
NOTES 1. This information should normally be contained in section 1B of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity. 2. This information should normally be contained in section 2D of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity. 3. The information contained in sections 3D, 4A & 5B of the RNIA Template should be considered when completing this section.		

Council Business

Derry City and Strabane District Council is comprised of forty Councillors who are elected every four years. These Councillors represent seven District Electoral Areas (DEAs).

All Councillors meet together as the Council. Meetings of the Council are normally open to the public and are normally held in the Guildhall on the last Wednesday (and Thursday) of the month. Meetings can also be viewed on the Council's You Tube Channel : [Derry City & Strabane District Council - YouTube](#).

Motions and Resolutions

A motion is a formal proposal put forward for debate and decision at a council meeting. In addition, resolutions (a decision / position statement) can also be agreed at Council meetings.

A number of these decisions include taking forward actions that may also include writing to Ministers and other officials / stakeholders.

The table below provides an overview of the number of Motions and Resolutions that have been agreed by Derry City and Strabane District Council during the current electoral term, the number of associated actions and progress to date.

Time Period	No. Motions / Resolutions passed	No. associated actions	% actions complete/ closed	% Motions / resolutions complete
June 2023 – March 2024	93	134	99%	99%
April 2024- March 2025	70	131	100%	100%
April 2025 – March 2026	67	129	89%	87%

Appendix 3

Performance Indicators – Comparative Figures

This list contains details of further performance indicator information that is collated as well as Northern Ireland comparative information, where available. Comparative information is also available in relation to the Statutory Indicators in Section 4.

Performance Indicator	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Number of dog licences issued	7,841	8,148	8,995	8,104	7297
NI Average	12,632	12,832	12,152	12,044	11,690

Performance Indicator	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Number of complaints in relation to stray dogs	256	183	241	277	320
NI Average	383	416	462	250	436

Performance Indicator	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Number of fixed penalties imposed – dog control	67	212	186	111	102
NI Average	114	124	162	129	70

Performance Indicator	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Number of successful prosecutions – dog control	0	2	11	10	26
NI Average	2	12	10	11	15

Performance Indicator	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Average number of days absenteeism per FTE employee	10.37 days	16.8 days	16.5 days	18.2 days	17.9 days
NI Average	10.62 days	15.84 days	16.2 days	16.83 days	Not available

Performance Indicator	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
% Invoices paid within 10 days	37.5%	26.1%	34.4%	38.2%	39.1%
NI Average	65.5%	72.5%	71.03%	71.13%	75.67%
% Invoices paid within 30 days	78.4%	64.7%	73.5%	82.3%	82.7%
NI Average	65%	73.5%	82.26%	82.26%	90.06%

