

**Annual Performance Report 2024-25**

**Performance Report 2024/25**

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* Appendix 1- **Information to be compiled by Public Authorities under Section3(1)(a) of the Rural Needs Act (NI)2016.**
* Appendix 2- **Performance Indicators – comparative figures**

# Introduction

## 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.

## What is Improvement?

‘Improvement’ means more than just gains in service output or efficiency, or the internal effectiveness of the Council. It is about 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 2024/25 Corporate and Improvement Plan, Derry City and Strabane District Council set out a number of improvement objectives/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; and
* any other sources of evidence, (including Council’s annual governance, value for money and sustainability statements etc., that appear to be relevant.

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 2024/25, we undertook consultations on a number of issues, including:

* Choose your favourite hashtags for the UNICEF UK child friendly communities programme
* Councils Performers Deal
* Draft Performance Objectives 2024/2025 (This began in March 2024 and continued into the 24/25 year)
* Consultation on Draft Performance Objectives 2025/2026 (This began in March 2025)
* EQIA of Draft Equality Action Plan and Disability Duties Action Plan 2024-2026
* New Strabane Leisure Centre
* Pathways Out Of Poverty (This began in February 2025)
* Tackling Barriers to Participation in Sport/Physical Activity Consultation (This began March 2024 and continued into the 24/25 year) Draft Improvement Objectives 2025/26
* EQIA of Dual Language Street Naming Policy 2024
* EQIA of Equality Action Plan & Disability Duties 2024
* Pilots Row Consultation conducted by the Education Authority in partnership with Council to review service provision
* Food Support and Wrap Around Service Consultation (Completed October 2023, with implementation in 2024/25)

In addition, the Council used its website and social media channels to keep citizens informed.

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Website** | **Page views** |
| Council | 1,636,358 |
| Leisure | 539,982 |
| Halloween | 508,527 |
| Recycling | 268,733 |
| Foyle Maritime Festival | 151,307 |
| Jazz Festival | 94,331 |
| **TOTAL Page Views** | **3,199,238** |

2024/25 figures:

This is an improvement of 19% from 2023/24

# 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 2024/25 continued to reflect the mission and objectives set out in the Corporate Plan 2015/16.

As we did last year, annual Directorate Delivery Plans have been 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 outlined above comprising 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 below shows the key elements of the planning, improvement and performance review framework. The highlighted box represents this document – the Annual Performance Report.

**Corporate Planning, Improvement and Performance Review Framework**

**Derry City and Strabane District Council Area: Plans and Performance Review Council: Plans and Performance Review**

“Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017-2032”. The District’s integrated plan which captures the shared outcomes for the area.

Derry City and Strabane District – 2 yearly Statement of Progress Report. Measures the district’s performance against the shared

outcomes set out in the “Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017-2032”.

**Derry City and Strabane District Council – Corporate Plan**

The Corporate Plan captures the Council’s contribution to the “Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017-2032”.

The resources required are reflected in the Annual Rates Estimates.

**Annual Improvement Plan 2025/26**

Improvement Objectives 2025/26 for the forthcoming year

**Annual Performance Report 2024/25**(this report)

Sets out what we have achieved in the previous year and how we have met our performance improvement duty.

**Directorate: Plans and Performance Review**

**Annual Directorate Delivery Plans**

Directorate delivery plans demonstrate how the Corporate Plan will be delivered and contains details about the work of the Directorate, its resources and how it is performing. Supported by six monthly progress reports.

**Individual: Development Plans and Performance Review**

This captures the individual’s contribution to Directorate and team plans.

# How we have performed - Review of Performance for 2024/25

This section sets out details of how the Council has performed in 2024/25, in five areas:

* Progress in delivering our Improvement Objectives including complaints handling
* Financial performance for 2024/25
* Key achievements in delivering our Corporate Plan Objectives
* Community Plan – Inclusive Growth Plan: Statement of Progress
* The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
* Progress in relation to performance improvement areas/criteria

## Improvement Objectives - Performance 2024/25

In our Improvement Plan 2024/25 we set ourselves four Improvement Objectives.

Details of each of these objectives, what we aimed to achieve and the progress we made during 2024/25 are set out below:

* + 1. **Improvement Objective 1**

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

Sub Objectives

* To maintain a minimum of 1.2 million paid user visits
* Maintain baseline of 6,000 paid members (includes direct debits, advanced payments, corporate and staff membership schemes)
* To target underrepresented groups through inclusive leisure, sport and physical participation which lead to more active lifestyles
* Achieve Sport & Physical Activity targets of 5,000 participants per year for targeted programmes including
  + 500 ‘Disability’ participants
  + 2,500 ‘Female’ participants
  + 2,000 ‘Area of High Social Need’ participants
* Maintain current levels of satisfaction/net promoter score

#### Why we selected this as an Improvement 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.

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 in order to address individual and societal health and wellbeing benefits.

The World Health Organization (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 also inequalities, with girls and women being less active than boys and men in most countries. And there are significant

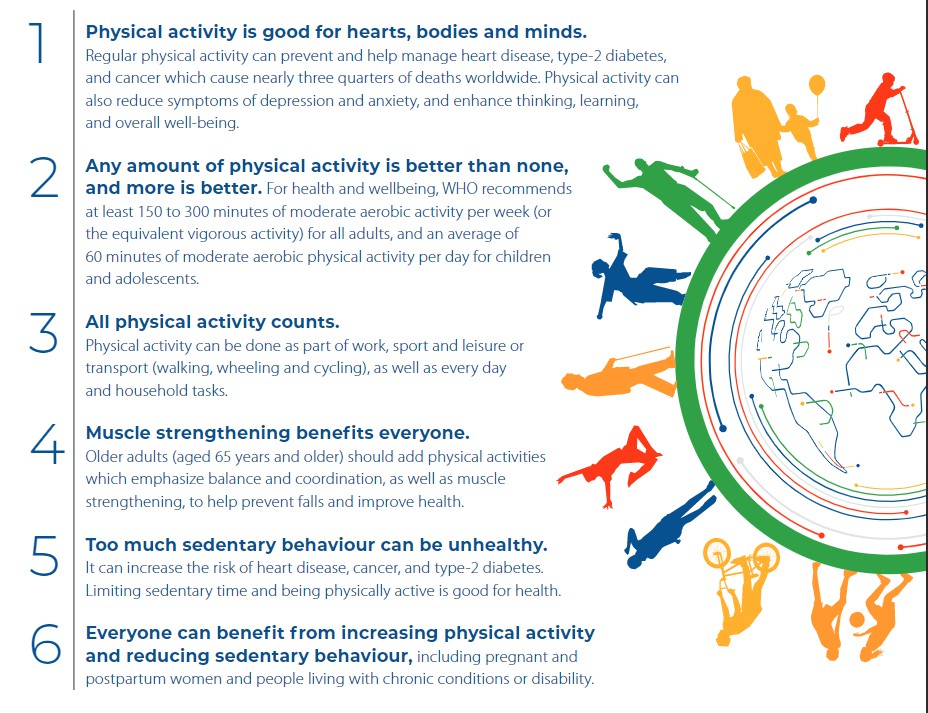
differences in levels of physical activity between higher and lower income groups, and between countries and regions. The WHO’s

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.

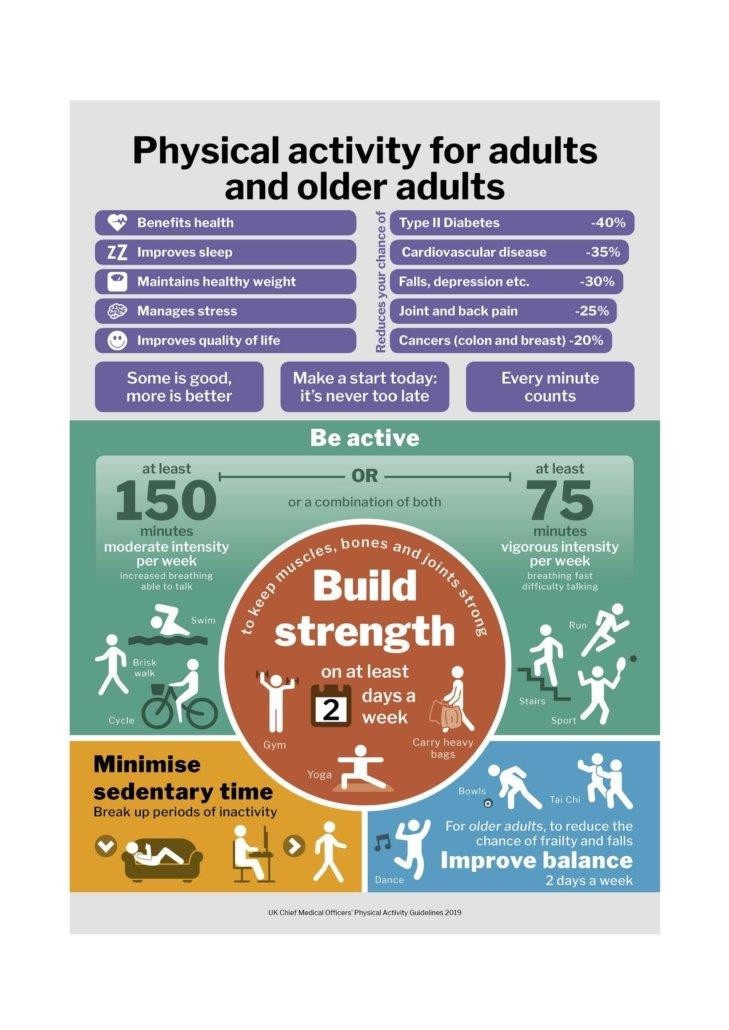
The World economic forum has developed a messaging strategy which summarises the key benefits of physical activity as seen in the

diagram overleaf:



**Physical Activity Guidelines Set Out by CMO**

The UK Chief Medical Officer activity guidelines sets 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 image below provides a diagrammatic representation on the types of activities that can deliver these benefits and contribute to meeting the physical activity guidelines.



Securing the future of public sport and leisure (published on behalf of APSE, CLOA, LGS) stated that:

‘Although the word leisure can conjure up images of optional activities, public sport and leisure services are in fact a service that fundamentally supports the health of the nation, enabling people to live longer, prevent or manage health conditions and boost mental health. The more deprived an area is the more dependent the community is on public sports and leisure provision.’

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.

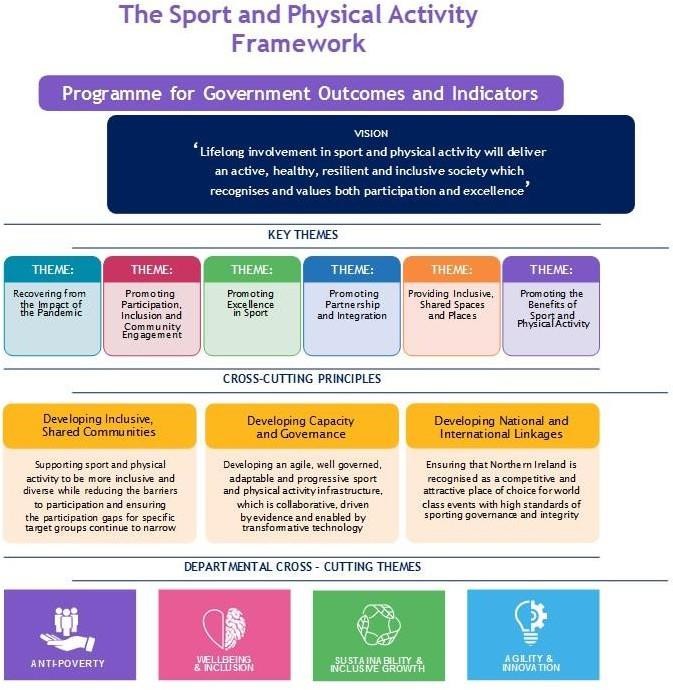
The NI Programme for Government has moved to an outcomes focused delivery-based approach which encourages cross departmental working to deliver on 9 key themes, including ‘We all enjoy long, healthy, active lives’ which most closely aligns to the outcomes for lifelong participation and engagement in 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.’

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.



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 sort 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.

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

**Levelling Up Fund**

Council has recently benefitted from the national Levelling Up Fund (total of £16m) for 3 significant infrastructural projects within the

district:

**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

incorporating the following elements: high quality public realm scheme in the Diamond; upgraded pitches at Mitchell Park for local

Gaelic and soccer teams; outdoor gym equipment; new play facility enhancing the heritage site at Castle Park; upgrade to event space at

Castle Park; upgrades to outdoor events space at Castle Park; upgrades to Greenways connecting Castle Park & Castlederg town centre;

and the creation of two parklets including one in the Diamond in the town centre.

**Acorn Farm St Columb’s Park**

The regeneration of St Columb’s Park was endorsed by Council. 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, 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. 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, and high blood

pressure or type 2 diabetes, and is linked to substantial direct and indirect costs - estimated to be £370m in NI.

Council by participating in the early adopter site will have the opportunity to work with Government and health bodies to influence policy change, work together on local interventions at community level, provide and make available facilities to support healthier food, dietary choices and enhance opportunities for physical activity.

The development of the Derry City and Strabane District Council ‘Be Active’ strategy 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:

• 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

DOH 2022 health inequalities report shows that health outcomes in 26 of the 52 measures are worse that 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 Organization’s (WHO) initiative, Derry City & Strabane District Healthy City & District project brings health, housing, transport, education, 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.

There will be specific focus on physical activity in the 2024/25 delivery plan.

**Delivery / Achievements**

In our Improvement Plan for 2024/25, 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 in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What did we aim to achieve?**  **Target Outcomes** | **Performance 2020-21** | **Performance 2021-22** | **Performance 2022-23** | **Performance 2023-24** | **2024-25 Target** | **Performance 2024-25** | **Target Delivered?** |
| Increase leisure user visitor numbers (paid visits) including:   * 20k children in school swimming * 6k participants in learn to swim programme * 70k participants in fitness classes | 28,379 | 542,733 | 1,350,144 | 1,522,132 | 1.2 million | 1,781,518  5000  10,299  133,980 | A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect.  Badge Cross outline  A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect.  A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect. |
| Maintain baseline of 6,000 paid membership  numbers |  |  |  | 7,040 | 6,000 per mth | 8,190 (average) | A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect. |
| Number of participants per year for sports development targeted programmes:   * 5000 participants * 500 disability participants * 2,500 female particpants * 2,000 ‘are of high social need participants |  |  | 5,235 | 5,328 | 5000 | NA  5,210  412  2440  1964 | A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect.  Badge Cross outline  Badge Cross outline  Badge Cross outline |
| Achieve participation completion rate for Physical  Activity Referral Programme (PARP) targeting  designated special populations | 349 | 494 | 605 | 712 | 550 | 640 | A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect. |
| Increase in the % of Bookable Activities Being Booked Via the Leisure App |  |  |  |  | 10% | 38% increase achieved | A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect. |
| Number of athletes enrolled in the Elite Athlete Membership Scheme | 49 | 71 | 63 | 74 | 60 | 82 |  |
| User satisfaction/net promoter score | 50 | Not carried  out due to Covid | 50 | 50 | 50 | Not completed | Badge Cross outline |
| Average quarterly mystery visit score across all leisure facilities |  | Not carried out due to Covid | Not carried out, commenced in 2023/24 | 85% | 85% | 80% | Badge Cross outline |
| % increase of bookable activities  being booked via the leisure app | N/A | N/A | N/A | 10% |  | 10% |  |

Further information on the work progressed in 2024-25 is contained in the Health and Community Directorate Delivery Plan for 2025-26 which is available on our website <https://meetings.derrycityandstrabanedistrict.com/documents/s50300/Appendix%201%20Annual%20Service%20Plan%2025-26.pdf>

**Overview / Assessment**

Council achieved the majority of other targets, including increasing leisure user visitor numbers (paid visits) by more than 17% on the previous year and increase in paid gym memberships, participation in sports development programmes. There were increases in the participation completion rate for Physical Activity Referral Programme and in the number of athletes enrolled in the Elite Athlete Membership Scheme.

**Overall Trend/ Assessment: Evidence of performance improvement**

#### Example initiatives taken forward in 2024-25 related to this Improvement Objective

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A poster for a sports event  Description automatically generated | **Family friendly fun for only £1 this summer across Derry and Strabane Leisure Centres**  **July & August 2024**  Children can enjoy fitness and fun throughout the summer months with a great value offer at Council’s leisure facilities being rolled out from 1st July to 31st August 2024.  All daytime activities until 5pm will be available for £1 for under 18’s, making fitness more open and accessible over the school holidays. This includes swimming as well as court activities such as tennis, badminton, 5-a-side, table tennis, basketball, squash and also some pitch activities (T&Cs apply).  The scheme aims to get kids more active and encourage them to try out new activities as part of Council’s wider sports development programme, while remaining cost-friendly for families over the summer holidays. |

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| **Take the first steps to a healthier life in 2024 with Council’s new fitness initiative**  8th May 2024  Derry City and Strabane District Council launched a new fitness programme aimed at setting people on the path to a more active and healthier 2024.  ‘Let’s Get Moving, Let’s Get Started’ is an eight week course that included three sessions a week with Council's Fitness Coaches and a tailored personal training plan for candidates to work towards their goals.  Goals that coaches worked on with clients included BMI and weight loss, lower blood pressure and improved fitness. |  |
| **Rise Female Leadership Programme**  **Programme run from Feb 24 – June 24**  Delivered in partnership with Sport NI, Rise is empowering the next generation of female leaders in sport, providing tailored support for female coaches, officials, and administrators across the Derry, Strabane, Causeway Coast, and Mid Ulster areas. With just 19.5% of the coaching workforce being women, and only 10% at elite levels, Rise aims to close this gap by enhancing leadership skills, diversity and inclusion.  Participants have gained tools to thrive in leadership roles, drive change, and make a lasting impact in their sports while learning from each other’s experiences. Rise has also created a supportive network within the sporting community for these women which will last long after the programme ends. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Coach Development**  **🗓️ Wednesday 24th April 2024**  **🕒 7-9pm**  The event was hosted by Chartered Physiotherapist & Current Derry GAA Senior Men's Physio Síofra O'Mullan and Performance Dietician Cáoileann Conway.  Areas covered  - Expert insights on optimizing physical performance  - Improving Nutrition  - Smarter conditioning  - Injury prevention/Rehab strategies  - Networking opportunities with like-minded individuals |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Council Implements Nutritional Standards in Vending at Foyle Arena**  21 March 2025  Derry City and Strabane District Council, along with the Food Standards Agency (FSA), has introduced nutritional standards in its vending machines at Foyle Arena.  The move will help meet growing consumer demand for healthier choices when ‘on the go’. Explaining challenges consumers face when trying to make healthier food choices |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Strabane Health and Wellbeing event**  **11 February 2025**  A special health and wellbeing event held in Strabane, featured helpful advice and information from a range of local organisations.  The event was delivered in partnership with Derry City and Strabane District Council’s Age Friendly Programme, Sports Development team, the Strabane Health Improvement Project, Neighbourhood Health Improvement Project and Strabane District Caring Services. |

* + 1. **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.

**Delivery / Achievements** In our Improvement Plan for 2024/25 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 in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What did we aim to achieve? Target Outcomes** | **Performance 2021-22** | **Performance 2022-23** | **Performance 2023-24** | **Performance 2024-25** | **Target**  **2024-25** | **Target Delivered?** |
| **Increased opportunities for play**   * **£ value of new/upgraded play provision** | £546k | £300k | Data only | £1.1m | £1.1m | A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect. |
| **Increased access to sustainable transport**   * **KM increase in provision of cycle path/greenway development** * **Capital value of greenways delivered** | 0.4  £1.32m | 0.3  c£100k | 4.2km  £3.94m | 0.2km  £300k | 0.2km  £300k | A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect.  A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect. |
| **More sustainable management of waste**   * **% household waste recycled/composted (W1)** * **Biodegradable LAC waste sent to landfill (tonnes)** * **Total amount of local authority collected waste** | 45.1%  8,299  83,540 | 46.0%  5,310  79,114 | 48.2%  4086  81,207 | 51%\*  4070  83,236\* | 50%  Reduce  N/A | A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect.  A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect.  N/A |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What did we aim to achieve? Target Outcomes** | **Performance 2020-21** | **Performance 2021-22** | **Performance 2022-23** | **Performance 2023-24** | **Performance 2024-25** | **Target 2024-25** | **Target Delivered?** |
| * **The average processing time of major planning applications** * **The average processing time of local planning applications** * **% of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks** | 65.2 weeks  14.2 weeks  73.3% | 51.6 weeks  15.6 weeks  77.9% | 78.0 weeks  21.0 weeks  - | 68.6 weeks  23.4 weeks  75.0% | 55 weeks  20.7 weeks  83.3% | Less than 30 weeks  Less than 15 weeks  70% | Badge Cross outline  Badge Cross outline  A check mark on a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect. |
| * **Total Building Control Applications Processed** | 3,439 | 4,195 | 4,196 | 3,897 | 3,136 | Demand led | N/A |

\*Subject to verification

Further information on the work progressed in 2024-25 is provided in the Environment and Regeneration Directorate Delivery Plan for 2025/26 which is available on our website at: <https://meetings.derrycityandstrabanedistrict.com/ieSearchResults2.aspx?SS=directorate%20plan&SD=01%2f03%2f2025&ED=31%2f05%2f2025&DT=3&CI=187&ADV=1&CA=false&SB=true&CX=5214848&PG=1>

**Overview / Assessment -**

The 2024/25 year saw a continuation in building control applications. The Planning Service encountered a number of operational challenges due to recruitment difficulties and staff shortages.

Regional unverified data indicates that the Council increased its levels of household waste recycled from the previous year.

Council also continued to deliver on a multi-million pound capital programme and to expand/ develop its parks and greenways, and the built environment.

**Overall Trend/ Assessment: Evidence of performance improvement**

#### Example initiatives taken forward in 2024/25 related to this Improvement Objective:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Learmount Forest Footstick Bridge officially opens**  **27 November 2024**  The project in Learmount Forest includes the construction of a replacement footbridge, path improvements, new seats, picnic benches and better signage.  The pedestrian footbridge known locally as the ‘Footstick’ in Park was entirely washed away during the widespread severe flooding event of August 2017.  Derry City and Strabane District Council secured funding from the COVID Recovery Small Settlements Programme for the construction of a replacement footbridge and improving access to the new bridge from both the Altinure Road and the car park at Learmount Country Park. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Castlederg celebrates new play park facilities**  **18 November 2024**  The local community in Castlederg are celebrating with the opening of a new, state-of-the-art play park in Castle Park, part of the transformative Derg Active Project that aims to enhance community spaces and promote active lifestyles across the area. This latest addition provides a welcoming, safe, and accessible space for children and families, fostering health, well-being, and family-friendly recreation.  The opening was led by the Deputy Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Alderman Darren Guy, who praised the investment in youth and family activities in Castlederg. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Successful completion of North West Greenway Network celebrated**  **12 September 2024**  A NEW EU-funded cross-border greenway connecting people and communities across the North West was officially opened today.  The €34m North West Greenway Network was supported by the European Union’s INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), and delivered by Derry City and Strabane District Council (COUNCIL) in partnership with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), Donegal County Council (DCC) and Sustrans NI.  Further funding was also provided by both Councils, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, the Department for Infrastructure, and the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland.  The overall project has successfully delivered a network of 46.5km of greenway infrastructure, walking and cycling routes, linking communities spanning the North West border area. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Mayor encourages residents to Join Recycle Week 2024**  **14 October 2024**  Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council Cllr Lilian Seenoi Barr is encouraging residents to “Step It Up” by not only recycling more but also making the most of Council resources that can help make a difference.  The Council has organised a range of exciting events to encourage sustainable practices across the community. In addition, the Council will be engaging with schools throughout the week, delivering workshops and interactive sessions to teach students about the importance of recycling, e-waste repair and reduction, and other sustainability practices. Through these events, Derry City and Strabane District Council aims to support residents of all ages in taking meaningful steps toward a greener, more sustainable community. |

### **Improvement Objective 3**

**To deliver improved customer satisfaction by improving customer support services and processes**

**Sub Objectives:**

* To embed the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman Complaints Handling Process within all service areas
* To provide accessible services / information

#### Why we selected this as an Improvement 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.

**Why we have decided to keep this as an improvement objective for 2024/25**

We have carried this improvement objective forward as:

• Access arrangements, communication channels, and engagement processes have continued to evolve. In order to continue to build customer confidence and service participation, we need to ensure that we continue to provide new, effective, and innovative ways of engaging with our citizens

• We value our stakeholders and recognise the importance of providing accessible, customer focused services

• We recognise that more work is required to achieve improved processes / satisfaction levels

• We wish to work towards a recognised framework for customer excellence

**Delivery / Achievements**

In our Improvement Plan for 2024/25 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:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What did we aim to achieve? Target Outcomes** | **Performance 2020-21** | **Performance 2021-22** | **Performance 2022-23** | **Performance 2023-24** | **Performance 24-25** | **Target**  **2024/5** | **Target Delivered?** |
| **NEW INDICATORS 24/25**   * **Complaints received**   Stage 1  Stage 2   * **Average response time in days**   Stage 1  Stage 2   * **Percentage complaints closed within timescales**   Stage 1  Stage 2 |  |  |  |  | 49  27  4.9  12  85.7%  77.8%, | n/a  n/a  5  20  90%  90% | N/a  N/a      Badge Cross outline  Badge Cross outline |
| **Call handling performance statistics**   * **Average time to answer external calls (seconds)** * **% abandoned external calls** | 17  7.8% | 27.3  5.4% | 23.3  5.1% | 22.8  5.4% | 22  5.3% | 10 sec  5% | Badge Cross outline  Badge Cross outline |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What did we aim to achieve? Target Outcomes** | **Performance 2020-21** | **Performance 2021-22** | **Performance 2022-23** | **Performance 2023/24** | **Performance 2024-25** | **Target**  **2024/5** | **Target Delivered?** |
| **% access support requests facilitated for Council run meetings / events met** | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |  |
| * **FOI response times** * **EIR response times** * **SAR response times** | 92.9%  93.7%  87.5% | 92.8%  100%  91.5% | 91.8%  91.3%  81.2% | 87.2%  91.1%  87.5% | 85.1%  86%  77.67% | 90%  90%  90% | Badge Cross outline  Badge Cross outline  Badge Cross outline |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **2024/25 Performance** | |
| **Changes to systems and processes that facilitate customer service** | * Implemented the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman complaints handling process (CHP) * Monitored and reported on the CHP to identify improvement opportunities in our services areas * Continued to engage with other Councils on best practice approaches to customer care (complaints handling, data protection and freedom of information) to enhance performance * Reviewed safeguarding policies * Implemented Google TranService Level Agreement on the Council website following thorough community engagement, ensuring inclusivity of languages spoken within the City & District |
| **Greater staff awareness of policies relating to customer care** | * Delivered refresher complaint handling training to 41 staff across council as part of the implementation of the new complaints handling process * Delivered refresher freedom of information training to new and frontline staff * Delivered refresher data protection to new and frontline staff * Delivered telephony etiquette training to reception staff |
| **Customer Satisfaction** | * Achieved a 95% 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 * Positive feedback received on Council events, including 79% of those surveyed for the Maritime Festival rating it good to extremely good, and 84% rating Halloween events as good to very good. |
| **Accessible Services & Information** | * Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan inclusive of persons aged 50+ years co designed and approved by Elected Members and Age Friendly Alliance * Co-design and delivery of the Department for Communities £441k Hardship Fund for 23/24 * Council achieved two Green RAG ratings from UNICEF for progress of the multi-agency child rights action plan/ embedding a Child Rights Based Approach to improve services * Audit of Inequalities, Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan developed * Annual Equality Progress Report submitted to Equality Commission * 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 * Unqualified audit in respect of Performance Improvement Duties. * Secured in excess of 10,000 media placements across a wide range of media platforms including print, online, broadcast media to the value of £37.5m in free PR coverage that showcases all Council services, initiatives, and events * Partnered with The Ulster-Scots Agency to deliver Ulster-Scots Language Week 2024 which included a hybrid programme of events including international speakers and a series of short films and schools events * Partnered with the office of the NI Children’s Commissioner and CCEA to develop Irish and Ulster-Scots versions of NICCY’s Child Rights Awareness animation * Social media engagement with Irish/Ulster-Scots audiences continues to grow; our Irish Language Facebook community Fóram Phobal na Gaeilge now has 2,793 Followers. Our Ulster-Scots X account has 431 followers. * Delivered a series of rural-based placenames awareness events as part of Council’s annual Age-Friendly programme (Oct 2024) |

Further information on the work progressed in 2024/25 is provided in the Strategic Planning and Support Services Directorate Delivery Plan for 2025/26 which is available on our website at:

<https://meetings.derrycityandstrabanedistrict.com/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=183&MID=2280#AI40877>

**Complaints Handling**

A new complaints handling process developed by the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) was introduced by Council in January 2024. It was designed to make the complaints process more accessible and informal with an emphasis on early resolution.

During the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, a total of 76 complaints were received, broken down as follows:

**Complaints received in total**

Stage 1 - 49

Stage 2 - 27

**Complaints received by Directorate**

Strategic Planning & Support Units - **1** (Stage 1)

Environment & Regeneration - **38** (23 Stage 1 & 15 Stage 2)

Business & Culture - **11** (9 Stage 1 & 2 Stage 2)

Health & Community Wellbeing - **26** (16 Stage 1 & 10 Stage 2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Further analysis of these complaints indicated that there were a number of key categories :   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Category** | **No. complaints received – Stage 1** | **No. complaints received – Stage 2** | | Employee Attitude | 7 | 3 | | Failure to provide service | 4 | 2 | | Poor quality service | 27 | 16 | | Discrimination | 2 | 3 | | Non-adherence to policy | 2 | 2 | | Other | 7 | 0 | | Maladministration | 0 | 1 |   In addressing these complaints, a number of remedies were applied, as set out below:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Remedy** | **Stage 1** | **Stage 2** | | No remedy required | 2 | 2 | | Apology | 16 | 6 | | Explanation | 21 | 17 | | Remedial action taken | 8 | 2 | | Compensatory award | 2 | 0 |   It is noted that during the 20204/5 year, there was one complaint escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2. A total of 49 complaints were closed at Stage1 and 27 complaints at Stage 2.  The majority (62%) of complaints were resolved (38 complaints at Stage 1 and 9 complaints at Stage 2). The remaining complaints  were either upheld, partially upheld or not upheld as indicated below:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Complaint Outcome** | **Stage 1** | **Stage 2** | | Upheld | 4 | 5 | | Partially upheld | 3 | 6 | | Not upheld | 4 | 7 | | | |
|  | | |
| In overall terms:  **Average Response Times in Working Days** | | |
| Stage 1 - **4.9** | | |
| Stage 2 - **12** | | |
|  | | |
| **Percentage of complaints closed within timescales** | | |
| Stage 1 - **85.7%** | | |
| Stage 2 - **77.8%** | | |
| **Number of complaints where an extension was authorised\*** | | |
| Stage 1 - **3** | | |
| Stage 2 – **0** | | |

\*Extensions, of a further 5 working days, can be authorised for Stage 1 if complaint can’t be closed within first 5 working days (this is agreed with complainant)

\*Extensions, of a further 20 working days, can be authorised for Stage 2 if complaint can’t be closed within first 20 working days (this is agreed with complainant)

**Key points / learning:**

* Only one Stage 1 complaint has been escalated to Stage 2. This clearly shows that the effective handling of complaints at Stage 1 prevents escalation to Stage 2.
* A key aim of the new process was to resolve issues effectively and at the earliest possible point. 77% of Stage 1 complaints were “resolved”. Again, this indicates that there is effective understanding and handling of the process.
* The main category of complaint, in both Stage 1 and Stage 2, was poor quality of service. This was consistent during all four quarters. Ongoing forward there will be a focus on delivering a higher level of service by listening to and actioning the feedback from our customers.
* The main category of remedy, in both Stage 1 and Stage 2, was “explanation”. This demonstrates that engaging with the customer is the most effective way to resolve an issue.

**Trends:**

* A direct comparison (regarding number/category of complaints) to previous years is difficult given the introduction of the new Complaints Handling process
* Directorates with the highest levels of direct engagement with the public tend to attract the highest level of complaints.

**Overview/Assessment**

**Overall Trend/ Assessment: Innovative work in accessible service delivery progressed. Ongoing assimilation of complaints handling process. Improvement required in call handling and managing information requests.**

Example initiatives taken forward in 2024/25 related to this Improvement Objective:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Council launches new service guide for over 50s**  **22 August 2024**  Derry City and Strabane District Council has produced a new resource for older people highlighting a range of local resources and services tailored to their specific needs.  The guide takes into account the views of the Over 50’s Reference Group and local community organisations. The project has been supported with funding from the Public Health Agency (PHA).  It features a comprehensive selection of key signposting information and relevant services, collated into a single resource to support people as they age well, particularly those who are not confident using the internet. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Programme of events to mark Ulster-Scots Language Week**  **8 November 2024**  A packed programme of events was delivered for the Ulster-Scots Language Week across the City and District.  The week-long programme ran from 25-29 November 2024. It included engaging talks, creative writing workshops, language learning events and short digital films. The female voice featured heavily in the diverse list of speakers and contributors. |
|  | | **Children and young people enjoy Mayor’s Inclusive Birthday Party**  **13 January 2025**  The Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Councillor Lilian Seenoi Barr held her Inclusive Birthday Party at Foyle Arena. Mayor Barr planned the event to allow neurodivergent children and young people the opportunity to participate in a birthday party in a safe and supportive environment. |
|  | **Blind and partially sighted supporters to avail of new commentary service at Brandywell games**  **24 September 2024**  Visually impaired or blind spectators attending Derry City games at the Ryan McBride Brandywell Stadium can now avail of a new service that will give them a live audio description of games.  The new programme has been designed to allow the supporters to listen to descriptive commentary that will be transmitted to a radio receiver through a headset from anywhere within the stadium.  The equipment has been installed by stadium owners Derry City and Strabane District Council following a report on accessibility improvements at the stadium being approved by Elected Members of Council’s Health and Community Committee in May. | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mayor hosts public meeting to discuss Violence Against Women and Girls**  **14 January 2025**  A public meeting, including a Panel Discussion and Questions and Answers Session to discuss violence against women and girls was hosted by the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council Cllr Lilian Seenoi Barr in January 2025.  The public meeting was one of 10 key actions agreed at a Special Council meeting in response to a spate of attacks in the city and district. Representatives from local women’s groups, who addressed the meeting, sought support from the Council to work proactively to establish and implement a number of actions to enhance safety measures to ensure women and girls feel safe in all public spaces.  Elected members attending the Special Council meeting in November fully endorsed the 10 key actions presented by the women’s groups, including a proposal to host a town hall meeting. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mayoral Youth Initiative invitation widened to include all generations**  **28 March 2025**  The Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council’s hugely successful ‘Our Guildhall, Our Space’ events, where young people from across the Council area have come together to enjoy music and entertainment, is being extended next month to include their parents, grandparents and family members and older adults from across the Council area as part of a wider Intergenerational Celebration of Youth.  Mayor Cllr Lilian Seenoi Barr says she wants to make the Youth Initiative event even more inclusive with an invitation to older persons across the Council area to come along and join in the celebration of young people. Young people registered were encouraged to bring their parents, grandparents or any family members. An invitation is also being extended to older persons groups across the Council area who want to be part of this unique celebration. |  |

## Financial Performance 2024/25

For the year ended 31st March 2025, Council approved a net expenditure budget as part of the rates process of £78.044m. The sources of funding were as follows:

District rates income (including de-rating grant) £76.084m

Rates Support Grant £0.619m

Transferred Functions Grant £0.441m

Council reserves/ District Fund £0.900m

Total net expenditure budget £78.044m

The rates rise for 2024/25 was set at a Special Meeting of Council on Wednesday, February 14, 2024, where it was highlighted that while the financial challenges are not as significant as last year, a number of challenges remain for Council including high inflation rates at 4%, associated staff pay and cost of living pressures, global volatility, construction inflation, and risks to Central Government grants due to current NI Executive budgetary pressures.

The agreed 6.5% District rates increase was composed of a 3.17% increase to cover statutory pressures and inflation, 1.83% to offset Central Government grant cuts mainly to Rates Support Grant, and 1.50% rates investment into Council’s capital programme to allow the progression of its strategic leisure and further community projects across the District. In essence, had Council not had any growth ambitions and did not have to deal with the level of grant cuts (which are not faced by most other Councils), a sub-inflationary rates increase could have been achieved.

Council aims to continue to deliver a full suite of critical front-line services to ratepayers and has continued to have a clear focus on protecting jobs, statutory and core services, and funding to community organisations and arts and culture groups who rely on Council grant funding to deliver community services and projects. The 2024/25 rates provided for service development with provision set aside to allow roll-out of brown bins in remaining rural areas.

Council has a £420m ongoing programme of capital investment which has either been delivered or is in the process of being delivered across the District. Projects currently being progressed include the DNA Museum, Acorn Farm, Daisyfield Sports Hub, Derg Active, North West Greenways Network, the new West Bank Cemetery, Strabane Public Realm and the Melvin Boxing Facility and Sports Hall. Also included is a transformative £240m programme of City Deal/ Inclusive Future Fund investment and with Outline Business Cases currently being submitted to Government, it is hoped to secure a Financial Deal by Spring/ Summer 2024.

Building on this, the message from the 2024/25 rates process was that Council had earmarked 1.5% rates investment as part of an ambitious 6-7 year capital financing strategy aimed at achieving over £210m of further capital investment. This would enable Council to progress its two transformative strategic leisure developments at Templemore and Strabane; new civic/commercial office development that forms a key component of the wider vision for future Central Riverfront development and university expansion plans; as well as continued investment in community projects across the District such as play parks/ greenways/ community centres/ waste facilities/ pitch development etc.

A Year End summary financial outturn report for 2024/25 (unaudited) is set out in the table below:

**Year-end financial outturn summary 2024/25**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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 | 9,131 | 9,820 | 9,647 | 173 | 158 | Services |
| Health & Community | 14,891 | 13,982 | 13,827 | 155 |
| Business & Culture | 8,541 | 8,735 | 8,234 | 501 |
| Environment & Regeneration | 31,407 | 32,666 | 33,327 | (671) |
| Capital and loan charges | 9,882 | 5,021 | 5,020 | 1 | 791 | Capital/ Other costs |
| Other costs/ income | 397 | 804 | 14 | 790 |
| Exceptional Item – Leisure VAT Appeal |  | (5,006) | (5006) |  |
| City of Derry Airport | 3,445 | 3,060 | 3,059 | 1 |
| Transfers to/ (from) reserves |  | 8,962 | 8,962 | (0) |
| **Funded by:-** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Rates income | (72,671) | (72,671) | (72,909) | 238 | 248 | Rates income |
| Derating grant | (3,414) | (3,414) | (3,424) | 10 |
| Non domestic rates provision | 350 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rates Support Grant | (619) | (619) | (667) | 48 | (952) | Grants/ Reserves |
| Transferring Functions Grant | (441) | (441) | (441) | 0 |
| Reserves | (900) | (900) | 100 | (1,000) |
| **Total** | **(0)** | **0** | **(245)** | **245** | **245** |  |

## Corporate Plan Objectives - Key Achievements 2024/25

Our Corporate Plan 2024/25 identified three strategic objectives:

* Protect our environment and deliver physical regeneration
* Promote healthy communities
* 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 below:

Objective: **Protect our Environment and Deliver Physical Regeneration**

**Green Infrastructure**

**GI Regeneration**

* Completion of Northwest Greenways Projects with Donegal County Council (DCC), Sustrans and Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to the value of 35m euro
* 4 Awards secured for Northwest Greenway/Pennyburn Bridge, namely (1) Construction Employers Federation- Transport Infrastructure project of the Year Award, below £10 M (2) the Institute of Civil Engineers Sustainability Award (3) CIHT Awards for Active travel project of the year and (4) NWGN infrastructure project of the year less than £5m – Bay Road Bridge
* £6.2m UKLUF Acorn Farm Gate lodge complete (£0.5m) and Urban Farm at St Columb’s Park progressing well on site
* Clooney Masterplan planning applications lodged and support Institute FC with their Clooney Stadium
* Secured £143k for the Allotments Car Park at St Columb’s Park from Department for Communities (DfC)
* Completion of three new Rural Covid Recovery projects in Claudy Play, Learmount Footstick and Newtownstewart Walkway (at £1m)
* Stradowen Greenway complete with funding secured from UKLUF
* Ballynagard Community Park progressed to site and progressing well and funding secured from UK Government
* Phase 1 of the Diamond, Castle Park and Derg Greenways complete for the Derg Active GI Projects namely funded by the UKLUF
* £3m secured for the REALM project in the Fountain/Bogside from TEO towards a phase 1 project cost of £6m
* 10 play areas designs completed in-house and extensive engagement with communities undertaken
* Planning approval secured for lighting project at Drumahoe, Bay Road and Foyle Valley pending
* Riverine Project in Lifford and Strabane awarded €16.7 Million from SEUPB Peace Plus with DCC Council inclusive of a. €660,000 engagement programme

**GI Climate Action & Biodiversity**

* UK Funded (£300,000) Net Zero Derry & Strabane Programme ongoing (Due for completion June 2025):
  + Derry & Strabane Sustainability & Climate Commission established (2 Additional cluster groups – Health/Community & Education) Vision & Roadmap complete
  + COUNCIL Greenhouse Gas Emission Baseline and Mitigation Plan developed (Subject to committee approval)
  + COUNCIL Responsible Procurement Strategy Developed (Subject to committee approval)
  + COUNCIL Climate Screening Tool Developed
  + Community Climate Conversations underway (Support secured from Involve UK)
  + Green Investment Plan to be developed
* Creative Ireland funded (€50,000 funding) Blueprint project delivered and showcase events held
* Green Club (Peaceplus) programme funding secured £200,000 and project launched – to be delivered during 2025/6
* Lottery funded Artitude project secured further £1,099,320 of funding for stage II. Ongoing work as project partner with delivery during 2025/26.
* Ongoing work leading City Deal Environment & Climate Working Group Ongoing support for Community Resilience Planning throughout the City & District
* Shared Biodiversity Project – Donegal County Council Shared Island Funding – Funding secured (€11,000) Cross Border Schools Project
* Secured Shared Island Funding:
  + - Derg Valley Leisure Centre
    - Acorn Farm Solar
    - Sigersons GAA

**GI Services & Management**

* Brooke Park – secured Green Flag Heritage Award
* Retention of the Bronze Award from Sustainable food places for the City & District
* 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 £1.7m funding from the Climate Action Fund Lottery Programme, in particular continuing to support the I Can Grow, I can Cook and Growing Challenges programmes
* Completion of Gatelodge Garden with £50,000 secured from Lottery for an educational demonstration garden

**Regeneration**

* £650k of SEUPB PEACE+ funding to design and deliver (a) historic cemeteries environmental improvement project (b) war memorials conservation-led maintenance project and associated cross-community heritage animation programmes
* 241 commercial facades painted across 8 rural settlements as part of the delivery of the £1.25m Covid Recovery Rural Settlements Programme funded by DfC/DAERA/DfC
* Regeneration masterplan commissioned for the former Strabane Grammar School site and multi-stakeholder steering group established
* Design concepts commissioned and completed in respect of a proposed environmental improvement streetscape scheme in Foyle Street
* Public consultation and stakeholder engagement exercises initiated in respect of the delivery phase of the Strabane Town Centre Public Realm Scheme
* Completion and launch of the Newtownstewart Town Centre Regeneration Framework document following community/stakeholder consultation and co-design process
* Completion of 2 built heritage audits and production of an interactive heritage map for Sion Mills and Newtownstewart
* Ongoing delivery of the Architectural Heritage Fund supported Walled City Heritage Development Trust Programme through technical support to lead partner Inner City Trust in the development of a pipeline of heritage led regeneration projects including restoration of 17-19 Magazine Street and proposals for the former Austins Department store
* Establishment and coordination of a dedicated Council-led task force designed to address dereliction in the Fountain estate

**Planning**

**Major/Strategic and Local Planning Permissions Granted**

Residential approvals included:

* Residential development comprising 674 no. dwellings (33 no. detached; 473 no. semi-detached; and 168 no. apartments), including open space and landscaping; new equipped children’s play area; bus route; SuDS Pond; and all associated site and access arrangements at H30, Waterside, Derry.
* Housing development comprising of 22 dwellings with associated access road in Plumbridge
* 26 dwellings with associated parking, landscaping and open space on Castlefin Road, Castlederg
* 31 No. dwellings at 8 Strabane Road Castlederg.
* 21 semi-independent living units (change of house type) at approved retirement village former Thornhill College Site Culmore
* Residential development of 16 Dwelling Units at 8A & 10 Prehen Road.
* 38 dwellings at Keery road Magheramason.
* Erection of four storey building consisting of 22 No. self-contained apartments and 1 No. commercial unit at 10 Bridge Street.
* Residential development of 21 No. dwellings on lands to the South of 212 Learmount Road, Park.
* Proposed residential (social housing) development comprising of 3 no. buildings containing 40no. units at 4 Letterkenny Road.

**Commercial/Economic Approvals included:**

* Approval and listed building consent for new porch extension, addition of 2nd floor glazed link extension, and upgrade of existing Clock Tower central porch entrance steps at The Ebrington Hotel,
* Proposed change of use of vacant retail units to new bar at Waterloo Street
* Extraction of sand and gravel at Baronscourt Road, Newtownstewart
* Sand and Gravel, Quarry Castlewarren Road Donemana
* Erection of one IT service and data centre buildings, substation compounds, generators, switch gear and transformers, access roads, vehicular access, car parking, security perimeter fencing and gate houses, external site lighting, at Maydown, Derry.
* Proposed hardstanding yard to provide an external storage area for Foyle Port at lands at Strathfoyle, Derry.
* Retention of the sale of non-bulky goods and convenience goods by B&M without compliance with condition 7 of A/2003/0325/RM at Crescent Link, Derry
* Section 54 Application to Vary condition No. 2 of planning permission A/2004/0978/F to allow 5 additional waste streams to be accepted at the River ridge facility, Maydown, Derry.
* 1no. assembly line unit with car parking, administrative spaces for KES Strabane Business Park

**Renewable /Energy approvals included:**

3 single turbines approved



**Community / Infrastructure Approvals included:**

* Construction of a municipal cemetery to include: burial space for approximately 4,000 plots; repositories for ashes; memorial garden, conversion of existing dwelling to reception/office admin building; removal of existing outbuildings; memorial service building and associated car parking at Mullenan Road, Derry
* Listed building consent for the change of use of former military buildings 45/46 Ebrington Square, to provide a Maritime Museum and Archive,
* Installation of 41no. 5m high lighting columns along greenway and paths at Drumahoe District Park, Derry
* Installation of 31 no. 6m-high lighting columns along greenway and paths at Castle Park, Castlederg
* Installation of 90 No. 6 M. high lighting columns along greenway and paths at Bay Road
* Replacement community building in Springhill Park
* Provision of new 93 space surface level car park, amenity lighting and a new ramped access & steps to the Community Centre at for Leafair Community Centre and playing fields

**Local Development Plan (LDP)**

* The Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) had been considering the LDP Independent Examination (IE, held in Sept. and Oct. 2023) and on 10th May 2024, they passed the LDP IE Report to DfI Regional Planning. DfI considered the LDP IE Report and at end of November 2024, commenced the intensive 3-week fact-checking exercise with Council Officers. The formal Direction was received from DfI on 17th December 2024; it was a very positive report, finding the LDP Plan Strategy to be ‘sound’, subject to a limited number of Modifications.
* The Council has published the DfI Direction and PAC IE Reports, they were considered by Officers and Members, the final version of the LDP Plan Strategy has been prepared, implementation of its Planning policies has commenced, and training of Officers and Members is being undertaken.
* Four technical assessment documents have been produced – Habitats Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal, Equality EQIA and Rural Needs RNIA. All four were put out to public consultation in March 2025. Forty-three Supplementary Planning Guidance documents (SPG) have been reviewed and updated or new documents drafted, ongoing, for public consultation alongside the Adoption of the LDP Plan Strategy (in May or June 2025).
* The Housing Monitor 2023-24 surveys were done, figures are compiled and report is near completion. A HMO Update report has been done for 2023-2024 and ongoing monthly monitoring tables done during 2024-2025. Urban Capacity study UC3 has been done. Economic Development Land Monitor was partially completed. Methodology documents have been prepared and work initiated for some of the key tasks of the LDP Local Policies Plan. Staff gave significant assistance to Development Management in processing Planning applications.
* Following the NIPSO Ombudsman report on the NI TPO System, a draft Council TPO Tree Strategy has been prepared, ready for Member approval. From April 2024 to end March 2025, 2 new Provisional TPOs were issued (& 3 requests were considered / refused), 9 Tree Works Consents were issued, 101 Tree Queries were managed and 1 Tree Works Refusal was successfully defended at PAC Appeal. Conservation Area meetings have been attended and advice has been issued on DM applications – as required.

**Environment & Building Control**

* Refuse Collection including Bulky Waste Collection services provided across the city and district to domestic and business users to include 3 million bin collections, 155,064 Assisted Bin Collections and 17,020 Bulky Waste jobs completed.

Ongoing promotional activity across all service areas with regard to anti – litter and fly tipping promotions, waste and recycling etc.

* Completed roll out of brown bin scheme across the rural area. Increased recycling rate to 51%
* Commenced the development of lands at Mullennan for the new Municipal Cemetery
* Ensured that Council properties and facilities remained in full compliance with statutory requirements e.g. EICR, Fire, Legionella Management etc. with circa 1500 certificates tested and renewed to include 1600+ statutory compliance certificate renewals - EICR, Emergency Lighting, legionella, Fire alarms, Fire Fighting equipment, LOLER, Gas etc., 115+ ROSPA Inspections completed, 95+ Contractors managed through Control of Contractor Procedures. Bi-annual Internal Property Inspections completed for 160+ Premises, 6000+ maintenance Jobs managed / completed. 1800 monthly Planned Preventative Maintenance inspections completed.
* In house team completed the installation and removal of Festive Lighting at rural villages and settlements.
* Completed maintenance in excess of 250,000M² on roadside grasslands and on over 40 football pitches equating to 465,882.00 M² of groundworks. Maintained Synthetic pitches: 33 segments equating to 82, 389.39 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.
* 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.
* Processed 1467 requests for postal numbering and street naming, 430 number Land and Property Services queries dealt with, 176 residents consulted with as part of 4 bilingual street name requests processed, 151 new or replacement street signs erected, one number bus shelter refurbished and reallocated, 10 refurbished on site, 2 number repaired due to storm damage.
* Investigated 1939 incidents of fly tipping across the City and District, 42 Fixed Penalty Notices issued.
* Winner City Category – Ulster in Bloom, Best Kept Awards, Winner Employer of the Year NI Apprenticeship Scheme.
* Completed 3 number Invest to Save Energy Projects including installation of EV panels at Skeoge, installation of Heat Boss system in Guildhall., tender process complete with regard to regional EV Charge Point Scheme
* 3,136 Building Control Applications processed, 10,455 site inspections completed, 2,179 property Certificates Issued
* Over 1.17 million page views visited across 97,600 visitors to the recycling website, with the recycling centre page being the most visited, followed by bin collections with over 1000 users downloaded the recycling app.
* Circa 71,450 hits across Council’s social media channels to include Facebook, Instagram, X, You Tube and the newly set up TikTok Channels with a further 360,147 hits through shares, retweets etc.
* 16 repair cafes were hosted through Share and Repair Foyle, 124 small household items were repaired and 152 laptops were received through the laptop donation scheme. In total 338 items were worked on as part of the campaign.
* A total of 45 posts across Instagram, Facebook & TikTok were published with a strong radio campaign, which proved highly effective reaching a total of 335,000 listeners
* Approximately 1200 posts were published on Facebook garnering a reach of around 5.2M impressions for recycling/waste related messaging including updates.
* Approximately 300 pieces of content was shared across Instagram including a range of images, videos & reels accumulating in a post reach of 189,700 and story reach of around. 108 stories were shared gathering a reach of 48,154 views.
* Approximately 584 posts were shared on X .

Objective: **Grow our Business and Facilitate Cultural Development**

**NI Entrepreneurship Support Service (Go Succeed)**

* £17M funding allocation secured from UKSPF in a collaborative 11 Council bid to deliver the Go Succeed Programme for a two-year period to March 2025. UKSPF have commissioned a further year of NI delivery to March 26 with a total value of £9.2M.

**Outreach Activity**

* The Business Support team have placed particular emphasis on increasing inclusivity and accessibility within the regions entrepreneurial landscape. Initiatives focused on empowering underrepresented groups such as women, young people, ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities and economically disadvantaged communities, providing tailored support to encourage business start-up.
* 42 Workshops, events and interventions delivered to 1580 participants

**Business Start Up**

* 292\* Business Plans Approved
* 175\* Jobs Promoted

\*(figures are subject to ongoing monitoring and verification and may change)

**Business Growth**

* 21 Workshops Delivered
* 3 Peer Support Networks delivered: Digital Transformation Network (4 sessions), Plumbridge Business Network (4 sessions) and Legenderry Food Network (2 sessions)
* 152 Businesses availing of 2280 1:1 mentoring hours to achieve growth ambitions

**Go Succeed Grant Funding**

* £342K delivered to 99 businesses for business investment to achieve growth ambitions

**Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF)**

* The business team have prioritised digital transformation among local businesses as a key catalyst for economic growth. DTFF promoted the adoption of new technologies to enhance efficiency, reduce costs and boost market competitiveness and scalability by offering grants ranging from £5000 - £20000, with a grant subvention rate of 70%.
* COUNCIL had 11 successful applications in the 24/25 year equating to £160.8K of grant funding. This equates to a total investment of £263.1K within the region. Successful applicants anticipate an additional 60 high value jobs and increase in turnover of £6M within the region because of the intervention.

**DAERA Rural Business Development Grant Scheme (TRIPSI)**

* The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) launched the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme, offering £1.55 million in capital grants to support rural micro businesses across Northern Ireland. This initiative aimed to provide much-needed financial assistance to help small rural businesses enhance sustainability, unlock growth opportunities, and create new employment, ultimately strengthening the rural economy.
* COUNCIL provided 75 Letters of Offer to rural businesses equating to £250.4K to support growth aspirations of rural businesses.

**Customer Centric Service Delivery Model**

* To strengthen the regional business ecosystem the Business Support Team has forged partnerships with businesses and key stakeholders including regional business hubs, academic institutions and industry leaders. These collaborations have created opportunities for local businesses to connect, innovate and expand into new markets.
* 238 Meetings with local entrepreneurs and businesses
* 87 Referrals to other programmes of support including INI, Smart Manufacturing Data Hub, InterTrade Ireland, Innovate NI & Tech Start.

**Strabane BID**

**Strabane Gift Card**

* Gift card sales have risen by nearly 50% representing a significant direct boost to local businesses and Strabane’s economy.
* 8 new businesses recruited to accept the gift card exceeding targets by 160%
* Increased awareness and uptake of the gift card within the community sector, contributing towards Strabane’s circular economy.

**Advertising and Promotion of Local Businesses**

* Professional business photos commissioned for use in promotional campaigns featuring 8 local businesses as the heart of Strabane through advertising and videography. Photos also released to businesses for use in their own campaigns.
* New Strabane Christmas video showcasing 7 local businesses and using local actors and backing vocalist to retain the *Love Local Support Local* ethos of BID.

**Business Support**

* Business Celebration Event held in The Alley Theatre in conjunction with the Business Team as part of Global Entrepreneurship Week. The evening focused on the experiences and journeys of three local businesses and provided attendees with an overview of the planned Public Realm scheme and Town Centre regeneration scheme for Strabane.
* Strabane BID Business of the Year Award featured at North West Business Awards and awarded to Bejeweled at Soul in recognition of their outstanding contribution to business.
* Working in partnership with Council’s Capital and Strategic Projects teams to progress business case for Strabane’s Public Realm scheme.
* Assistance in helping to establish a new remote working facility in the heart of the town centre, Hive Coworking.
* Increased engagement with businesses leading to a more powerful collective voice for Strabane’s business community, evidenced through consultation and action.
* Increased partnership working leading to building relationships, gaining a stronger voice at central government level, knowledge transfer / best practice, projects and action with; NI BIDs, Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, PSNI, local schools and community.
* Working in partnership with Council’s Regeneration team to develop and maintain a vacancy audit in Strabane town centre.

**Support of City Deal Projects**

* Working in partnership with Council to progress the Strabane Town Centre regeneration scheme.
* Engagement of the business community in the pilot Positive Energy District (PED) through SMART Derry Strabane.
* Establishing business involvement, support and signing of Strabane’s Local Green Deal (LGD).

**Employment, Training and Skills Labour Market Partnership (LPM):**

* Progressed the year four 2024/25 Labour Market Partnership Action Plan.
* Delivered 10 LMP Board meetings which included 1 AGM. Hosted capacity building sessions for members on Social Value and City Deal.
* 2025/26 and 2026/27 Action Plans were drafted and submitted. The 2025/26 Action Plan was approved.
* Managed the Apprenticeship Forum through which we developed and delivered an apprenticeship marketing campaign council wide to highlight apprenticeships as a career path for all.
* Actively participated in NI Apprenticeship Week 03-07 February 2025 by hosting an Apprenticeship Fair and three apprenticeship employer events. Maintained Council’s bespoke getapprenticeships.me website.
* Partnered with DfC on the delivery of 2 Major Job Fairs: Derry Cross Border Fair in the City Hotel and Strabane Job Fair held in the Alley Theatre. 400 people attended with 62 employers and 14 support organisations exhibiting.
* Partnered with the Equality Commission NI and Northern Ireland Union for Supported Employment to deliver a conference for employers on addressing the disability gap. 65 people including 20 employers attended.
* Supported 9 events (mini job fairs, information events) across Derry and Strabane with a total attendance of over 700 people.
* Minimum of 110 people assisted through 8 Employment Academies and 155 people through other LMP programmes

**PEACE Plus**

* June 2024 First Council of 17 to receive a fully funded Letter of Offer for Theme 1.1 Local Co-Designed Action Plan. The LOO included 58 projects with geographic impact across our 8 local growth areas (50% of the total bid) and thematically at a district level (50% of the total bid).
* June 2024 First Council of 17 to hold a formal launch event in line with Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) programme requirements. Event was fully booked and held in the Waterfoot Hotel. It included attendance by the Chief Executive of SEUPB, and representation from Government Ministers and the North-South Ministerial Council as well as a widespread attendance from the local community and voluntary sector.
* Securing of a full (20%) advance from SEUPB via presentation of business and financial case to enable the programme to operate until SEUPB have set up Financial Controller call off list.
* E-tendering (including OJEU) of 82 tender exercises to secure contracts for 58 projects. (An average of having to advertise /re-advertise 1.41 times to get each tender exercise over the line).
* Establishment (in-house) of an electronic evaluation and monitoring system with SEUPB approval (pending SEUPB creating their own agreed system which could take 12 months).
* Delivery of an additional 3 Publicly Advertised Tender Training Sessions (Cityside, Waterside and Rural) to build capacity in e-Tendering across the Community and Voluntary Sector.
* Continued servicing of the monthly PEACEPLUS Partnership Board and 3 thematic steering groups.
* Recruitment of a new Finance Officer.
* Recruitment and successful placement of a 6 month trainee clerical role/apprenticeship placement for a young adult who had been unemployed.
* Hosting 1 regional PEACE Managers meeting from all PEACEPLUS participating councils in NI and RoI border counties.
* Delivery of 4 mandatory training sessions for live projects covering procurement, communications and monitoring.
* Pro-active communications including maintenance of website, monthly e-mailouts, social media and press releases.

**SMART/Digital (City Deal)**

* Programme Business Case for Smart Derry Strabane City Deal Programme approved (July 2024)
* Outline Business Case for Digital Innovation Hub drafted (November 2024)
* Strabane Positive Energy District Concept Report drafted (December 2024)
* Launch of the Local Green Deal for Strabane’s Positive Energy District (January 2025)
* DIGIREN Horizon Europe proposal submitted (February 2025)
* EU Intelligent Cities Highly Commended Award re. Local Green Deal (March 2025)

**Digital Services**

* Continued to support multiple committee meetings, council meetings and working groups in Hybrid.
* PRO-Claim Upgrade
* New Core network tendered and installed in Strand Road, This includes new Cyber security protections
* Move to new WAN procured as part of FFNI from old WAN,
* Continue to replace older laptops and pc’s
* Continue Cyber security updates.
* Server uptime 90%
* Network uptime 90%
* Continued to support all users via the Helpdesk, 4579 tickets between 1st April 24 and 1st April 25
* Achieved Cyber Security Assurance from CAA for City of Derry Airport

**Web and systems Development**

* Continued support of council website
* Migrated council website to new updated CMS
* Daily management of CMS with uploads, press releases, documents and planning applications
* Management of our external websites (SSL, updates, Domains)
* New Alley Theatre website tender developed and evaluated and work on going on new site
* New Intranet Developed that is linked to Sharepoint

**City Region Investment & Opportunity**

* Hosting of 20 inward visits raising the profile of the city region to an international audience
* Development of 5 nr. value propositions for potential investors (life sciences, AME, tech)
* Coordination and delivery of the RegTech Forum in December 24 showcasing NW as a hub for RegTech to an audience of financial & professional services, regulators and tech innovators
* Planning and coordination of the Ireland North West Trade & Investment Mission programme to Boston and Philadelphia
* Planning and management of Golden Bridges annual transatlantic conference at Babson College, Boston
* Coordination and delivery of Pathfinder II supporting 6 innovation driven NW companies with their go-to-market strategies for the US
* Securing Phase I of Invest NI’s Cluster Acceleration Programme (CAP) bid for GEMX (Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Network
* Securing PeacePlus funding of 10million euro for NW Depth programme (digital skills and employment pathways)
* Diaspora engagement via quarterly ezines
* Ongoing engagement and strengthening of relationships with existing investors, academic partners, stakeholders and agencies to ensure priorities and activities are aligned to advance economic development and investment opportunities

**Off-Street Car Parking**

* Successful transition to new contract provider for parking enforcement services
* Phase II of car-parks re-surfacing scheme underway (March 2025)
* Introduction of contactless payments in 4 nr off-street car-parks
* Improved provision of accessible parking within the off-street car-parks
* Parking scheme with Strabane BID to incentivise town centre footfall in lead up to Christmas 2024
* Facilitation of festival activities and events in council’s car parks

**Arts & Culture Summary**

Strategic Development & Implementation

* Continued rollout of the Arts & Culture Strategy, supported through:
  + NW Audience Development Programme
  + Collaborative Resilience Programme
* 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.

**Alley Arts & Conference Centre**

* 25,000 tickets sold across a diverse event programme.
* £300,000 economic contribution via arts, events, and hospitality.
* 200,000+ visitors engaged through performances, workshops, and conferences.
* Awarded 4-Star Visitor Experience rating by Tourism NI.

**Arts Development Initiatives**

* HERE for Arts & Culture brand expanded across Donegal and the NW.
* HeART of the Sperrins (Round 3) – £8,900 funding for older adults' arts sessions.
* 20 inclusive arts workshops in rural Strabane (Autumn 2024–Spring 2025).
* Artist Studios Scoping in partnership with Vault and Creative Village Arts

**Creative Sector Forums & Collaboration**

* Festival & Event Organisers Forum sessions on ticketing, green events, and health & safety.
* NW Music Makers Forum launched with 80 attendees; focus on networking and venue collaboration.
* NW Theatre Makers Forum launched with cross-border collaboration plans (March 2025).
* IACP Awards 2024–25 delivered for 15 recipients; review for 2025–26 underway.

**Access & Inclusion Programme Highlights**

* Venue Accessibility. 9 projects funded (£195,188 total) for venue access improvements based on Access Audits.
* Hidden Disability Awareness Training (Jan 2025) delivered by Destined, highlighting invisible disability needs.
* FestivALL 2025 returns with outreach and performance opportunities for disabled participants.
* JAM Card Friendly Campaign: 34 businesses (Derry) and 16 (Strabane) onboarded.
* Access Rider launched: a tool to help disabled individuals communicate access needs; available online in accessible formats.

**Museum & Visitor Services**

* Visitor Services Income up on previous year
* Sustainability practices developed within Visitor Services
* High levels of visitor experience with written compliments received
* Visitor Services completion of mandatory staff training, 100% compliance in external health & safety audit, Visitor Services staff trained in Ask for Angela and Hidden Disability, 10 staff completed OCN level 2 Tour Guide training through NWRC
* Guildhall received Volunteer Friendly Award
* Guildhall staff successfully leading on Heritage Venues Working Group
* Successful operational delivery of programme of events in the Guildhall
* Successful recruitment and development of staff throughout the year including
* 6 new retail lines added to Guildhall offering including 3 charities
* Derry Girls Experience – milestone of 68,000 visitors from 96 countries since opening and additional features added
* Playful Museums Festival - delivery of four sessions for the under 5 years at the Tower Museum using the museum art collection and funded by Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC)
* Workers' Rights Social Justice Week Programme - ‘Hope - the Lego Suffragette’ in partnership with the Houses of Parliament installed at the Tower Museum, lecture by Anne Crilly on the Suffragette movement in the North-West and Trade Union events
* International Drawing Day at the Tower Museum
* Various programme with the National Gallery at the Tower Museum, Guildhall and Museum Services as part of the 200th anniversary of the National Gallery London
* ‘Yes’ Festival - film installation at Tower Museum and installation in the Guildhall’s Main Hall focused on the Shirt Factories and included the travelling exhibition ‘Shirts, Singers & Sewing’.
* Foyle Maritime Festival with Derry on the North Atlantic (DNA) Museum Marquee with focus on a shirt factory heritage
* Declaration of Independence Exhibition in Alley Theatre (July-Aug 24)
* Conflict Textiles exhibition display at the Tower Museum, in partnership with NMNI, Ulster University and the Conflict Textiles  team
* Menii Memories Menii Voices (MMMV) - Decolonization Project Derry Workshop in Tower Museum
* Culture Night (Sept 24) – A ‘Derry Girls Panel Event’ in the Tower Museum
* European Heritage Open Days tours at Tower Museum and Guildhall
* Railways Collections display @ the Alley Theatre
* Archive & Genealogy programme included events with PRONI and Trinity College Dublin focused on the Virtual Treasury, PRONI 100 events plus a range of sessions with local, history, community and professional organisations and third level students.
* Education and Learning programme included the LiveWell programme, Reminiscence and Loan Box sessions delivered and school tours to the Tower Museum & Guildhall.

**Tourism 24/25 Highlights**

* Food Network maintained supporting 50 businesses with experience development, ongoing training and promotion.
* Delivery of 15+ food events/experiences as part of the Love LegenDerry Food month February 2025. PR and digital marketing campaigns, and a LegenDerry Food media showcase, hosting 50+ food media, developed and delivered Funding secured to support the delivery.
* LegenDerry Food Village delivered as part of the City’s 2024 Halloween Festival and Foyle Maritime 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, phase 2 scoped and funding application submitted to support delivery.
* Development and delivery of strategic signage installation, a NW golf initiative, and marketing activity enabled to enhance the Walled City via the Northwest Development Fund projects, Shared Island Project and PeacePlus funding bid.
* Ongoing support for City Deal projects - Walls Experience & DNA City Deal Projects
* 7 venues supported with £83,000 through the Heritage Animation & Visitor Servicing Fund 2024/25.
* Ongoing support of Sperrin Partnership provided including in relation to the consultation phase of the development of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Plan for the region.
* Visitor footfall of 23,734 has been achieved at Sperrin Heritage Site/Giant Sculpture for the period February 14, 2024 to February 5, 2025. The site’s cross directorate working group for the site has progressed a design concept for phase two development and a tender exercise for the completion of a building condition survey has been issued.
* Continued partnership working and support given in relation to the promotion, maintenance, and development of outdoor activity trails and routes including the International Appalachian Trail Ulster Ireland, Sperrins Scenic Driving Routes, Sperrins Sculpture Trail, and Tourism NI’s family friendly walks scoping initiative.

**Festivals & Events**

* Delivered the full complement of events including City of Derry Jazz and Big Band Festival, Derry and Strabane Halloween, Foyle Maritime 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.
* Held the Foyle Maritime Festival with over 134,621 attendees across 4 days and evenings with attendee numbers and occupancy on a par with previous events.
* Total event attendees to date over 431,555 attendees across all tier 1 events.
* Supported the Mayors Supercar event in May with all proceeds in aid of the Mayor’s charity.
* Delivered a new Waterside Half Marathon route to include all 4 bridges with record number of participants.
* Advised and enabled a series of external events including the Yes Festival.
* Managed Headline and Community Festival funds with a total of £116,000 awarded through Community Festivals Funding and £205,000 awarded through Headline Events funding.
* Secured in 2024 £160,000 through Tourism Northern Ireland for funding for, Foyle Maritime Festival and 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 Achievements**

* Designed, developed, delivered, and supported 195 marketing campaigns for Council services, festival & events, funded programmes and cross cutting projects across 3 directorates and strategic support units.
* Achieved a 2% increase in our overall online community size across all social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & LinkedIn) resulting in a total combined audience size of 396,601.
* Successfully attracted 120,000 visitors to Derry Halloween 2024, a 20% increase on 2023. 35% of these visitors where from GB and Overseas.
* Attracted 135,000 visitors to the Foyle Maritime Festival 2024.
* Secured £27,500 in funding for the Chewing Gum Taskforce Campaign & Equipment from Keep Britain Tidy.
* Delivered Switch to Repair electrical reuse campaign in partnership with Repair and Share Foyle with 18 repair cafes held across the District since March 2024 & growth of a local volunteer base of fixers.
* Supported Council's Environment Team in marketing campaign to rollout 6000 new brown bins to rural homes across the District.
* Achieved a 3% increase in combined brown and blue bin recycling rate.
* Drove initiatives and internal taskforce to green Council events with a 69.2% recycling rate achieved at Derry Halloween 2024.
* Promotion of the Alley Theatre events resulting in over 25,000 tickets sold.
* Delivery of highly successful marketing campaigns for NIESS that included two phases of an overarching regional campaign across tv, radio, outdoor, press and digital. This was complimented by localised and targeted campaigns in each of the 11 council areas, featuring local businesses as case studies. Campaign tracking exercises (independent survey of samples of 1,000 people representing the adult population in NI) showed that after less than a year Go Succeed was the most well know organisation for Help Starting a Business, only after Invest NI. This showed an awareness from 50% of the audience surveyed (up from 41% in the first exercise 6 months previous), overtaking the awareness around banks and LEAs as a support mechanism.
* Successful launch of the Go Succeed Members Area on the website – Creation of a resources portal which houses bespoke courses commissioned by the Marketing Team, within each of the service pillars as well as a range of masterclasses that adds significant value to the client journey, keeping them engaged with the service, even after their mentorship has ended.
* Secured sponsorship agreements to the value of £60,000 along with a contra agreement to the value of £70,000.
* Shortlisted at the NILGA Awards 2025 for Communications Campaign of the Year**.**

Objective: **Promote Healthy Communities**

**Community Development**

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

* **Community Centre Venues Fund (CCVF) –**Total amount of funding awarded - £195,000.00. In the rural areas, additional funding was secured to fund three additional centres during 2024-25 financial year only, at a cost of £30,000.
* **Community Support Fund (CSF) –** Consensual Process adopted for this fund in the Urban areas, however, an Open call process to C&V Sector groups within rural DEAs of the COUNCIL area to deliver programmes in line with the Community Support Programme (CSP). 18 C&V sector groups financially supported across the rural DEAs. Total amount of funding awarded for the Rural DEAs £67,115.00
* **Strategic SLA**
* Rural Community Support (RAPID) - £70,000
* Newtownstewart 2000 Centre - £37,500
* Developing Healthy Communities - £15,000
* Foyle Search and Rescue - £15,000
* **Advice Services Programme** – The total allocation of funding for Advice Services for the 2024/25 financial year was £1,031,355.71.
* **Integrated Debt Advice Partnership Fund 2024-26 -** DFC has approved an Integrated Debt Advice Partnership fund which COUNCIL received an allocation of £114,548.04 over 2 years until 31st March 2026 (subject to LoO) which will focus on enabling better integration of funding and services, collaboration for early intervention and prevention to increase the reach of debt advice.
* **Neighbourhood Renewal (Strabane Town) –** The Community Development Section has responsibility for the coordination of 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.
* **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 make a bid to a competitive fund for resources on a three-year basis. The 2024-25 budget for GR is £370,752.38. Funding is received from The Executive Office (TEO) at a level of 75% with the remaining 25% coming from Council.
* 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 to groups, leadership programme and a Special DEA initiative
* Our Safe Community: Under this theme, there is an interfaces and contested spaces initiative,
* Our Cultural Expression: This theme allows officers to work on projects that encourage the celebration of culture. It 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.
* **Refugee Integration Funding -** TEO provided Derry City and Strabane District Council funding of £50,000 to support Refugees within the Council area.
* **Full Dispersal Funding -** The CD section has received funding of £47,502 from TEO released by the Home Office to support projects which will support Asylum Seeker integration within the COUNCIL area for the 2024-2025 financial year.
* **Council Owned Community Managed Community Centres (COCMC) –** the section is responsible for the overall management of 19 Council Owned Community Centres.. A programme of work was scheduled to undertake essential maintenance on the centres at a cost of £100,000.
* **Local Community Planning -** Officers provide 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. 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 hosted the Pride of Place Awards Ceremony on 2nd November 2024 in the Hillgrove Hotel, Monaghan. 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. This year’s nominations saw the submission of two local community groups providing a diverse range of services to our communities. Both organisations, DEEDS and Aspace2 received runners up awards at the prestigious All -Ireland event.
* **Social Supermarket (SSM)** - Derry City and Strabane District Council received a Letter of Offer from the Department for Communities (DfC) for **£243,044.37** under the Social Supermarket Fund for 2024-25.
* **Age Friendly** – Core funding secured of £51,131 for 2024-2025 (annually from PHA). 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.
* **Children & Young People -** The Children & Young Peoples Co-ordinator continues to address actions outlined within the children and young person’s outcome of the Strategic Growth Plan. Progress 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.
* **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. A key priority recently has been the consultation with centre user groups to establish the needs of users and what they would like to see in the centre in future.
* **LGBTQIA+ Working Group -** The Working Group is coordinated within the section and to date three meetings of the group have taken place, a draft TOR has been developed for the group and some actions developed.

**PCSP Achievements**

* External funding support of 653,747.08 secured during 2024/25.
* £30,000 of Small Project Support allocated to 5 local groups to enhance the community safety of the city and district.
* £141,600 allocated via Consensual Grant Aid to 8 Local Growth Partnership Boards in the city and district.
* 118 homes fitted with additional home security equipment under the Safer Homes Initiative (to December 2024).
* Support for 44 Neighbourhood Watch schemes covering 3,500 homes.
* 9 Multi-Agency Support Hub meetings held with 149 referrals dealt with through the Support Hub (April to December 2024).
* 12,338 anti-social behaviour (ASB) hotspot patrols carried out by the Community Safety Wardens (to January 2025).
* Community Safety Wardens received and actioned 1,267 ASB referrals (to January 2025)
* 123 CCTV cameras monitored and independently dealing with 394 missing person reports, 182 attempted suicides and 683 suicide welfare concerns (to January 2025).
* 23 RAPID (Remove All Prescription and Illegal Drugs) Bins installed across the district to remove and destroy unwanted tablets/pills.

**Sports Development Achievements**

* Delivery of £60,000 Support for Sport Grant Aid Programme
* Delivery of £45,000 Playing Pitch Maintenance Fund
* Cater for 640 clients through the GP Referral PARS
* 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. Target a completion rate of 70% for all programmes.  As part of programme establish 2 new walking/running clubs that target sedentary and people with low levels of physical activity.
* 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 a minimum of3 CPD courses.
* 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.
* 82 Elite Athlete Gym Memberships
* 36 Travel Bursaries - £9,828
* RISE Women in Leadership Programme completed in partnership with Sport NI, 20 local women completed a capacity building and personal development programme through a series of workshops over 11 months.

**Leisure Services**

* Leisure and sports services achieved paid user visits of 1,781,518 recorded for 24/25
* Over 7,000 children participated in leisure services centre based swim lessons.
* 90,000 participants in fitness classes
* Over 7,000 paid memberships now maintained each month
* City Baths reopened with a full programme of wetside and dryside activities.
* Teen gym instructor led fitness sessions now in place at Foyle Arena, Templemore SC & Riversdale LC
* Inclusive swim and play sessions across leisure services
* 38% increase year on year for bookings processed through the Council app
* Council’s leisure facilities have hosted a range of cultural and sporting events including;
  + IPC Gilgal Cultural event
  + Choral Festival
  + Hive Cancer Support event
  + Walk of hope – Mental health & Suicide prevention charity awareness event
  + North West Angling Fair
  + Halloween Fun Day
  + Women’s Wellness day
  + Try-a-tri events
  + Swimming galas

**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 well-being, and safeguarding the environment by supporting communities and businesses through education and enforcement’.

**Environmental Health Service Delivery**

* 2942 Environmental Health service requests investigated and actioned in accordance with Council enforcement policies

**Housing Service (Private Rented Sector)**

* Participated on the DfC’s Affordable Rent Project Board and Intermediate Rent Working Group
* Participated on the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Regional Monitoring Group regarding the delivery of the HMO function
* 210 HMO's licensed in the COUNCIL area to date
* 286 Home Safety visits undertaken with a resultant 196 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
* 164 service requests related to the private rented sector investigated
* 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 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 and Affordable Warmth teams
* 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.

**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**

* £110,688.68 external funding secured to support Home Safety (£46,684) and Tobacco Control (£64,684) programmes (to 31 March 2025).
* 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 49 eligible households referred for a Home Safety Fire check and to have smoke detectors installed where necessary.
* The Home Safety Service attended the schools’ education programme - Youths Educated in Safety (YES) Programme 15th-17th October 2024 – P6-P7 pupils and school staff members in attendance.

**Food Safety and Port Health**

* Food Hygiene (FH) and Standards (FS) Work Conducted 545 Food Hygiene inspections and 239 Food Standards Inspections.
* 240 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. 125 new food business operators, before they opened.
* 466 other (non- programmed/alternative enforcement) FH interventions completed.
* 253 other (non-programmed/alternative enforcement) FS interventions completed.
* Investigated 585 Requests for Service, including 12 food incident reports from the Food Standards Agency (FSA).
* Continue to operate the mandatory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) with 95% 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 Foyle Maritime Festival and Halloween markets.
* Investigated 75 notifications of Infectious Diseases including participation in an out of hours rota with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.
* Assisted the Public Health Agency in the investigation of two separate E Coli outbreaks.
* Procured 336 microbiological food samples; 188 chemical food samples, including participation in national surveys.
* Informal Alcohol sampling undertaken in 24 licensed premises prior during December 24.
* Contaminant sampling undertaken in order to comply with EU requirements.
* 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.
* Took the lead on behalf of NI Food Managers Group in the planning and delivery of a Food Safety Conference for EHO’s in September 2024.
* The Food Service was the subject of an internal audit in Q1/Q2. The audit was successful, with only two minor recommendations made.

**Support to Businesses**

* Food Safety Workshop delivered for Food Businesses in the COUNCIL area delivered in October 2024 in association with Safefood.
* 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 October 2024, promotion of the COUNCIL allergen seminar recording in November 2024, and food safety information following the impact of Storm Eowyn in January 2025.
* Updated Council website with links to Food Hygiene guidance, forms and training materials.

**Enforcement**

* 1 Voluntary Closure 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.
* 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 Consultation on Best Practice Guidance - Allergen Information for Non-Prepacked Foods.

**Food Imports/Exports**

* Continue to participate in Foyle port working groups with FSA, DAERA, DEFRA and DEFRA Organics.
* Continue to work alongside DAERA, DEFRA, FSA, Planners and Foyle Port in application to EU for designation of Foyle Port as a BCP for importation of frozen fishery products.
* Undertook 19 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.
* Facilitated businesses applying to become part of the NI retail movement scheme (NIRMS) through providing food premises registration numbers.

**Port Health**

* Reviewing of incoming ships to Foyle Port to verify health conditions of crew and validation of ship sanitation certificates. 149 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.
* Ship Sanitation inspection training provided to staff members.

**Health & Safety and Consumer Protection Services**

* Joint Strategy between Councils and the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI)
* Working with the Northern Ireland Consumer Protection Sub Group to progress implementation of the 2023/24 work plan.
* Participated in regional working groups for Health and Safety and Consumer Protection, including development and delivery of joint plans.
* 480 health and safety and consumer protection visits carried out.
* 391 health and safety and consumer protection requests for service were received.
* 34 workplace accident notifications were received and responded to in accordance with relevant guidance.
* Funding of £55k awarded from the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS).
* All new premises visited were provided with Consumer Protection and/or Health and Safety guidance.
* Participated in regionally agreed & coordinated ongoing project work on Construction Products with OPSS and the other 10 councils.
* 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.
* Follow up with businesses affected regarding OPSS product safety alerts.
* 231 premises written to on the OPSS safety alert regarding water beads & joint liaison with Home Safety & Early Years Social Workers.
* Health and Safety in Brow Bars leaflet produced and 130 businesses provided with guidance.
* 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.
* Provision of safety guidance to 6 businesses supplying E-bikes/E-Scooters.
* Press release issued and an associated radio interview provided regarding safety messaging on E-bikes/E-Scooters.
* H&S&CP website updated with guidance on E-bikes/E-Scooters and new EU GPSR regulations.
* Use of Council social media platforms and website to post guidance and information on Health and Safety and safety of consumer
* products, including promotion of the OPSS fireworks and Christmas products safety messaging.
* Carried out visits to specialist Halloween costume shops and produced and provided guidance on Consumer Protection requirements.
* Participated in a major tattoo convention held in the district with regard to health and safety advice and regulation.
* Infection Control Guidance produced and sent to 60 Barbers.
* Provided guidance to businesses regarding Sunday Trading.
* Proactive working with the Food Safety Service and council’s Business Team, to provide advance CP and H&S guidance to business trading at the Maritime festival including 10 H&S visits and 24 CP visits (with 2 voluntary withdrawals of non-compliant products) at the Foyle Maritime Festival and subsequent follow up work.
* A butane (lighter refills) test purchase exercise was also undertaken and 25% of premises were visited with one sale detected which is being investigated. All premises visited were written to in advance.
* Sunbed guidance leaflet sent to 23 sunbed premises with Test Purchase letter.
* Sunbed Test Purchase Exercise completed with 50% of sunbed premises with 3 sales detected. 3 Fixed Penalty Notices of £250 each were issued to the premises concerned and all 3 were complied with and paid.
* Liaison with the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) regarding the provision of safe consumer products and the Health and Safety Partnership Officer regarding joint work between the 11 councils and HSENI.
* Gas Safe Register gas safety alert sent to 60 mobile premises.
* Supported the safety messaging for Gas Safety Week in conjunction with HSENI, Gas Safe Register and the other 10 councils.

**Environmental Protection Services**

**Air Quality Management**

* Continued monitoring of local air quality throughout the Council district as part of Local Air Quality Management framework which includes 5 continuous air monitoring sites air monitoring stations located at Rosemount, Dales Corner, Newtownstewart, 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%.
* £39, 547 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.
* 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). 43 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 scaled 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.
* 720 planning consultations received between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024 (655 during the same period in previous year).
* Participated in Planning Appeal Commission hearings, and Public Inquiries.

**Licensing Services**

* 237 Licenses/permit/registration applications received.
* 208 licenses/permits/registrations issued.
* 12 Road Closure applications received
* 13 Road Closure applications issued.
* 113 responses to 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
* 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**

* Continued administration of the multi agency Safety Advisory Group, promoting best safety practices for public events
* Provision of advice and guidance in support of 43 planned public events.
* 4 Special Safety Advisory Group meetings held to facilitate specific events: Foyle Maritime Festival, Extreme Funfair and the Kneecap concert.

**Animal Welfare Service**

* Animal welfare service through lead Council Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) ongoing.
* 430 animal welfare cases investigated with 478 visits, 15 Improvement Notices, 0 Formal Caution issued, and 2 cases with seizures in Derry City and Strabane District Council. There were 0 prosecutions in the Derry City and Strabane District Council area during this period.

**Dog Control Service**

* 1,231 Service requests, including 95 dog attacks (people, livestock and domestic pets), 313 stray dog complaints.
* 6469 dog licenses issued (including 24 block licenses) achieving approximately £34,380 income.
* Schools’ education programme - Youths Educated in Safety (YES) Programme 70 presentations to 1036 P6-P7 pupils, 109 staff members from 23 schools. Further YES Programme workshops will take place on 25-27th February 2025. Pupils are provided with bespoke stationary to reinforce the responsible dog ownership message, including a QR code linked to council webpages.
* £1710.00 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, Christmas Message, Sheep Worrying Keeping dogs safe during Summer heat, Halloween, Fireworks,
* XL Bully Ban resulting in registration and licensing of 41 exempt XL Bullies before 31st December. To fulfil all criteria for exemption all exempt XL Bullies must be neutered before 30th June 2025.
* Dog wardens continued to monitor compliance with 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.
* Participation in Green Dog Walker Scheme with 1,000 bespoke dog collar keyrings created with QR cods 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. No unclaimed healthy dogs have been humanely destroyed except for stray dogs that were determined to belong to a banned breed list of “dangerous dogs”. It should be noted that dogs that are ill or have a history of aggression 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 rouge 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 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)**

* 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**

* Maintained ISO 45001 Health & Safety Management System Accreditation
* Reduction in the number of RIDDOR incidents from previous year.
* ISO 45001 awareness training delivered to all key service areas.
* Continuously reviewed & updated all Health & Safety Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work to ensure that staff and members of the public feel safe using Council premises and facilities.
* All Health & Safety procedures and templates updated during 2024/2025.
* Continued to respond effectively to all emergencies within the City & District.
* Council continues to coordinate the development, review and implementation of Local Government Civil Contingencies policies and protocols locally and sub-regionally.
* Continued to ensure that all employees and Elected Members were paid in a timely manner. Ensured that all Payroll statutory returns were completed and submitted within required deadlines.
* Completion of planned audit work based on the approved audit plan and completion of unplanned work as required in order to provide appropriate levels of assurance to the Chief Executive, the Assurance, Audit & Risk Committee and the Northern Ireland Audit Office
* All audit recommendations accepted by management and presented to the Assurance, Audit & Risk Committee for review and assurance purposes
* All Final Audit Reports issued within 2 weeks of receipt of management response
* External Peer Review completed of the Internal Audit Section to determine compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards Ongoing review of Debt Management
* Completion of Annual Governance Statement and all associated governance documents
* Continued management of Council's Self-Insurance Programme Ongoing review of the Corporate Risk Register and Service Risk Registers across Council to provide assurance in relation to risks to meeting objectives
* Led on the procurement process for a number of significant projects across all directorates
* All tenders now processed via E Tenders NI
* Suppliers continued to be paid in accordance with agreed terms and conditions
* Audit Committee training, Emergency Planning training and Health & Safety training delivered to Elected Members

**City of Derry Airport**

* 100% funding secured from the Department for the Economy to fund the PSO route up to March 2025
* Ongoing liaison with the Department of Transport and Department for Economy to ensure the successful delivery of and drawdown of £4.3m funds for the Public Service Obligation route up to March 2025.
* Subsidy control assessment successfully completed for PSO funding and annual operating subvention provided to CODA from Council.
* £3m funding confirmed from Department for Infrastructure towards operational subvention costs 2024/25.
* Completion of Competition and Markets Authority subsidy control assessment for £12m proposed operating subvention support from Department for Economy 2025/26- 2028/29. Positive report received from Competition and Markets Authority.
* Ongoing liaison with Northern Ireland Departments regarding business case approval and sign-off for continued £12m airport operational subvention support from Government to reduce Council funding burden.

**Strategic Finance and Funding**

* Year-end accounts for 2023/24 completed and audited in line with required timeframe with no Priority 1 audit recommendations identified
* Rolling revaluation of all Council properties completed as part of year-end accounts
* Rates estimates for 2025/26 completed and agreed by statutory deadline of 15th February 2024 resulting in 4.92% District rates increase for ratepayers in the District
* Council approval of updated capital funding strategy in respect of Council’s strategic leisure and other community projects as part of rates process including 1.5% new rates investment secured- £100m funding now in place towards strategic leisure projects and further £10m community investment funding identified.
* £5.384m Contingency fund maintained to cover unbudgeted pressures and risks during 2024/25 and into 2025/26
* Continued financing of projects previously earmarked to be funded by borrowing from cashflow/ capital and revenue savings meaning approximately £9m of loans no longer need to be drawn down saving circa £4.4m in loan interest over the life of the relevant assets
* Positive outturn position reported at Quarter 3 meaning Council is on target to achieve £1m required savings agreed as part of revised reserves reduction strategy.
* Approval of new treasury management policy and loans being issued to other Councils to provide security of Council investment- on target to secure £1m interest on Council investments for 2024/25.
* City Deal/ Inclusive Future Fund Financial Deal signed September 2024.
* Regular updates provided to Council on key growth indicators and statistics
* Collection of economic data through use of new ‘smart’ counters across District to inform business support plans including monitoring of Ebrington site. Additional baselining completed at 6 new regeneration sites.
* Collation of economic information and DfC and DE data and links to statistical toolkit on COUNCIL site.
* Background research and development of compendium of information in relation to Council Unity Motion for consideration by Council and other stakeholders. Completion of consultation exercise on Unity including independent analysis by Academics
* Assistance to COUNCIL planners with submission/response to LDP – appearance in front of Planning Commissioner. Acknowledgement by Planning Commissioner that our submission formed key part of evidence base.
* Monthly & supplementary Community Funding Bulletins issued to members and a broad range of community and voluntary organisations and partners across the district with vital up-to-date funding horizon scanning.
* Ongoing Open4Community funding portal training sessions and support delivered for staff and community and voluntary groups and partners.
* Council’s continued investment in the Open4Community funding portal has leveraged at least £4.5m for community groups throughout the district to date.
* Co-ordinated the successful submission of Council’s bid for £780,464 UK SPF Communities and Place funding.
* Ongoing engagement with the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government to progress Council’s £20m Long-Term Plan for Towns Funding.

**City Deal & Legacy**

* Financial Deal signed September 2024 with a £290m financial package
* Governance Arrangements reviewed and agreed for the delivery phase of the City Deal/IFF Programme
* Programme Managers and Project Officers agreed for all the City Deal/IFF projects
* Benefits Realisation Group established to develop a collective approach and framework to recording and managing benefits for individual projects and the overall City Deal/IFF programme
* Codesign of an approach to develop a local anti-poverty action plan
* Extensive stakeholder engagement on local poverty issues and potential interventions for pathways out of poverty
* Publication of a draft anti-poverty action plan for consultation
* Review of the 23/24 DfC £441k Hardship Fund
* Continued engagement with the City Deal Team to embed inclusiveness and addressing poverty within the City Deal/IFF outline business cases
* Cross departmental engagement on the development of a Sustainable Procurement approach and circular initiatives which also assist with alleviating poverty
* Support to the Rural Issues Group and escalation of strategic issues on rural challenges and opportunities
* Management of external support to assist the three rural Local Growth Partnerships to design and submit applications for rural capacity support
* Management of the Rural Technical Assistance Programme, supporting 22 small capital projects across the three rural DEAs on their project feasibilities
* Supporting cross departmental working on rural issues.

**Corporate Communications**

The section secured almost 13,000 media placements across a wide range of media platforms including print, online, broadcast media to the value of £61.6m in free PR coverage that showcases all Council services, initiatives, and events.

During this 12 month period the team dealt with 1,238 press queries from various media outlets. The team were responsible for developing 633 press releases and editorial features and continued to work closely with strategic partners in terms of sharing messaging.

The team are responsible for creating creative video and social media content on the Council corporate platforms and works closely with the mayor’s office to create bespoke content for the Mayoral social media platforms.

During this nine-month period the team created over 13,000 social media posts and saw wider engagement across all our social media platforms. The team continued to work closely with its media contacts to build on those relationships to secure as many positive placements and proactive content across the Council area and wider NI region as possible.

The team produced a Staff newsletter that is circulated to all staff across the Council.

**Democratic Services**

* The reintroduction of hybrid Council and Committee Meetings
* Raised £16,191.90 (Month 9) for the Mayors Charity
* Facilitated no. 5250 Citizens engagement with the Mayor (month 9)
* No. 478 Mayor’s Receptions arranged to recognise individuals/groups (month 9)
* £10,000 external funding obtained for the Mayors Youth Initiative
* No 13 training courses scheduled for Elected Members (month 9)

**Policy, Performance, Equality Languages and Improvement Team**

* Achieved a 95% 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;
* Council delivered a week-long programme of events to mark Ulster-Scots Language Week 2024 and Irish Language Week 2025 respectively combining in-person events along with a digital offer which included short film, and multimedia content which was shared on social media platforms. Council continued to promote the languages of Irish and Ulster-Scots across social media platforms including Facebook and X (formerly Twitter)
* A customer satisfaction survey conducted in January 2025 found that 95% of Irish language services users were satisfied or very satisfied with Council’s offer and a review of Council’s in-person and digital engagement methods which formed part of the survey was presented at a meeting of the Irish Language Community Network forum. Partnered with the office of the NI Children’s Commissioner and CCEA to develop Irish and Ulster-Scots versions of NICCY’s Child Rights Awareness animation
* Social media engagement with Irish/Ulster-Scots audiences continues to grow; our Irish Language Facebook community Fóram Phobal na Gaeilge now has 2,793 Followers. Our Ulster-Scots X account has 431 followers.
* Delivered a series of rural-based placenames awareness events as part of Council’s annual Age-Friendly programme (Oct 2024)
* Audit of Inequalities, Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan developed
* Annual Equality Progress Report submitted to Equality Commission
* Annual Rural Needs Report submitted to the Department of Environment and Rural Affairs
* The Designated Safeguarding Officer team actioned 100% of support requests from staff within the reporting period. Officers attended 2 x meetings of the Local Government Safeguarding Network Forum and worked with SBNI and other partners on the Safer Spaces Forum to develop a series of multi-agency public engagement events to raise awareness of CSE and EVAWAG. Council marked Adult Safeguarding Week in November 2024 with a social media campaign designed to raise public awareness of adult safeguarding.
* Performance Improvement Plan issued by the statutory deadline
* Annual Performance Report issued by statutory deadline
* Unqualified audit in respect of Performance Improvement Duties.

**Information Management and Services Support**

* Implemented the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman complaints handling process (CHP)
* Monitored and reported on the CHP to identify improvement opportunities in our services areas
* Delivered refresher complaint handling training to 41 staff across council as part of the implementation of the new complaints handling process
* Delivered refresher freedom of information training to new and frontline staff
* Delivered refresher data protection to new and frontline staff
* Delivered telephony etiquette training to reception staff
* Continued to engage with other Councils on best practice approaches to customer care (complaints handling, data protection and freedom of information) to enhance performance
* Training evaluation completed following Member training and improvement areas reported annually to Council
* Ongoing media coverage and social media on Mayoral activities
* Details of all Council Members including contact details provided on the Council website.

**Facilities Management**

* Pro active monitoring of energy costs in both offices.
* Successful in all H&S and compliance following an internal ISO 45001 internal audit of Derry Rd Offices.
* Planning, procuring & fitting out 2 new offices within Strand Rd for New City Deal Team.
* Delivery of upgraded Conference Room Facilities at Strand Rd.

**Strategic Partnerships**

* Developed and submitted two concept notes for a further iteration of the North West Development Fund to the North South Ministerial Council secretariat.
* Secured an additional €500,000 from the Irish Government to cover NW Regional Development activities to September 2026.
* Hosted four North West Regional Development Group Meetings – June/Sept/Dec/March
* Full & final commitment of North West Development Fund spend of €6m
* Submission to Review of Ireland 2040/National Planning Framework to reposition the North West City Region
* Developed written evidence to the Northern Ireland Economy Committee on regional balance
* Met with the DFI Minister in April 2024 to lobby for regional infrastructural investment in roads, rail and air connectivity.
* Developed a presentation on the NW Activities to the International Centre for Local and Regional Development Conference in Belfast
* Convened, hosted and facilitated 3 meetings of the Strategic Growth Partnership and 3 meetings of the Local Growth Partnerships Strategic Engagement Forum.
* Developed and secured agreement on a forward work plan for the review and statement of progress cycles for the Strategic Growth Plan to 2045.

**Business Support**

* Developed and edited the City Deal Financial Deal Document and led on event planning for the successful Financial Deal event in September 2024
* Prepared a strategic narrative for the Magee Taskforce Action Plan
* Prepared a corporate consultation response for the Draft Programme for Government
* Developed governance arrangements and co-chair arrangements for the Long Term Plan for Towns Board
* Arranged the delivery of a wide range of deputations to Governance and Strategic Planning Committee covering topics and issues in relation to key council/committee motions
* Serviced 21 Senior Leadership Team Meetings and monitored implementation of circa 210 actions.
* Provided a comprehensive secretariat support service for the Chief Executive’s Office.

**Legal Services**

* Delivery of training to members on governance, planning and standing orders
* Represented Council in a range of judicial review proceedings including in relation to Mineral Prospecting Licences, Planning issues and regulatory matters
* Represented Northern Ireland Councils in relation to the public inquiry into the Covid response.
* Represented Council on the Law Society of Northern Ireland Climate Justice Group
* Review of planning protocol and standing orders to reflect changes/clarifications arising from judicial decisions and new legislation e.g. in relation to remote meetings.
* Continued second phase digitisation of council’s property portfolio

**Human Resources**

* Transfer of former DOE employees to Council terms and conditions achieved.
* A range of health and wellbeing initiatives progressed including, women and men’s health weeks, procurement of new Employee Assistance Programme and Healthcare Cash Plan
* New e-learning system developed and promoted to all employees.
* Apprentice opportunities progressed and nominated for Public Sector Employer in Partnership with a Training Provider award.
* Hybrid Working Arrangements reviewed and policy revised.
* Staff Recognition event held in December 2024
* A range of compliance and capacity building programmes developed and delivered for all levels of employees
* Continued good working relationships with Trade Unions

**Capital Development**

**Capital Projects Completed or Nearing Completion on Site (approx. £23M value of contracts)**

* Completion new £4.6m LUF/COUNCIL funded Daisyfield Community Hub and Pitches, Derry
* Completion of the following LUF/COUNCIL funded Derg Active Programme projects: new play park in Castle Park, public realm renewal in Castlederg town centre and new greenways at Dergview, with combined value of £3m
* Completion of new £3.5m SEUPB funded North-West Greenways (NI) - Route 2 Pennyburn to border at Muff, which also represents the completion of the overall €35m North West Greenways (NI) programme
* Completion of new £2.3m Pennyburn pedestrian cycle bridge and linking greenways
* Completion of new £3m DCFC/COUNCIL collaborative project for new North Stand at Brandywell, Derry
* Completion of new £2.8m Urban Villages funded extension to Gasyard community centre, Derry
* Completion of new £1.0m public realm and Factory Girls artwork scheme, Harbour Square, Derry
* Completion of new £1.0m DfI/COUNCIL funded Strabane North Greenway, Ballymagorry
* Completion of three new Rural Covid Recovery projects in Claudy, Learmount and Newtownstewart (at £1m cost)
* Completion of new Passive House accredited £440k LUF/COUNCIL funded Gate Lodge project at St Columb’s Park, Derry
* Completion of new £185k replacement ‘Foot Stick’ pedestrian footbridge and pathways Learmount, Park, Co, Derry

**Capital Projects Commenced or Continuing on Site (approx. £10M value of contracts)**

* Construction commenced on COUNCIL/SNI funded new £3.3m Multisport Hub extension to Melvin Sports Complex, Strabane
* Construction well advanced on new £5.45m LUF/COUNCIL funded Acorn Farm project at St Columb’s Park, Derry
* Construction has commenced on new £1.3m community allotments and play park at Ballynagard, Derry

**Capital Projects Attaining Key Delivery Milestones (approx. £280m value of projects progressed)**

* Commenced procurement of contractor for COUNCIL/DfC funded £7.3m public realm scheme in Strabane town centre
* Contractor appointed to commence the new £4m strategic cemetery at Mullenan Road, Derry
* Contractor appointed for LUF/COUNCIL funded £3.5m Derg Active Mitchell Park floodlit combined full size soccer and GAA training 3G synthetic pitch, Castlederg
* Contractor appointed for recarpeting and netting over of existing MUGA at Patrician Villas, Strabane.
* Completed tenders for procurement of main building contractor and specialist fit-out contractor for £14.8m City Deal funded Museum at Ebrington
* Commenced procurement of new design team for £90m Templemore Leisure Centre
* Commenced procurement of new design team for £40m Strabane Leisure Centre
* Commenced procurement of design team for phased delivery of £10m Urban Villages and others funded ‘Realm’ project in the Derry Bogside/Fountain Urban Village
* Continued RIBA Stage 4 design for new £2.7m Glenview Community Centre
* Planning approval secured for new £625k Springhill Community Pavilion, Strabane
* Financial Deal attained for the £78m Derry Strabane City Deal, Strabane Regeneration Programme and commenced design brief for the consultant team for the Public Realm and Enabling Works project.
* Commenced closing out of timebound ‘Matters in the Interest of Safety’ (MIOS) recommendations in the Section 10 inspection reports for the two Creggan Reservoirs, which will enable council to achieve departmental Responsible Reservoir Manager status for reservoirs upon new lease being signed between COUNCIL and Creggan Country Park.
* Collaborating with Derry City Football Club (DCFC) on the installation of a pitch sprinkler system at the Brandywell Stadium
* Collaborating with DCFC on submitting a £10m funding application for the extension of the Mark Farren Stand and various other ground enhancement works, at the Brandywell stadium.
* Collaborating with DCFC on the creation of a Football Academy pavilion building and pitches adjoining Templemore Sports Complex, Derry
* Secured SEUPB Peace Plus funding for €16.7m Riverine project in collaboration with Donegal County Council.

#### Overview / Assessment

**Corporate Plan Objectives – 2024/25**

**In overall terms, there is evidence of Council investment, activity and positive progress in 2024/25 in**

**working towards its Mission of “Delivering improved social, economic and environmental outcomes for everyone”.**

## Inclusive Growth Plan

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’ every two years to provide transparency and report on performance in its implementation. Following previous Statements of Progress published in 2019 and 2021, a third statement was published in March 2024. This Statement of Progress shows that the economy in Derry and Strabane is growing - despite the significant and unprecedented challenges presented in recent years and that the majority (86%) of the ‘Priority Actions’ detailed within the Plan are on track to be delivered.

Further information on the Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan and the role and function of the Strategic Growth Partnership is available at [www.growderrystrabane.com.](http://www.growderrystrabane.com/)

## 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.

In fulfilling these obligations, the Council has taken rural needs into consideration during 2024/25 in respect of the:

|  |
| --- |
| Review of Fees for Civil Marriage and Civil Partnership Solemnisation Ceremonies. |
| Development of the Citizen Recognition Policy. |
| Development of the Newtownstewart Regeneration Framework. |
| Review of the Entertainment Licensing Policy. |
| Proposed introduction of the Time Management Software in Leisure facilities. |
| Development of the Good Relations Action Plan 2025-26. |
| Development of the Corporate Plan and Improvement Plan 2024/5. |
| Review of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy. |
| Development of the Safeguarding Policy (Children and Young People). |
| Development of the Treasury Management Policy and Investment Strategy 2025-26. |
| Implementation of the Annual Directorate Delivery Plans. |
| Review of the Temporary Street Trading Policy. |
| Development of the Dual Language Street Signs Policy. |
| Review of arrangements for Council/Committee Meetings. |
| Review of the Hybrid Working Pilot Policy and Guidance. |

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.

## Performance Improvement Areas / Criteria

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 requires that councils make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the carrying out of its activities and highlights the following improvement areas /criteria:

* Strategic effectiveness
* Service quality
* Service availability
* Fairness
* Sustainability,
* Efficiency, and
* Innovation.

Work is currently being progressed, in liaison with other Councils and the Association for Public Sector Excellence to identify relevant indicators for performance measurement, benchmarking and process improvement purposes. Work is also being progressed in terms of linking corporate and service indicators to the outcomes set out in the community plan.

Performance indicators are also 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 initial evidence of quantifiable improvements being made across a number of areas.

Examples of the indicators, by improvement criteria, that we collect and performance trend details are provided in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Improvement Area** | **Performance Indicator** | **2020-21**  **Performance** | **2021-22**  **Performance** | **2022-23**  **Performance** | **2023-24**  **Performance** | **2024-25**  **Performance** | **Trend** |
| **Strategic**  **effectiveness** | Number of leisure users | 28,379 | 542,733 | 1,350,144 | 1,522,132 | 1,781,518 |  |
| **Service**  **availability** | Total number of  applications processed by Building Control | 3,439 | 4,195 | 4,196 | 3897 | 3136 |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Improvement Area** | **Performance Indicator** | **2020-21**  **Performance** | **2021-22**  **Performance** | **2022-23**  **Performance** | **2023-24**  **Performance** | **2024-25**  **Performance** | **Trend** |
|  | % dog attacks investigated within 1 day  % FOI responded to within 20 days | 100%  92.9% | 100%  92.8% | 100%  91.8% | 100%  87.2% | 100%  85.1% |  |
|  | Business Capital Grant Scheme – funding allocated | £197,716 | £118,316 | £144,108 | £ 56.7\* | £731k |  |
| **Efficiency** | % of staff receiving pay slips via email  % server uptime | 84%  97% | 87.3%  98% | 90.3%  90% | 91.5%  95% | 91.5%  95% |  |
| **Innovation** | Number of international markets activated | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |  |

* £ 56.7K \* Go Succeed funding only, no DAERA funding in this year

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Improvement Area** | **Performance Indicator** | **2020-21**  **Performance** | **2021-22**  **Performance** | **2022-23**  **Performance** | **2023-24**  **Performance** | **2024-25**  **Performance** | **Trend** |
|  | Trade mission – local  companies recruited | 0 due to Covid  restrictions | 0 due to Covid  restrictions | 6 | 6 | 7 |  |
|  | Digital and social media innovation website views |  | 1,514,227 | 2,96,3903 | 1,984,919 | 3,199,238 |  |

\*Subject to Verification Key to Trend

Performance improving/demand increasing Performance declining/demand decreasing



 Performance/demand trend unclear or no change

Further information on performance indicators can be found in the Directorate Delivery Plans and in Appendix 2.

# Statutory Indicators:

## 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.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Ref** | **Statutory Indicator** | **Standard to be met (annually), where applicable** |
| **ED1** | The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity | 140 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | (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.) |  |
| **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 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **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 |

## 2024/25 Performance – Statutory Indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Performance Indicator & Target  **W1 The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting) (KPI a2). Target: 50% by end 2020** | | | | | | |
| **What this indicator**  **shows** | The % of household waste that has been sent for recycling, composting or reuse | | | | | | |
| **Why this is**  **important** | Councils were set a recycling target of 50% household waste by 2020 | | | | | | |
| **Our Performance and how we Compare** | **Comparator** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** | **2024/25** | **Are we Improving? Statutory Target met?** |
|  | Derry City & Strabane District Council | 46.1% | 45.1% | 46% | 48.2% | 51%\* | Yes |
|  | NI Average | 50.9% | 50.1% | 50.7% | 51.1% | Data not yet available | **Statutory Target achieved?** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **What we have done to improve** |  | 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.  Council has also 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 have also been actively engaging with schools to actively communicate and 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. 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 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

#### Latest available statistics by council:

**Source:** https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/news/northern-ireland-local-authority-collected-municipal-waste-management-statistics-released-310725

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | PI & Target  **W2 The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste (BMW) that is landfilled (KPI g)**  **Target: less than 17,920 tonnes in 2019/20. No target for 2024/25** | | | | | | | |
| **What this indicator**  **shows** | The volume of Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) landfilled | | | | | | | |
| **Why this is important** | Councils are under direction to reduce the volumes of BMW going to landfill in consideration of Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme and EU Landfill Directive targets | | | | | | | |
| **Our Performance and how we Compare** | **Comparator** | **2020/21** | | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** | **2024/25** | **Are we improving?**  **Statutory Target met?** |
| Derry City & Strabane District Council | 4,802 | | 8,299 | 5,310 | 4076 | 4070\* | Yes – based on volume per head of population |
|  |  |  | |  |  |  |  | **Statutory**  **Target achieved? (n/a no target for 2024/25)** |
|  |  | |  | | | | | |
| **What we have done to improve** |  | All properties now have been access to bio waste collection schemes across the district to increase the volumes of bio wastes 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. A number of targeted campaigns are planned for poor performing areas over the next twelve months. Recycling initiatives such as paint reuse schemes on the recycling centres and also repairing electrical items. | | | | | | |
| **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 continue to actively take part in recycling and reuse initiatives in order to divert from landfill. 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 by DAERA

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | PI & Target  **W3 The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings (LACMW) (KPI j)** | | | | | | |
| **What this**  **indicator shows** | This indicator shows the total amount of local authority collected municipal waste which has been collected by the Council and includes both household and commercial wastes. | | | | | | |
| **Why this is important** | 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. | | | | | | |
| **Our** | **Comparator** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** | **2024/25** | **Are we improving?** |
| **Performance** |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Statutory target met?** |
| **and how we** | Derry City & | 83,989 | 83,540 | 79,114 | 81,027 | 83,236\* | Yes – based on waste |
| **Compare** | Strabane |  |  |  |  |  | arisings per head of |
|  | District |  |  |  |  |  | population |
|  | Council |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | NI Average | 93,742 | 94,058 | 88,360 | 90,971 | 91,847\* | **Statutory Target achieved?**  **(N/A no target for 2024/25)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **What we have done to improve** | Council have been actively undertaking multiple marketing and social media campaigns highlighting benefits of recycling in terms of climate action, cots 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, Council also supported upcycling workshops held across the city and district.  Council have been reinforcing the 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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | PI & Target  **PI The average processing time of major planning applications. Target: less than 30 weeks**. | | | | | | | |
| **What this indicator shows** | This indicator shows how quickly major planning applications are processed. | | | | | | | | |
| **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. | | | | | | | | |
| **Our Performance and how we compare** | **Comparator** | | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** | **2024/25** | **Are we Improving? Statutory Target met?** |
| Derry City & Strabane District Council | | 96.0  (Legacy cases 337.3)  (Council received cases 63.6) | 65.2  (Legacy cases not available)  (Council received cases 65.2) | 51.6  (Legacy cases 372.4)  (Council received cases 51.6) | 78.0  (Legacy cases 565.9)  (Council received cases 63.0) | 68.6 weeks  (No legacy cases issued)  (Council received  cases 72.2 weeks Q1-3) | 55 weeks | Improvement on last year’s ‘major’ processing time, however, statutory target still not met. |
| NI Average | | 52.8  weeks | 61.4  weeks | 49.8  weeks | 57.8  weeks | 46.5  Weeks | **39.6 weeks** | **Statutory Target achieved? No** |

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| **Why we have not achieved our statutory target** | Council’s processing time for Major applications improved from 68.6 weeks in 23/24 to 55 weeks in 24/25, and overall improvement of 13.6 weeks. Council received 14 Major planning applications on 24/25. Council issued 11 Major planning applications and 2 were withdrawn. Council met the 30 week target in Q1 through the issuing of 3 applications and the withdrawal of 1 within 16.4 weeks  For the remainder of the year the additional processing time has been caused by negotiating applications to approval and deferrals. For 24/25 Council had a 100 % approval rate for all applications issued. Although the 30 week target has not been met, the improvement has enabled and facilitated the  conclusion of 11 Major applications.  The NI average was 39.6 weeks, with 5 out of the 11 Councils meeting the 30 week target.  A major contributing factor to processing times was the loss of a senior member of staff in June 2024.  Despite the constraints, Council has made significant improvements through speeding up of decision making of 13.6 weeks. |
| **What we have done to improve** | Major applications continue to be carefully managed and progressed as  quickly as possible and is focusing on major applications 12 months plus. Council has also recruited an additional member of staff. |
| **Future actions we will be taking to improve** | Maintain staff resources and focus on applications for major development. Improve PAD engagement with potential applicants for major development. Target to get closer to the NI Average time, and then to the Statutory Target. |

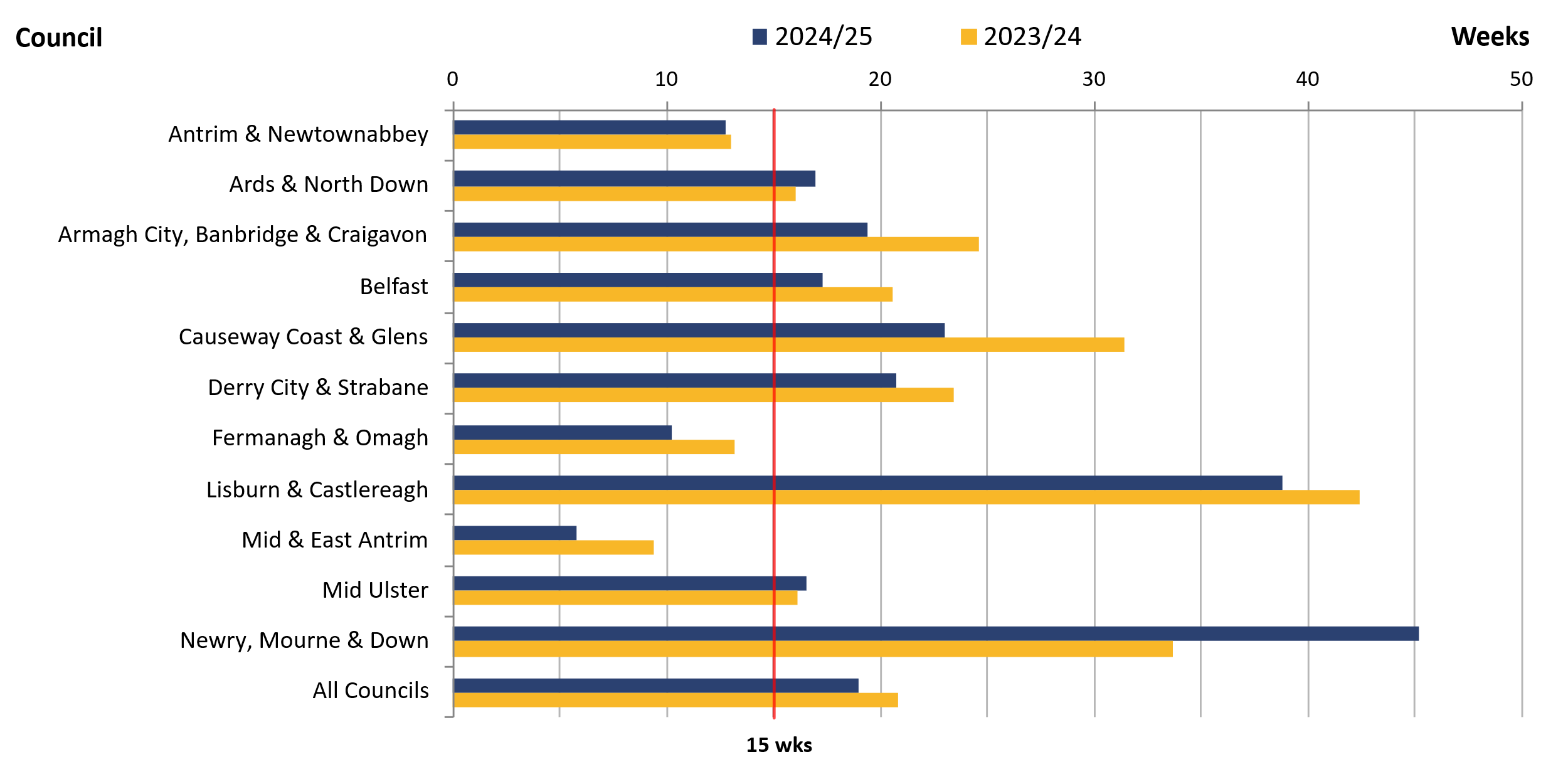
**Major Development average processing times by council, 2023/24 to 2024/25**

**Source:** [**https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-april-2024-march-2025**](https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-april-2024-march-2025)

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|  | | | PI & Target  **P2 The average processing time of local planning applications. Target: less than 15 weeks** | | | | | | | |
| **What this**  **indicator shows** |  | | | | This indicator shows how quickly local planning applications are processed. | | | | | |
| **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. | | | | | |
|  | **Comparator** | **2019/20** | | **2020/21** | | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** | **2024/25** | **Are we Improving? Statutory Target met?** |
| **Our Performance and how**  **we Compare** | Derry City & Strabane District Council | 14.0  weeks | | 14.2  weeks | | 15.6  weeks | 21.0  weeks | 23.4  Weeks | 20.7 | No |
|  |  | (Legacy  cases 255.6) | | (Legacy  cases 267.4) | | (Legacy  cases not available) | (Legacy  cases 350.0) | (Legacy cases  not applicable) | As before |  |
|  |  | (Council received cases 14.0) | | (Council received cases 14.2) | | (Council received cases 15.6) | (Council received cases 21.0) | (Council received cases 23.4) |  |  |
|  | NI Average | 14.0  weeks | | 14  weeks | | 17.2  weeks | 19.0  weeks | 20.4  Weeks | 19.0 | **Statutory Target achieved?**  No |
| **Why we have not achieved our** | Significant staff shortages / absences over the course of the year, together with the increasing complexity of Planning applications, their consultations, reports required, objections and challenges. | | | | | | | | | |

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| **statutory**  **target** | Only 3 Councils are achieving the Northern Ireland target. |
| **What we have done to improve** | Staff gaps were partially filled throughout the year and a focused performance project was put in place in the latter part of the year, which did improve the output performance in the final quarters. Staff were also returning. |
| **Future actions we will be taking to**  **improve** | Re-deployments, recruitment actions and HR input to address staff shortages and absences. A continuation of the focused performance project with positive caseload & output-management to targets. Staffing Review to take place and ongoing process-review to streamline the applications processing. Ongoing focus on issuing and targets. Officers to review each month and quarter. |

Local Development average processing times by council, 2023/24 to 2024/25



Source: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-april-2024-march-2025>

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | PI & Target  **P3 The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks. Target: 70%** | | | | | | | | |
| **What this indicator shows** | | This indicator shows how quickly Enforcement cases are concluded. | | | | | | | |
| **Why this is important** | | To ensure the Council’s Planning Department takes appropriate and proportionate action in dealing with alleged breaches of planning control. | | | | | | | |
| **Our Performance and how**  **we Compare** | | **Comparator** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** | **2024/25** | **Are we Improving? Statutory Target**  **met?** |
| Derry City & Strabane  District Council | 78.1% | 73.3% | 77.9% | \*\* | 75% | 83.3% | Maintain level of performance |
| NI Average | 81.4% | 69.9% | 70.4% | \*\* | \*\* | 70.7% | **Statutory Target met?** Yes |
| **Why we have not achieved our statutory**  **target** | | N/a, the statutory target has been met and exceeded. | | | | | | | |

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| **What we have done to improve** | Ongoing focus on the targets, and efficient case management despite staff resources being an ongoing issue. |
| **Future actions we will be taking to improve** | Ongoing focus on the targets, and efficient case management, attempt to maintain reasonable level of staff cover and continuity over the year. |

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| PI & Target  **ED1 The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity. Target 140 jobs** | | | | | | | |
| **What this**  **indicator shows** | Number of Business Plans delivered and Jobs Promoted | | | | | | |
| **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. | | | | | | |
|  | **Comparator** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** | **2023/24** | **2024/25** | **Are we Improving? Statutory Target met?** |
| **Our Performance and how**  **we Compare** | Derry City & Strabane District council | 112 | 143 | 150 | 71 (note: Target for 6 months only 23/24) Target of 70 – overachievement by +1) | 175\*  (Overachievement by +35) | \*unverified data please see commentary below. |
|  | NI Average | 129 | 169 | 162 | 81 | 145\* | **Statutory Target Achieved**  Yes |

# Overall Assessment in relation to Performance Duty

#### The Council is committed to and has worked to discharge its general duty to secure continuous improvement in 2024/25. There is evidence of good practice and improvement in a number of areas.

# Publishing our Performance

Our Annual Performance Report 2024/25 will be published on the Council’s website at [www.derrystrabane.com](http://www.derrystrabane.com/) as soon as is practical and by 30th September 2025 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.](mailto: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.](mailto: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](mailto: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.

#### 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).*

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| --- | --- |
| **Name of Public Authority:** | **Derry City and Strabane District Council** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reporting Period:** | **April** | **20** | 24 | **to** | **March** | **20** | 25 |

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) 20161 | The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to2 | 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 service3 |
| Review of Fees for Civil Marriage and Civil Partnership Solemnisation Ceremonies. | Not applicable - Council policy | This policy is not intended to impact people differently in rural areas. The fees policy will apply to all applicants regardless of where they live or where the ceremony takes place. |
| Development of the Citizen Recognition Policy. | Not applicable -Council policy | This policy is based on merit, and is not related to whether or not the perspective nominee for an award lives in a rural or urban area. |
| Development of the Newtownstewart Regeneration Framework. | Cross-cutting inc. rural businesses, tourism, community safety and development. | This framework applies to the rural town of Newtownstewart which has a population of circa 1500 people. Newtownstewart is as an important service centre catering for its resident population and a wide rural area. As a rural town, the primary beneficiaries will be the local rural residents, business owners and visitors to the town. In drafting the Newtownstewart framework document, research was undertaken to develop locational and contextual understanding of the rural town which included a review of all relevant policy (local development plans, local growth plans relevant local action plans, and a review of census information). Council also undertook an extensive community engagement hosting two public engagement events which were attended by residents, local business owners and other key stakeholders. Council officers met regularly with representatives from the local businesses and heritage group and 2000 Centre and also receive feedback from local elected representatives. |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 20161 | The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to2 | 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 service3 |
| Review of the Entertainment Licensing Policy. | Not applicable – Council policy (relevant to rural and urban businesses) | The statutory framework imposes requirements on both applicants and the councils in relation to what is required. There is no differential treatment in regard to rural and urban areas. |
| Proposed introduction of the Time Management Software in Leisure facilities. | Not applicable – internal staff policy | The proposed arrangements are for all staff working in leisure facilities regardless of whether they live/work in rural or urban areas. |
| Development of the Good Relations Action Plan 2025-26. | Education and training in rural areas, poverty in rural areas, rural community safety, rural development | The programmes in the Good Relations Action Plan are open to all eligible groups and organisations that meet the eligibility criteria including those in rural areas. The design of the grant aid programmes, wherein each district electoral area will receive a proportionate allocation of funding should mean that people in rural areas will benefit equitably. Other programmes will also benefit the rural areas e.g. those delivered through the local growth plans and the cultural quarter programme. In designing the programme, feedback was considered from the Rural Area Partnership in Derry and other rural groups, as well as from Elected Members, Local Community Group Partnerships and previous beneficiaries. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 20161 | The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to2 | 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 service3 |
| Development of the Corporate Plan and Improvement Plan 2024/5. | Other – Improving well-being for users of Council services and citizens | This plan will assist the Council in delivering it's mission of delivering “improved social, economic and environmental outcomes for everyone”.  The three improvement objectives have positive benefits for rural communities   * To assist a return to healthy lifestyle history and re growing participation in high quality leisure, sports and physical activity; * To create a greener cleaner more attractive district; and * To deliver improved customer satisfaction by improving customer support services and processes.   The improvement objectives identified in this plan were subject to a public consultation exercise. No rural issues raised. |
| Review of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy. | Not applicable – internal Council policy | This is primarily a policy that applies to staff and does not impact differently on staff who live or work in rural areas. Consideration was given to 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 Council's Lone Working Policy and in the general safe systems of work and associated risk assessments carried out for all staff. |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 20161 | The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to2 | 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 service3 |
| Development of the Safeguarding Policy (Children and Young People). | Not applicable- Council policy | This policy will apply to all individuals who engage with council staff and services, irrespective of the location in which they access those services. |
| Development of the Treasury Management Policy and Investment Strategy 2025-26. | Not applicable- Council policy | No direct impact on rural needs. |
| Implementation of the Annual Directorate Delivery Plans. | Other – internal plan | Rural needs are reflected as appropriate in Directorate Delivery Plans based on the Corporate and Improvement Plan |
| Review of the Temporary Street Trading Policy. | Not applicable – council policy | The policy is not intended to impact people in rural areas. Applications for temporary licences relate to events taking place in the urban areas of Derry and Strabane. |
| Development of the Dual Language Street Signs Policy. | Other – road naming | The policy recognises the importance of townland names for rural communities and has developed a policy which allows rural dwellers to request dual language road signage which includes the relevant townland name in which the road is situated. The policy also allows for the provision of different languages to be used in the case of long roads which are normally found in rural areas. |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 20161 | The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to2 | 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 service3 |
| Review of arrangements for Council/Committee Meetings. | Not applicable – internal policy | This proposal is aimed at improving democratic participation for all Elected Members. It is noted that Members in rural areas may benefit more from virtual meetings through greater reductions in travel time and better time management. |
| Review of the Hybrid Working Pilot Policy and Guidance. | Not applicable – internal staff policy | The policy recognises the benefits when considering personal commuting and lunchtime costs. Commuting costs may be higher for those staff living in rural areas. In addition, one of the primary components of the carbon footprint of work relates to travel - using hybrid working arrangements, managers and staff can help to reduce both their own and the organisation’s environmental footprints.  The hybrid working arrangements will be offered to all staff working in suitable service areas regardless of whether they live/work in rural or urban areas. |

#### 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.

#### Appendix 2

**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.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance**  **Indicator** | **Performance**  **2020/21** | **Performance**  **2021/22** | **Performance**  **2022/23** | **Performance**  **2023/24** | **Performance 2024/25** |
| **Number of dog licences issued**  Derry City & Strabane District Council  NI Average | 7,626  12,895 | 7,841  12,632 | 8,148  12,832 | 8,995  12,152 | 8,104  12,044 |
| **Number of complaints in relation to stray dogs**  Derry City & Strabane District Council  NI Average | 619  388 | 256  383 | 183  416 | 241  462 | 277  250 |
| **Number of fixed penalties imposed – dog control**  Derry City & Strabane District Council NI Average | 20  51 | 67  114 | 212  124 | 186  162 | 111  129 |
| **Number of successful prosecutions – dog control**  Derry City & Strabane District Council  NI Average | 0  5 | 0  2 | 2  12 | 11  10 | 10  11 |
| **Total noise control complaints received**  Derry City & Strabane District Council | 541 | 687 | 556 | 471 | 521 |
| **Notices served per 100 noise complaints**  Derry City & Strabane District Council | 0.0 | 0.14 | 0.18 | 0.64 | 0.19 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance**  **Indicator** | **Performance**  **2020/21** | **Performance**  **2021/22** | **Performance**  **2022/23** | **Performance**  **2023/24** | **Performance 2024/25** |
| **Average number of days absenteeism per FTE employee**  Derry City & Strabane District Council | 10.37 | 16.8 | 16.5 | 18.7 days | 15.6days |
| **% Invoices paid within 10 days**  Derry City & Strabane District Council | 37.5% | 26.1% | 34.4% | 38.2% | 39.1% |
| **% Invoices paid within 30 days**  Derry City & Strabane District Council | 78.4% | 64.7% | 73.5% | 82.3% | 82.7% |