



Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

FOR INFORMATION

Performance Improvement Update	27 October 2020
Corporate Policy and Resources Committee	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Innovation and Transformation
Outcome	More effective performance reporting to Council
Lead Officer	Head of Performance
Cost: (If applicable)	Costs allowed for within the annual budget

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Elected Members an update on the current Performance Improvement cycle, as well as providing the final published version of the Council's self-assessment of performance against the indicators set out in the 2019/20 Performance Improvement Plan.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Council's Performance Improvement Plan for 2019/20 was approved by Council in June 2019. The Plan contained improvement projects which will help to meet the Council's Performance Improvement Objectives for 2019/20. In September 2020 this committee was presented with the self-assessment analysis against the central indicators as set put in the 2019/20 Performance Improvement Plan. On 30th September 2020, Council published its completed 2019/20 Self-Assessment which is attached for your information.

2.2 The performance improvement cycle for the year 2020/21 is very different from standard years as Councils react and adapt to the implications of Covid-19 and the associated restrictions placed on society. Dept for Communities (DfC) has confirmed that there is no requirement in 2020/21 for a Council Performance Improvement Plan. All Local Authorities were still required to publish their performance improvement assessment report covering 2019/20 which Council has complied with.

2.3 The NI Audit Office (NIAO) led annual Performance Audit of Council has commenced. The Terms on the audit this year is greatly reduced in light of the impact of Covid-19 on the requirement for a 2020/21 Performance Improvement Plan. NIAO has confirmed that the audit will focus entirely on the performance of Council in 2019/20 as set out in the Self-Assessment. Furthermore, the scope of the audit will be 25-30% of that which it has been in previous years, and this will be reflected in the level of information requested, Council resource required, and indeed a reduced audit fee.

2.4 Council's integration into the APSE led National Performance Benchmarking Network has been progressing well with the initial focus being on staff training and the identification of data requirement for the prescribed APSE Performance Indicators. In the next few months, Directorate leads will bring their own Directorate level APSE related updates to their relevant oversight committees.

2.5 Council, as part of the NI Performance Improvement Working Group (PIWG), has been working closely with the DfC and the NIAO to ensure that we continue to strive to build a culture of performance across local government in the coming years whilst navigating the long term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, the following actions for progress at the national level have been agreed across the 11 local authorities:

Timeframe	Actions Required
Short Term (1 month)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification and official correspondence on the scope, process and timeline for the Performance Audit and Assessment in 2020/21.
Medium Term (12 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification on the scope and focus of the Performance Improvement Plan for 2021/22. • Clarification on whether each Council must consult on the draft performance improvement objectives 2021/22 (or recovery objectives). • Clarification on the content of the Self-Assessment 2020/21, in the absence of the Performance Improvement Plan 2020/21. • Clarification on the scope, process and timeline of the Performance Audit and Assessment 2021/22. • Careful consideration of benchmarking in the current and post COVID-19 environments, specifically in relation to the nine statutory performance indicators and standards, as the statutory Waste targets have not yet been issued.
Long Term (24 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full review of Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 • The Performance Indicators and Standards Order should be reviewed alongside Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

Draft recommendations have been made to DfC in terms of amendments to Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) and the annual Performance Improvement process, and Council will be updated when any significant changes are agreed.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The Council's Corporate Policy and Resources Committee assumes a scrutiny role in relation to the Performance Improvement Plan and receives update reports to enable this function. Members are invited to note the updates provided above as well as reviewing the attached Self-Assessment Report. Members can take the opportunity to seek any further information necessary with regard to the various updates and outcomes that are detailed.



Causeway Coast and Glens Council

Performance Improvement 2019/20 - Self-Assessment

30 September 2020

Introduction

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 puts in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of council services in the context of strategic objectives and issues that are important to those who receive those services. The Act specifies that Council must make arrangements for the publication of:

a) Its assessment of its performance during a financial year:

In discharging its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement.

In meeting its improvement objectives which are applicable to that year.

By reference to the statutory performance indicators and self-imposed indicators which are applicable to that year.

b) Its assessment of its performance in exercising its functions during a financial year as compared with:

Its performance in previous financial years.

So far as is reasonably practicable, the performance during that and previous financial years of other Councils.

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Section A – Performance Successes in 2019/20

Completing this Performance Self-Assessment process has given Council an opportunity to look back on the year 2019/20 and reflect on the many valuable and lasting ways in which your Council has performed for you. Throughout the content of this report you will learn about how Council has performed in the delivery of its services against targets and indicators that have been set either by Council itself or by central Government. Out with these important areas, there have also been many Performance highlights in the year 2019/20; a year which opened with the Causeway Coast and Glens showcasing itself to the world and ended with incredible displays of duty and resilience in the face of Covid-19. Council feels that it is important to take this opportunity to recognise and celebrate some of the significant successes and performance highlights delivered for citizens in 2019/20

A1 – Successes in 2019/20

Council's contribution to enable the 2019 Open Golf Championship.

The 148th Open Golf Championship was the largest event ever to take place on the island of Ireland. It had been 67 years since an Open Golf Championship had been staged at Royal Portrush. The 148th Open, will be etched in the memories of those people who either live, work or were fortunate to be visiting the borough between the 14th to the 21st July 2019.

The Royal and Ancient (hereafter referred to as The R&A, the event owner) has been overwhelming positive about the event. It has been described by the R&A and the sports media as the most successful Open Golf Championship ever.

Why was the event such a success? There are many contributing factors, but throughout the evaluation exercise, the quality, depth and trust of the relationships between all agencies involved in planning and delivery of the event has been highlighted repeatedly.

The partner host agencies had a common goal to deliver a successful world class event and exceed the expectations of the R&A. Outside of the event, a further area of success was the atmosphere and activity throughout Portrush during the week of The Open. This epitomised the way the whole of Northern Ireland embraced the Open.

The Council was committed to consulting and engaging with the community for 18 months prior to the event. This engagement, along with the dressing and animation programme helped create a sense of civic pride which then generated a celebration off the course throughout the week of the event.

The story continues with the delivery of the R&A's Legacy Fund. £100k was distributed via grants to ten community groups and organisations within Portrush. Council's allocated budget to prepare for, dress the Borough, animate Portrush and support The Open was £350,000. Whilst additional funding was gained from other sources, the final account for the Council's allocated budget is £344,000.

The forecast total economic benefit for Northern Ireland was, at least, £80m. The independent research now confirms a total economic benefit for NI of £106m.

Council's Capital Project Management Process resulting in Capital Projects continually being delivered to the highest standards, on time and within Budget.

The conception, development and management of Council's Capital Projects, continues to deliver projects to the highest standards of budget control, time, quality, risk mitigation and safety.

This is achieved through the application of best practice governance procedures, ensuring good project management and decision making arrangements throughout all stages of projects.

This has been demonstrated through the successful delivery of a diverse range of Capital Projects including:

- Garvagh Mountain Biking Facility - £700,000
- Portrush Environmental Improvements Scheme - £5million
- Magilligan Community Centre £450,000
- Harbours Dredging Campaign £1.5million
- Portrush North Pier Rock Armour Repairs £3.5million
- Car Park Upgrades £500,000
- 32 Community Centres refurbished and improvement works completed through the PEACE IV Programme

Council's performance that positively impacts the local environment

Improvements in our Waste and Recycling services, including public promotion and engagement activity, has led to Council for the first time surpassing the 50% recycling rate target against the indicator of the % of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling. This milestone was reached a full year ahead of target date.

Council has received much praise and positive feedback thanks to the stunning wildflower displays in 2019/20 which support our native pollinators, thanks to a new approach to planting and the Don't Mow Let It Grow initiative. The floral spectacles, evident in many of our towns, villages, open spaces and roadside areas, have revolutionised Council's land management practices and confirm its commitment to supporting biodiversity in the Borough.

Through the Don't Mow Let It Grow initiative, natural wildflower meadows have been created in some Council parks by switching from grass mowing to a hay meadow style approach, while a change in the bedding plants used in floral displays has also helped to ensure there is a rich source of food for our precious bees, birds and butterflies.

Our Planners issued the 2nd highest number of Major Development Applications out of 11 Councils with 100% approval rate

Council investing in people

In 2019/20 Council continued to perform well in terms of continually developing and supporting its workforce.

Council overseen the appointment of 62 new staff members across all Council operations. The breakdown of these staff was as follows - 3 Fixed Term, 21 Temporary and 37 Permanent staff

Council recorded 1,724 separate staff attendees at training across 197 specific events. Furthermore 9 employees were awarded Assistance to Study support with 2 employees achieving Masters Degrees.

A2 How the Council demonstrated success and strong performance in the response to Covid-19

In March 2020, a global pandemic was declared, and the world quickly adjusted to life under Covid-19 restrictions. Buildings were closed, certain services were ceased, many staff were confined to their homes, and life changed dramatically. This had a significant impact on all sectors of our community and indeed Council had to move quickly to react to the lockdown measures and social distancing regulations that were put in place. During this time the Performance of your Council swiftly adapted and faced these issues head on, and staff had to make many changes and improvements to ensure that the vital services Council provides were maintained. For the purposes of this self-assessment it is important to look back to March 2020 and reflect on the fantastic performance delivered by Causeway Coast and Glens Council.

Local and National Leadership

The response of Council can be traced back to November 2019 when the Senior Management Team led a Business continuity refresh based on influenza epidemic risk. This piece of work put Council in strong position and enabled a fast start when initiating emergency procedures. Furthermore, the continuation of essential services such as removal of waste and rubbish from homes and businesses was typical of the spirit and resilience shown by Council staff during Covid-19 lockdown period.

The Council Chief Executive, in his roles as the Chair of Solace NI and the Northern Emergency Preparedness Group, led the local government response to Covid-19 pandemic in Northern Ireland in March 2020. This entailed coordinating civil contingences across the 11 councils and close liaison with key central government departments and health trusts.

Senior Council officers led the development of co-ordination hubs and created operating procedures that were subsequently shared and adopted by other Councils, health trusts and the Department for Communities. Many officers were redeployed into roles outside their usual responsibility and showed flexibility and capability to deal with the emergency situation. This resulted in robust critical operations, effective food distribution, and maximum support to vulnerable communities.

The Community Hub

Council recognised the extraordinary efforts of the voluntary and community groups in support of their communities, who were struggling during unprecedented times.

To support the vulnerable and isolated citizens of Northern Ireland, Council worked directly with the Department for Communities, the Health and Social Care Trusts, the Public Health Agency and representative bodies of the Voluntary and Community Sector. To coordinate and support this voluntary effort Council set up a Covid-19 Co-ordination Hub, the role of which was to:

- To receive 'referrals' from both Advice NI and the Health and Social Care Trusts.
- To allocate the 'referral' to a local voluntary community organisation and subsequently coordinate, record and report the volunteer community activities in the Borough.
- To support and sustain the Voluntary Community Organisations.

The Council Coordination Hub directed requests from the Helpline to community organisations, with specific support to be provided, which included:

- Food delivery and collections.
- Prescription delivery and collections.
- Fuel - Requirement for top-up gas cards, electric top-ups, coal and heating oil.
- Social contact.

This Council established the first Covid-19 Co-ordination Hub linking to 90 voluntary and community operating in the Borough. The procedures established by this Council were adopted throughout NI. At the conclusion of the Hub's operation, 1500 vulnerable and isolated persons were supported.

Support for Businesses

The unfolding of lockdown left no part of society untouched. Nowhere was this more prevalent than in the economy. The Council's Prosperity & Place Unit immediately moved into assistance mode to provide support and guidance for over 400 businesses through its Alchemy and Digital Causeway Programmes. It provided assistance to many hundreds of queries around the support available from Central Government, through hands-on help and signposting.

The Unit has also helped almost 500 local businesses through provision of PPE and other equipment through the generosity of the Departments for Communities and Agriculture.

Causeway Coast and Glens were the first Council to:

- support staff and mentors (through Alchemy) to do same day call backs to emergency business enquiries
- film and share our own video webinars (through Council's you tube channel)

From 18th March 2020 as lockdown approached we entered what we called 'Emergency Phase', our business support team was the first to step into action as an emergency response for businesses in our borough:

- immediately advertised the daily 12hr availability of business support staff to take calls 8am - 8pm (e-zine, website, Facebook & Twitter) lasted a month
- immediately created a simple form on website for COVID specific enquiries
- immediately created a COVID-19 specific response page on our website with updated information on guidelines as they emerged from Central Government.

The focus for the next three years may well be focused on recovery, but Prosperity & Place will also concentrate on local resilience by enhancing both broadband and energy through engagement with Project Girona and the Full Fibre Northern Ireland Programme.

The Council's Funding Unit and distribution of Covid-19 funding

The Covid 19 pandemic and ensuing lockdown required an emergency response from Council that necessitated getting immediate help on the ground to enable communities to respond quickly and provide food and support to the most vulnerable members of the community. The Funding Unit rose to the challenge and community groups received letters of offer awarding them funding within days of their request being submitted.

In the first few weeks of lockdown the Funding Unit issued 85 letters of Offer totalling £148,000. This enabled 60 community foodbanks to be stocked, 6,675 families on low incomes were supported with food, 3885 families on low incomes were supported with connectivity, 4359 children under 16 years of age were supported, 4123 disabled persons were supported, 7119 older people were supported. **In total 34,753 persons received some form of support through the first wave of funding.** An additional £126,000 of grant-aid to the community and voluntary sector is currently being rolled out to support the longer term needs of the most vulnerable within our community.

The Funding Unit also managed a quick response to enable recovery in the Business sector through administration and management of the Business Revitalise Fund. In total 548 applications were received, assessed and scored, with 487 Letters of Offer totalling £445,884.25 issued. Once again a quick response with letters of Offer providing grant-aid being issued within days of receipt of applications. Vital PPE and equipment was purchased enabling hundreds of local businesses to open their doors again.

The pace of getting much needed funds on the ground exactly when they have been needed most has undoubtedly make a significant contribution to easing the many challenges that the community and business sector have faced during this unprecedented pandemic.

Section B – 2019/20 Performance against Improvement Objectives

Performance Improvement Objectives 2019/20	
1	We will increase the participant usage of, and income generated by, our Leisure centres
2	We will increase support for local businesses
3	We will introduce a robust arrangement for engaging with our citizens
4	We will lower staff absenteeism rates
Long Term	1. We will reduce the % of Council income that is spent servicing Council debt 2. In terms of overall Council income, we will increase the % of non-rates income

Performance Improvement Plan – Improvement Objectives - Highlights 2019/20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated Information Management system rolled out across all Leisure facilities. - Leisure Centre Members, number of individual swims and annual income have all improved - Number of jobs created through direct Council assistance has improved - Number of instances of businesses assisted and engaged by Council has improved - Over 1,200 respondents to the Leisure Centre & Sports Centre Customer Survey - A new Council Absence Management Policy and Procedure has been agreed by Council - Improved focus on Health and Wellbeing of staff with increasing participation in Council led initiatives - Rates of staff Absenteeism are falling

- Establishment of Council's Finance Committee to be responsible for recommending to Council the key decisions and actions required to be taken specifically in relation to the work of the Finance function within Council.

Performance Improvement Plan – Improvement Objectives – Areas for further improvement 2019/20

- Engagement with citizens through a Borough wide consultation and publication of subsequent report has not been completed as originally planned, but work is well under way to address this within 2020/21

- Rates of Absenteeism falling, which is welcomed, but the target reduction was missed. Targets have been revised for 2020/21 and the successful output improvements realised in 2019/20 put Council in a strong position to improve again.

Performance Improvement Objective 1 We will increase the participant usage of, and income generated by, our Leisure centres	
Outputs - (The things that we will do in 2019/20)	How did we perform against these outputs in 2019/20?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a new Marketing Plan and promotional campaign • Agree and roll out a new pricing scheme for leisure centre membership to ensure equality of product and pricing across all centres • We will review the mechanisms for customers to sign up to membership packages • We will review our equipment within all centres • We will oversee the transfer of all centres on to the same digital management platform to ensure that we collect and utilise performance information much better for the interests of Council and customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure Marketing Plan and Promotional Membership campaign launched across all sites including digital media and traditional promotional techniques, as well as special Membership offers • Mobile Phone App for Leisure Services launched to include membership sign up and bookings • As part of the ongoing Council Shadow Bid process in leisure, a mechanism was put in place for the ongoing review of leisure centre equipment • Integrated “Legend” Performance Management system rolled out across all Leisure facilities. • New pricing schedule for Members has been agreed and rolled out across all sites
Outcomes - (The measurable differences made in 2019/20)	How did we perform against these outcomes in 2019/20?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2% increase in participant user numbers across all centres (2018/19 – 695,354) • 2% increase in the number of individual swims across our three swimming pools (2018/19 – 122,949) • 2% increase in the number of members across all centres (Dec 2018 – 3,029) • 2% Increase in Income (2018/19 was £2,007,842) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant user levels at 642,127 • The number of Leisure Members has risen 17% from 2,308 in April 2019 to 2,728 in March 2020. • April 2019 – Feb 2020 - 122,473 individual swims which is a 9% against period April-Feb last year (note. loss of individual swims from JDLC Pool Closure circa 7,000) • Income across Leisure centres has improved against the same period last year, totalling £2,104,455 by the end of March 2020.

Explanation of performance and how this contributes to the achievement of the Performance Improvement Objective

The provision of Leisure through our Centres is one of the most tangible and visible forms of service that we provide to the citizens of Causeway Coast and Glens. It is no surprise therefore that when consulting with the general public as well as elected members that the provision of Leisure is one of the main topics raised, and as such has for several years been the focus of Improvement Objectives.

This Improvement Objective for 2019/20 was framed in such a way as to focus the improvement work in several Outcome areas i.e. overall number of users, number of Leisure Members, number of individual swims and of course income generated. A focus on outputs and improvement works in these areas should see a corresponding rise in the Outcomes measured, and hence deal with many of the key areas highlighted by the public and elected members.

In terms of the improvement outputs planned for the year, Council can report a year of successful implementation, with the highlights being the development and delivery of a new Digital App to support Leisure customers and Members, the transfer of all centres on to the same digital management platform and also a successful Council wide campaign and recruitment drive for new Leisure members.

In terms of the associated Outcomes measured, 3 out of the 4 have seen an increase against the 2018/19 position, with a 17% rise in Leisure Members, 9% rise in individual swims and a 5% rise in income. All 4 outcomes had a standard ambition of 2% increase placed on them so we can see that the number of Leisure members, the number of swims and total income have surpassed this. The fourth Outcome, the number of overall users, saw a 12% drop in overall numbers. However, in the context of the 3 very important factors listed below, Council believes that overall the Outcomes achieved still demonstrates a positive year of performance against this Improvement Objective:

- Firstly, during the year Council was forced to close one of its swimming pools for an extended period of time in order to carry out important repairs to the ceiling and roof that covered the pool. Based on previous years this was estimated to have led to the loss of almost 7,000 individual user experiences.
- Secondly, as noted above, the Council completed a significant piece of work around integrating all centres on to the same digital management systems. During that work there were several significant “down” periods during which access controls and data collection systems were not operating at their usual capacity.
- Thirdly, and indeed most significantly, was the impact of Covid-19 and the subsequent shutting of our Leisure Centres in early/mid-March 2020. The impact on user numbers was being felt for weeks before the centres were closed as concerns grew amongst citizens and therefore some slippage against target is to be expected.

Risks identified and mitigated

- 1- The hugely significant and ongoing social, health and economic impact that Covid19 has had on our whole society with lockdown measures, facility closures, social distancing requirements etc. Council took the correct decision to close all facilities when it did as our paramount concern was for the health, safety and wellbeing of customers and staff. The knock on affect to income and participation rates from February onwards was significant and indeed will be with us for some time and we attempt to provide the best service possible within the constraints placed on us all.
- 2- Early lag in the provision of performance information due to new system installation. During the “down” time staff kept manual records and endeavoured to record as much activity as possible.
- 3 - The temporary closure of JDLC Pool has had a significant impact on usage figures and an estimated £65,000 loss in income. This was mitigated by Council prioritising the procurement and delivery of the work in order to have it resolved as quickly as possible. Furthermore, customers where directed to and provided with flexible access to our other swimming pools.

How was progress against this Improvement Objective reported on during the year?

Development of the Leisure Centres Utilisation Performance Dashboard has continued as Council continues to ensure that reporting on improvement work is managed centrally by the relevant Service areas themselves. Performance against the indicators here is monitored by the Leisure Operations Manager’s.

Initially when the Utilisation Dashboard was first produced in the year 2019/19, one of Council’s key goals was to provide consistency in terms of the reporting of utilisation information from each site, thus enabling proper analysis of performance and identification of areas for improvement. This has been developed further during 2019/20 and the new Information Management software installed in all sites has ensured much more consistency in terms of reporting.

Now that our Leisure Operations Managers are in place we will be working more closely with them to ensure that utilisation is analysed at regular intervals. Utilisation and how it contributes to Improvement is now a standing agenda item in One to One’s with each of the LOM’s ad the Senior Manager in this area and furthermore will also be used to benchmark against each other internally, and within the bigger APSE project.

Next steps?

As Council moves into the year 2020/21 it does so with all Leisure Facilities closed, and a limited opening not expected until August. This is a truly unique environment in which all of society finds itself. Council's focus will be on attempting to provide the best possible service for our members and customers within the limits that are set by the Covid-19 related restrictions. The health, safety and wellbeing of citizens and staff will remain the priority.

Performance Improvement Objective 2 We will increase support for local businesses	
Outputs - (The things that we will do in 2019/20)	How did we perform against these outputs in 2019/20?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to grow the number of businesses that are engaged in and receive direct support and mentoring through the Alchemy Programme We will consult on, agree, and implement a new Economic Development Strategy for the Borough We will continue to work with key partners to increase the number and quality of business start-ups and to promote enterprise and entrepreneurship throughout the borough, including through the Council's Business Start-Up Programme. We will launch a Retail Development Programme to assist town centre and retail businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of Reference for new Causeway Coast and Glens Economic Development Strategy produced the engagement and consultation stage are progressing. Alchemy Programme and Business Start-Up Programme both continue to grow and perform well. Please see below. Retail Development Programme progressed well with 192 businesses registered for the CCG gift card which was officially launched 14th November 2019 Emergency Response to Covid-19 by Project Alchemy was initially focused on our 'Emergency Phase' responding to immediate issues from 18th March as lockdown loomed. These enquiries were mostly in regard to the new rates grant and furloughing staff due to closures. Alchemy mentors responded with a call back service within 24hrs of enquiry and can report that 106 businesses were assisted within the first 10 days of lockdown in March 2020.
Outcomes - (The measurable differences made in 2019/20)	How did we perform against these outcomes in 2019/20?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow the Alchemy Programme by registering a further 150 businesses, with 100 receiving 5 days business mentoring and 50 receiving 2.5 days business mentoring Increased number of Business Plans Approvals to 235 (231 in 2018/19) Exceed the statutory target number (125) of jobs created through Business Start-up activity Through our Business Engagement and Communications Service we will engage with 1000 businesses and manage 10 business engagement events (800 businesses engaged in 2018/19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 240 businesses recruited and mentored under the Alchemy Programme with 38 jobs created 195 Business Start Business Plan approvals 120 jobs created through the Business Start Programme 2,987 businesses engaged and assisted 89 retail staff participated in Retail Development Programme workshops/clinics and 192 businesses registered for the CCG gift card through this Programme

- 40 new retail businesses engaged in training activities through the new Retail Development Programme

Explanation of performance and how this contributes to the achievement of the Performance Improvement Objective

Performance against this Improvement Objective in 2019/20 has been positive, building on similar Performance Improvement Objectives over the past years. Measurable target outcomes were agreed in 5 areas with baselines from previous year's performance available. A good start towards the aims of increasing support to local businesses in early 2019 was followed by some strong numbers towards the end of 2019. Job creation rate and support to Businesses spent the majority of the year ahead of target but it was the impact of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown measures that had the biggest impact on performance against this Improvement Objective over the last period of the year.

The Alchemy Programme and the improvements that they have made to their engagement and support systems has been a success, achieving outcomes well above target and indeed contributing to the success of other business development related targets across Council. Furthermore, the response of colleagues in the Alchemy Programme to the Covid-19 crisis was a clear success and undoubtedly improved the capacity of local businesses. During the first 10 days of the Lockdown, Alchemy staff assisted 106 businesses with information and support to do with financial support packages and furlough regulations.

Through the Business Start Programme, Council contributed to the approval of 195 Business Start Business Plans (missed target by 40) and the creation of 120 jobs (missed target by 5). As mentioned above, both of these outcomes remained above target for the majority of the year, but were halted significantly in the later months due to concerns over, and then the subsequent shut down in response to, Covid-19. However, in terms of overall job creation that was supported by Council's Business Support team, the performance was very positive as outlined below with **244 jobs created**:

- 120 Business Start Programme
- 38 Alchemy
- 17 Exploring Enterprise
- Learn To Earn Initiative - 63 people assisted into employment including sheltered employment
- 6 jobs created through the Digital Causeway Programme (Programme only started in November 2019)

The changes and improvements in approach in terms of our overall engagement and interaction with businesses has seen a significant rise in the numbers of businesses that we are actively engaging with. The total of 2,987 businesses engaged and assisted was significantly higher than target and was made up of the following:

195 business start approvals, 240 businesses recruited through Alchemy, 183 businesses at Alchemy workshops, 80 Exploring Enterprise enrolments, 12 artisan producers at Balmoral Show, 5 Taste Causeway businesses attended INI Meet the Buyer event, 28 people at Labour Relations training programme, 1,717 e-mail addresses subscribed to business support e-zine, 68 businesses recruited to Digital Causeway Programme, 19 businesses funded Rural Business

Development Programme, 89 retail staff participated in Retail Development Programme workshops/clinics, 154 shop fronts completed Revitalise Shop Front Scheme i.e. businesses assisted (37 in Limavady & 117 in Portrush) and 5 businesses funded through the completed **Enterprise Fund grants** totalling **£42,000**.

Risks identified and mitigated

Political Uncertainty - Potential impact of Brexit – The full impact of Brexit, whilst not yet fully clear, has had an unsettling affect amongst the business community affecting confidence and potential growth. Council’s Business Support Team ensures that it remains fully updated and briefed in terms of the affects that Brexit is having local businesses, working with local and national government departments and agencies, and offering direct support for Brexit concerns.

The hugely significant and ongoing social, health and economic impact that Covid19 has had on our whole society with lockdown measures, business closures, social distancing requirements etc. The knock on affect to jobs, business confidence and our local economy will be with us for some time, with many institutions such as the Bank of England predicting an economic recession. The Council’s response to the risk presented by Covid-19 was focused on the following:

Emergency phase

Council’s initial response was the 'Emergency Phase' responding to immediate issues from 18th March as lockdown loomed. These enquiries were mostly in regard to the new rates grant and furloughing staff due to closures. Alchemy mentors responded with a call back service within 24hrs of enquiry. 106 businesses were dealt with in this emergency phase during this financial year 2019-2020 (in those 10 days during March). In total, nearly 300 businesses were given advice and help during this phase from March to the beginning of May 2020.

How was progress against this Improvement Objective reported on during the year?

As well as being monitored by the Council’s Economic Development Officers and the Head of Prosperity and Place Service, progress against the outcomes and outputs set out in this Improvement Objective were reported to Leisure & Development Committee. This information was also included in updates to Council from the Performance Team.

Next steps?

As of April 2020, Council enters the new business year of 2020/21, in which hundreds of businesses are either temporarily closed or running at a limited capacity, with national lockdown continuing in response to the threat from Covid-19. This is a truly unique environment in which all of society finds itself.

Council's Business Support team moved into their Recovery Phase during which many businesses then received additional support/guidance/referrals from May 2020 onwards – focusing on such issues as looking at ways to change the way they conduct business, their plans to reopen, recovery from COVID-19 etc. 110 businesses received mentoring during this recovery phase May - August 2020.

Performance Improvement Objective 3 We will introduce a robust arrangement for engaging with our citizens	
Outputs - (The things that we will do in 2019/20)	How did we perform against these outputs in 2019/20?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will conduct a public procurement exercise to commission a Citizen's Survey for Causeway Coast and Glens We will create an all Council survey for Causeway Coast and Glens that will include key questions and measures on the services we provide, the perceptions of our citizens and indicators that are demonstrative of how we are delivering for our citizens. We will hold public meetings and conduct face to face conversations with citizens in order to understand better how we are performing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market Research conducted and meetings held with external consultants to assist in the development of this project. Procurement Documents and Specification developed in advance of Public Procurement exercise Longer term approach agreed with Senior Leadership Team, who now look to utilise the engagement expertise offered through our newly committed membership of APSE Performance Network
Outcomes - (The measurable differences made in 2019/20)	How did we perform against these outcomes in 2019/20?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will engage directly with 750 citizens across the Borough We will publish the findings of the first Causeway Coast and Glens Citizen's Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leisure Centre & Sports Centre Customer Survey - 1271 returns Every Customer Counts surveys – 340 returns Citizens survey was not completed in 2019/20
Explanation of performance and how this contributes to the achievement of the Performance Improvement Objective	
<p>Performance against this Improvement Objective has not fully met the Outcomes that had been agreed at the beginning of 2019/20.</p> <p>The year started strongly in terms of developing this work, with Market research conducted, fact finding meetings held with consultancy companies, and procurement/tender/specification documents developed. Links were also made with other Councils who had delivered such work as we refined and improved our ideas around the approach to public engagement. All of this early work and the outputs from it have contributed positively to achievement of this Improvement Objective.</p> <p>The progress against this Improvement Objective however did not continue to develop within the 2019/20 as planned, and what follows are the two most crucial factors in that:</p>	

1- Finance – During the year 2019/20 Causeway Coast and Glens Council conducted a large scale cost cutting and budget realignment exercise at the clear direction of Elected Members and Senior Management. Tough choices had to be made with regards to pieces of work that could be delayed to further years in order to release some budget within the 2019/20 financial year, and as such it was agreed that the £15,000 budget for the Citizens Survey would remain on hold until the Financial Review was completed.

2- Uncertainly due to the advance of Covid-19 – Planning for work to commence on the survey work in the new year of 2020/21 was halted during March 2020 once it became very clear that the Covid-19 regulations would mean that interviews, face-to-face surveys, public meetings etc would be impossible to plan for until further notice.

The final output that contributed positively to this Improvement Objective was the Council decision to fully commit to membership of the APSE Performance Network, which will allow for benchmarking of performance nationally as well as expertise and consultant led guidance of citizen’s engagement.

Risks identified and mitigated

Financial – Councils’ extensive financial review during 2019/20 has led to the decision being made to delay the delivery of the Citizens Survey until the next financial year. To ensure that we are as prepared as possible when a new budget is agreed, Council has undertaken the preparatory work in terms of research, market testing and the production of pre-procurement documentation.

Covid-19 – Limitations in terms of social distancing will affect the techniques used when collecting citizen’s data.

How was progress against this Improvement Objective reported on during the year?

Progress against this Improvement Objective was monitored and reviewed by the Head of Performance as well as being included in updates to Council from the Performance Team. As reflected in the comments above, progress against this Improvement Objective is an area for improvement for Council.

Next steps?

Council’s Senior Management Team have agreed that the next step in this process will be engaging with the Public Engagement consultants at APSE and utilising the networks that we have there to move this Objective to the next stage. However, as with a significant number of Council Objectives, the outcomes are very dependent on the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Performance Improvement Objective 4 We will lower staff absenteeism rates	
Outputs - (The things that we will do in 2019/20)	How did we perform against these outputs in 2019/20?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and agree a new Council Absence Management Policy and Procedure, by August 2019 and roll out a programme of training for employees and line managers September – December 2019 • Work with stakeholders to identify and agree further measures to support employees such as access to private Health Care, access to specific treatments, health insurance etc by December 2019 • Review the effectiveness of the Occupational Health process within Council and introduce an Occupational Health Nurse/adviser provision. • We will oversee an improved focus on the health and wellbeing of our staff by offering more education and opportunities for physical activity. This will include a new programme of activities and education including for example yoga/Pilates/kettlebells classes across all our main offices, golf and walking events, weight loss challenges, focus on mental health etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Council Absence Management Policy and Procedure, has been developed, consulted on and agreed with Trade Unions at JCNC. The Policy was agreed by Council on 4th February 2020. • A programme of training for employees and line managers has been developed following approval of the Policy. This training was due to commence in April 2020 to coincide with the implementation of the Council wide policy, but this was impacted by Covid-19 implications. • Work is ongoing with stakeholders to identify and agree further measures to support employees such as access to private Health Care, access to specific treatments, health insurance etc • A review has been carried out regarding the effectiveness of the Occupational Health process within Council and an Occupational Health Nurse/adviser provision has been introduced with effect from April 2019
Outcomes - (The measurable differences made in 2019/20)	How did we perform against these outcomes in 2019/20?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 5% reduction in the number of days lost to Council through long term sickness (9,623.49 days in 2018/19) • A 5% reduction in the average number of days lost per employee through sickness absenteeism (18.36 days per employee in 2018/19) • We will reduce the average time for an Occupational Health Review from 4 weeks to 2 weeks by September 2019 • 150 staff members will take part in the Council's new physical wellbeing activities and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9,510.23 days lost to Council through long term sickness which was an almost 3% reduction • 17.82 days was the average number of days lost per employee through sickness absence which was a 1.18% reduction • Reduction in the average time for an Occupational Health Review is complete and average time is now 2 weeks, which can be evidenced via the new appointment dates • Over 300 staff engaging in numerous wellbeing events and initiatives such as ongoing 1b for £ weight loss challenges, Corporate sporting events, new walking and running groups, and ongoing growth in the exercise/activity classes we provide in our main buildings.

How did we perform against these outputs and outcomes?

Causeway Coast and Glens Council, like many other Local Authorities, has experienced several years of increases in terms of the number of colleagues who are absent from work. Growth in this area is not sustainable for any organisation, and as such Council has set this clearly defined Improvement Objective with measurable outcomes and corresponding outputs for the year 2019/20.

In terms of the specific outputs that Council had set for 2019/20, Council has performed well against this Improvement Objective. One of the output highlights was the development, agreement and delivery of a new Absence Management Policy and Procedures for Council. This important piece of work brought together the four legacy Council arrangements into one single Policy that now applies to all members of staff. This puts in place the tools and mechanisms through which Council can seek further improvements. Improvements to the managing absence procedures also have contributed to these reduced rates, for example the reduced time that staff have to wait to see as Occupational Therapist which has contributed directly to staff returning to work faster.

Traditionally, Councils' highest reason for absence has been stress. During 2019/20 Council ensured that employees who report sick with stress are referred immediately to Occupational Health so that interventions can be put in place at an early stage. Employees have also been directed to the counselling services provided by Council through INSPIRE and over this period 35 employees availed of these services.

A further highlight has been the improvements made by Council in its approach to enabling the Health and Wellbeing of staff. Well over 300 colleagues have been taking part in a wide range of activities across Council locations such as facilitated weight loss programmes, lunchtime fitness/Pilates/yoga classes, new walking and running groups, campaigns that focus on mental health etc. These improvements have all gone some way to creating a working environment in which the Health and wellbeing of staff is more centrally connected to the culture of the organisation.

Council had set itself an ambitious target of a 5% reduction in the outcomes of the average number of days lost per employee through sickness absenteeism and then the total number of days lost due to sickness absenteeism. Against these targets Council achieved reductions of 1.18% and 3% respectively. Whilst it was very encouraging that Council was able to achieve a reduction in the numbers associated with absenteeism, it has to be recognised that the 5% target was not achieved and further work is required over the coming years to ensure that the absenteeism rates continue to fall.

Finally, it should be noted that the onset of Covid-19 and the corresponding restrictions had an impact on absenteeism figures in March 2020. This is not to say that without Covid-19 Council would have met the 5% target reductions, but it did have a notable impact as colleagues had to self-isolate and take up additional caring responsibilities outside of work from March onwards.

Risks identified and mitigated

- Ongoing engagement with stakeholders in development and delivery of new Absence Management Policy – Such an important policy and new set of procedures, which has a clear focus on people, has many stakeholders ranging from trade unions and staff to the elected members and affiliated health care providers. Council worked hard at every stage to ensure that all stakeholders were fully engaged and had opportunities to contribute towards the improvements that were being designed and implemented.

- Covid-19:

- In terms of absenteeism the effects of Covid-19 were felt from early March 2020 onward, with staff having to self-isolate and shield in line with Government led restrictions. Compounding on this was the lockdown of society which led to the closure of schools and educational facilities, which in turn had a significant impact on the caring responsibilities for all staff. Council moved as quickly as possible to enable staff to work from remotely and from home, offering as much technical and logistical assistance as possible.

- Covid-19 had an effect on the programme of training for employees and line managers which was developed following approval of the Policy. This training was scheduled to commence in April 2020 to coincide with the implementation of the Council wide policy. However, in light of COVID-19 this was postponed. The OD/HR team liaised with the training provider and the training has now commenced using video technology so that social distancing measures are adhered to. The schedule of training has been revised and a new plan is in place

- During this period of COVID-19 lockdown, OD/HR have issued daily emails to all staff covering a variety of topics from Mental Health awareness, anxiety, bereavement, to activities for home schooling

How was progress against this Improvement Objective reported on during the year?

As well as being monitored by the OD/HR Team, progress against the outcomes and outputs set out in this Improvement Objective were reported to Audit Committee on a quarterly basis. This information was also included in updates to Council from the Performance Team.

Next steps?

- Work is ongoing with stakeholders to identify and agree further measures to support employees such as access to private Health Care, access to specific treatments, health insurance etc

- A revised target for the year ahead 2020/21 of a 2.5% reduction in absenteeism has been agreed and will be reported quarterly to the Council's Audit Committee.

Long Term Performance Improvement Objectives	
1. We will reduce the % of Council income that is spent servicing Council debt 2. In terms of overall Council income, we will increase the % of non-rates income	
Outputs - (The things that we will do in 2019/20)	How did we perform against these outputs in 2019/20?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will track, monitor and report on the Council’s level of debt repayment, borrowing and non-rates income • We will establish clear data and information baselines from which to continually review performance • Council will conduct a review of its debt repayment structure • Council will conduct a review into the different possible areas in which it can increase its non-rates income • These two Long Term Performance Improvement Objectives will be the first two objectives and/or themes to be considered when Council develops its new Corporate Strategy 2019-23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work associated with this Long Term Improvement Objective has been taken over by the newly created Finance Committee • The first planning session for development of the 2019-23 Corporate Strategy have taken place, with sessions held between elected members and senior Council staff. • Wide ranging, independent, Consultant led Financial Review exercise was conducted by Council to analyse and report on all of management of Council budgets. Findings have been reported to Members and this work continues
Outcomes - (The measurable differences made in 2019/20)	How did we perform against these outcomes in 2019/20?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of, monitoring and reporting of, and opportunities for Members to analyse the Council’s debt repayment structures • Increased confidence for Members to make important financial decisions • Long term trend towards decreasing the % of Council income that is spent servicing Council debt • Long term trend towards increasing non-rates income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work associated with this Long Term Improvement Objective has been taken over by the newly created Finance Committee which met for the first time in September 2019. • In terms of Financial Performance Council concluded the year 2019/20 under budget, and this trend has continued into the first quarter of 2020/21 • Council has improved the management and level of its financial reserves during 2019/20

Explanation of performance and how this contributes to the achievement of the Performance Improvement Objective

These long term improvement objectives were added to the 2019/20 Performance Improvement Plan at the express instruction of Elected Members. The Members sought to create new and improved mechanisms that would enable Council to have improved monitoring functions over finance, budgets and debt. Whilst in the main the outcomes associated here are “Long-term” in their ambition and scope, it is the improvements associated with key outputs in 2019/20 that have contributed to a positive performance against these long term improvement objectives.

Furthermore, Council has completed the year 2019/20 under agreed annual budget, maintained that trend into 2020/21 and has also improved the management and levels of its financial reserves.

One of the major output improvements has been the formal creation of the new Council Finance Committee. The Finance Committee is responsible for recommending to Council the key decisions and actions that are required to be taken specifically in relation to the work of the Finance function within Council. Several of its key responsibilities are as follows:

- Leading on the annual Rates Estimate setting process;
- Monthly review of the management accounts; to include a summary by service area of income and expenditure, with commentary of positive or negative outcome on their budgets;
- Setting key finance targets and monitoring their delivery, including efficiency and income generation;
- All capital and resource expenditure to be reviewed by the committee before going to full council;
- To investigate, review and set targets for efficiencies and income for each department.
- To implement and review a 3 year rolling budget/forecast
- Monitoring and reviewing business and service delivery plans for the Finance Service;
- To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council;
- Receive a rolling programme of finance related presentations from all service areas.

Risks identified and mitigated

Covid-19 and the effects that it has on several of Council’s most significant income streams - The Finance Committee has taken the lead in coordinating and monitoring the financial support that has been provided in response to Covid-19 as well as contributing towards the consolidation and recovery plans associated with our major income generating services.

Citizen's confidence in Council – During the year 2019/20 there were several news and press reports concerning Council and its financial position. Council is very aware that any negative coverage can have an overall detrimental effect on the confidence that citizens have in Council as a whole. As such, Council has created the new Finance Committee to monitor and report on this function as well as ensuring that it remains as open and transparent as possible when communicating with citizens and media.

How was progress against this Improvement Objective reported on during the year?

The ambition and scope of this improvement objective has changed significantly since its creation by elected members in early 2019. Since its creation in September 2019, the Finance Committee has met at least once a month, and continues to report on and monitor the progress against the outcomes and wider ambitions of this Long Term Improvement Objective.

Next steps?

The finance Committee will continue to meet once a month to carry out its important work, and its Terms of Reference will be continue to be reviewed during its first year in operation.

The Finance Committee will play a central role in 2020/21 in overseeing Covid-19 financial support as well as monitoring the overall affect that Covid-19 is having on Council finances.

Section C – 2019/20 Performance against Statutory Indicators

Performance against Statutory Indicators 2019/20 – Highlights

- Continuing strong performance by our Planners in terms of the conclusion of enforcement cases
- Improvements in our Waste and Recycling services, including public promotion and engagement activity, has led to Council for the first time surpassing the 50% recycling rate target against the indicator of the % of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling.
- Furthermore, Council performed strongly against the indicator of the amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled, by lowering its % of allocation used by 18.9 points from the previous year, and indeed shows a drop of almost 40% points over the past two years.

Performance against Statutory Indicators 2019/20 - Areas for improvement

- Performance against our Planning indicators relating to processing rates for Major and Local Development Planning Applications has fallen short of the targets set by central Government. This reflects a trend over the past 3 years. From the analysis below one can see that we are not massively out with the trend of other Councils, but despite this Council's Planning Department continues to strive to make as much progress against these targets as possible. However, with a number of vacant posts not filled currently within the Planning Department due to reductions in income, this is likely to impact on performance going forward for the 2020/21 business year.

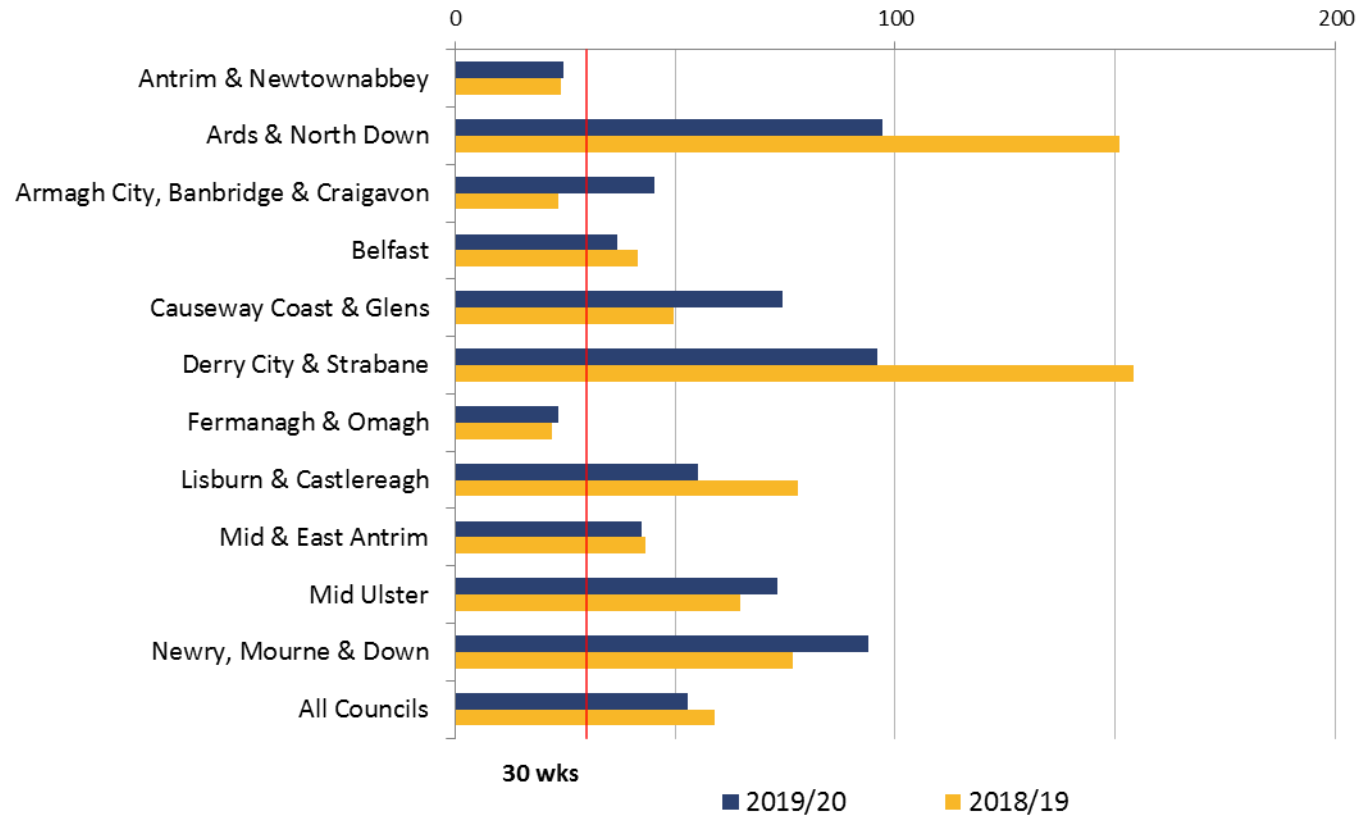
C1 Statutory Planning Indicators

The information included in the tables below for Statutory Indicators (NI Local Authority Planning Statistics) is verified and published by DfI. Please see the following link <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-april-2019-march-2020>

Please note that final validation of the following Planning performance information will not be completed until November 2020.

Statutory Planning Indicators		
P1 - It is a statutory target for each council that their Major Development planning applications will be processed from the date valid to decision issued or withdrawal date within an average of 30 weeks.		
Performance Year	Performance in number of weeks and % success rate against target	National Average
2019/20	74.5 weeks (15%)	52.8 weeks (26.1%)
2018/19	49.6 weeks (16.7%)	59 weeks (28%)
2017/18	58.4 weeks (30%)	50.2 weeks (13.3%)
2016/17	51.4 weeks (13.3%)	50.2 weeks (20.4%)
<p>Explanation of performance in 2019/20</p> <p>Performance against this statutory planning indicator did not meet the statutory targets that have been set by central government and as such our performance against this target remains an area for further improvement. It should be noted however, that of the 11 Councils only 2 managed to meet the statutory target and there were 3 that underperformed in comparison to Causeway Coast and Glens. The graphic below illustrates this further.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the postponement of the March Planning Committee meeting due to the Covid-19 pandemic, impacted on the number of decisions that issued in March as a further 1 major application had the potential to issue subject to determination at that meeting.</p> <p>In comparison to the same period last year, the number of major applications received has decreased by 6, however, the number of major applications decided has increased by 8. The major category of planning application improved to 100% approval rate, an improvement of 11.1% when compared to the previous year. However, this strive to improve approval rates resulted in longer negotiations on applications.</p>		

Major Development average processing times by council, 2018/19 & 2019/20



Statutory Planning Indicators

P2 - It is a statutory target for each council that their Local Development planning applications will be processed from the date valid to decision issued or withdrawal date within an average of 15 weeks.

Performance Year	Performance in number of weeks and % success rate against target	National Average
2019/20	20 weeks (40.8%)	15 weeks (54.1%)
2018/19	21.6 weeks (36.8%)	14.8 weeks (50.9%)
2017/18	20.4 weeks (32.3%)	15.2 weeks (49.7%)
2016/17	18.8 weeks (38.1%)	16.2 weeks (47.1%)

Explanation of performance in 2019/20

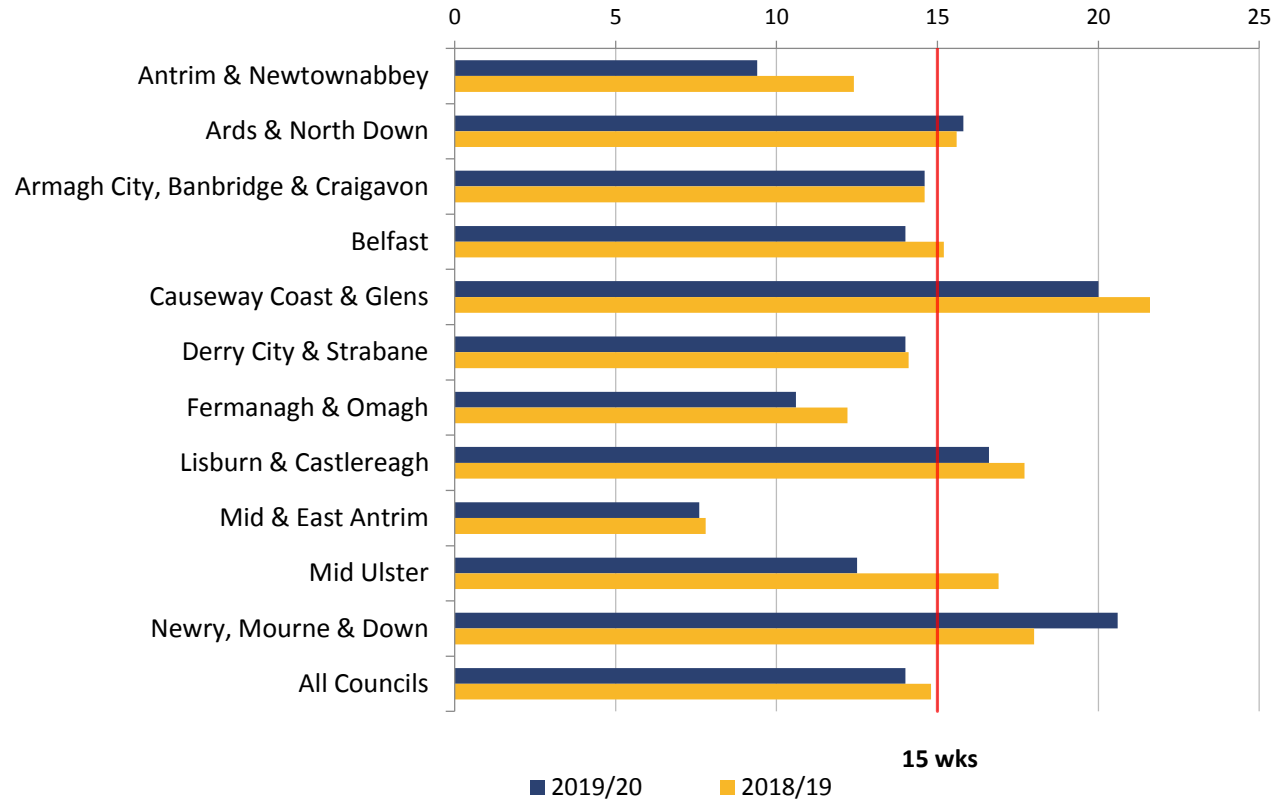
Performance against this target remains an area for further improvement. Although we did not meet the statutory target of 15 weeks for processing local applications, processing times has improved by 1.6 weeks when compared to the same period last year and with 4% more local applications being processed within the statutory target when compared to same period last year. Furthermore, the number of applications decided/withdrawn is greater than the number of applications received resulting in a reduction in the number of live applications in the system.

Unfortunately, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in March impacted on the processing times for that month with staff unable to issue decisions from 24 March 2020. As a result the average processing times for March was much higher than would have been anticipated, impacting not only on the monthly but also the yearly average processing times.

In comparison to the same period last year, the number of applications received has decreased by 91 applications and the number of decisions issued/withdrawn has decreased by 57 applications.

Seven of the 11 Councils met this target, and 4 did not. The graphic below is provided to enable further comparisons with other Councils.

Local Development average processing times by council, 2018/19 & 2019/20



Statutory Planning Indicators

P3 - It is a statutory target that 70% of all enforcement cases dealt with by councils are progressed to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint.

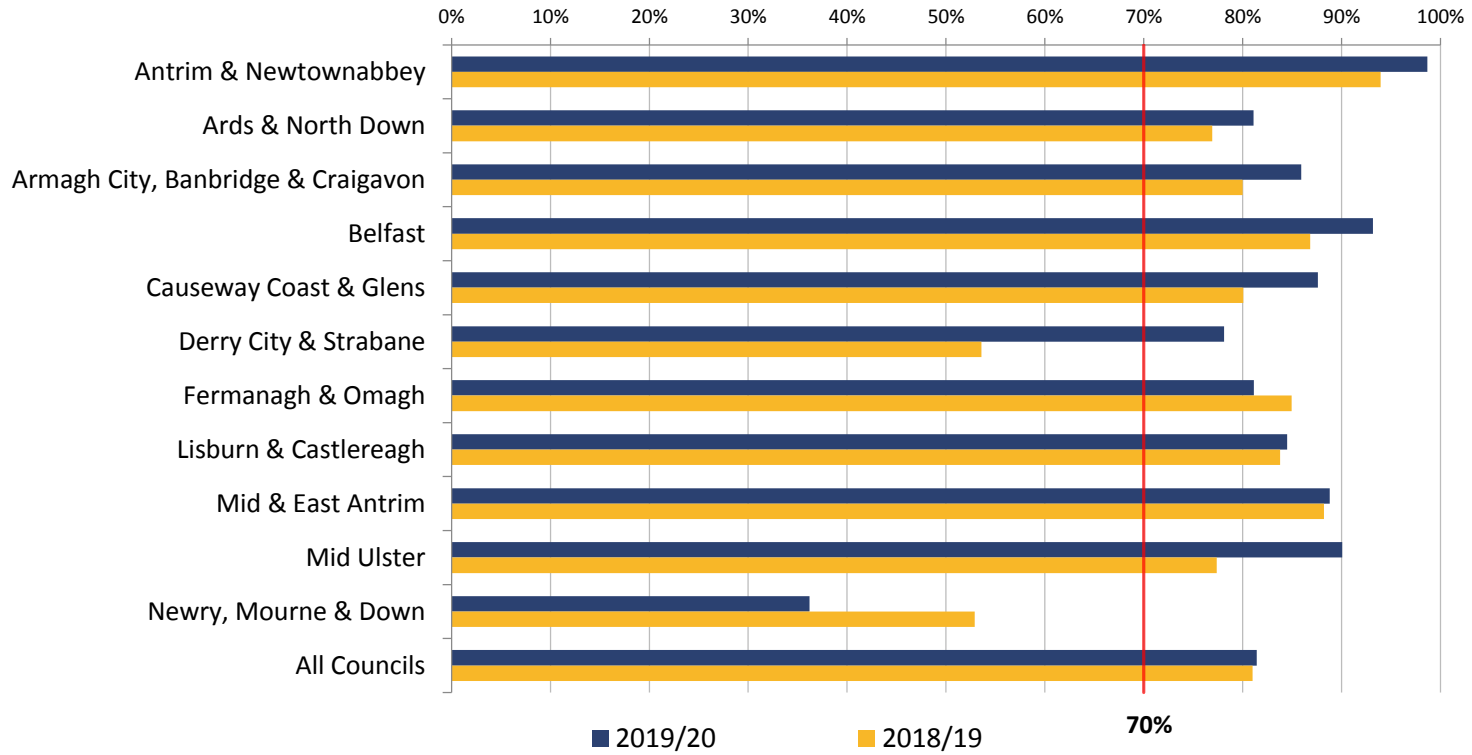
Performance Year	Council Performance	National Average
2019/20	87.6%	81.4%
2018/19	80%	81%
2017/18	70.5%	77%
2016/17	89.5%	80.7%

Explanation of performance in 2019/20

The statutory target for concluding 70% of enforcement cases within 39 weeks continues to be exceeded by our Enforcement team with 87.6% of cases concluded within the statutory target. An improvement of 7.6% when compared to the same period last year. Furthermore, the length of time taken to conclude 70% of cases has reduced by 3.8 weeks taking just 28 weeks to conclude. Council's performance against this indicator in comparison to other Councils is strong, as we remain above the average and well in line with the top performing Councils. Please see the graphic below for further illustration of our performance against this indicator in relation to other Councils.

In comparison to the same period last year, the number of cases opened has increased by 54 and the number of cases brought to conclusion has decreased by 16.

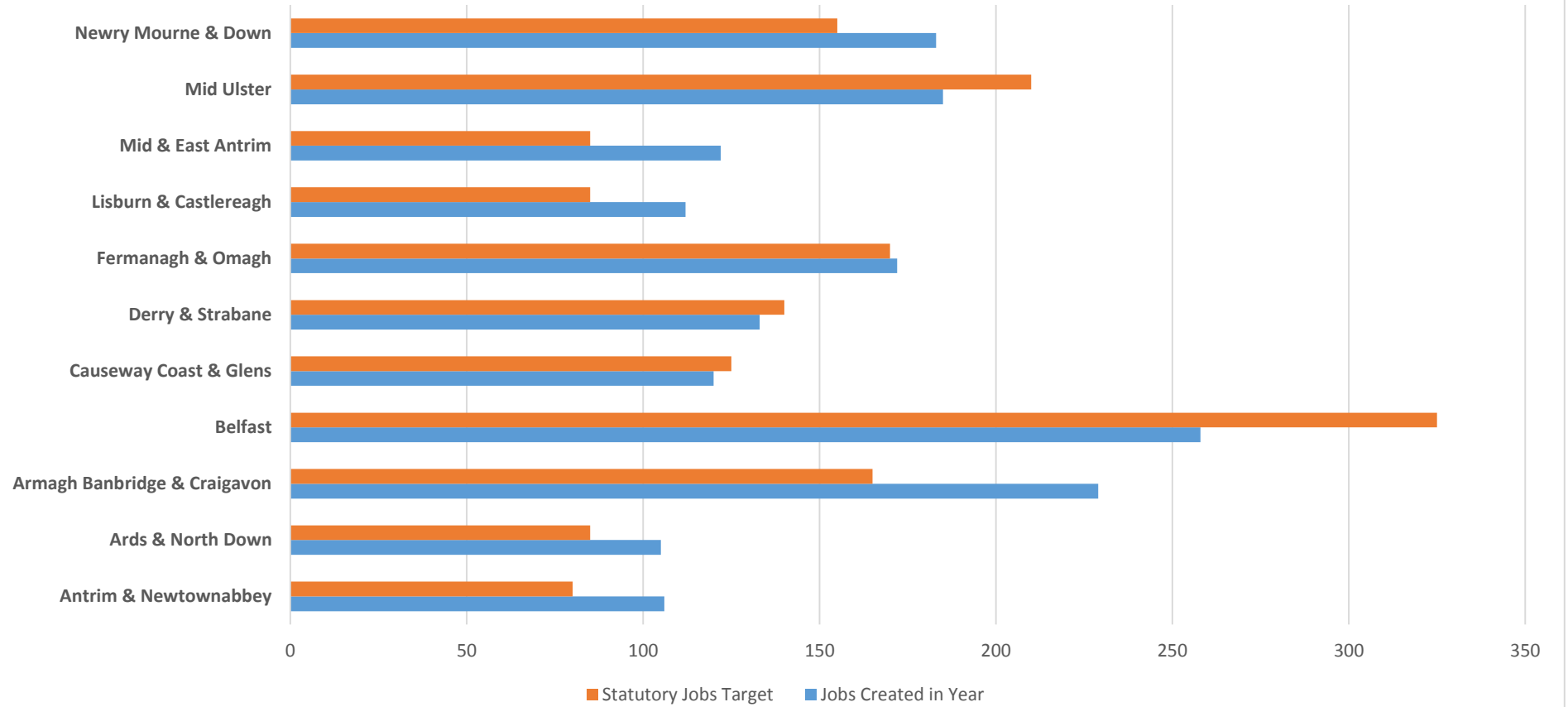
Percentage of cases concluded within 39 weeks by council, 2018/19 & 2019/20



C2 Statutory Economic Development Indicator

Statutory Economic Development Indicator	2019/20 Performance	2019/20 National Average	2018/19 Performance	2018/19 National Average	2017/18 Performance	2017/18 National Average	2016/17 Performance	2016/17 National Average
Target – 125 - The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity	120 (96% success rate)	106%	142 (114% success rate)	111%	185 (148% success rate)	107.8%	209 (167% success rate)	141%
<p>2019/20 Explanation of performance</p> <p>Council continues to perform well against its Statutory Economic Development Performance Indicator, and indeed spent the majority of the year 2019/20 ahead of target. However, the impact of Covid-19 of job creation and business confidence in March 2020 led to a drop in performance which ultimately contributed to Council narrowly missing out on target. Council’s performance against this target in relation to other Councils can be further illustrated in the table below.</p> <p>This being said, overall, Council has been able to demonstrate that in 2019/20 its work has directly contributed to the creation of 244 jobs.</p>								

NI Business Start Up Programme - Jobs Promoted by Councils



C3 Statutory Waste Performance Indicators

The information included in the tables below for Statutory Indicators (NI Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics) is verified and published by DAERA. Please see the following link <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-local-authority-collected-municipal-waste-management-statistics#toc-1>

Please note that final validation of the following waste performance information will not be completed until November 2020.

Statutory Indicator W1 – The percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling		
Standard to be met – 50% by December 2020		
Performance Year	Performance Achieved	National Average
2019/20	54.4%	52%
2018/19	47.7%	50%
2017/18	42.7%	47.6%
2016/17	42.5%	44%
2019/20 Explanation of performance		
<p>Performance in 2019/20 has been very positive with Council happy to report that it has surpassed the 50% recycling rate for the first time and indeed now sits above the national average. Against this indicator Council has seen year on year increases, and in 2019/20 our recycling rate is now a full 6.7% points above performance from the previous year</p> <p>Performance in 2019/20 has been helped by improvements in waste/recycling education for the public as well as the successful embedding of the rollout of the brown biodegradable waste bins to all households in the Borough.</p>		

Statutory Indicator W2 - The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled

Standard to be met annually – To limit utilisation of 17,062T allocation and do not exceed 100%

Performance Year	Annual Tonnage	% of allocation usage	National average % of allocation usage
2019/20	9,999	58.6%	57.4%
2018/19	14,082	77.5%	65.5%
2017/18	18,992	98.5%	68.9%
2016/17	18,996	93.2%	77.8%

2019/20 Explanation of performance

Council has shown a marked improvement in 2019/20 and now has a landfilled rate of 58.6%, which is down 18.9 points from the previous year, and indeed shows a drop of almost 40% points over the past two years.

Council's performance in this area has also remained above the national average.

Performance in 2019/20 has been helped by improvements in waste/recycling education for the public as well as the successful embedding of the rollout of the brown biodegradable waste bins to all households in the Borough.

Statutory Indicator W3 - The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings

Standard to be met – Ongoing reduction in growth rate

Performance Year	Annual Tonnage	% growth rate
2019/20	81,270	-0.01%
2018/19	81,763	2.5%
2017/18	79,634	-0.02%
2016/17	79,758	

2019/20 Explanation of Performance

Council has shown a slight decrease in its growth rate in its Municipal Waste arising which is to be welcomed. Whilst the Department has not set specific targets for this indicator, it is clear that the preferred trend will be to see a continuing decrease in this figure.

In terms of comparisons with other Councils, it is perhaps difficult to make accurate comparisons due to the differing size and population of each area, but Causeway Coast and Glens does appear to follow that size trend with 4 Councils returning larger tonnage of Waste.

Section D – Performance Against self-imposed indicators

	Measure	2018/19 Outcome	Target	2019/20 Outcome	Assessment of Performance
1	% of invoices paid within 30 days	82.25%	90%	80%	<p>Council's performance in this area was very close to that achieved last year, but suffered somewhat during March 2020 as Covid-19 restrictions were put in place. It should also be noted that the average processing time was 22.53 days as opposed to 24.49 days in 2018/19</p> <p>Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic Council had introduced electronic purchase order processing (POPs) in January 2020, staff were trained and this was working well. For staff to access the system they need access to the Council network which has caused issues for some staff working from home without VPN connection. Many staff enter the council buildings at designated times to raise and approve orders but it is anticipated that as more staff return to the workplace this will improve.</p>
2	Debt owed to Council	675,000	Reduce	759,000	<p>This indicator reflects the level of short term debt through Trade Receivables, as this is the main area that Council has control over in terms of pursuing reductions in debtor times and value.</p> <p>Awaiting final consolidated information. This measure continues to be reported and monitored by the Council's Finance Committee.</p>
3	% of complaints dealt with at stage 1	93%	95%	93%	<p>Council has maintained this high level of performance in 2019/20, with the lockdown restrictions in March 2020 having an effect on this work in the last month of the reporting year.</p>
4	% of FOI and EIR requests dealt with within target 20 working days	93%	100%	90%	<p>Once again Council has delivered a good performance in terms of meeting this statutory based directive. It is important to note that this high level of performance was managed in the context of 72 more cases than in the previous year, and the Covid-19 restrictions from March 2020, which both help to demonstrate the effort and performance delivered in this area.</p>

5	Number of staff training attendees	1,714	2,000	1,724	<p>Target of 2,000 separate incidents of training has not been reached, and indeed on reflection, this may have been an over-projection. Council did exceed the training rate from 2018/19 but, to provide some context, in the 2018/19 there was a large scale training programme rolled out across all Council in response to the new Data Protection legislation. This was completed by every member staff, and as such the numbers for 2018/19 could be considered to be skewed from a more normal pattern. In this context, 2019/20 can be seen as a success.</p> <p>Furthermore, once the Covi-19 restrictions were in place from March 2020 onwards, all planned training was postponed.</p> <p>Plans have been developed and indeed some training is now being delivered to staff via various online and interactive mechanisms.</p>
6	The cost of agency staff across the Council	£7,063,201.47	Reduce cost	£7,859,509	<p>Agency staff continue to provide a vital and highly valued role in terms of the delivery of Council services, and Council continues to work hard to strike an efficient balance between Permanent and Agency workers.</p>
7	The % of agency staff hours as overtime hours	<p>Environmental – 8.95%</p> <p>Leisure & Development – 10.7%</p> <p>Corp Services / CEX – 3.53%</p>	Reduce in each Directorate by 10%	<p>Environmental – 7.3%</p> <p>Leisure & Development – 14.5%</p> <p>Corp Services / CEX – 1.6%</p>	<p>As stated above, agency staff continue to provide a vital and highly valued role in terms of the delivery of Council services, and Council continues to work hard to strike an efficient balance between Permanent and Agency workers.</p> <p>In terms of Agency staff overtime as a percentage of total agency hours, Council has been able to demonstrate an overall slight reduction. At the Directorate level, 2 out of the 3 Directorates have seen reductions in this rate and work will continue in 2020/21 to maintain this trend.</p>

Section E - Progress against key proposals for improvement following NIAO Performance Audit, December 2019

Issue 1	December 2019 - Proposal for Improvement
Departmental plans are not agreed until several months after the start of the year	Annual Service Business Plans should be signed off at the beginning of each financial year. They should identify improvement arrangements and areas for continuous improvement and be regularly reported to relevant Committees.
Update	
<p>Council's Senior Management Team led on focused action to ensure that Business Plans were prepared and agreed much earlier in the business year. Services were instructed to avoid submitting a list of regular outputs, and instead were directed to tie their work much closer to improvements, performance indicators and measurable outcomes. This work was progressing well and remained on track but was temporarily halted in March 2020 due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, during which time Council did not hold a full complement of Committee sessions again until June 2020. However, the Directorates did have their Business Plans completed and agreed within a few months of the post lockdown restart.</p> <p>Furthermore, work has been progressing with Council's newly committed membership of APSE through which the Services will be subject to and indeed will provide data towards National Benchmarking Performance Indicators. This is a very positive step for Council. It has been agreed that moving forward the relevant and applicable APSE performance indicators will be included and reported through Service Business Plans.</p> <p>Finally, and as seen below, Council's Digital Services Team have been developing and testing new Performance Management Software, which will be used to assist in the monitoring and reporting of progress against Business Plans.</p>	

Issue 2	December 2019 - Proposal for Improvement
A robust and flexible Management Information System (MIS) is needed to: 1. Inform budget and target setting;	The Council should prioritise the development of its performance management system to enable the performance of all its functions and services to be measured, to support the identification of those areas

<p>2. Enable Services to manage and report on performance;</p> <p>3. Enable Services and Committee members to challenge what Council does and how it is done.</p>	<p>which would benefit most from improvement, and to monitor and report on performance improvement across all services as well as specifically against Improvement objectives and projects.</p> <p>The Council should consider if Performance Management software could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of collecting, analysing, monitoring and reporting on performance indicators and measures across all services and functions.</p>
<p>Update</p>	
<p>Council’s Senior Management Team and ICT consulted with colleagues and peers across other Councils and organisations when planning how best to address this area for improvement. The two main issues that Council continued to come back to was firstly the specification requirements to bespoke fit in with systems and software that Council already utilised and secondly the cost implications.</p> <p>The best solution that addressed both these issues was that Councils’ own Digital Services Team would create, build and develop new Performance Management Software for Council. The Digital Services Team have been developing and testing new Performance Management Software, which will be used to assist in the monitoring and reporting of progress against Business Plans. The key performance indicators and improvement actions from each Business Plan will be used to populate the digital platforms created, and accessibility for staff and elected members can be granted at whatever stage is deemed necessary and appropriate.</p> <p>Out with the cost savings and flexibly bespoke nature of the new software, one of the additional benefits of this has been that the Digital Services team have been able to improve themselves and their skill set, adding further value to the organisation and increasing the capacity and capability of their team.</p>	

Section F - Benchmarking indicators

F1 Important update on benchmarking

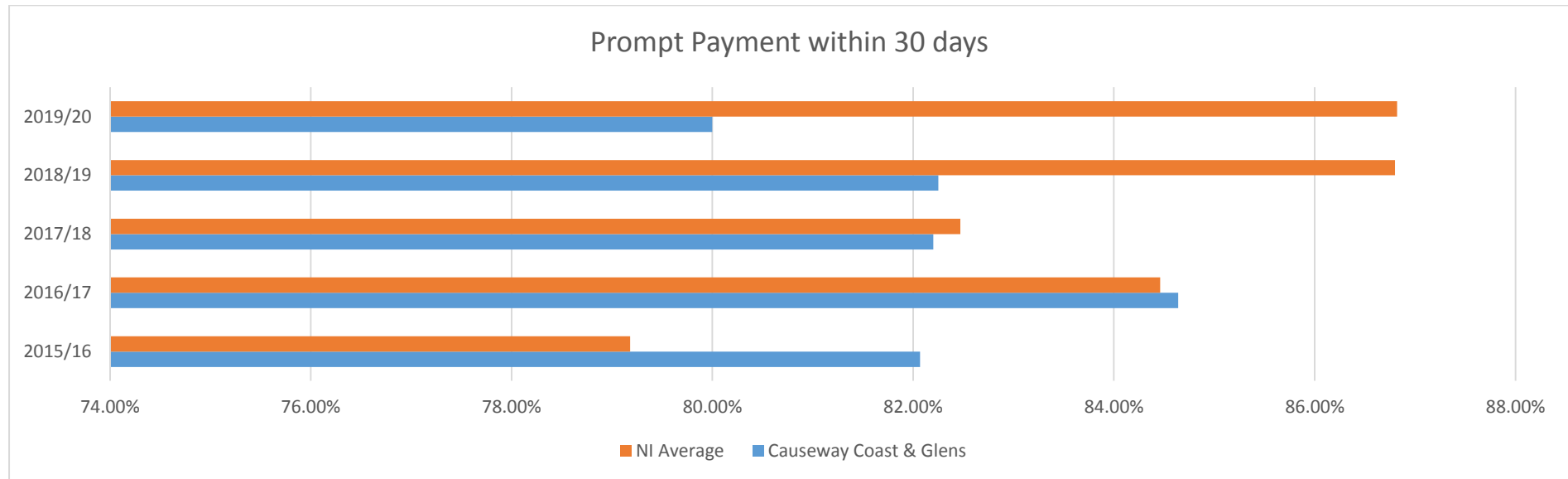
Causeway Coast and Glens Council has taken the positive step and joined up with 9 of the 10 other Northern Ireland Councils to be part of the “Northern Ireland Project”. This is the National Benchmarking Framework that is led and facilitated by APSE Performance Networks. Through membership of this network, Council will now be subject to and contribute data against over 170 Performance Indicators across 12 Services areas. Training and development for staff who will be involved in this has been ongoing, and Council believes that this is a valuable and positive step towards our ongoing aim to foster a culture of improvement.

The onset of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown restrictions and changes to working practises led to the development of this work to be slightly halted. The significant impact has been that Council will not be in a position to contribute to the August 2020 data submission exercise, however it has been agreed that Causeway Coast and Glens will be involved in the “Section Batch” exercise in January 2021, which will provide us with an opportunity to accurately benchmark significant areas of our performance in 2019/20 against nine other Councils in Northern Ireland.

This Performance Network and the services provided by APSE will also go some way to addressing the historic issues that Council face around the independent verification and validation of performance information.

It has been agreed that moving forward the relevant and applicable APSE performance indicators will be included in and reported through Service Business Plans.

F2 Prompt invoice payments



Council has a target to ensure that 90% of supplier invoices are paid within 30 days. As the table above shows, since 2015 Council has not achieved an annual average figure of over 90% and this has been reflective of the average rate at which all Northern Ireland Councils have been performing.

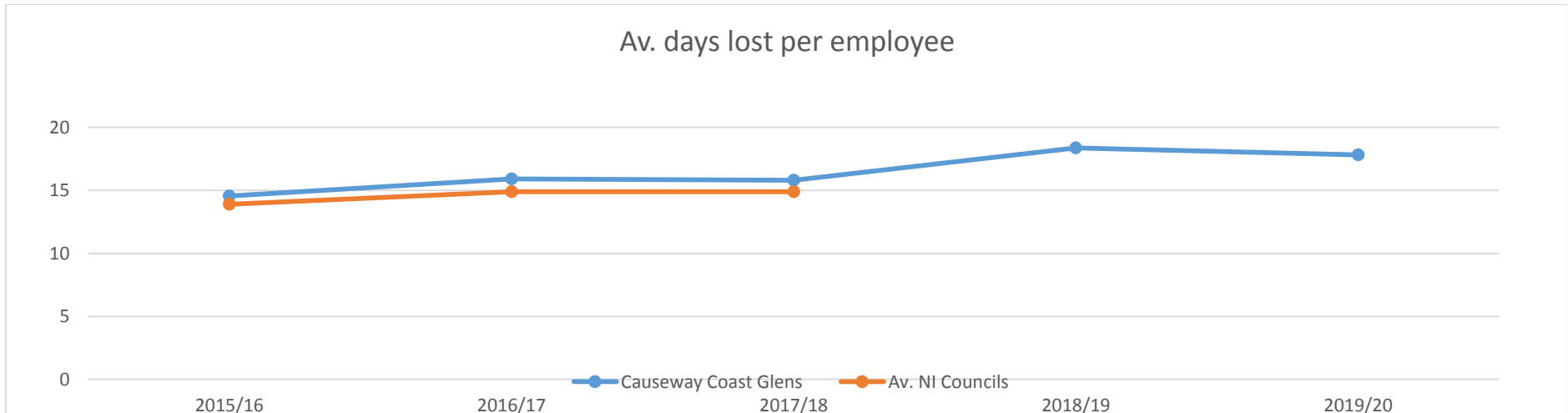
At Causeway Coast and Glens our Performance in this area has dropped since a high in 2016/17. Whilst the slight drop performance in comparison to previous periods is unwelcome council officers continue to seek improvements to overcome these difficulties and ultimately improve the performance. Council's Finance staff are continuing with the setting up of electronic systems which will remove the need to have invoices transported around all of our offices for verification and authorisation. The electronic system will produce significant improvements in the payment figures and an increase in performance is expected in 2020/21

F3 Council Absenteeism

During the year 2019/20 Absenteeism was the subject of a Performance Improvement Objective within the Council’s Performance Improvement Plan, and as such was regularly reported to Council. This decision had been reached after analysis of the Absenteeism data which showed that the average number of days lost per employee had reached an all-time high of 18.36 days at Causeway Coast and Glens and as such a Performance Improvement Objective for 2019/20 was agreed which focused on reducing the absenteeism rates in Council.

Average number of days lost per employee	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Causeway Coast Glens	14.56	15.9	15.8	18.36	17.82
Av. NI Councils	13.9	14.9	14.9	N/A	N/A

The table above also demonstrates the extent to which absenteeism had continued to rise over the previous four years, how Causeway Coast and Glens has been performing poorly against the national Council average, and then further reiterates the importance of the Improvement Objective created for the 2019/20 Performance Improvement Plan. The good news here is that due to the concentrated improvement work carried out by Causeway Coast and Glens Council that we have seen a reduction across all the main measurements of staff absenteeism in 2019/20.



SECTION G – Discharging the General Duty

G1. Governance for Performance Management within Causeway Coast and Glens Council 2019/20

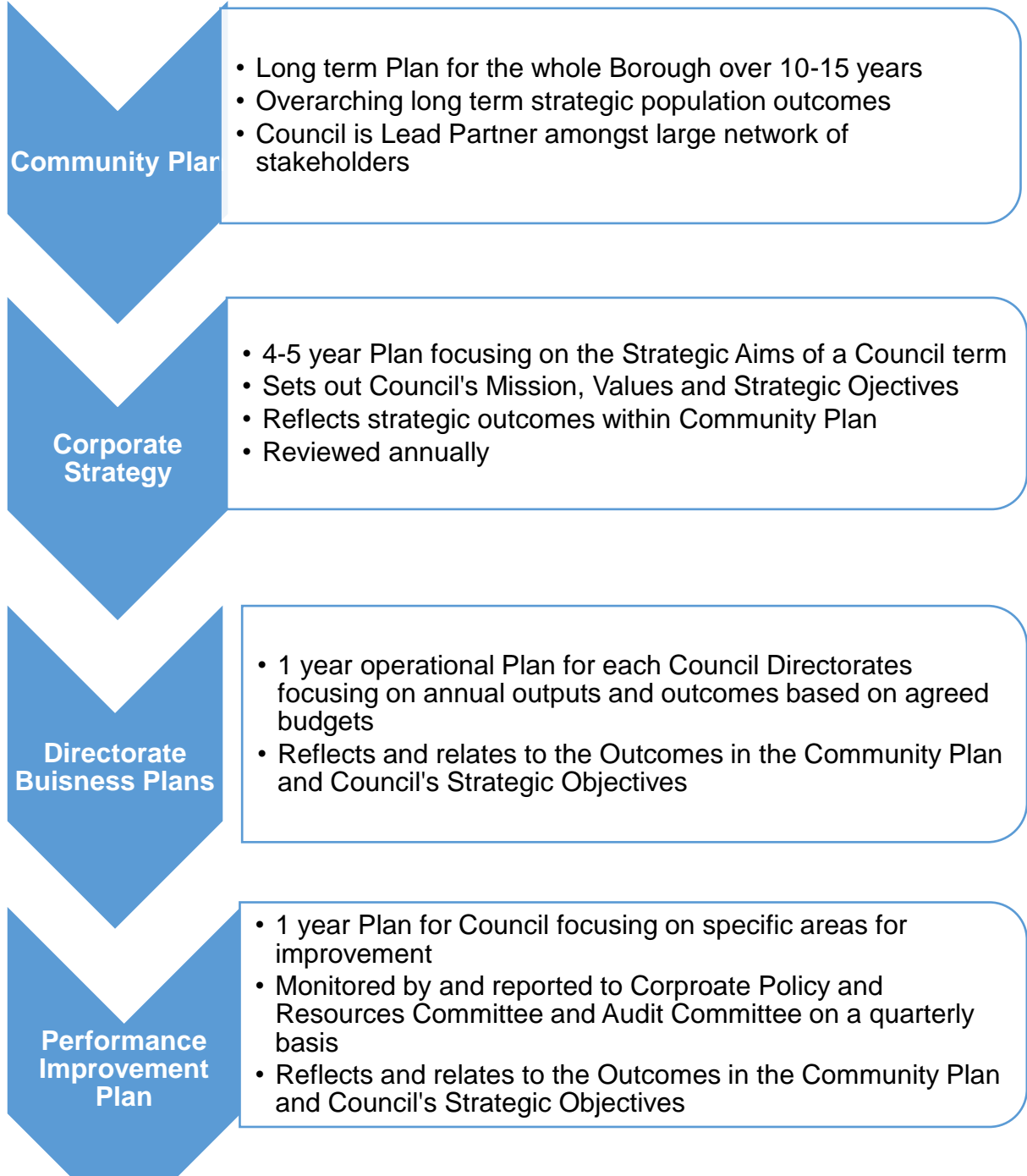
The Council aims to ensure that performance is formally identified, assessed and managed in accordance with the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (Part 12). To this end the following arrangements were in place during 2019/20:

- The process for monitoring, tracking and reporting on the progress of the Performance Improvement activities at Council has historically been coordinated on a day-to-day basis by the Council's Performance Team. To a significant extent this remains the case, however much more emphasis has been put on the Service Areas themselves to monitor and report against their own improvement actions.
- The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee assumed a scrutiny role for performance improvement and was presented with performance information in order for it to carry out this function.
- The Council's Audit Committee assumed a monitoring role in relation to the Performance Improvement and received update reports in order for it to carry out this function.
- The Council's appointed in-house Auditors had a planned audit in relation to progress of work being undertaken in relation to the annual performance improvement plan. This audit work, which will be reported to Council's Audit Committee, has been delayed due to the Covid-19 implications.
- Departmental Business Plans have been developed and approved by relevant Committees, and this forms an integral part of the performance improvement process. Within these Plans Council's resources are aligned, focusing on priority areas to maximise the delivery of improvements for citizens
- A suite of Council policies were in place to underpin the delivery of strategies and services and to ensure consistency of approach in terms of the Council's values and principles. Examples include the Council's Equality Scheme, Records Management Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Risk Management Policy. Other processes include the financial audit process, internal audit, external reporting such as the annual Sustainability Report or annual Equality Progress Reports.
- The Council has continued to develop its Performance Improvement Policy to underpin its continuous improvement approach including a framework cycle that reviews annual performance and identifies on going improvements and measurement. This Policy has been reviewed by Committee in August 2019 with Members making many recommendations for changes.

- The arrangements the Council has put in place to secure continuous improvement are subject to an annual Improvement audit and assessment by the Local Government Auditor. The outcome of the Performance Audit and Assessment is expected to be completed and reported on by the end of November 2020.
- Information on decision making is made available through Council and Committee Meeting Minutes and Reports being available on the Council’s website.
- The Council continued to work in partnership with other local authorities and the Department for Communities regarding the effective application of the legislative requirements within the Local Government (NI) Act 2014.
- The Council’s corporate website has been updated and now features a webpage dedicated to performance. This page provides further information regarding the Performance Improvement Plan, Assessment of Performance and guidance on how stakeholders can propose improvements in the future.

G2. Corporate arrangements to Secure Continuous Improvement

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is committed to achieving continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions as set out in the forward thinking themes detailed within the Corporate Strategy 2015-19 and the draft Corporate Strategy 2020-24. Indeed one of the named Values in the draft 2020/24 Corporate Strategy is “**Improvement**”, with the aim to – “Create a culture of continuous improvement”. The Performance Improvement Plan is set within a strategic hierarchy of key Plans which provide a comprehensive picture of the arrangements through which Council discharges its duty to improve. Please see below:



G3. The 2019/20 Performance Improvement Plan

In addition to the plans and strategies outlined above, the Council's commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of our services is clearly set out through our Performance Improvement Plan. In June 2019 Council published a new Performance Improvement Plan for 2019/20 which set out how we would deliver improvement in at least one of the seven improvement areas, as stipulated in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014:

- Strategic Effectiveness
- Service Quality
- Service Availability
- Fairness
- Sustainability
- Efficiency
- Innovation

The process to identify and select Improvement Objectives began in November 2018 and continued right through until the following June 2019. We set out to gather as much information and opinion as possible before formulating improvement themes and the final Improvement Objectives. The main contributing factors and activity towards the creation of Improvement Objectives were:

- The Performance Improvement Consultation process
- Identification of areas of need by senior council officers
- Outcomes and areas for improvement within the 2018 Section 95 Audit and Assessment Report
- Critical self-analysis of Council's Performance
- Analysis and debate by Members during Council Committee sessions

Section B of this self-assessment report focuses on progress made against the specific improvement projects which contribute to the Council's Performance Improvement Objectives for 2018/19.

Please see the Performance Improvement Plan 2019/20 for further reference.

G4. Consultation for the 2019/20 Performance Improvement Objectives

In line with part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 General Duty of Improvement, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council sought views from ratepayers, customers and those with an interest in the Borough to aid the development of its draft performance improvement objectives for the 2019/20 financial year:

Council decided to expand the boundaries of the Performance Improvement Consultation process for the 2019/20 Improvement Plan. As such we managed a consultation process with four distinct strands as set out below:

1. A 12 week public consultation which ran from 1 Dec 2018 until 28 February 2019, during which time views were sought via an online survey, social media, local press, staff newsletter and the Council web site. Council received 60 responses including over 400 separate comments.
2. An Elected Members workshop was held on 10 January 2019 and was attended by 15 Members. These 15 Members provided verbal and written feedback on their key areas for improvement in terms of the services that Council provides.
3. The Performance Team presented to Council Heads of Service and Directors on 26 November 2018. These senior officers have all provided written responses with Service specific areas for improvement.
4. The Performance Team presented to the Community Planning Stakeholders on 16 January 2019. These stakeholders offered their views at that session as well as providing written feedback on proposed areas for improvement.

Summary - Self-Assessment of Performance Improvement 2019/20

Performance Improvement Area	Self-Assessment 2019/20 Overview	What can we do better?
<p>Performance against Improvement Objectives 2019/20</p>	<p>4 of the 5 Improvement Objectives have reported significant improvements and successful delivery against the agreed outcomes</p> <p>Reflecting on Audit recommendations, and in an effort to improve the quality of our self-assessment, and instead of mainly reporting on outputs as Council has done in the past, in 2019/20 the information that has been managed and reported in the self-assessment in relation to the improvement objectives has been significantly developed. Indeed, against each Improvement Objective Council has provided the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear Outputs - Measurable, targeted outcomes with historic benchmarks - Explanations of performance - Assessment of achievement of the Improvement Indicators - Risks - Reporting mechanisms - Next steps <p>Council Committee's received updates on the progress and performance of the Improvement Indicators and Improvement Plan. During 2019/20 the emphasis for monitoring and reporting has been placed much more on the Service areas themselves and specific templates for internally reporting on progress have been developed</p>	<p>The conscious move in 2019/20 to ensure that the Service areas take more direct responsibility for reporting on their own performance has made some progress, but there is much scope for further development here. More detailed reporting at more regular intervals from the Services is required.</p> <p>Work on new performance management software, as well as Council's newly committed membership of the APSE Performance Network will both assist to develop this area of work, especially in terms of culture.</p>
<p>Statutory Indicators</p>	<p>Council is achieving positive returns against targets for 4 of the 7 statutory indicators, with the Economic Development indicator only missing out marginally in the face of Covid-19</p>	<p>The Statutory targets that our Planning Department have to attain to have proved difficult to achieve, although this is indicative of most Councils in Northern Ireland. Our Planning Department is working hard to put process improvements in place.</p>

	<p>One of the Council's most positive stories in 2019/20 was highlighted through the waste and recycling Statutory Indicators where Council surpassed the 50% recycling rate for the first time.</p> <p>Council has built up at least 4 years of performance data in relation to the Statutory indicators which has enabled comparisons over time against other Councils.</p> <p>Performance against statutory indicators is now being reported by the Services to their relevant Council Committees ensuring more transparency and opportunity for scrutiny</p>	
Self-Imposed Indicators	<p>Council has many measures and indicators that it tracks to help demonstrate performance and activity, and each Directorate Business Plan contains suites of targets and Outcomes.</p> <p>A set of formalised self-imposed indicators was developed and included in the 2019/20 Performance Improvement Plan, and explanations of Performance against these indicators is included in this self-assessment.</p> <p>Work on new performance management software, as well as Council's newly committed membership of the APSE Performance Network has increased the focus on establishing and reporting against indicators.</p>	<p>Improvements are required in the Council's Business Planning process especially in terms of aligning work to measurable and tangible outcomes.</p> <p>Council needs to get to a point where self-imposed indicators, which are measurable outcome based, are evident in all Service Business Plans and are reported on to Council Committees on a regular basis. Council has been developing this approach and improvements should be evident during 2020/21.</p>
Benchmarking Indicators	<p>In terms of Prompt Payments statistics, Council has not met its target of 90% invoices paid within 30 days, but Performance is very much in line with the average return from all Northern Ireland Councils and was impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions.</p> <p>In terms of Absenteeism, Council's overall performance improved in 2019/20 with reductions noted against the main indicators</p>	<p>Developments in Benchmarking will improve significantly over the period 2020/21 as Council has taken the positive step and joined up with 9 of the 10 other Northern Ireland Councils to be part of the "Northern Ireland Project". This is the National Benchmarking Framework that is led and facilitated by APSE Performance Networks. Through membership of this network, Council will now be subject to and contribute data against over 170 Performance</p>

	<p>associated with staff absenteeism. It should be noted however that the improvement did not reach the target reduction that was set.</p>	<p>Indicators across 12 Services areas. Training and development for staff who will be involved in this has been ongoing, and Council believes that this is a valuable and positive step towards our ongoing aim to foster a culture of improvement.</p> <p>The overall approach to benchmarking will be developed in line with recommendations from the Multi-Stakeholder subgroup of the Local Government Performance Improvement Working Group, with a clear focus on Covid-19 recovery</p>
<p>Discharging the General Duty</p>	<p>Council's Performance Management Framework has continued to develop, with some evidence of a culture of improvement being realised throughout the organisation.</p> <p>Some of the most important developments have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directorate Business Plans agreed and published earlier in the business year - More direct reporting and monitoring by senior managers and to Committee by the Services themselves - Council led solution developed for new Performance Management Software. This will host Business Plans and key self-imposed indicators, as well as ensuring a standardisation in terms of monitoring reports. - Council has taken the positive step and joined the National Benchmarking Framework that is led and facilitated by APSE Performance Networks. Through membership of this network, Council will now be subject to and contribute data against over 170 Performance Indicators across 12 Services areas. Council believes that this is a valuable and positive step towards our ongoing aim to foster a culture of improvement. 	<p>Living with Covid-19 and the impacts that it has on all Council Services will be a main factor in how we perform moving forward. Recovery based indicators will need to be developed and monitored in 2020/21.</p> <p>One key area for improvement is the Council's Business Planning process. Director and Service level business plans are being produced earlier, but they all need to ensure that their work is aligned better to clear and measurable outcomes and performance indicators. Furthermore, there is limited scrutiny and performance reporting against these Business Plans during the year and Council needs to get to a point where this level of scrutiny is increased. This remains a key area of work for Council in 2020/21.</p> <p>Work on the new Corporate Plan 2020/24 needs to be completed with a clear Outcomes focus.</p>

	<p>- The Council's new Corporate Strategy 2020-24 has been developed and is currently in Draft form</p> <p>Council Committees continue to receive updates regarding progress with Improvement Objectives, self-imposed indicators and statutory performance indicators from Service leads and the Council's Performance Team.</p>	
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Have Your Say

Your opinion matters.

The Council is committed to improving our services and it is important that we listen to what the community have to say. We welcome your comments or suggestions at any time of the year.

If you have any comments, would like any further information, or to request a copy of this assessment document then please contact:

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