



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council



Performance Improvement Plan

2016-2017

Introduction

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council was established as part of the programme for local government reform, the most significant change in over 40 years.

The purpose of the reform process is to create “a thriving dynamic local government that creates, vibrant, healthy, prosperous, safe and sustainable communities that meets the needs of the citizens” and aims to deliver improved service provision and long-term cost savings.

For Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, this provides a once in a political lifetime opportunity to do things differently and to do different things.

Our focus is always to improve the quality of life for our citizens.

Our vision:

Mid and East Antrim - Working together to create a better future for all

How we will realise our vision:

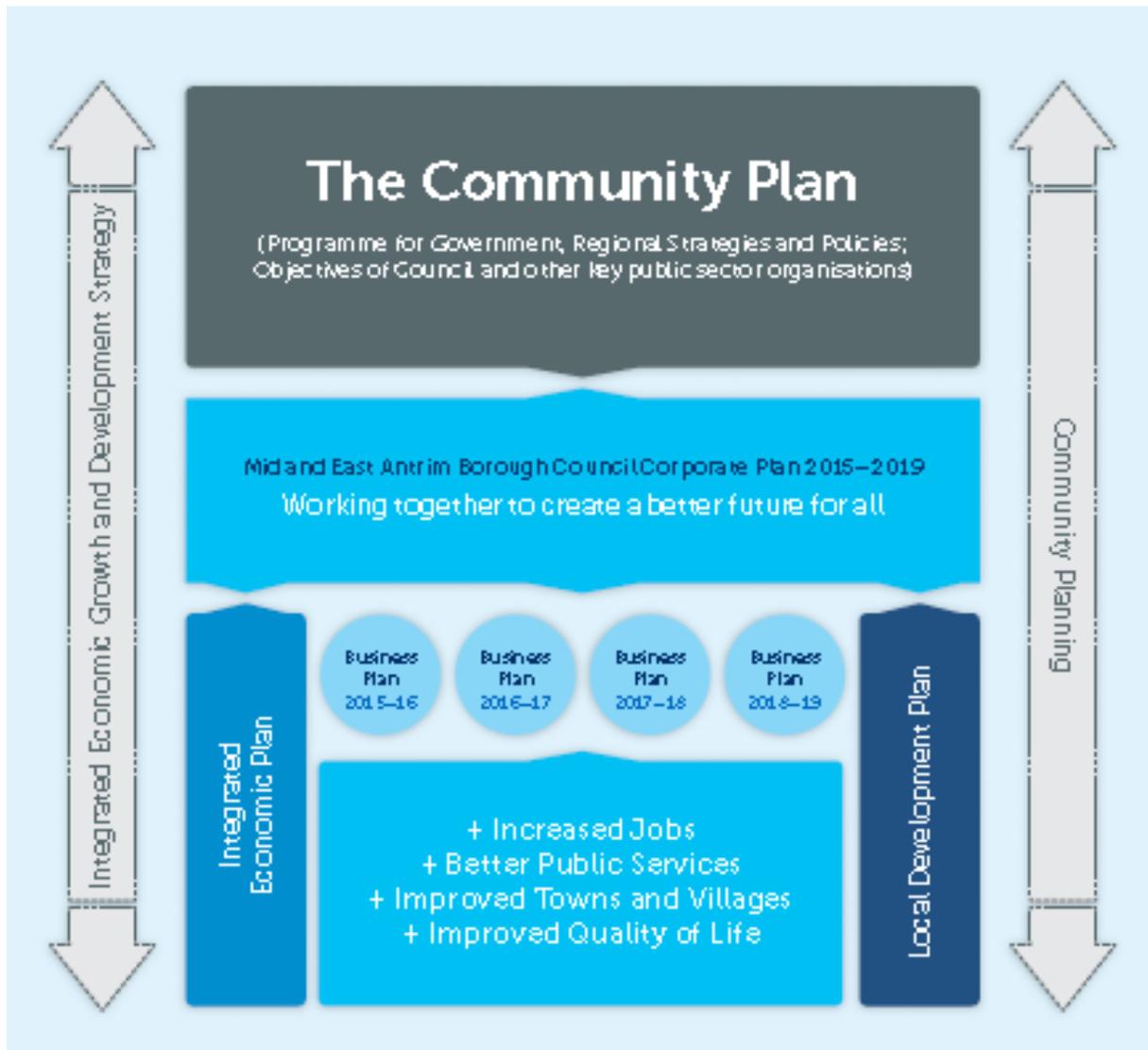
The first Corporate Plan for Mid and East Antrim Borough presents a clear and compelling vision for our people and the place. It ties together a number of plans and strategies which will enable the Council to deliver our vision for the area and will be interlinked to our Community Plan which sees all public services and corporate priorities come together.

The Community Plan (planned publication date April 2017) will bring together the key priorities of all public service across Mid and East Antrim to ensure that public resources are used to best effect and in line with citizen need. Council’s priorities are set out in our Corporate Plan.

Business Plans will set out how we will deliver these priorities within allocated resources.

Additionally our Integrated Economic Growth and Development Strategy and Local Development Plan are key to realising our strategic priorities.

The diagram below outlines how these plans link together.



To deliver our vision, Council has agreed five integrated strategic priorities:



A duty to improve

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 put in place a new framework to support continuous improvement in the delivery of council services, in the context of strategic objectives and issues that are important to our citizens and customers.

“Improvement” in the context of the Act means more than just quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or the internal effectiveness of the Council. Improvement for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council means activities which will enhance the sustainable quality of life and environment for our citizens - **creating a better future for all.**

In addition to the plans and strategies outlined above Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will demonstrate our commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of our services through the development and implementation of an annual improvement plan.

With our improvement plan we will set out how we will deliver improvement in at least one of these areas:

- Strategic effectiveness;
- Service quality;
- Service availability;
- Fairness;
- Sustainability;
- Efficiency; and
- Innovation.

Identifying improvement areas

From April 2017 the Community Plan for Mid and East Antrim will inform our Annual Improvement Plan as it will establish those areas our citizens have identified as being most important to them and where improvement will have maximum impact.

Additionally, the Programme for Government will establish key strategic priorities for the region which will be reflected in our improvement plans.

For our 2016/2017 Improvement Plan areas have been identified through:

- Our strategic priorities;
- Community Plan - baseline report;
- Citizen feedback (e.g. surveys, complaints/compliments);
- Service reviews and audit reports and
- Statistical information (e.g. statutory key performance indicators, financial data, attendance information)

Specific, service level projects have been identified to support improvement in strategic effectiveness, service quality and availability, fairness and efficiency.

We believe that our improvement objectives are:

- **Legitimate** - making a demonstrable contribution to at least one of the improvement areas listed above;
- **Clear** - setting out the visible improvement that citizens can expect;
- **Robust** - with defined terms of success;
- **Deliverable** - with established links to individual service programmes and budgets; and
- **Demonstrable** - capable of being supported by objective evidence.

Statutory Performance Indicators

In addition to the improvement areas identified by Council the Department for Communities also sets targets for Councils.

For 2015-2016 these were set in the following functional areas:

Planning:

- Number of major planning applications processed;
- Number of local planning applications processed; and
- Progress of enforcement cases.

Economic development:

- Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity. (*Business start-up activity means the delivery of completed client led business plans under the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's Regional Start Initiative or its successor programmes*).

Waste:

- % of household waste collected by Council that is sent for recycling;
- Amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled;
- Amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arising.

Council will publish our results against these indicators on our website:
www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/improvement

Improvement Objective 1 -

High level of customer satisfaction based on standards which are well communicated to both service users and staff.

We will do this by:

Establishing quality standards to support improved service delivery across Council

Why are we doing this?

During this time of transformation Council wishes to ensure first class frontline services which make a positive impact on the quality of life for all our citizens, and delivering excellent services is key strategic priority for Council.

Establishing services standards have a proven record of driving quality improvements and organisations that use established (e.g. BSI, QUEST, Green Flag, IIP) and/or bespoke standards have more satisfied customers, more efficient ways of working and better cost control.

Council has already identified the benefit of the Plain English Campaign Crystal Mark accreditation, to encourage clear communication with citizens.

We will deliver:

- A Customer Service Charter establishing key corporate services standards expected across all services;
- Competition of a scoping exercise to determine quality standards currently operational across the Council, where gaps exist and learning to be shared;
- Following scoping exercise determine appropriate awards Council may apply for to improve standards; and
- 100% of documents submitted to Plain English Campaign will receive Crystal Mark accreditation.

How we will measure success - expected improvement outcomes:

- Increased Customer satisfaction levels (identified through surveys, monitoring of complaints/compliments);
- Crystal Mark accreditation in 100% of documents submitted for assessment.

Start: April 2016

Duration: 12 months

Strategic priority linkage:

- Delivering excellent services

Performance improvement area:

- Service quality

Improvement objective 2 -

A consistent and fair Leisure Service Pricing Policy which promotes access to leisure services across the Borough

We will do this by:

Developing and implementing a Pricing Policy for Leisure Services

Why are we doing this?

Variation in prices across the predecessor council areas, in conjunction with the variation of fees and charges across neighbouring Councils in Northern Ireland for similar services, impact on the service users perception of price fairness and equity. Additionally, service users are increasingly focussed on value for money, and whether the outcomes satisfy their investment.

We will deliver:

- Leisure Services Pricing Policy for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council which will be used to cost charges and fees;
- Within the Pricing Policy, agree a concessionary pricing policy, which supports the Council's strategic priorities and is in line with the Council's duties under Section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998; and
- To develop and implement charges and fees schedule which is well communicated to service users and staff.

How we will measure success - expected improvement outcomes for the citizen:

- Increased customer satisfaction levels (survey, complaints/compliments received);
- Positive feedback from S75 groups following consultation;
- Increase in users at groups targeted through concessionary rates; and
- Increase in users generally.

Start: April 2016

Duration: 6 months

Strategic priority linkage:

- Building stronger, safe and healthy communities; and
- Delivering excellent services.

Performance improvement area:

- Service availability; and
- Fairness

Improvement Objective 3 -

To achieve a culture of high performance which will support the provision of first class frontline services which make a positive impact on the quality of life for all our citizens.

We will do this by:

The establishment of a cross-functional workforce team - ACHIEVE

Why are we doing this?

The purpose of the high performing culture team, aka ACHIEVE, is to support the development of staff to ensure we have the right skills, knowledge and attitudes to deliver effective services in line with citizen need.

We will deliver:

- Staff are working to the core competencies to enable high performance;
- Define a performance improvement framework; and
- Create managers who are clear about what good performance looks like and able to have critical conversations in a positive way.

How we will measure success - expected improvement outcomes:

- Increased awareness of performance culture across Council at all levels; reporting;
- Increase in customer satisfaction levels (both from service users and staff);
- Performance appraisals conducted across organisation with feedback making a positive impact on service delivery; and
- Improved sickness absence rates.

Start: November 2015

Duration: March 2019

Strategic priority linkage

- Delivering excellent services; and
- Developing a high performing Council.

Performance Improvement Area

- Strategic Effectiveness;
- Service Quality; and
- Business Efficiency.

Improvement objective 4:

Effective implementation of the Northern Ireland Executive’s policy on prompt payments, improving business cash flow and supporting our local economy.

We will do this by:

Introduction of electronic purchase ordering across all Council services, facilities and functions.

Why are we doing this?

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will be pioneering in our approach to service delivery to make every penny count, and account for every penny. In doing so we will innovative and outcome focussed.

In line with the Northern Ireland Executive’s policy on prompt payment, Council is encouraged to aim to pay at least 90% of valid invoices within 10 working days and the rest within 30 working days. This practice helps business cash flow and supports our local economy.

In 2011 Larne Borough Council introduced an Electronic Purchase Ordering system. That system has demonstrated an improved control environment, prompter payments, and greater efficiencies in relation to invoice clearance.

Office location	% invoices paid within 10 working days (2015/16)	% invoices paid within 30 calendar days (2015/16)
Ballymena	34.75	79.6
Carrickfergus	50.65	87.45
Larne	82.84	96.6
Total	49.55	85.36

Larne Office exceeds the performance of the top-ranked Council in Northern Ireland who paid 71.56% invoices paid within 10 working days. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is currently ranked 4th for prompt payments within 10 working days, whilst 2nd for prompt payments within 30 calendar days.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is committed to improving business efficiency through innovative use of information technology and as such proposes to implement the electronic purchase order system currently used in the Larne office across all Council services and facilities.

We will deliver:

- Improved control environment - complete audit trail from raising of order, approval and invoice clearance.
- Prompt payment targets met.
- Authorisation of orders across a multi-site organisation.
- Full visibility of status of purchase orders at all times.
- Maintain good customer/supplier relationships.

How we will measure success - expected improvement outcomes:

- 80% of invoices will be paid within 10 working days ;
- 95% of invoices paid within 30 calendar days; and
- Ranked #1 Council in Northern Ireland in relation to Prompt Payments, improving cash flow for our suppliers and supporting the local economy.

Start: September 2016

Duration: 2 years

Strategic linkage:

- Growing the Economy; and
- Delivering excellent services.

Performance improvement area:

- Efficiency; and
- Innovation.

Improvement Objective 5:

To create a fit for purpose, user-friendly and attractive website.

We will do this by:

Website redesign

Why are we doing this?

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council recognises that we must be open, transparent and responsible for all we do and are accountable to the citizen. Good communication is an essential tool in building trust among our services users, stakeholders and citizens.

Following the launch of the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council website in April 2015 a satisfaction survey was conducted with Elected Members and Senior Staff which identified areas for improvement with the design of the website. In addition, public feedback from service users has indicated a need for improved signposting of information and more access to online services.

We will deliver:

- Clear understanding of audience groups and service user needs;
- User-centric website that allows users to access information and services quickly and easily.
- Effective communication of key messages about the Council;
- Meet our statutory responsibilities in relation to proactive publication of information.

How we will measure success - expected improvement outcomes:

- Improved customer satisfaction levels (tested through re-survey);
- Increased unique users and return visits;
- Increase in number of users utilising online services; and
- Increased awareness of Council's key messages (tested through survey).

Start: September 2016

Duration: 6 months

Strategic Linkage:

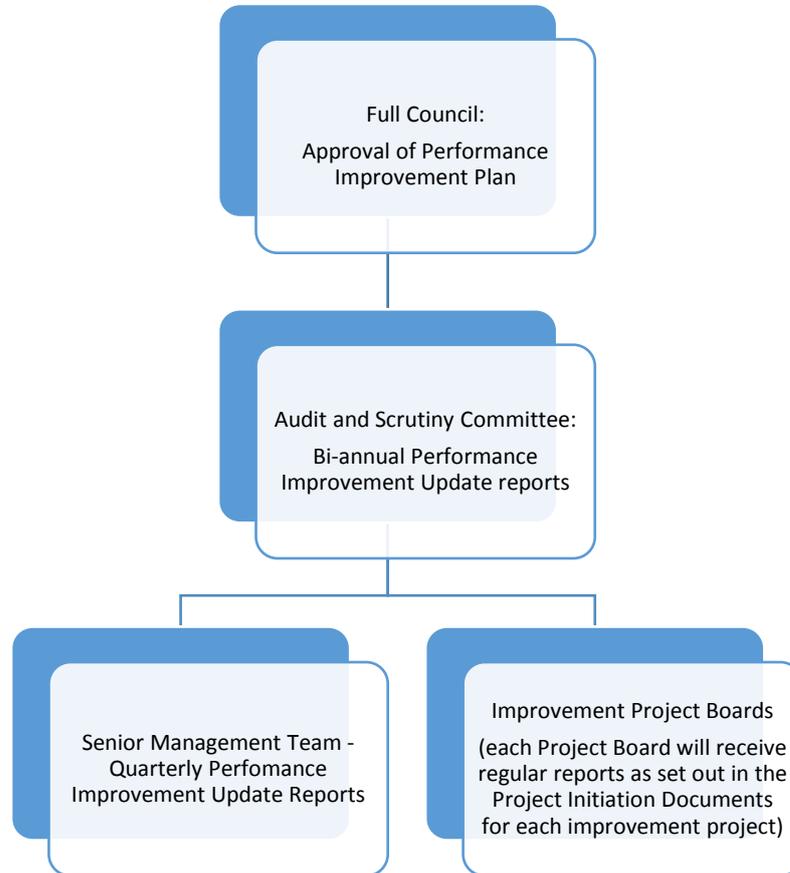
- Delivering Excellent Services

Performance Improvement Area:

- Service quality; and
- Service availability

Performance Improvement Programme Management

The diagram below sets out the Council's governance arrangements for the monitoring and reporting of Performance Improvement in 2016/2017.



In addition Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will publish an Improvement Review Report annually for our citizens, service users and stakeholders.

In summary:

Improvement Project	Strategic Priority	Performance Area	Objective	Completion date	Outcomes
Establishing quality standards	Delivering Excellent Services	Service Quality	High level of customer satisfaction based on standards which are well communicated to both service users and staff.	March 2017	Increased customer satisfaction levels; Crystal Mark Accreditation achieved in 100% of submitted documents
Pricing Policy for Leisure Services	Building Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities	Service Availability Fairness	A consistent and fair Leisure Service Pricing Policy which promotes access to leisure services across the Borough	September 2016	Increased customer satisfaction levels (survey, complaints/compliments received); Positive feedback from S75 groups following consultation; Increase in users at groups targeted through concessionary rates; Increase in users generally; and Income generated.
High Performing Culture Team - ACHIEVE	Delivering Excellent Services; Developing a High Performing Council	Strategic Effectiveness Service Quality	To achieve a culture of high performance which will support the provision of first class frontline services which make a positive impact on	Ongoing - key milestones identified in Project Initiation Document	Increased awareness of performance culture across Council at all levels; reporting; Increase in customer satisfaction levels (both from service users and staff); Performance appraisals conducted across organisation

Improvement Project	Strategic Priority	Performance Area	Objective	Completion date	Outcomes
			the quality of life for all our citizens.		with feedback making a positive impact on service delivery; and Improved sickness absence rates.
Electronic Purchasing	Growing our Economy; Delivering Excellent Services	Service Quality	Introduce electronic purchase ordering across all Council services and facilities to support Council's implementation of the Northern Ireland's policy on prompt payment, improving business cash flow and supporting our local economy.	March 2018	80% of invoices will be paid within 10 working days ; 95% of invoices paid within 30 calendar days; and Ranked #1 Council in Northern Ireland in relation to Prompt Payments, improving cash flow for our suppliers and supporting the local economy
Website Redesign	Delivering Excellent Services	Strategic effectiveness Service Quality Service Availability	To create a fit for purpose, user-friendly and attractive website	March 2017	Improved customer satisfaction levels (tested through re-survey); Increased unique users and return visits; Increase in number of users utilising online services; and Increased awareness of Council's key messages (tested through survey).

