



Corporate Plan 2023-2024

Six-month update report
April - September 2023

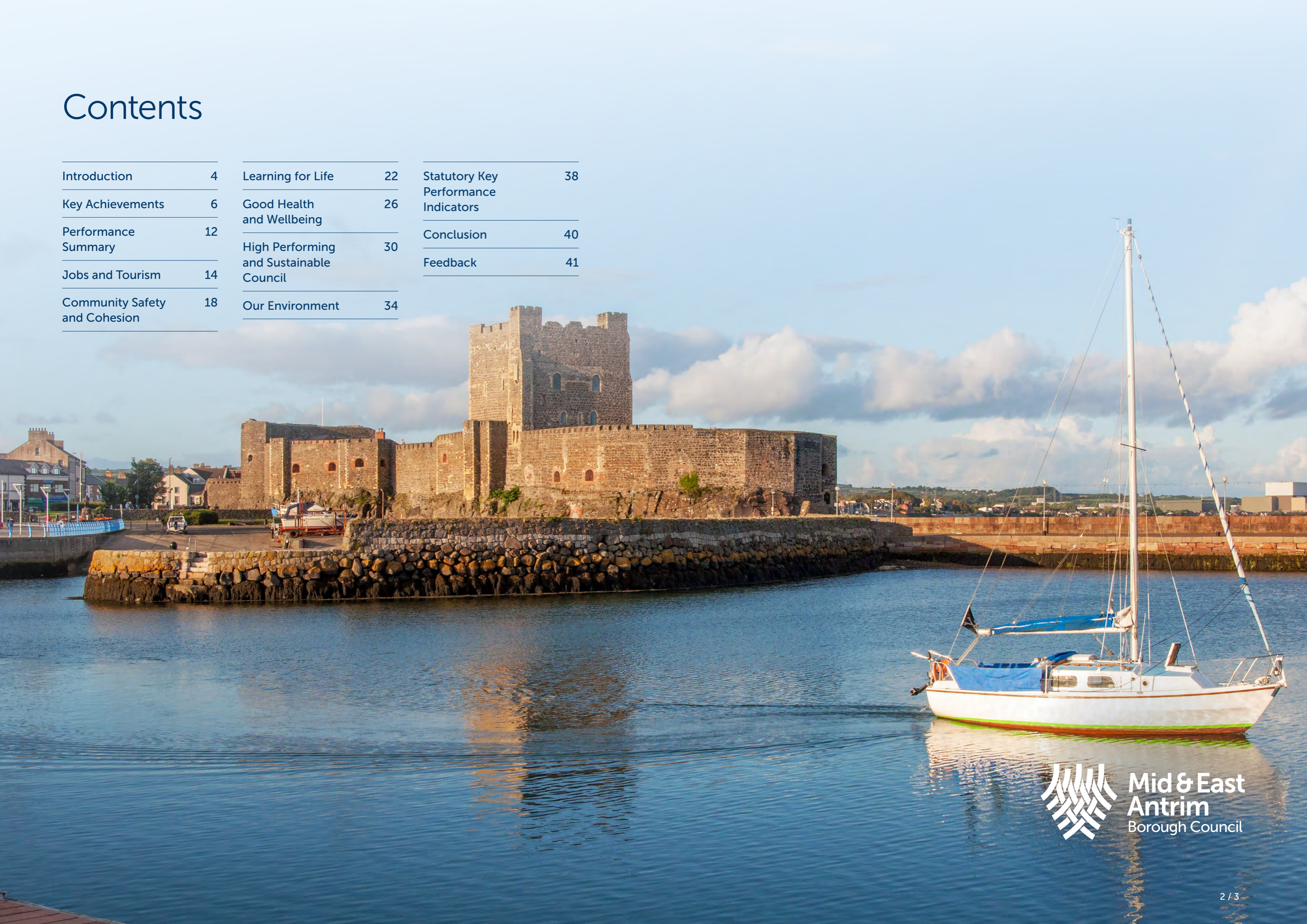
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**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

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Introduction

As the Interim Chief Executive of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, I would like to welcome you to our Corporate Plan 2023/24 six-month update report.

Our Corporate Plan sits at the heart of everything we do, and is closely aligned to the 15-year Community Plan for the borough - Putting People First.

This report will provide you with an executive summary of our performance against the objectives set out within the plan.

As we continue to recover from the effects of the pandemic, we face many economic shocks, including a cost-of-living crisis, price instability, inflation, low consumer confidence, tightened financial conditions and slower economic growth.

We also face the challenge of transitioning to a carbon-neutral society.

Despite all of these challenges our staff have continued to work tirelessly to deliver on our vision for the borough, and I am pleased to share just some of these achievements within this report.

As the year progresses there will undoubtedly be further challenges, but we are committed to working together for Mid and East Antrim, to improve the quality of life for all.



Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive
Mid and East Antrim
Borough Council

Our Vision

Mid and East Antrim will be a strong, vibrant, safe and inclusive community, where people work together to improve the quality of life for all

Key Achievements

Four play parks refurbished

13 new Elected Members welcomed following successful election process

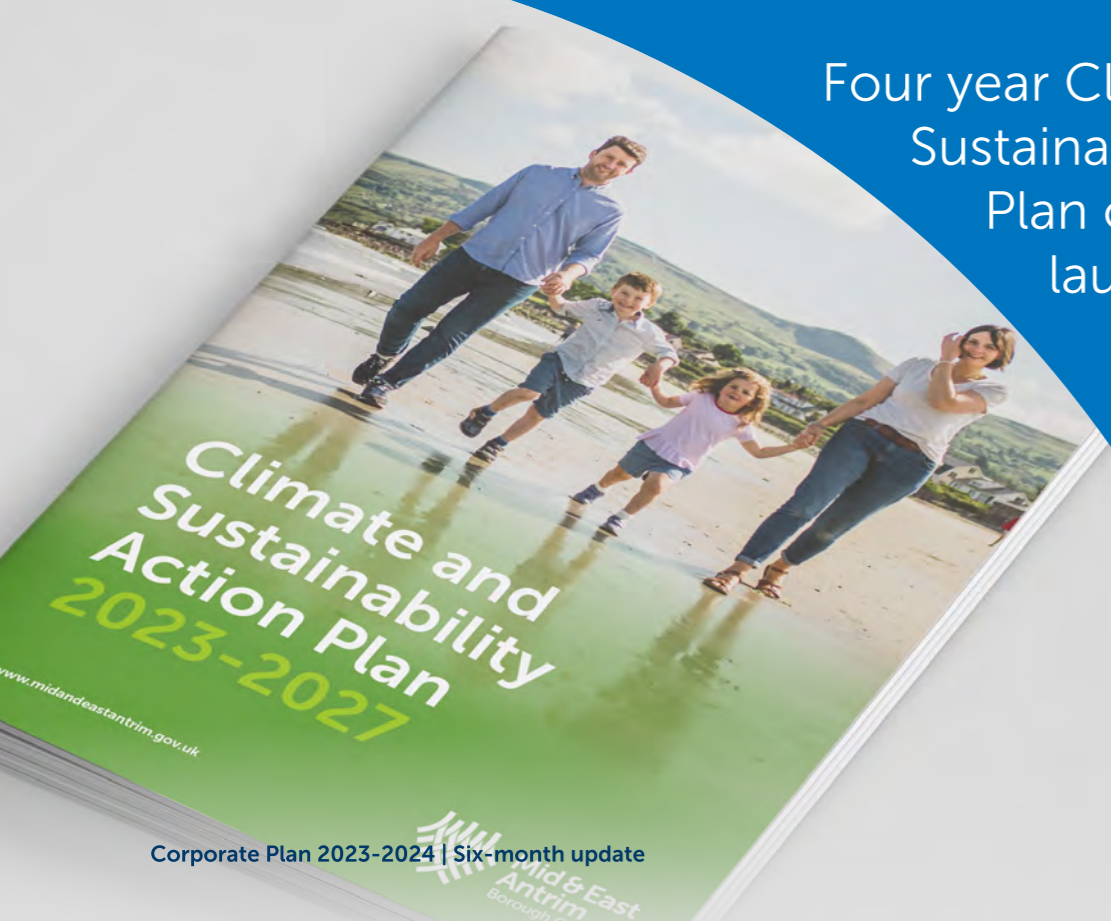
Sensory gardens officially opened at People's Park and Carnfunnock Country Park



Successful delivery of World Alzheimer's Month 2023



Hydrogen Training Academy wins Best Public/Private Partnership Working Initiative at the APSE Service Awards 2023



Four year Climate and Sustainability Action Plan officially launched

Local Development
Plan 2030 – Plan
Strategy officially
launched



Council
presented with
Zero Waste Award
by Keep Northern
Ireland Beautiful



World Suicide
Prevention Week
delivered across
the borough



Our Plan

Our Corporate Plan was designed to support the delivery of the Community Plan (2017-2032), sharing the same vision and aligning with its themes and priorities.

Our strategic priorities for this year are outlined below.

- Jobs and Tourism
- Community Safety and Cohesion
- Learning for Life
- Good Health and Wellbeing
- High Performing and Sustainable Council
- Our Environment

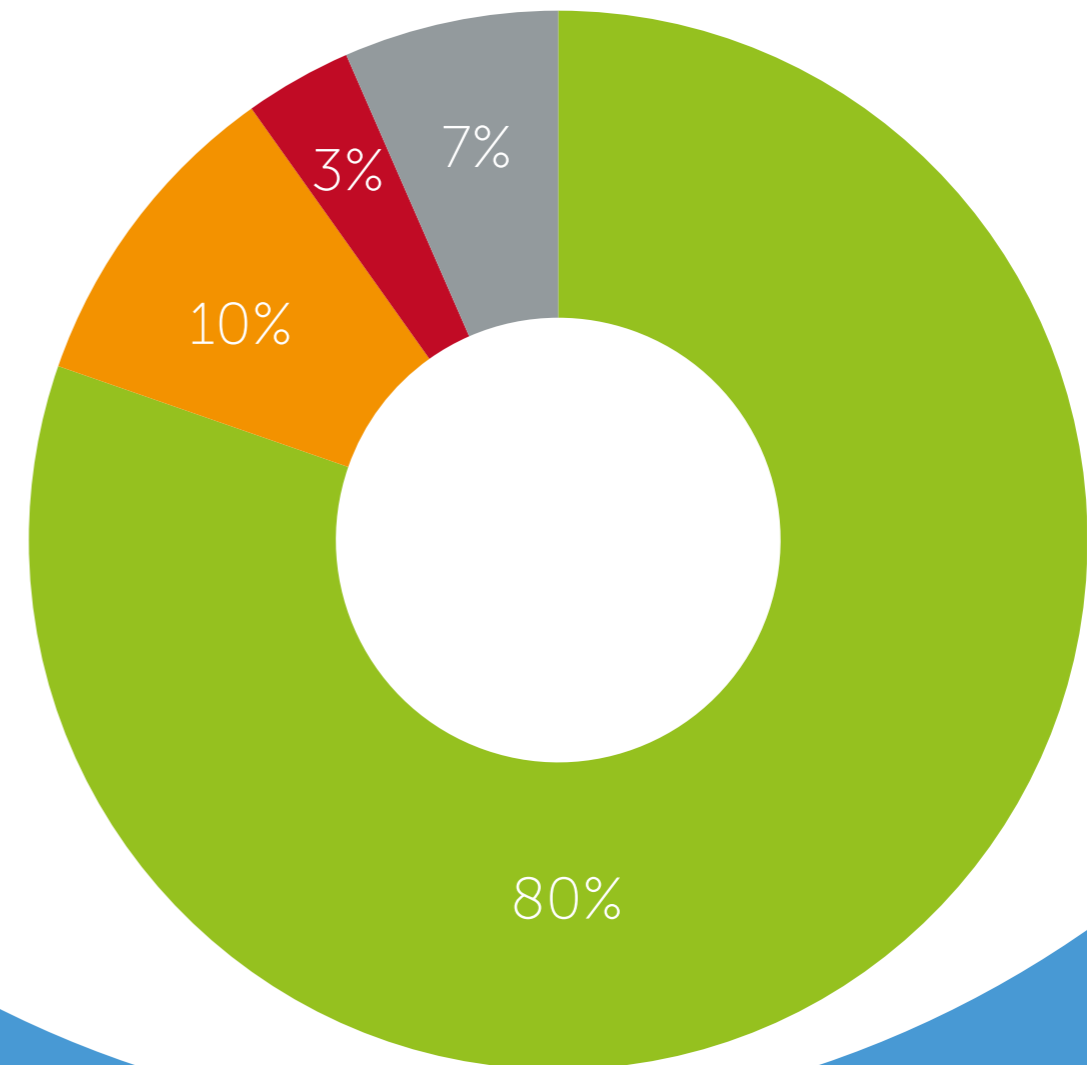
Performance Overview April - September 2023

To support the delivery of our Strategic Objectives and Actions, we established a set of 61 measures to help us track our success.

The chart below summarises our performance against achieving these measures from April – Sept 2023. Performance by theme is outlined on the following pages.

Progress Key
We have outlined our progress throughout the report as follows:

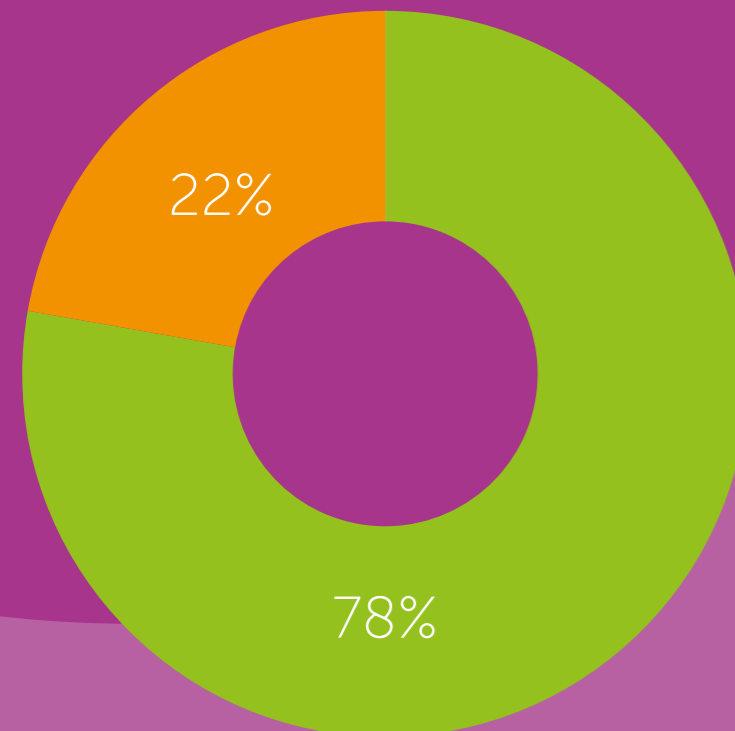
- Achieved or on track
- Delayed but progressing
- Not achieved or stopped
- Not due or not available



Jobs and Tourism

Strategic Objectives

- Position and promote Mid and East Antrim as a dynamic, outward-looking region that welcomes and supports inward investment.
- Through a variety of support programmes, grow, support and sustain new and existing businesses.
- Drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth through investing in our people, our places and our businesses.
- Create a compelling tourism proposition by investing in the development and promotion of our unique cultural, arts and heritage assets.
- Attract more domestic and international visitors to the borough to stay longer and spend more.



Actions and Measures

Action 1	<i>Continue to progress the development of the i4C Innovation and CleanTech Centre to support businesses and create jobs.</i>
Measure 1	Secure Outline Business Case Approval for i4C and HyTech by 31 March 2024.
Status	At the centre of our Cleantech focus is hydrogen innovation, training and support and we have dedicated resources to a host of major developments and pioneering initiatives. This includes the new £23.5m, 7,000 m ² i4C Innovation and Cleantech Centre, which is planned for Ballymena in 2027, as part of the Belfast Region City Deal. The Outline Business Case for the i4C project has been issued to the Department of Finance and we are currently awaiting their final approval.
Action 2	<i>Deliver a suite of business support programmes and projects designed to support business start-up and growth across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	400 businesses engaged across business support programmes by 31 March 2024.
Status	325 local businesses have been engaged to date through a variety of business support programmes. These include business start-up support via Go for It and SPARK, and business growth support via programmes such as Escalator, the MEA Food and Drink Network and Digital Surge. Further support programmes on town centre development have also been delivered, these include Health and Safety in the Workplace Training, Cyber Security, Wreath Making and Decoupage Workshop and the Festive Window Promotional Competition.
Measure 2	85 jobs promoted through Business Start Interventions by 31 March 2024.
Status	66 jobs promoted to date.
Action 3	<i>Develop a dynamic 5-year tourism strategy that will drive economic growth, job creation and a thriving tourism economy.</i>
Measure 1	Welcome at least 83,000 visitors to strategic visitor attractions (Carrickfergus Castle, The Gobbins, US Rangers Museum, Andrew Jackson Cottage and Arthur Cottage) by 31 March 2024.
Status	79,591 visitors have been welcomed to date.
Measure 2	At least 7 businesses signed up to Discover NI by 31 March 2024.
Status	To date 26 businesses have signed up.
Measure 3	Support businesses to develop at least 5 new tourism products by 31 March 2024.
Status	Officers continue to engage with the local tourism industry to support businesses to develop new tourism products.

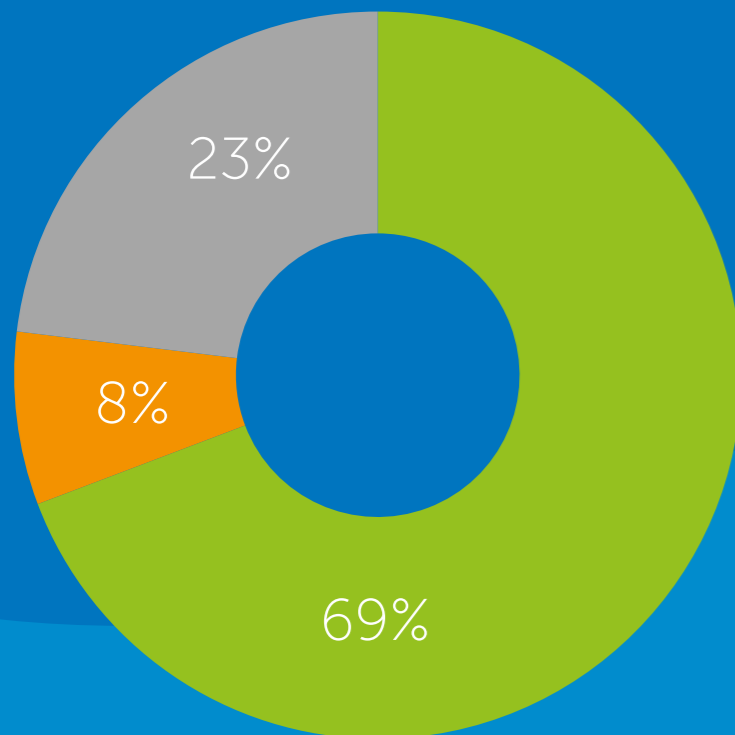
Action 4	<i>Progress the delivery of Council's 10-year vision for the three town centres to develop, regenerate and attract inward investment.</i>
Measure 1	Finalise the development of the Town Centre Revitalisation Scheme and complete delivery of year 1 actions by 31 March 2024.
Status	The Department for Communities has awarded over £436,000 of funding to Council to deliver a range of revitalisation projects across the three main towns of the borough. We identified a number of initiatives to support our town centre offerings, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopfront Revitalisation Scheme. • Bringing a vacant unit in each town back into use. • Enhanced feature lighting and planting to bring vibrancy to key areas. • Activities to attract people into town centres, and the provision of town-specific features including signage and PA systems. To support the delivery of the scheme, we established a Steering Group comprised of local businesses and groups.
Measure 2	Deliver the Public Realm Improvement Scheme by 31 March 2024.
Status	During the summer of 2023, the Point Street area in Larne benefitted from an investment of over £400,000 in high-quality Public Realm funding. The initiative, delivered in partnership with the Department for Communities, the Department for Infrastructure and Council, has improved the area by upgrading the footways with granite paving, re-surfacing of the road and the installation of new street lighting. The Scheme has officially commenced work on Bridge Street and Castle Street in Ballymena and contractors are making good progress.
Measure 3	Support businesses to develop the Townscape Heritage Initiative by 30 September 2023.
Status	Carrickfergus Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), supported by funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and building owners, is an ambitious regeneration scheme breathing new life into the town's conservation area, maintaining heritage, boosting tourism and growing the local economy. To date, 9 properties have benefitted from restoration works. The tenth and final property experienced delays due to supply chain issues, adverse weather conditions and complex design challenges which are now overcome. This property is expected to complete in January 2024.

Community Safety and Cohesion

Strategic Objectives

Work alongside partners to:

- Encourage good relations, civic pride and a sense of belonging by creating vibrant, shared, cohesive and inclusive communities across the borough.
- Build the capacity of local communities to improve resilience and self-sustainability.
- Improve community safety and confidence, enabling people to feel and be safe by providing early intervention and supporting those most at risk of becoming involved in crime.
- Provide support to vulnerable people who need it.



Actions and Measures

Action 1	<i>Through the delivery of various programmes, support our local communities to improve their resilience and build self-sustainability.</i>
Measure 1	Continue to support the Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) to identify, review and shape proposals for the next phase of RCRG priorities by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>The Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) brings together multi-agency partner organisations from government, utilities and the voluntary sector. They help communities to prepare for, and respond to, weather related emergencies, especially those living in rural areas, where emergency services response times may be an issue.</p> <p>Our Corporate and Community Resilience Officer and local community groups are in the process of designing a toolbox of resources to help them better prepare for major events, including extreme weather. It is anticipated this toolkit will be completed and available across the borough in the new year.</p>
Measure 2	Review the existing MEA Community Resilience Framework and requirement for an MEA Community Resilience Action Plan in tandem with RCRG proposals by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>In collaboration with Community Resilience Groups from across the borough, we have been taking part in a joint study, funded by RCRG, with Derry City and Strabane District Council.</p> <p>As part of the study, we have identified five key elements making up a resilient community and have been able to highlight the major role communities play in ensuring we are prepared for, able to respond to, and recover from severe disruption.</p> <p>The study will also inform the future direction of the RCRG as it takes a broader societal approach to building resilience in line with the Civil Contingencies Framework.</p>
Action 2	<i>Deliver comprehensive Good Relations activities, with the aim of influencing positive changes to attitudes and knowledge.</i>
Measure 1	Deliver the agreed Good Relations action plan by 31 March 2024.
Status	The Community Development team have made significant progress in the delivery of agreed actions to date. Details of these are listed in measure 2 below.
Measure 2	Deliver at least 2 Good Relations projects by 31 March 2024.
Status	Our team have successfully delivered a number of Good Relations projects, including the Beacon Project and the Integrate Project. Between 18 and 23 September, we successfully celebrated another Good Relations Week, this year focusing on the theme 'Together'. Building upon the progress already achieved in encouraging and supporting change within our communities, the Good Relations Week programme offered workshops, lectures, panel discussions, feature talks, podcasts, storytelling, new digital content, exhibitions, and much more.
Measure 3	At least 50% of participants in Good Relations activities stating that their attitude towards people from different religious backgrounds has improved by 31 March 2024.
Status	Data against this indicator will not be gathered until the end of the year.
Measure 4	At least 50% of participants in Good Relations activities stating that their attitude towards people from different ethnic backgrounds has improved by 31 March 2024.
Status	Data against this indicator will not be gathered until the end of the year.
Measure 5	At least 50% of participants in Good Relations activities stating that their knowledge of cultural traditions/ backgrounds has increased by 31 March 2024.
Status	Data against this indicator will not be gathered until the end of the year.

Action 3	<i>Work in partnership with the Poverty Action Group to progress initiatives to support the most vulnerable across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	Conduct a review of the Safe, Warm and Well Programme delivery model by 31 March 2024.
Status	The review remains an ongoing process and is continually being adapted in response to Council's changing landscape.
Measure 2	Deliver 90% of Public Health Agency target for the over 65s home safety checks by 31 March 2024.
Status	To date, 213 home safety checks have taken place, this equates to 180% of the cumulative target.
Measure 3	Deliver 90% of Public Health Agency target for energy efficiency support by 31 March 2024.
Status	To date, the Health and Wellbeing team have received 209 referrals, reaching 143% of target.
Measure 4	Support the Poverty Action Group by ensuring continued presence and contribution to meetings by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>During the summer we once again ran the highly successful School Uniform Scheme. The scheme was delivered in partnership with Mid and East Antrim Community Advice Services (MEACAS) and supported by Mid and East Antrim Poverty Action Group (MEAPAG).</p> <p>MEAPAG act as our vehicle for the delivery of the Hardship Fund and in partnership with the Affordable Food Club (AFC), they have been able to deliver several support schemes.</p> <p>In addition to the new work within the scope of the Hardship Fund the members of the MEAPAG continue to support each other and act as referral agents for the available support.</p>
Action 4	<i>Through the Loneliness Network collaborate with statutory and voluntary partners and community groups to promote and deliver initiatives to tackle loneliness in the borough.</i>
Measure 1	At least 40 partner organisations engaged in the network by 31 March 2024.
Status	Over 40 partner organisations have been engaged with to date.
Measure 2	At least 40 support programmes delivered by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>The Loneliness Network in Mid and East Antrim was launched in 2019 to create coordinated action, raise awareness, share best practice and encourage learning and prevention across the borough. The network brings together Council and the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, and other statutory, voluntary and community groups.</p> <p>To date, we have delivered 16 programmes as part of our work to tackle loneliness across the borough. These have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven additional Chatty Benches bringing the total number to 18. Launch of additional Chatty Cafes throughout the borough bringing the total number to 14. Two Connected Walks including a Mindfulness and Sensory Connections walk in Galgorm Wood, Cullybackey and a Plants and Foraging walk at ECOS, Ballymena. <p>In May 2023, Carrickfergus Museum was pleased to host a striking photography exhibition, showcasing the creative talents of local teenagers. The partnership programme between Council, the Northern Health and Social Care Trust and the Loneliness Network invited teenagers to get creative and take part in a series of photography workshops, encouraging connection to both each other and the outdoors.</p> <p>Due to resource pressure, the original target of 40 programmes delivered may no longer be achievable, however, we will endeavour to provide as many support programmes as possible to help everyone across the borough tackle loneliness.</p>

Learning for life

Strategic Objectives

- Develop the skills needed to embrace opportunities for a prosperous and more sustainable future.
- Through our various programmes, develop a sense of ambition towards achievement regardless of location, community background or socio-economic factors.
- Promote to stakeholders the benefits of creating volunteer and enhanced work experience opportunities.
- Lead by example by developing and implementing a work placement programme within Council.
- Support our staff to achieve their full potential by investing in training, development and cross Council collaborative opportunities.

100%



Actions and Measures

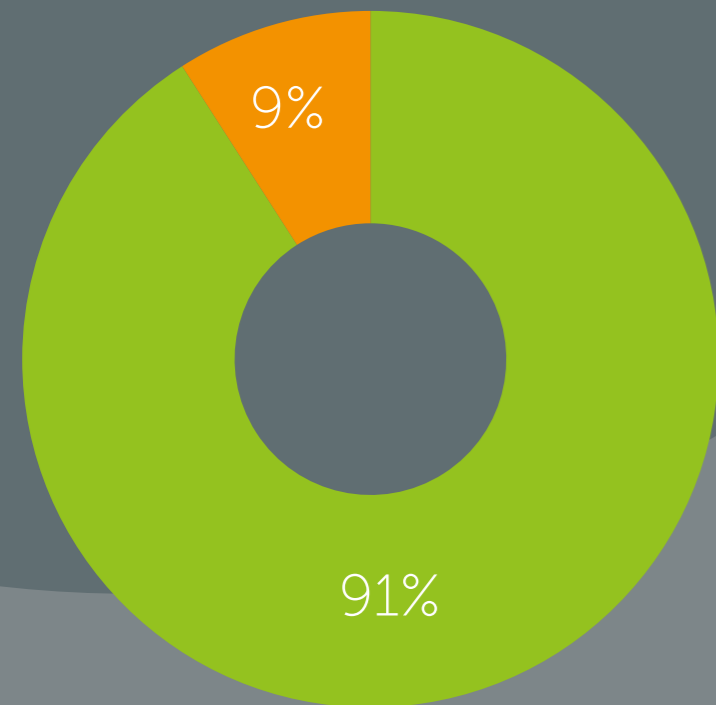
Action 1	<i>Deliver a suite of employability programmes to support our citizens to develop their skills, gain qualifications and secure employment.</i>
Measure 1	At least 140 participants in employability interventions and academies by 31 March 2024.
Status	80 people have taken part to date.
Measure 2	At least 80 qualifications achieved by participants in employability interventions and academies by 31 March 2024.
Status	102 qualifications have been achieved to date.
Measure 3	At least 80 participants gaining employment/self-employment as a result of employability interventions and academies by 31 March 2024.
Status	30 participants have progressed into employment or self-employment to date.
Action 2	<i>Position MEABC as an employer of choice by providing opportunities for work placement/work experience.</i>
Measure 1	Deliver at least 8 work experience/work placements by 31 March 2024.
Status	10 individuals were welcomed onto various work experience/placement positions in a variety of departments including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Health • Capital Works • Parks and Open Spaces • Climate and Sustainability • Facilities Management • Economic Development • Tourism

Action 3	<i>Deliver a suite of environmental education programmes for citizens, businesses and young people across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	Deliver 8 climate and sustainability education programmes across schools, communities and businesses by 31 March 2024.
Status	Our Climate Change and Sustainability officers delivered several educational and engagement programmes to local schools, communities and businesses promoting sustainable practices and encouraging greater awareness of our impact on the environment. This has included delivery of the Eco Schools Programme. To date, all 77 MEA schools have been engaged with and in June, Council were pleased to host the Eco Schools NI Green Flag Awards 2023 on behalf of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. Additionally, the team have delivered a series of waste and recycling talks to local community groups across the borough. Council are also continuing to develop the ECOS Innovation Centre into a sustainability hub for use by school groups, businesses and community groups.
Action 4	<i>Develop MEABC employees to deliver high quality and responsive services to citizens through the provision of comprehensive and bespoke training.</i>
Measure 1	Ensure at least 1.5 days are spent, per full time equivalent, on employee learning and development by 31 March 2024.
Status	0.74 days have been spent, per full time equivalent, on employee learning and development to date.
Measure 2	Deliver at least 100 training courses to staff by 31 March 2024.
Status	121 training courses have been delivered to date. Courses have included Time Management, Environmental Awareness, Accident Reporting, Fire Awareness and more.

Good Health and Wellbeing

Strategic Objectives

- Deliver a coordinated partnership approach to improve the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of our citizens.
- Ensure our citizens and visitors have accessible and inclusive Council facilities.
- Enable vulnerable groups within our borough to be active, respected and supported in their community.
- Encourage our staff to use the resources and tools available to improve and maintain their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.



Actions and Measures

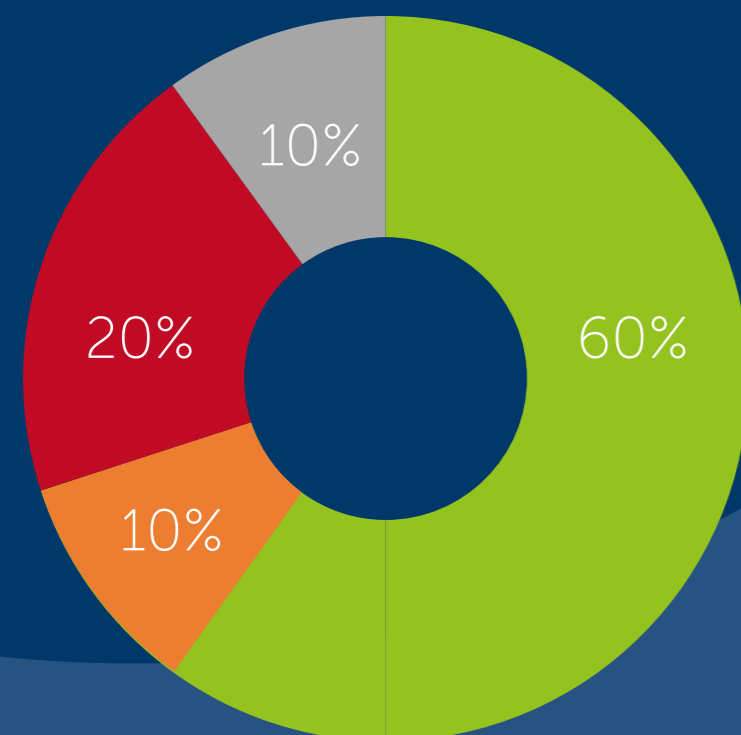
Action 1	<i>Support our citizens to lead healthy and active lives by increasing our offering of physical activity sessions and support schemes across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	Launch the MEAqua Strategy & Action Plan 2023-2025, including delivery of first year actions by 31 March 2024.
Status	The MEAqua Strategy remains in development and progress is steady. Aspects of the strategy which have been completed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of additional suitably qualified swimming teachers to deliver on the MEAqua Programme. • Parent and toddler swimming lessons introduced across all three leisure centres for the first time. • £4,000 of funding secured from Disability Sport NI for the purchase of sensory equipment for the MEAqua Swim Academy. • Expansion of the programme to include the summer months across all three leisure centres in the borough.
Measure 2	Deliver the MEActive programme by 31 March 2024.
Status	Our MEActive programme continues to have a positive impact across the borough. In the first six months of the year, Council welcomed 3,454 participants to 1,012 sessions including dodgeball, basketball, pilates, danderball, bocchia, pickleball and walking netball. Of those 3,454 participants, 1,835 were women and girls and 945 were individuals living with a disability or lifelong illness.
Measure 3	Continue to support the delivery of the Move More programme by 31 March 2024.
Status	In collaboration with Macmillan Cancer Support, our Move More programme offers a free tailored programme to help individuals suffering from cancer to get and stay active at a level that is right for them. 926 individuals were offered opportunities to participate, and we delivered 227 classes.
Measure 4	Continue to support the delivery of the GP Referral Scheme by 31 March 2024.
Status	Our Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS) has had a positive impact on our residents. Delivered in partnership with the Public Health Agency (PHA) PARS is a 12-week prescribed physical activity programme. The scheme received 123 referrals, and from those approved for participation 28 completed the scheme.
Action 2	<i>Develop an Age Friendly Action Plan to ensure our older citizens feel supported and included within their local communities.</i>
Measure 1	Establishment of an MEA Age Friendly Alliance by 30 December 2023.
Status	The MEA Age Friendly Alliance has been established with the first meeting held on 16 November 2023.
Measure 2	Development of an MEA Age Friendly action plan by 31 March 2024.
Status	An action plan was developed at the first meeting of the alliance. <p>In addition to the MEA Age Friendly action plan, Community Planning Partners continue to work together on the Provision of Ageing Well Services contract which was awarded to Mid and East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP). Partners include Council, the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP), Northern Health and Social Care Trust, NI Housing Executive (NIHE), Public Health Agency (PHA) and the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG).</p> <p>The contract provides many services to older people in the community including Good Morning phone calls, home security equipment, assistance with home maintenance, signposting to services, community activities and IT support. Between April and September, there were 173 work orders requested, including 83 home security orders and 3,463 successful good morning calls.</p>

Measure 3	Development of a borough-wide Landlord Forum by 31 March 2024.
Status	The Landlord Forum, featuring representatives from the Landlord Association (NI) and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is now fully established. <p>Resources have been employed to develop an accurate database of landlords across the borough. This has allowed registration requirements to be checked, with the aim of boosting compliance within the private rented sector.</p> <p>The summer issue of the Landlord Newsletter was issued in July. This newsletter is unique to our borough, and with two editions each year, offers general information, advice, and useful contact details. In addition, our website has been updated with a page dedicated to the work of the Forum and provides useful guidance and support.</p> <p>A meeting was held in September and multi-lingual educational videos were launched in October, both were very positively received.</p>
Action 3	<i>Encourage the use of outdoor spaces for health and wellbeing, through the delivery of our Outdoor Recreation strategy.</i>
Measure 1	Deliver at least 3 outdoor recreation programmes by 31 March 2024.
Status	We have delivered a number of programmes to encourage the use of outdoor spaces for health and wellbeing. Some of these have included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Oceans, Healthy Minds - delivered in partnership with Live Here Love Here, we hosted 6 sessions across the 3-week campaign and engaged with 117 residents. Sessions included Beach Babbies, Rockpool Safari, Stand Up Paddle boarding, Pollution Art and Seaweed Tasting. • Love Parks Week - delivering a programme of orienteering to celebrate Love Parks Week alongside our Play Development Team in partnership with Lagan Valley Orienteers, we made use of the People's Park, Bashfordsland and Carnfunnock Country Park maps. • Natural Connections Photography Scheme - delivered in connection with the Loneliness Network, the scheme encouraged teenagers from across the borough to get outdoors and be creative with photography.
Measure 2	Support at least 60 participants in citizen focused health and wellbeing programmes by 31 March 2024.
Status	132 people have participated to date.
Action 4	<i>Ensure we continue to provide reliable, value for money services to our citizens by focusing on the health and wellbeing of our employees, and through the management of employee attendance.</i>
Measure 1	Ensure absence levels do not exceed 14 days per annum, per full time equivalent, by 31 March 2024.
Status	At the six month point our absence figures currently sit at 7.55 days per full time equivalent.
Measure 2	Deliver at least 2 health and wellbeing initiatives for staff by 31 March 2024.
Status	We have delivered a number of health and wellbeing initiatives to support our staff, including the delivery of Health and Wellbeing Week in May, Be Kind to Your Mind in September and various other mental health and selfcare workshops. <p>Officers are regularly sent reminders of the resources available to support their mental and emotional health, including Mental Health Champions and the Employee Assistance Programme delivered by Inspire.</p> <p>Information including details of free webinars are circulated to staff on a monthly basis highlighting key areas around mental health, financial health and topics such as managing a healthy work/life balance and healthy eating.</p>

High Performing and Sustainable Council

Strategic Objectives

- Take the lead on delivering both the Community Plan and the Local Development Plan, working effectively with our partners and citizens.
- Increase customer satisfaction with our services through innovation and continuous improvement by proactively engaging with and listening to our citizens, customers and staff.
- Using an agile delivery model and adapting to changing landscapes, be recognised as a leading council, ensuring value for money and affordability of council services, facilities and assets.
- Deliver our activities and functions in a sustainable manner, integrating social, economic and environmental factors when planning or decision-making, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Embed our values in our day-to-day working environment, ensuring our employees feel supported and motivated to achieve their full potential.



Actions and Measures

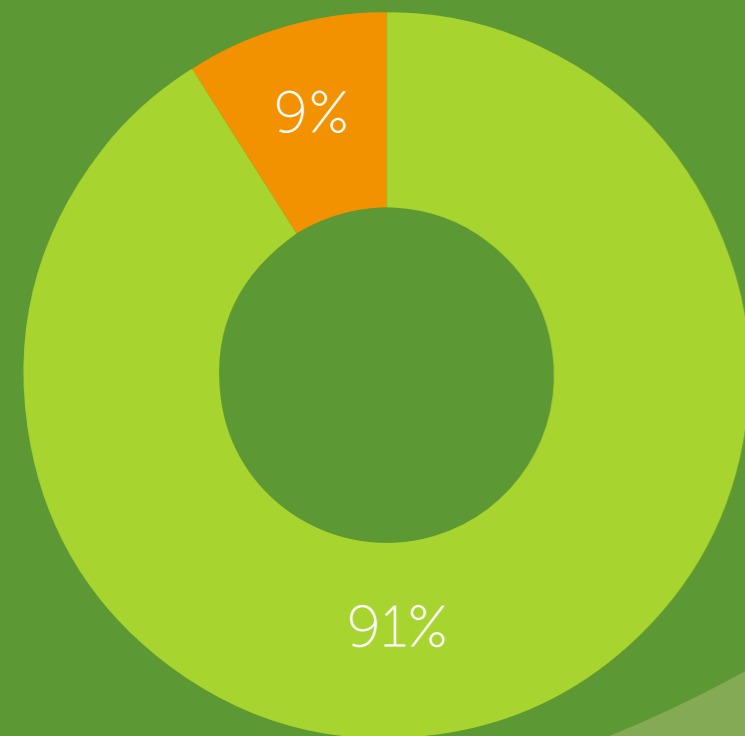
Action 1	<i>Ensure we remain responsive to citizen need by developing processes that allow us to engage with, listen to and act on feedback from our stakeholders to increase customer satisfaction with our services.</i>
Measure 1	Establish processes to gauge customer satisfaction levels by 31 March 2024.
Status	The Council is developing a 'Customer First' approach, and processes to gauge customer satisfaction will be considered as part of that workstream.
Action 2	<i>Work collaboratively with our community planning partners, to consolidate and capitalise on shared resources to deliver positive outcomes for citizens.</i>
Measure 1	Engage with at least 8 community partners by 31 March 2024.
Status	We continue to proactively engage with the Strategic Alliance, with the most recent meeting having taken place in September.
Measure 2	Deliver at least 8 community planning initiatives by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>Community Planning is about the public, private and voluntary organisations in the borough working together with communities to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people's lives. Specifically, this is about, achieving long term objectives for improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area.</p> <p>We are delivering a number of community planning initiatives, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism Friendly Borough • Dementia Friendly Borough • MEA Loneliness Network • MEA Ageing Well Project <p>Our Community Planning team are in the process of completing a Statement of Progress against the number of initiatives delivered. The final figure will be available at year-end.</p> <p>During the September meeting of the Strategic Alliance, final implementation plans with agreed actions were approved as part of our recently reviewed Community Plan, <i>Putting People First</i>.</p>
Action 3	<i>Ensure we promote sustainable development for the borough across economic, social and environmental dimensions, through the delivery of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.</i>
Measure 1	Deliver a minimum of 10 programmes against each of the 17 Goals by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>We have delivered 75 programmes against the 17 goals to date. These range from programmes focused on employability, sustainable agriculture, outdoor recreation, gender equality and empowerment, amongst others.</p> <p>In September, we received a report from Queen's University Belfast entitled 'What is the progress of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council on achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals?'. The report found that we are currently delivering towards 94 of the applicable 114 targets, and 120 of the applicable 168 indicators.</p>

Action 4	<i>Contribute to a healthy economy by delivering effective and efficient services for the benefit of citizens and businesses across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	Ensure that at least 53% of payments to suppliers are made within 10 working days by 31 March 2024.
Status	65% of payments to suppliers, to date, have been made within 10 working days.
Measure 2	Ensure that at least 85% of payments to suppliers are made within 30 calendar days by 31 March 2024.
Status	Due to a variety of internal factors, we are slightly behind target, with 79% of payments to suppliers, to date, having been made within 30 calendar days.
Measure 3	Processing time for major planning applications within an average of 30 weeks by 31 March 2024.
Status	The average processing time for major planning applications from April to September was 67.4 weeks. The NI Council average was 34.7 weeks.
Measure 4	Processing time for local planning applications within an average of 15 weeks by 31 March 2024.
Status	The average processing time for local planning applications from April to September was 10.2 weeks. The NI Council average was 19.2 weeks.
Measure 5	70% of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint by 31 March 2024.
Status	The number of enforcement cases concluded, and corresponding processing times are not yet published by the Department of Infrastructure.
Action 5	<i>Ensure we remain responsive to employee needs by engaging, listening to and acting on feedback from our employees to increase staff satisfaction levels.</i>
Measure 1	Develop an action plan based on the results of the Listening to Staff survey by 31 March 2024.
Status	The Listening to Staff survey has been completed, and findings have been analysed and shared with officers. Working groups have been established to further investigate and identify next steps.

Our Environment

Strategic Objectives

- Deliver the Local Development Plan in line with Council's climate and sustainability commitments.
- Empower, educate and work in partnership with our citizens and local businesses to progress towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- Support local communities to create an environmentally resilient and sustainable borough.
- Invest to improve and develop our parks, open spaces and built heritage, ensuring they meet the needs of citizens and visitors, and promote the considerate use of all spaces.
- Lead by example and reduce the impact of Council services, to improve and sustainably manage our environment, protecting it for future generations.



Actions and Measures

Action 1	<i>Utilise nature-based solutions to aid climate change adaptation and improve the health and wellbeing of our citizens across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	Deliver at least 3 nature-based solution projects by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>We currently own 506 hectares of green space across the borough and 483 hectares of foreshore. This natural capital provides valued space for nature, supports biodiversity and captures in excess of 1000tonnes of CO₂ per year.</p> <p>The woodlands, grasslands, hedgerows and healthy peatlands in our parks and open spaces can be described as nature-based solutions for climate change as they can help with climate adaptation (through reducing the impacts from flood and drought), as well as climate mitigation through absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.</p> <p>A number of nature-based solutions projects are planned for delivery during the winter months. These include, 186ha of woodland planting, over 30 school grounds to have improvements made through the Emergency Tree Fund, the Ahoghill Wet Woodland project and the restoration of peatland across Keeran Moss Grazing.</p> <p>The development of further nature-based solution projects are on track and are included within our Climate and Sustainability Action Plan for 2023-2027.</p>
Action 2	<i>Develop a Tree and Woodland Management Strategy to enhance biodiversity, increase carbon store and support ecosystems across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	Plant at least 2,000 trees on Council land by 31 March 2024.
Status	Ahoghill Nature Park has been identified for tree planting during the winter months.
Measure 2	Plant at least 3,000 trees on public land through Council support by 31 March 2024.
Status	32,732 trees have been planted on public land as part of our Climate Canopy Project.
Action 3	<i>Support communities, farmers and local businesses to be more sustainable, reduce carbon emissions and adapt to a changing climate.</i>
Measure 1	Work in partnership with Sustainable NI to promote sustainable practices by 31 March 2024.
Status	We continue to proactively engage with Sustainable NI to share knowledge and best practice with other local government authorities. The most recent meeting of the Sustainable NI Forum took place in September.
Measure 2	Recruit a Net Zero Officer to deliver the Mid and East Antrim Net Zero Business (MEANZ Business) project by 30 September 2023.
Status	Following the receipt of funding from Innovate UK KTN, we successfully recruited a Net Zero Innovation and Delivery Manager in July. This officer is working alongside Innovate UK, under the Fast Followers Programme, to develop and deliver net zero activities to businesses across the borough.
Measure 3	Engage with at least 40 businesses to promote net zero activities by 31 March 2024.
Status	12 businesses have been engaged with to date.

Action 4	<i>Improve the resource and energy efficiency of our buildings and practices by first establishing baseline data of Council emissions with the goal to reduce costs and our MEABC operation emissions to net zero by 2040.</i>
Measure 1	Establish baseline emissions for Council buildings with a focus on those with larger consumption rates by 31 March 2024.
Status	In order to support our efforts to track emissions, we have installed a data analytics software package and are in the process of inputting data to establish baseline data and track progress going forward.
Measure 2	Support the delivery of Council's Green Growth Strategy through the completion of 5 Renewable Technology projects by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>We are in the process of delivering a number of solar array installation projects across the borough.</p> <p>Sullatober Household Recycling Centre and Springwell Street multi-story carpark in Ballymena have both been upgraded with solar array. Installation is currently underway at Larne Leisure Centre and Carrickfergus Amphitheatre is due for completion early in 2024.</p> <p>Following approval from NIE, procurement is currently underway for the installation of solar array at The Braid and Waveney Road Household Recycling Centre. These are planned for completion in early 2024/25.</p> <p>The application process for further arrays at ECOS is underway and we anticipate that once approval is received, we can deliver the project in the 2024/25 financial year.</p> <p>Throughout this process, the team have continued to complete desktop reviews of Council locations to identify further suitable locations and installations will take place as often as possible.</p>
Action 5	<i>Deliver an effective and efficient waste service that supports citizens and businesses to reduce waste.</i>
Measure 1	At least 50% of household waste collected to be sent for recycling by 31 March 2024.
Status	The percentage of household waste collected that was sent for recycling from April to June was 55.71%. Data up to September has yet to be published.
Measure 2	No more than 16,387 tonnes of biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste to be landfilled by 31 March 2024.
Status	3,317 tonnes were landfilled from April to June. Data up to September has yet to be published.
Measure 3	The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority collected municipal waste arisings. The Department for Communities requires that each council sets and monitors its own individual target annually. We have set a target of no more than 75,797 tonnes by 31 March 2024.
Status	20,623 tonnes have been collected from April to June. Data up to September has yet to be published.

Statutory Key Performance Indicators







The Department for Communities set statutory targets for councils in the areas of Planning, Economic Development and Waste.

These are outlined in our annual business plans, and as far as possible within our annual Performance Improvement Plan.

Performance updates are published on our website every three months at:

midandeastantrim.gov.uk/improvement

Quarter two results are not yet available for the Waste indicators, therefore, quarter one figures are reported.

	Indicators 	Targets 	Result 
	The average processing time of major planning applications	MAX 30 Weeks	67.4 Weeks
	The average processing time of local planning applications	MAX 15 Weeks	10.2 Weeks
	The percentage of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks	MIN 70%	Data has not yet been published.
	The number of jobs promoted through business start interventions	MIN 85 Jobs*	66 Jobs
	The percentage of household waste collected by district Councils that is sent for recycling	MIN 50%	55.71%
	The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	MAX 16,387 Tonnes	3,137 Tonnes
	The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	The Department for Communities requires that each council sets and monitors its own individual target for this indicator annually.	20,623 Tonnes

*This target may increase to 111 during 2023-2024, pending changes to legislation.

Conclusion

This report has provided just a snapshot of some of our achievements over the last six months.

I am extremely proud of our officers and would like to take this opportunity to thank them for the innovative and creative solutions they have come up with to ensure that we continue to provide our citizens with the highest quality services while tackling the financial pressures we all find ourselves in.

As a local government body, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is not unique in navigating the financial pressures. Internally, we are conducting several reviews into the way in which we work, to ensure that our services are delivered in a financially responsible and sustainable way.

I have no doubt that there may be further challenges ahead, but I can assure you that the needs of our citizens, communities and businesses, are of the utmost importance to both Council officers and Elected Members.

I would encourage anyone who is keen to hear more about the good work being carried out to follow us on our various social media channels.

You can also find out more through our corporate documents, such as our Performance Improvement Plan, Climate and Sustainability Action Plan and Community Plan. These, and many others, can be found on our website.

Thank you,



Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive
Mid and East Antrim
Borough Council

Feedback

We are committed to continuously improving our services and as such we welcome your comments or suggestions for improvement areas at any time throughout the year. Please get in touch via: performance@midandeantrim.gov.uk

If you would like any further information or to request a copy of this plan in an alternative format please contact:

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