



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council



Performance Improvement Plan (2020/21)

Consultation Summary Report

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1. Introduction

In developing the Performance Improvement Plan 2020/21, we undertook the following approach to consultation:

- A workshop was held in January 2020 for Elected Members and the Senior and Operational Management Teams to identify key performance improvement areas for 2020/21.
- The draft Plan was developed with reference to the results of the September 2018 Residents' Survey which was conducted across the Borough. A representative sample of 775 residents completed a face-to-face interview which addressed resident satisfaction and priorities for Council. Residents were asked to identify investment and improvement priorities.
- The draft Performance Improvement Plan was open for public consultation for 14 weeks from 4th February to the 12th May 2020. Note that the closing date was extended from the 28th April due to Covid-19.
- An online survey was published on Council's website. To encourage consultation responses, we highlighted the consultation on our social media platforms. Council staff also attended three Council Grants Programme public events in Larne, Carrickfergus and Ballymena, which were attended by representatives of a variety of interests across the Borough.
- The Chief Executive sent an email to staff inviting them to submit their views and emails were sent to local community groups who engage with Council.
- 113 questionnaires were completed; almost 86% of these were completed by residents. The table below outlines the breakdown of who completed the survey:

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A Resident	85.71%	84
A Business	4.08%	4
From the Community / Voluntary Sector	14.29%	14
An Elected Member	0.00%	0

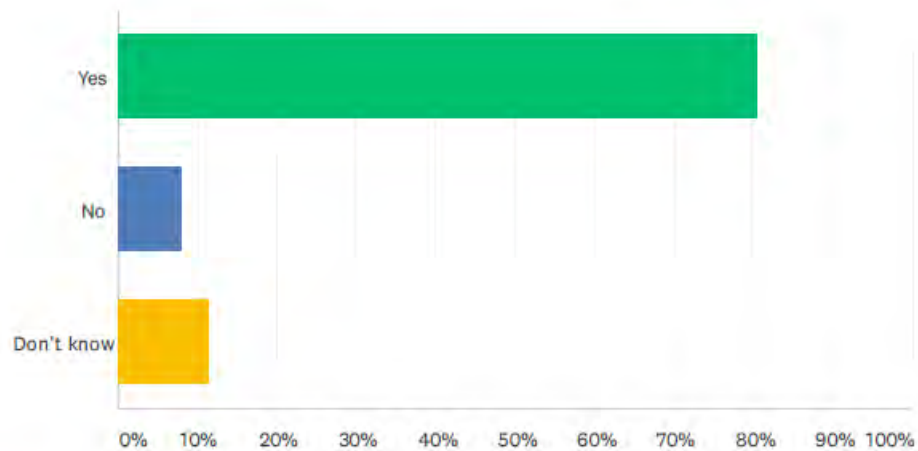
2. Consultation responses

Survey respondents were asked the following question

'We are proposing the Improvement Objectives below to deliver improvements within the borough in 2020/21. We are keen to hear your views on these projects. Have we got the Improvement Objectives below right?'

Q1 Grow the economy and create jobs

Answered: 113 Skipped: 0



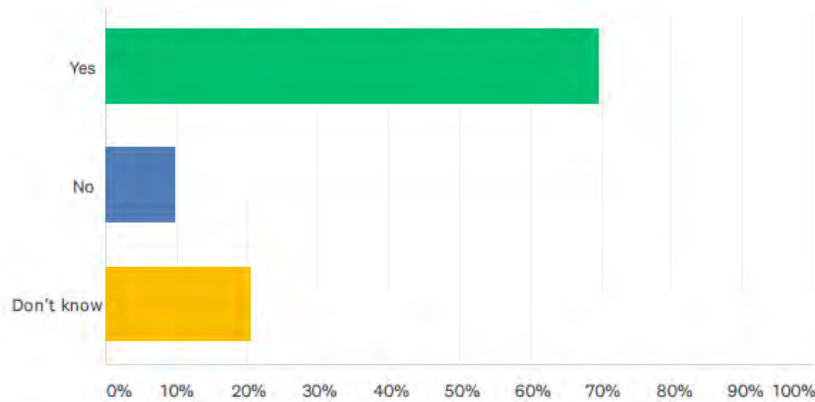
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	80.53%
No	7.96%
Don't know	11.50%
TOTAL	

Response highlights

- The local economy in the region has taken a real battering over the last few years. The Larne area in particular has fallen backwards on a number of fronts and therefore needs serious review and investment, however Ballymena is struggling, the east coast generally is under pressure, any possible stimulus to the area and to jobs in the area would be a massive boost.
- There also needs to be programmes for people who lose jobs in mid-life to utilise their skills and maximise their earning potential.
- In 2020, any economic growth should be 'sustainable'.
- I don't see many job opportunities for graduates within the borough. A strong possibility we will lose our young people to better prospects and career development.
- Vitally important to keep growing the economy and create jobs for the benefit of all who live and work within the Borough. This should include help for micro and small businesses, which are the foundation of the economy. Large business makes the headlines, whereas the former continue to be the main 'growers' in the background, so deserve the investment and funding to continue to grow and create sustainable jobs as a result.
- This needs addressed especially with the closure of some of the boroughs largest manufacturing plants.

Q2 Support the communities within the historic conservation area of Carrickfergus, contributing to the sustainability of the local economy

Answered: 112 Skipped: 1



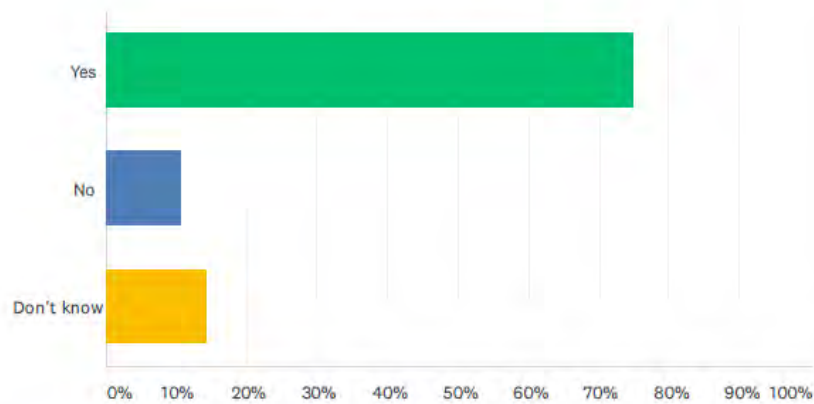
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	69.64%	78
No	9.82%	11
Don't know	20.54%	23
TOTAL		112

Response highlights

- Communities are the back bone of any town and supporting them builds a stronger more sustainable economy.
- Carrickfergus town centre is underutilised and appears run down.
- Look at the decimation of the West Street and North Street. There is no reason Carrickfergus couldn't be buzzing like Newcastle or any other seaside town.
- All regeneration must be completed with a heritage focus and communities, both social and business must be kept engaged to encourage buy in and future private and public sector investment.
- I wouldn't be as familiar with this part of the Borough, but do recognise that it is of significant historical importance, with the Castle etc. as a unique asset, dominating the skyline. Anything to conserve the area would be positive.
- Carrickfergus has great history and needs to be marketed effectively to build the tourism potential, which will help to contribute to the local economy.

Q3 Encourage people to value our natural environment through the promotion of the Green Dog Walkers Scheme

Answered: 112 Skipped: 1



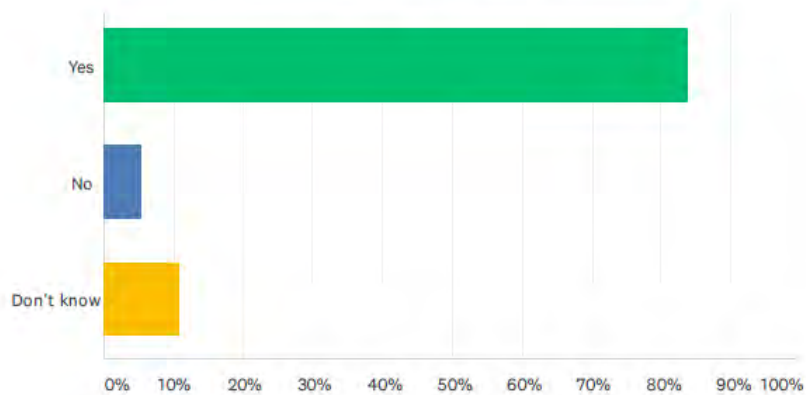
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	75.00%	84
No	10.71%	12
Don't know	14.29%	16
TOTAL		112

Response highlights

- As a recent convert to dog ownership, I endorse this - also because I am now more acutely aware of those who do not hold the natural environment in the same esteem. Our children are becoming more aware of the issues as well, and it can only assist to advertise and promote this scheme.
- When people take pride in their environment the area will benefit.
- Dog fouling is anti-social and one of the most common complaints.
- The value of the natural environment should be promoted in much wider terms than solely the green dog walker scheme - huge opportunity given growing interest in the natural environment in terms of climate change.
- Positive scheme and well received by the local community
- This is a good idea, as long as everyone is a responsible dog owner, which presumably they would be. It can only help increase fitness, health and wellbeing of people of the Borough.

Q4 Improve customer engagement and service delivery by enhancing our use of information technology

Answered: 110 Skipped: 3



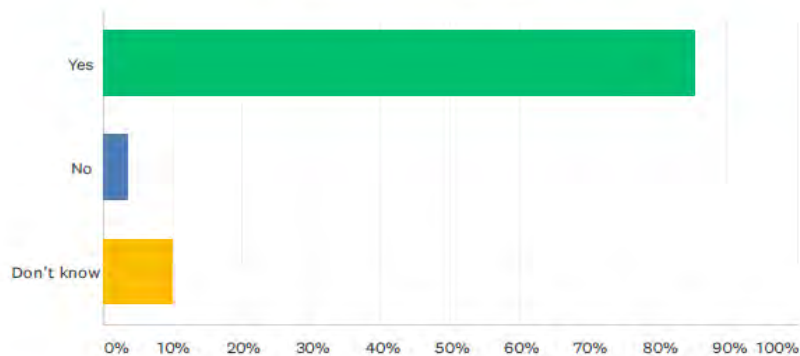
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	83.64%	92
No	5.45%	6
Don't know	10.91%	12
TOTAL		110

Response highlights

- People on low-incomes and older people do not have access to on-line provisions. Given how difficult it is to actually speak to someone on the phone providing some services online would be helpful e.g. dog licencing.
- Relevant as a large proportion of residents, visitors & workers and other stakeholders using Council Services use IT and online services. This could be augmented by improving connectivity in rural areas within the Borough and encouraging customers to use Councils online services through information, education and other incentives.
- This only works if you let the public know what they can do online. Information giving/promotion of the ability to use IT is lacking
- 2020 - we need to embrace a digital era and move with the times. This is particularly important with regards to booking community centres etc.
- More pay online options please.

Q5 Reduce waste and increase recycling through the introduction of an improved household waste collection system

Answered: 110 Skipped: 3



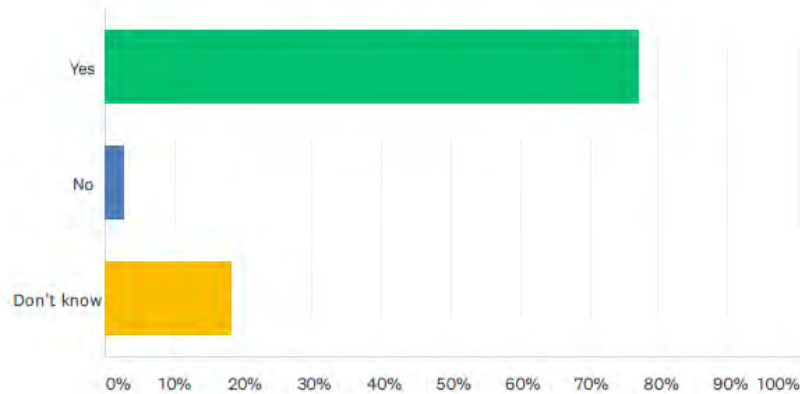
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	85.45%	94
No	3.64%	4
Don't know	10.00%	11
TOTAL		110

Response highlights

- While the system, both at domestic level and in recycling centres, is pretty good at present there is always scope to improve. I am a firm advocate of recycling as much as possible and there is already facility in Northern Ireland through commercial enterprises to ensure that 0% of waste generated goes to landfill, as much as possible is recycled and any remainder is used in the production of energy through biomass/CHP generation. Any steps that can be taken to improve recycling, make it more accessible so a greater number of people embrace it and mean less waste generally would be welcomed.
- An improved household waste collection system may not reduce waste as Council is facilitating the collection of greater amounts of waste. Culture change is required through education particularly in schools. I believe efforts to increase recycling need to be balanced against changing the way products are packaged. As a Council, we could be encouraging our businesses to use less packaging or compostible packaging and our customers to reuse etc.
- Need education and enforcement of current scheme first and foremost. A lot of people still put food in black bin for example and just expect council to deal with it. need incentives - show people how rates money will be saved.

Q6 Autism Friendly Mid and East Antrim

Answered: 110 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	77.27%	85
No	2.73%	3
Don't know	18.18%	20
TOTAL		110

Response highlights

- I know several people who either are, or have children who are, within the autism spectrum. Many of the issues that they face are difficult to deal with, but equally difficult to articulate to those who don't understand. Improving awareness of this issue and making life for those with autism easier is a great initiative. It should be extended to other disabilities or limitations over time as well, if a workable format can be adopted.
- Education of the public has to be an ongoing process and community group need to be invited to get involved with any initiative.
- Introduction of one hour without music in the gym in the leisure centre has been a good start.
- Excellent idea.
- Should be wider across disability and not just focused on autism.
- Yes, this should be a priority for all public services, not just the Council.
- Having relatives that are autistic, it may be an idea to hold some information events and free basic Makaton courses which would enable better communication and encourage inclusion with members of the autistic community.
- Autism is so very prevalent now and it can be very challenging and isolating for families.

Conclusion

- Substantial support was given for our proposed Improvement Objectives with all of our objectives receiving at least 70% support.
- Our objective to 'Improve customer engagement and service delivery by enhancing our use of information technology' received significant support with 84%.
- Our objective to 'Support the communities within the historic conservation area of Carrickfergus, contributing to the sustainability of the local economy' received the least support at 70%. However, only 10% of respondents disagreed, with 20% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.
- Following the consultation process, five improvement objectives will be taken forward for delivery during 2020/21. As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, government funding was not received as was expected for the Waste related project. Therefore, this project is not financially viable to deliver in the 2020/21 year. The high level of public support demonstrated through the consultation means that the scheme may be taken forward at a future date, if funding becomes available.