



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council



Performance Improvement Plan

2017-2018

A draft for consultation - January 2017

1.0 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.

1.1 Our vision:

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

1.2 How we will realise our vision:

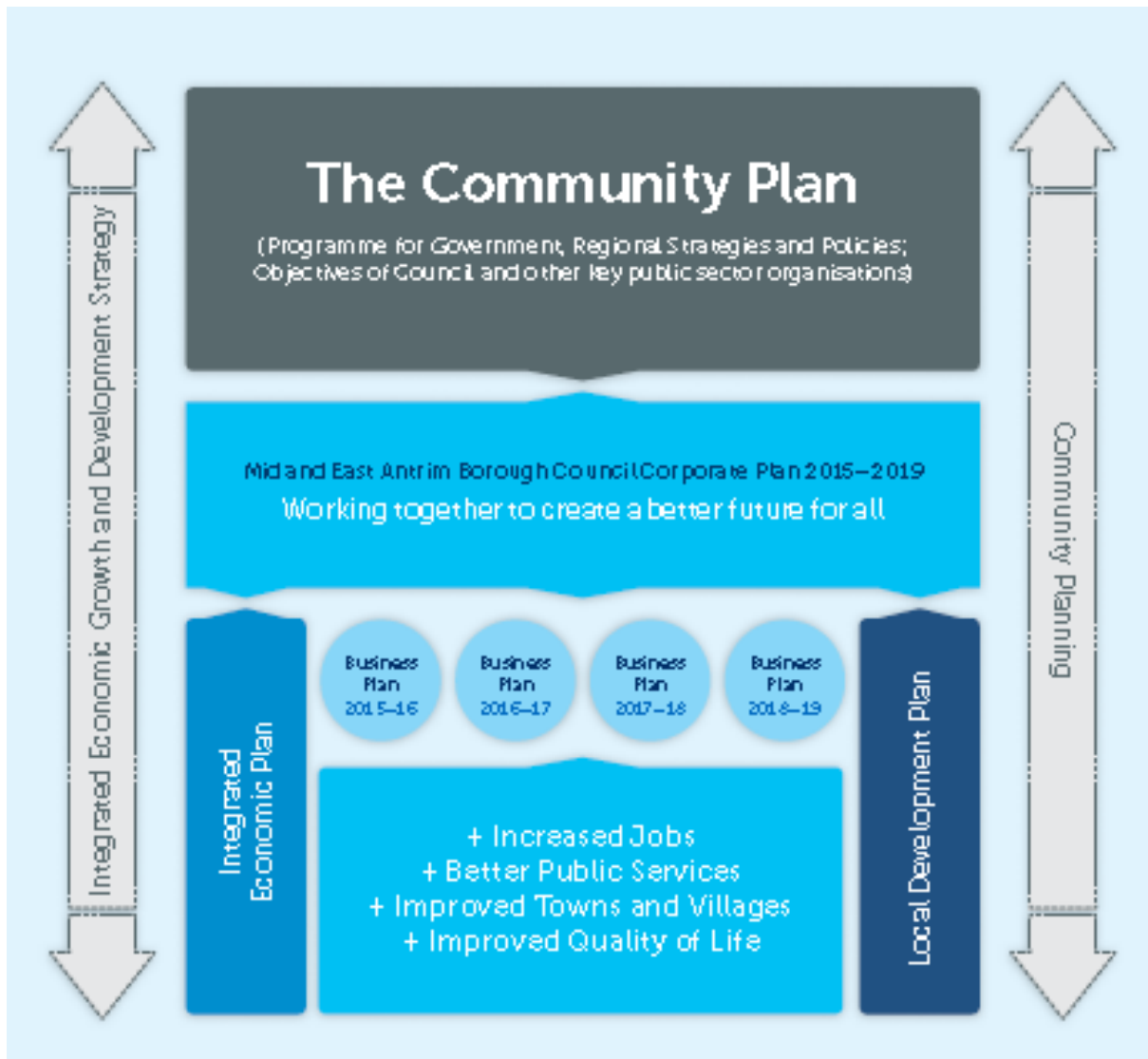
The Corporate Plan for Mid and East Antrim Borough presents a clear and compelling vision for our people and the place. It ties together a number of plans and strategies that will enable the Council to deliver our vision for the area and will be interlinked to our Community Plan which sees all public 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 strategic priorities are set out in our Corporate Plan for 2015 - 2019. Each member of Council’s Operational Management Team has developed a Business Plan to provide detail on how Council will deliver these strategic priorities within our 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 within our Corporate Plan:



2.0 Duty to improve

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 put in place a framework to support continuous improvement in the delivery of council services.

“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 focusses on the issues that are important to our citizens and customers. Improvement for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council means doing things that will enhance the sustainable quality of life and environment for our citizens thereby helping us to achieve our vision of **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 Performance Improvement Plan.

In this Performance Improvement Plan, we will set out how we will deliver improvement in at least one of these seven improvement areas:

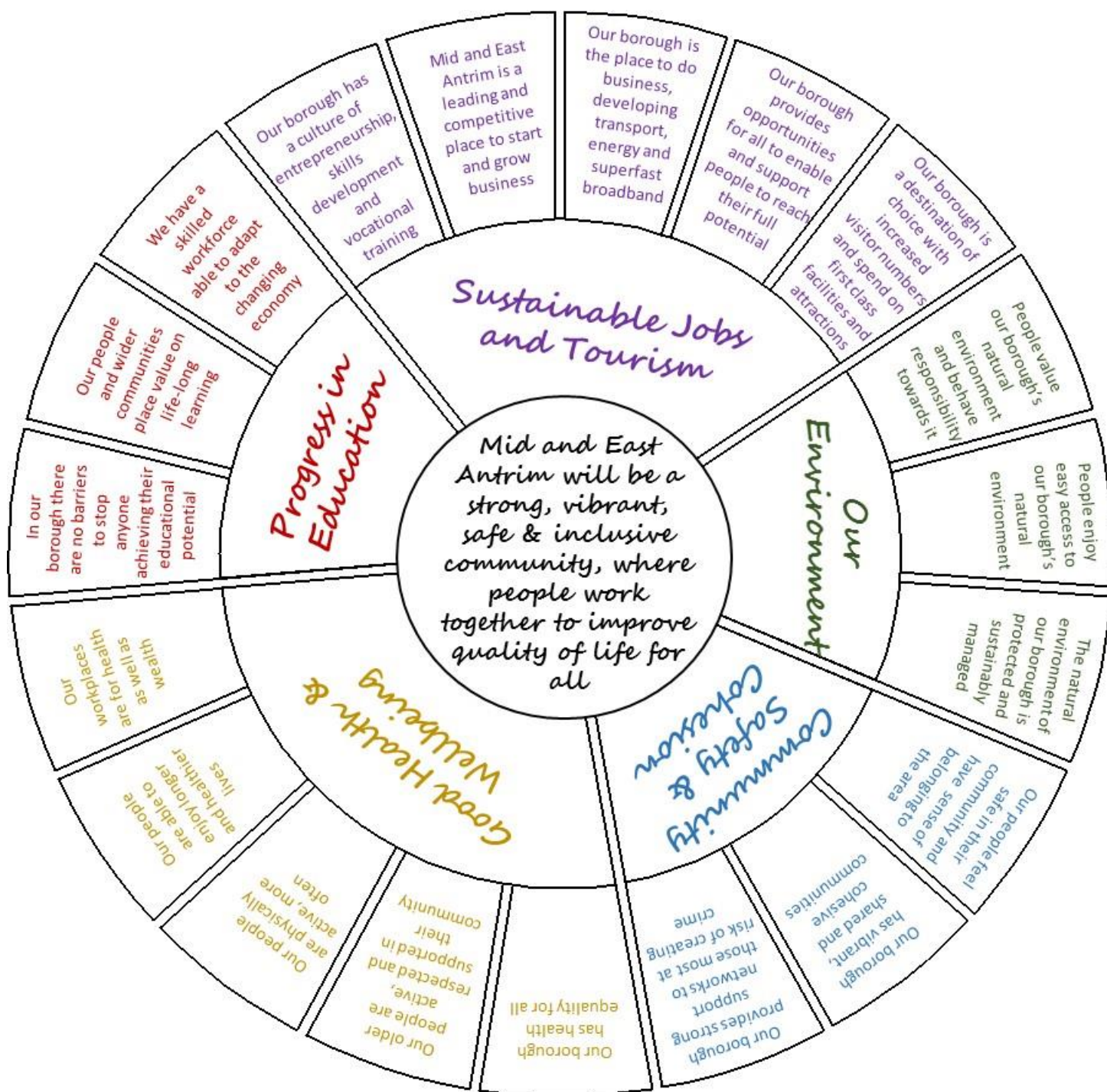
- Strategic effectiveness;
- Service quality;
- Service availability;
- Fairness;
- Sustainability;
- Efficiency; and
- Innovation.

2.1 How we identified the improvement areas

The Community Plan for Mid and East Antrim drives and informs our Performance Improvement Plan. Through an extensive consultation exercise, the Mid and East Antrim Community Plan has established those priority areas that our citizens have identified as being most important to them and where improvement will have maximum impact.

These priorities are built around 5 themes as summarised in Diagram 1 below:

Diagram 1 - Mid and East Antrim Community Plan - Priority Themes



Specific improvement projects have been developed to enable improvement that will support the delivery of the outcomes identified in the Community Plan and are linked to the Strategic Priorities within our Corporate Plan.

2.2 Criteria for selecting Improvement Projects

Following the annual inspection of our Performance Improvement Plan for 2016/17 by the Northern Ireland Audit Office, the following criteria were developed and applied to help Council to select projects to be included within the 2017/18 Plan:

1. Will it support the achievement of at least one of the six Community Planning Themes?
2. Will it support delivery of at least one of the Council's corporate objectives?
3. Will it demonstrate improvement in at least one of these seven improvement areas?
 - Strategic effectiveness
 - Service quality
 - Service availability
 - Fairness
 - Sustainability
 - Efficiency
 - Innovation
4. Are outcomes SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound)?
5. Are resources in place or committed (budget, capacity, leadership, skills/knowledge) in order to successfully deliver the project?

On reviewing the improvement areas stipulated within the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Council agreed to prioritise the following improvement areas for the 2017/18 year:

- Strategic Effectiveness;
- Service Quality;
- Efficiency;
- Service Availability; and
- Innovation.

Council has gone through a process of reviewing each of the five Improvement Objectives against each of the criteria above. We have also reviewed each of the five Improvement objectives against our priority improvement areas. As a result of this process, 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.

3.0 Statutory Performance Indicators

In addition to the improvement areas identified by Council the Department for Communities also sets targets for Councils 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 its performance results against these indicators on our website:

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/improvement

4.0 Consultation

The final Performance Improvement Plan for 2017/18 will be supported by a detailed plan for consultation to be published in the final plan.

The consultation will take place over an 8-week period and will include the following individuals and groups, as appropriate:

- citizens and stakeholders;
- local businesses and, where appropriate, potential businesses;
- its statutory and other community planning partners;
- other bodies with whom collaborative working is taking place or is being planned.

5.0 Improvement Objectives

Improvement Objective 1

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:

Continuing the work of the cross-functional workforce team - ACHIEVE

Why are we doing this?

The purpose of ACHIEVE is to create a culture of high performance within the Council in order to deliver efficient and effective services in line with citizen need. ACHIEVE will define performance, communication and engagement processes that support the development of staff at all levels. This will ensure we have the right skills, knowledge and attitudes to continually improve customer satisfaction.

We will deliver:

- A performance management framework, including a process for cascading corporate objectives to individual employee objectives;
- Communication and Engagement processes to ensure staff are motivated, well-informed and dedicated;
- Staff working to core competencies to enable high performance;
- 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:

- Increase in customer satisfaction levels (both from service users and staff);
- Response rate from employee surveys;
- Number of employees with a personal development plan; and
- Improved sickness absence rates.

Start: November 2015

Duration: March 2019

Community Plan linkage

- Health and Well-being - Our workspaces are for health as well as wealth

Strategic priority linkage

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

Performance Improvement Area

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

Improvement Objective 2 -

To lead the growth of and development of new industry sectors in the Mid & East Antrim Borough Council area through the creation of 125 knowledge economy jobs by December 2019.

We will do this by:

Redevelopment of Council owned ECOS centre, Ballymena as a Digitally Supported Environmental Innovation Centre and securing an innovative partnership arrangement with Catalyst Inc. (formally Northern Ireland Science Park NISP) as credible advisors to the knowledge economy and government.

Why are we doing this?

- To assist with the long term development of the economy in Mid & East Antrim by acting as a catalyst for change and enhancing the opportunities for wealth creation;
- To encourage the establishment of environmental focused, digitally supported business and entrepreneurship.
- To be the Centre of Excellence for start-ups, spin outs and social economy businesses within the environmental sector;
- To raise awareness and promote STEM activities in the schools, FE and HE sectors to encourage growth of jobs in the knowledge economy;
- To be a demonstrator site for the commercial development of university environmental research and strengthening the links between business and Northern Ireland's two universities.

Council's focus is tied into NISP's original objective that it would operate a Hub and Spoke model, with Titanic Quarter being the Hub and spokes through the NI regions. The opportunity for Council, as the only Council in NI to have secured ECOS as the 2nd element of this Hub and Spoke model, is truly innovative and will create a platform for further growth and creation of high value jobs in our economy.

We will deliver:

- Optimal space utilisation with an overall increase in 'lettable' space including meeting and conference space;
- High specification fit-out, supporting an open innovation businesses model;
- State-of-the-art telecommunications;
- Continued focus on attracting the public to ECOS through the café and interpretation and marketing of the meetings/conference facility;
- A business model to test for a further planned extension of the project in due course.

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

- New jobs created;
- Increased rental income; and
- Number of new tenants

Start: April 2017

Duration: March 2020

Community Plan Linkage

- Sustainable jobs and tourism - Mid and East Antrim is a leading and competitive place to start and grow business

Strategic priority linkage:

- Growing our Economy

Performance improvement area:

- Innovation;
- Strategic effectiveness; and
- Sustainability.

Improvement Objective 3

Carrickfergus Townscape Heritage Initiative - Contribute to the sustainability of our local economy and to support the communities that live and work in the historic conservation area of Carrickfergus.

We will do this by:

Supporting the structural repair, refurbishment and re-use of up to thirty target properties within the Carrickfergus conservation area by offering grant assistance to owners of targeted properties to undertake repair works in line with conservation architecture standards such as historic shopfronts and choice of traditional building materials and techniques. Re-use could involve vacant floor-space changing from commercial to town centre residential apartments.

Why are we doing this?

Carrickfergus is one of the oldest towns in the province of Ulster dating back to the 12th century and the arrival of the Anglo-Normans who built the castle that is now a key landmark for Northern Ireland and popular visitor attraction. The traditional town centre economy has declined over recent decades arising from a number of factors including significant local factory closures, emergence of out of town shopping centres and the towns proximity to NI key retail centre Belfast to change in buying habits such as the growth in online retailing. For the exception of a public realm works costing £2.4m funded by the Department of Regional Development in 2013 there has been minimal investment in the town centre in recent times and in the historic fabric of the medieval town centre

Supported with a grant of £1.7 million, from the Heritage Lottery Fund and match funding from Council of £550k the Town Heritage Initiative (THI) will restore up to thirty buildings of historic and architectural interest include several that are currently at an advanced state of dereliction. Grant rates will average between 45% and 75% dependent on the nature of the works required while it is anticipated that the property owners themselves will provide the majority of the match funding required.

We will deliver:

- Refurbishment of 18-20 buildings (60% of target building) given that several of property owners may not wish to participate/possess match funding to participate.
- A THI education programme will highlight the role of built heritage in supporting town centre regeneration and to provide local residents a higher degree of ownership of their towns historic pedigree;
- Ultimately facilitate a better future for all through increased inward investment and local employment opportunities related both directly and indirectly to heritage and tourism

How we will measure success - expected improvement outcomes:

- Lower the level of town centre vacancy as measured per town centres health-check monitor - Carrickfergus currently has one of the highest vacancy rates of any provincial town in Northern Ireland.
- Increase in the square footage of floor space of retail, commercial or residential use - monitored by following up applicant baseline details.

- Increasing levels of town centre footfall arising from the THI investment and upgrade and reuse of buildings as well as impacts from of other complimentary town centre. public realm and tourism and recreation initiatives. Measured via deploying footfall counters and street surveys
- Increased market value of property; monitor any year on year improvements
- Number of new businesses; annual audit within wider town centre (within walls)

Start: October 2016

Duration: 5 years

Community Plan Linkage

- Sustainable jobs and tourism - Our borough is a destination of choice with increased visitor numbers and spend on first class facilities and attractions.

Strategic priority linkage

- Growing our Economy

Performance Improvement Area

- Strategic Effectiveness;
- Sustainability

Improvement Objective 4

Reduction of Food Waste through Healthier Eating

We will do this by:

Developing and promoting a range of literature and workshops highlighting a range of benefits from eating healthily.

Why are we doing this?

Research suggests that adopting a healthy eating regime can lead to significant improvements in health and wellbeing. This will provide significant benefits for service delivery providers, including:

- Improved health and well-being;
- A reduction in food waste;
- Increased longevity.

We will deliver:

- A Food Waste Policy supported by Healthy eating literature and workshops highlighting the finance and health benefits of healthy eating;
- Within the Food Waste Policy, agree a support package for those people living in disadvantaged areas, which supports the Council's strategic priorities and is in line with the Council's duties under Section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998; and
- Develop and implement a range of support information promoting the benefits to local residents of healthy eating.

How we will measure success - expected improvement outcomes:

- Customer satisfaction levels (survey, complaints/compliments received);
- Levels of Food Waste; and
- Increased participation in the food waste collection scheme.

Start: April 2017

Duration: March 2018

Community Plan Linkage

- Our Environment
- Good Health & Wellbeing

Strategic priority linkage

- Building stronger, safe and healthy communities

Performance Improvement Area

- Sustainability

Improvement Objective 5

Deliver excellence in our citizen experience, through digital transformation and improved citizen engagement.

We will do this by:

- Mapping our customer lifecycle and lifetime engagement with Council services;
- Completing an ICT systems audit and consolidate systems to drive efficiencies;
- Developing and implementing a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system containing business workflows and citizen profiles;
- Enabling online transactions and encouraging citizen self-service, whilst joining up offline and online citizen (customer) journeys;
- Building the 'MyMEA' citizen app and supporting enhanced citizen engagement;
- Developing an organisational information strategy, including business intelligence and analytics;
- Designing real-time 'dashboard' reporting; and
- Creating a digitally literate organisation with enhanced customer service skills.

Why are we doing this?

- To deliver excellent public services, improving customer service and satisfaction;
- To improve efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery, offering better value for money for the ratepayer;
- To provide improved insight and management reporting, supporting better and more informed decision-making; and
- To develop a high performing Council and be recognised as leading citizen experience in NI local government through digital transformation.

We will deliver:

- A Business Transformation Strategy for Council, including digital transformation, information and customer strategies;
- Baseline data on the current citizen experience;
- Digital transformation of two Council business workflows e.g. 'making an enquiry' and 'making a complaint' to improve citizen experience within the first 12 months of the project;
- Online transaction developments based on volume or cost of interactions.

How we will measure success - expected improvement outcomes:

- Customer satisfaction levels (survey, feedback/complaints/compliments received);
- Improved efficiency and effectiveness of Council-delivered services which have been digitally transformed.

Start: April 2017

Duration: March 2020

Community Plan Linkage

- Our Environment;
- Sustainable Jobs and Tourism.

Strategic priority linkage

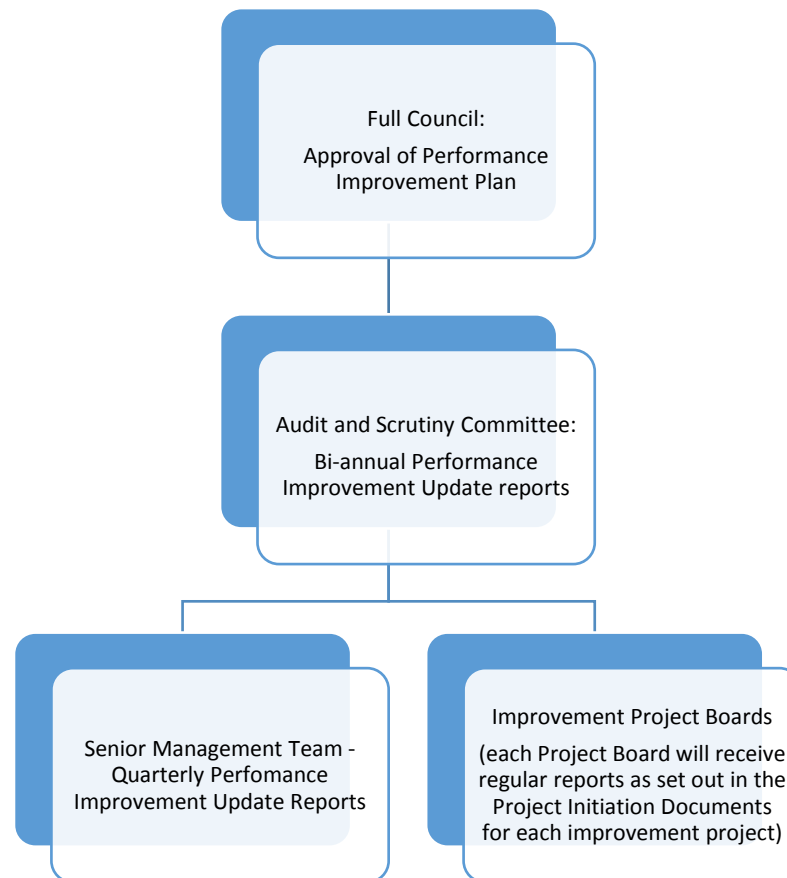
- Delivering Excellent Services;
- Developing a High Performing Council.

Performance Improvement Area

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

5.0 Performance Improvement Plan - Programme Management

The diagram below sets out the Council's governance arrangements for the monitoring and reporting of progress against the Performance Improvement Plan in 2017/2018.



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

Performance Improvement Plan 2017-18 - Summary

Improvement Project	Community Plan	Strategic Priority	Performance Area	Objective	Completion date	Outcomes
ACHIEVE	Good Health and Well-being	Delivering Excellent Services, Developing a High Performing Council	Strategic Effectiveness; Service Quality; and Efficiency.	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.	March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased customer satisfaction levels (both from service users and staff); Performance Management Framework to enable continuous improvement.
Digitally Supported Environmental Innovation Centre	Sustainable Jobs and Tourism	Growing our Economy	Innovation; Strategic Effectiveness and Sustainability.	To lead the growth of and development of new industry sectors in the Mid & East Antrim Borough Council area through the creation of 125 knowledge economy jobs.	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 125 new high value jobs created by March 2019; Increased rental income to ECOS; and Increased number of new tenants.
Carrickfergus Townscape Heritage Initiative	Sustainable Jobs and Tourism, Our Environment	Growing our Economy	Strategic Effectiveness; Sustainability	Contribute to the sustainability of our local economy and to support the communities that live and work in the historic conservation area of Carrickfergus.	March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased market value of property; Increased number of new businesses Improve attractiveness of the town.
Reduction of Food Waste through Healthier Eating	Good Health & Wellbeing, Our Environment	Building stronger, safe and healthy communities	Sustainability	Developing and promoting a range of literature and workshops highlighting the benefits from eating healthily, including a reduction of food waste.	March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased customer satisfaction; Reduction in Food Waste; and Increased participation in the food waste collection scheme.
Deliver excellence in our citizen experience, through digital transformation and improved citizen engagement.	Our Environment, Sustainable Jobs & Tourism	Delivering Excellent Services, Developing a High Performing Council	Strategic Effectiveness; Service Quality; Efficiency.	Improving the citizen experience through the development of a Business Transformation Strategy for Council, including digital transformation, information and customer strategies.	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased customer satisfaction levels; Improved efficiency and effectiveness of Council-delivered services which have been digitally transformed.