



Performance Improvement Plan **2023-2024**

Quarter 2 Update Report

April-September 2023

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

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Duty to Improve

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

Under the Act councils have a statutory duty to publish a Performance Improvement Plan by 30 June each year, which sets out one or more improvement objectives, and to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to achieve them. This is known as the Duty to Improve.

For us 'improvement' is not limited to gains in service output or efficiencies. It is about focusing on the issues that are important to our stakeholders, helping us achieve our vision of improving the quality of life for all.

Our arrangements to secure continuous improvement are subject to an annual audit and assessment by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Arrangements to secure continuous improvement

Our Performance Management Framework drives continuous improvement within our organisation by aligning our key strategies and priorities, and enabling performance to be measured and managed at every level.

During the development of our key plans, we consult with our stakeholders and use a range of statutory and self-imposed indicators to track our progress in delivering them. An electronic performance management system is in place to support these arrangements.

Feedback

We welcome the opinions of our citizens, businesses, community groups, employees, Elected Members, and service users at any time throughout the year.

If you have an idea for improvement, please email us at: performance@midandeantrim.gov.uk



Performance Improvement Plan for 2023/24

Maintaining our performance has never been more important and more challenging.

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.

Our Plan for 2023/24 demonstrates our ongoing commitment to supporting our local communities in the midst of these challenges.

Developed with extensive stakeholder engagement and public consultation, the plan outlines some of the areas we aim to improve, how we plan to do it and how our citizens will be better off as a result.

You can view our current and previous plans in more detail at:

midandeastantrim.gov.uk/performance



Our Improvement Objectives for 2023/24

1

Growing the economy and creating jobs

Identify ways to increase local jobs and employment opportunities within Mid and East Antrim.

4

Working in partnership to support our citizens, particularly those who are vulnerable

Through citizen-focused projects, including Autism-Friendly and Age-Friendly initiatives.

2

Revitalising our towns

Through a variety of regeneration activities, support our businesses, welcome inward investment, and attract visitors to our towns.

5

Improving infrastructure to support the transition to low-carbon transport systems

To reduce emissions and protect the environment for future generations.

3

Supporting our citizens' health and well-being

Encourage and promote regular, safe, and responsible use of our parks and open spaces by providing quality, sustainable and inclusive opportunities.

6

Enhancing customer engagement and service delivery

Develop the Council's use of information technology to improve customer engagement and service delivery.

Second quarter performance summary

The following pages outline in detail what our citizens are going to see as a result of the delivery of our Improvement Objectives. We refer to these as 'outcomes'.

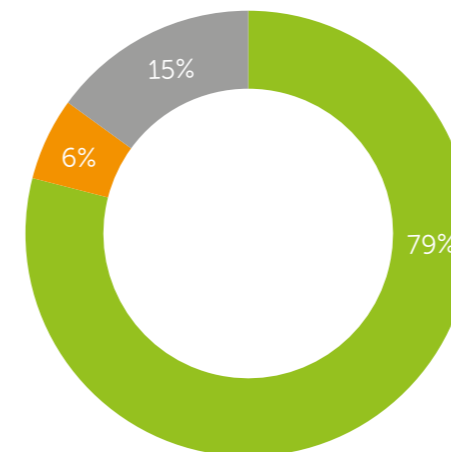
Key performance indicators help us track the delivery of our outcomes. We refer to these as 'measures'.

The charts below summarise our performance against our 33 key performance indicators (or measures) from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.

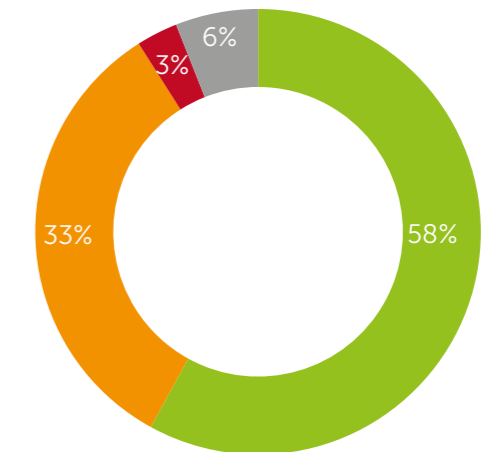
Progress Key

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

Q1 April - June 2023



Q2 April - September 2023



The figures provided in the charts indicate that progress has slowed in quarter two. There is a considerable reduction in the number of measures on track or completed (down 21 percentage points), and a sharp rise in the number that are now delayed but progressing (up 27 percentage points).

The reasons for these changes are outlined on the pages that follow.

Growing the economy and creating jobs

Identify ways to increase local jobs and employment opportunities within Mid and East Antrim.

Why are we doing this?

- 4,680 redundancies have been confirmed in Mid and East Antrim since 2013.
(Source: NISRA Labour Market Report, Redundancy Tables October 2022)
- Developing skills and job prospects ranked the third top priority for making the borough a better place to live.
(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)
- Only 28% of citizens agreed Mid and East Antrim is a good area for job opportunities.
(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)

Who is responsible?

The Director of Development.



What you'll see

Outcome 1		Programmes to encourage skills development and employability
Measure 1	8 employment and skills programmes delivered by 31 March 2024.	
Status	6 additional programmes commenced in the second quarter of the year, bringing the total number to 8. This includes the following academies and skills programmes - 'Forklift', 'Classroom Assistant', 'Transport', 'Restaurant', 'Manufacturing', 'Childminding', 'Enterprise Pathways', and Community Skills 'Paediatric First Aid'.	
Outcome 2		The promotion of new jobs in the borough through Business Start Interventions
Measure 1	85 jobs promoted by 31 March 2024.*	
Status	32 jobs were promoted over the second quarter, bringing the total number of jobs promoted since April 2023 to 66.	
Measure 2	NI Entrepreneurship Support Service (NIESS) implemented in partnership with all NI councils by 31 March 2024.	
Status	<p>The NIESS is a new approach to helping potential entrepreneurs, new starts, and existing businesses to maximise their potential and contribute to Northern Ireland's economy. It will provide would-be and existing businesses with flexible, tailored and easily accessible advice and support at any stage of their growth journey.</p> <p>In place from November, the NIESS officially launched at Belfast City Hall on 13 November 2023, with a local launch at Hillmount House in Larne on 17 November.</p> <p>Funding is secured from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to support delivery through to March 2025.</p>	
Outcome 3		An effective and efficient Planning Service to maximise economic development
Measure 1	Adopt the Local Development Plan Strategy by 31 December 2023.	
Status	The Local Development Plan Strategy was adopted at Full Council on 16 October 2023.	
Measure 2	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 2023 was 67.4 weeks. The NI council average was 34.7 weeks, with four NI councils within target.	
Measure 3	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 2023 was 10.2 weeks. The NI council average was 19.2 weeks, with four NI councils within target.	
Measure 4	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 for Infrastructure.	

* The target may increase from 85 to 111 during 2023-2024, pending changes to legislation.

Employability and skills programme case studies

Classroom Academy

The Classroom Assistants Employment Academy aimed to provide those who are unemployed or who are on low incomes, with the skills and qualifications needed to apply for 'live' Classroom Assistant positions.

With 60 initial expressions of interest received, 22 people participated in the academy and completed it. To date, three participants are into employment. The programme ends in December 2023.

Enterprise Pathways

This programme was designed to help those furthest removed from the labour market create their own job through self-employment.

Participants benefited from business support, a personal Skills Coach and Business Mentor, test trading opportunities and access to finance via the Get Started Fund.

15 participants completed the academy. Of these, 13 started a business.

This programme supported clients who faced a range of barriers to starting a business, including a single mother of a child with severe autism who had struggled to source appropriate childcare and had been unemployed for 12 months. Her mentor helped arrange suitable after-school childcare, subsidised by Universal Credit, enabling her to start trading from her home.

Manufacturing Academy

Manufacturing Academy Cohort 1 participants undertook a range of personal, employability, essential skills, and technical training, including bench fitting skills, sheet metal working, welding, and machining. They also learned about CNC machining, electronics and robotics, PLCs, pneumatics, and CAD.

Four participants completed the programme and gained a qualification, three gained employment, and one progressed to Further Education.

Cohort 2, which commenced in 2023, will support participants who are keen to gain employment within the manufacturing sector as an electrician's aid.

Revitalising our towns

Through a variety of regeneration activities, support our businesses, welcome inward investment, and attract visitors to our towns.

Why are we doing this?

- 'Delivering clean and attractive streets and towns' was identified as being one of the top five priorities for making MEA a better place to live.
(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)
- Of 20 potential actions, "clean and attractive towns and streets" ranked joint 2nd most popular action Council could take to make their area a better place to live. The "regeneration of towns and streets" ranked 7th.
(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)

Who is responsible?

The Director of Development and the Director of Operations.



What you'll see

Outcome 1	<i>Clean and attractive towns and streets</i>
Measure 1	A Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) Street Cleansing Index score of 66% or above by 31 March 2024.
Status	This annual score will be available in April 2024.
Outcome 2	<i>Enhancement of Ballymena and Larne town centres through public realm improvement works</i>
Measure 1	Completion of public realm improvement works at Point Street Larne by 31 August 2023.
Status	The public realm works completed on 5 May 2023, and included additional infrastructure upgrades by Northern Ireland Electricity. The cleaning and sealing of the footway took place shortly after, alongside the decommissioning of the works compound.
Measure 2	Public realm improvement works completed at Castle Street Ballymena by 31 December 2023.
Status	The public realm related works on Castle Street are due to complete by 30 November 2023.
Outcome 3	<i>Revitalisation Scheme delivered within our three main towns</i>
Measure 1	Revitalisation Scheme agreed by 30 September 2023.
Status	The first application for funding was successful, with a Letter of Offer received from the Department for Communities for over £400,000. A second funding application was submitted for the provision of street art across the borough's three main towns, with the potential for a third application being submitted before the end of the year for green walls and parklets.
Measure 2	Revitalisation Scheme delivered by 31 March 2025.
Status	The 'Shop Front Revitalisation Scheme' launched in early November to help eligible businesses in Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne town centres invest in their shopfronts, making them more visually attractive and appealing to residents and visitors. Information sessions were held within the three towns and facilitated online. The scheme was further promoted through traditional and digital marketing methods. It is anticipated that a pop-up shop scheme will also launch before Christmas.

Outcome 4	<i>Up to 10 buildings of historical and architectural interest restored in Carrickfergus through the Townscape Heritage Initiative, with Council and Heritage Lottery grant assistance</i>
Measure 1	Restoration of 10 buildings of historical and architectural interest by 30 September 2023.
Status	The ninth property at West Street completed in September 2023. The tenth and final property at Cheston Street experienced delays due to supply chain issues, adverse weather conditions, and complex design challenges, which are now overcome. This property is now due to complete in January 2024.
Outcome 5	<i>The local community will have a better understanding of built heritage</i>
Measure 1	A Built Heritage Education programme delivered by 30 September 2023.
Status	A closing event will take place and publications issued upon completion of the remaining property.
Outcome 6	<i>Increased inward investment and local employment opportunities related directly and indirectly to heritage and tourism growth</i>
Measure 1	Increased inward investment and local employment opportunities related directly and indirectly to heritage and tourism growth.
Status	This data will be available when the tenth and final property completes.



Supporting our citizens' health and wellbeing

Encourage and promote regular, safe, and responsible use of our parks and open spaces by providing quality, sustainable and inclusive opportunities.

Why are we doing this?

- Citizens ranked 'support and activities for children and young people' as the most important thing that needed to be improved to make the area a better place to live.
(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)
- Almost half would like to see more 'support services for children and families and/or those with disabilities', and more than a third would like to see more 'access to green spaces such as parks and forests'.
(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)
- Both the 'Play Strategy' and 'Play Investment Framework' for Mid and East Antrim emphasise the need for play. Our landscape provides excellent opportunities to enhance health and well-being, as outlined in our 'Outdoor Recreation Strategy'.

Who is responsible?

The Director of Community and the Director of Operations.



What you'll see

Outcome 1	5 replacement play parks completed by 30 June 2023
Measure 1	Play parks replaced at: 1 Ballymena Road, Ahoghill 2 Martinstown 3 Ferris Park, Larne 4 Woodburn, Carrickfergus 5 Wilson Crescent, Ballymena
Status	All 5 play parks are complete and open to public.
Outcome 2	2 replacement play parks completed by 31 March 2024
Measure 1	Play parks replaced in: 1 Clough 2 Marine Gardens, Carrickfergus
Status	The design and consultation for Clough play park is complete. With procurement in progress, site works are expected to commence in January 2024. The design of the Marine Gardens play park is being finalised prior to procurement commencing before Christmas.

Outcome 3	3 new or upgraded multi-use games or 'Kick-about' areas completed by 30 June 2024
Measure 1	New or upgraded multi-use games or 'kickabout' areas in: 1 Portglenone 2 Carnlough 3 Glynn
Status	Contractors are appointed for all three sites, with works expected to commence early 2024.
Outcome 4	1 new skatepark completed by 31 March 2024
Measure 1	New skate park in Larne.
Status	A revised procurement process is set to be issued in November 2023, with the tender process due to commence thereafter.
Outcome 5	5 outdoor safety training courses delivered
Measure 1	4 courses delivered by 31 March 2023 and another by 31 December 2023.
Status	All 5 courses are complete, with a total of 152 attendees.
Outcome 6	Outdoor events delivered by 31 March 2024
Measure 1	20 events delivered, with 50 participants.
Status	42 events have been held since April, totalling 1351 participants. 36 took place in quarter 2, and included Foraging, 'Treemendous Trees', Kayak Safety, Art in the Park, National Play Days, and First Aid Training, to name a few.
Outcome 7	Number of trees planted by 31 March 2024
Measure 1	5000 trees planted by 31 March 2024.
Status	32,732 trees and 10 sites are confirmed for the tree-planting season (one council and nine non-council sites). There will also be tree giveaway opportunities for staff and the community.



Working in partnership to support our citizens, particularly those who are vulnerable

Through citizen-focused projects, including Autism-Friendly and Age-Friendly initiatives.

Why are we doing this?

- Almost half of citizens said they would like to see more 'support services for children and families and/or those with disabilities'. Less than half agreed that the borough is a good area for 'supporting equality and inclusion'.

(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)

- Figures extracted from the 2022/23 Northern Ireland School Census show that 15,212 school aged children had been diagnosed with autism. This represents an estimated autism prevalence rate of 5.0% within the school aged population.

(Source: "Prevalence of Autism (including Asperger Syndrome) in School Age Children in Northern Ireland" Department of Health and NISRA 2023).

- Of 20 actions we could take to make your area a better place to live in, citizens ranked 'affordable quality housing' joint second. 57% agreed that the borough is a good area for 'a sense of belonging among people'.

(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)

Who is responsible?

The Director of Community.



What you'll see

Outcome 1 <i>Promotion and delivery of the Autism Friendly Initiative</i>	
Measure 1	10 Autism Friendly Workshops delivered to service providers by 31 March 2024.
Status	13 workshops have been delivered since April 2023. 10 with the PSNI, two with Libraries NI, and one within the Braid Arts and Museum Centre.
Measure 2	3 Autism Friendly Roadshows delivered within Ballymena, Carrickfergus, and Larne by 31 March 2024.
Status	A roadshow took place in Carrickfergus on 8 November 2023, entitled 'Family Support and Education'. More roadshows are scheduled for Larne on 6 February 2024 (entitled 'Life After ASD Diagnosis and Healthy Minds and Healthy Living') and Ballymena on 28 March 2024 (entitled 'Employability, Benefits, and Independent Living').
Measure 3	Develop a Communications Plan to raise awareness of the initiative by 31 March 2024.
Status	The Communications Plan is expected to be finalised by Christmas.
Measure 4	4 Autism Friendly Action Plans delivered in Council venues by 30 September 2023.
Status	Action plans are written for all four venues (Braid Arts and Museum Centre, Larne Arts and Museum Centre, Carrickfergus Museum, and Andrew Jackson Cottage and US Rangers Museum). A completion date of March 2024 is now deemed more realistic.
Measure 5	4 additional Autism Champions within Council by 30 September 2023.
Status	1 staff member has completed the qualification. Three more are expected to complete it by March 2024.
Measure 6	Autism Awareness Train the Trainer programme developed and shared with partner organisations by 31 March 2024.
Status	The pilot with Libraries NI remains underway, with the potential for a further 'Train the Trainer' programme being rolled out with the PSNI.

Outcome 2 <i>The establishment of an Age Friendly Alliance</i>	
Measure 1	MEA Age Friendly Alliance developed by 31 December 2023.
Status	The first meeting of the Age friendly Alliance took place on 16 November 2023.
Measure 2	MEA Age Friendly Action Plan developed by 31 March 2024.
Status	The action plan will progress following the first meeting of the alliance.
Outcome 3 <i>The development of a borough-wide Landlord Forum</i>	
Measure 1	A borough-wide Landlord Forum developed by 31 March 2024.
Status	A Landlord Forum meeting was held in September and educational videos were launched in October 2023; both were very positively received. Interest was expressed for establishing the forum as an affiliate of the Landlord Association of Northern Ireland. Ideas were also put forward for inclusion in the winter edition of the landlord newsletter. The next step will be to re-engage prior to Christmas.



Improving infrastructure to support the transition to low-carbon transport systems

To reduce emissions and protect the environment for future generations.

Why are we doing this?

- In 2023, it was announced that the phase out date for the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans is now 2035.
- In a FASTER Project survey (2021), which established attitudes and behaviour towards transport use, almost 30% of NI respondents (464) were from Mid and East Antrim (134). Of these, 34% of those who plan to change their vehicle in the next three years said they would be likely to purchase a battery electric vehicle.
- When asked what the Council should prioritise to be more environmentally friendly, 'awareness and assistance in tackling climate change' was the second most popular response.

(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)

Who is responsible?

The Director of Operations.

What you'll see

Outcome 1	<i>Fast electric vehicle chargers (22kW, charge in 1-2 hours) installed across the borough, through the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS)</i>
Measure 1	12 "fast" chargers installed at agreed locations by 31 March 2024.*
Status	<p>An update provided by the lead partner organisation in November advised that the tender remains under review.</p> <p>The delay in procurement is likely to make the extended timeframe for installation in March 2024 difficult to achieve.</p>

**In June 2023, the completion date of this project was extended from 31 December 2023 to 31 March 2024.*



Enhancing customer engagement and service delivery

Develop the Council's use of information technology to improve customer engagement and service delivery.

Why are we doing this?

- 'High Performing and Sustainable Council' is a key strategic priority within our Corporate Plan.
- Digital transformation initiatives can improve our management reporting and help to inform our decision-making. It can provide us with greater flexibility in how we deliver our services, leading to gains in efficiencies and better value for money for our ratepayers.

Who is responsible?

The Interim Director of Corporate Services.





What you'll see

Outcome 1	<i>The digital transformation of at least one customer-facing service</i>
Measure 1	16 Council-managed community centres connected to full fibre broadband by 30 September 2023.
Status	<p>All council-managed community centres have been upgraded with cabling to facilitate full-fibre broadband.</p> <p>Of the ten community centres that are now council-managed, four are connected to full fibre broadband, two of which are up and running, and two are awaiting additional hardware to enable this.</p> <p>The remaining six community centre broadband connections have not progressed. The timeframe for this is yet to be confirmed, however, it will not take place before Christmas.</p>

Previous years' Improvement Objectives

While most of our previous objectives are now 'complete' or delivered as 'business as usual', some targets were not reached within the intended timeframe. This section gives an update on these, where possible.

Some continuing or outstanding indicators from the Performance Improvement Plan for 2022/23 are included within our objectives for 2023/24. Where this was not possible, an explanation is provided within our year-end update report and Performance Self-Assessment Report for 2022/23.

Objective 1 Encourage people to value our natural environment through the promotion of the Green Dog Walkers scheme.	
Outcome 1	<i>A cleaner borough.</i>
Measure 1	A reduction in the number of residents perceiving dog fouling to be an issue in our local areas.
Status	Our Officers continue to promote the initiative across the borough and engage with local residents, schools, and community groups to encourage responsible ownership.

Objective 2 Improving customer engagement and service delivery by enhancing the Council's use of information technology	
Outcome 1	<i>The continued implementation of the Council's Agile Framework, through the delivery of a number of citizen-focused projects.</i>
Measure 1	The redesign of the Council's website developed from user experience feedback (phase 3).
Status	The Council is developing a 'Customer-First' approach, and this will be considered as part of that workstream.
Measure 2	The expansion of the automated customer call system into an additional service area.
Status	The Council is developing a 'Customer-First' approach, and this will be considered as part of that workstream.

Objective 3 The development of Sullatober Household Recycling Centre (PIP 2021/22)	
Outcome 1	<i>A larger site with improved infrastructure and accessibility to maximise re-use and recycling.</i>
Measure 1	6,500m ² site by 31 March 2022.
Status	The new, larger site opened in May 2022.
Measure 2	Increase recycling rate by 23.2% by 31 March 2023.
Status	There was a 12% increase in the rate of recycling rate to 72%. The site is still deemed to be in the 'settling-in' stage, having just opened in May 2022. This target will remain until March 2024.
Measure 3	1,046 additional tonnes of recycled materials by 31 March 2023.
Status	940 tonnes achieved, due to the initial 'settling in' period. This target will remain until March 2024.
Measure 4	12 additional tonnes of reused materials by 31 March 2023.
Status	8 tonnes achieved, due to the initial 'settling in' period. This target will remain until March 2024.
Outcome 2 <i>Financial savings by compacting waste and reduction in fuel consumption.</i>	
Measure 1	50% reduction in containers hauled per newly compacted material by 31 March 2023.
Status	20% achieved. This target will remain until March 2024.
Measure 2	Reduce tCO ₂ e by 800 by 31 March 2023.
Status	287 tonnes, due to the initial 'settling in' period. This target will remain until March 2024.
Outcome 3 <i>A more effective and efficient service with increased customer satisfaction and value for money for ratepayers.</i>	
Measure 1	Increased rate of customer satisfaction.
Status	Surveys conducted in 2021 and 2022 indicate an increase in customer satisfaction for 'accessibility, 'movement around the site', and 'sufficient site size'.

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 Improvement Objectives. We also set our own internal targets to ensure continuous improvement within these areas.

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.

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

	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 (DfC) requires that each Council sets and monitors its own individual target for this indicator annually.	20,623 Tonnes



For us, improvement is not limited to gains in service output or efficiencies. It is about focusing on the issues that are important to our citizens and businesses, helping us achieve our vision of improving the quality of life for all.



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

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