

Performance Improvement Plan 2025/26
Quarter 1 Update Report (April to June)

Other Formats

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Foreword

Welcome to our first update on our Performance Improvement Plan for 2025/26.

This plan sets out some of the improvements we hope to achieve over the next financial year, while working alongside our Corporate Plan to deliver on the key issues affecting our borough. Our Improvement Objectives align with the Community Plan for Mid and East Antrim, the Programme for Government and other key regional initiatives.

Among this year's objectives is a focus on economic regeneration and activities to help increase footfall, promote local trade and enhance town centre vitality. The plan also outlines our commitment to tackling violence against women and girls, an issue that has deeply affected many of our communities.

There is a strong environmental focus within our objectives, with the planned introduction of a simpler recycling system, as well as increased efforts to encourage everyone to take pride in Mid and East Antrim and contribute to making it a cleaner, greener and more welcoming place to live in and visit.

Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive

Duty to Improve

Legislation:

- Under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, councils have a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. Improvement means an activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities.
- The Council must set Improvement Objectives and have appropriate arrangements in place to achieve them. A Performance Improvement Plan, setting out these objectives, must be published each year.
- The objectives should be framed to bring about improvement in at least one of the following areas - strategic effectiveness, service quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability, efficiency and innovation.
- To view our plan in full, please visit:
www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/performance

Arrangements to Secure Continuous Improvement:

- Our arrangements to secure continuous improvement are outlined within a Performance Management Framework. This framework drives performance by linking our corporate strategies, aims and objectives to each employee's individual work plan. Our arrangements are audited by the Northern Ireland Audit Office every year.

Objectives and Progress Update

- Our Improvement Objectives for 2025/26 are:
 - People: We will help prevent violence against women and girls.
 - Place: We will help boost our local economy and town centres.
 - Planet: We will all play our part in making Mid and East Antrim a great place to live in and visit.
- We use outcomes (what you will see) and measures (key performance indicators) to monitor the delivery of our objectives.
- Of 15 measures:
 - 87% are achieved or on track (13 of 15)
 - 13% are not achieved (2 of 15)

Objective 1 - People: We will help to prevent violence against women and girls

Why this objective was chosen:

- Most women and girls in Northern Ireland have experienced some form of gender-based violence, from everyday misogyny and sexual harassment to extreme physical and sexual violence. There have been over 20 domestic homicides with a female victim since January 2020, and these numbers continue to rise. There is something everyone can do to end this.
- The Northern Ireland Executive launched The Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework in September 2024, focusing on tackling the underlying causes of violence, abuse and harm towards women and girls and stopping it before it starts. The Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Change Fund has been made available to local councils for rollout within the community and voluntary sector.
- Our citizens support programmes and activities to address this issue.

Progress update:

Outcome	Roll out of the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Change Fund.
Measure	Change Fund delivered by 31/3/26.
Status: On track	We opened a call for applications to the EVAWG Change Fund in March 2025. The fund will support local organisations working to prevent violence against women and girls by focusing on the following outcomes: 1. Changing the attitudes, behaviours and culture of violence against women and girls, 2. Promoting healthy and respectful relationships, and 3. Helping women and girls feel and be safe everywhere. The applications have now been assessed, and Letters of Offer have been issued.

Outcome	Everyone understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes, and plays an active role in preventing it.
Measure	Training programme delivered by 31/3/26.
Status: On track	The programme is underway, with 'Power to Change' and 'Be the Change' training delivered to our leisure staff in June. The aim is to ensure our leisure facilities and gyms are somewhere women and girls know they can feel safe and will be safe. The training encourages individuals to take responsibility for ending violence, abuse and intimidation against women and girls by changing their attitudes and behaviours, and by challenging those of their peers. The training will help our leisure staff to challenge abuse or harassment and enable them to deliver effective responses to anyone who may have experienced it. It is anticipated the training will be rolled out to personal trainers, gyms and leisure facilities across the borough at a later date.

Outcome	Our organisation will know how to recognise and respond to domestic violence or abuse.
Measure	Platinum level Workplace Charter on Domestic Violence by 31/3/26.
Status: On track	Staff training will take place from September to raise awareness of domestic abuse and to build an adequate support network within our organisation. The assessment is due to take place in November.

Objective 2 - Place: We will help boost our local economy and town centres

Why this objective was chosen:

- Our citizens would like to see more inward investment, support for businesses to start up and grow, and higher value jobs in the area.
- The Northern Ireland Executive plans to transform our economy by addressing challenges relating to productivity, good jobs, decarbonisation and regional balance. We will establish a Mid and East Antrim Local Economic Partnership to support this, with funding to deliver on our agreed priorities.
- Our town centres face many challenges with high operating costs, businesses closing, vacant units, dereliction and cleanliness identified as key issues. Our citizens support actions that will help to drive footfall and support our local businesses.
- We need to work in new ways to help citizens and visitors stay connected to what's happening across our borough.

Progress update:

Outcome	Submission of Mid and East Antrim's Local Economic Partnership Action Plan.
Measure	Submit an agreed action plan in line with Regional Balance Fund Project Guidelines by 31/3/26.
Status: On track	Meetings continue to be held with the Department for Economy, Invest NI and members of the Mid and East Antrim Local Economic Partnership to progress the submission of an agreed action plan by March 2026.

Outcome	Town centre events to boost footfall and support our local businesses.
Measure	15 events or activities held within Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne town centres by 31/3/26.
Status: On track	Events have been held across the borough's town centres to encourage footfall and support our local businesses, including

	Artisan Markets, Cirque de Carrickfergus, Broadway Summer Carnival, Feel-Good Friday music sessions and more.
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Outcome	Information notice boards to help citizens and visitors stay connected.
Measure	Installation of 3 information notice boards in Ballymena and Carrickfergus town centres by 30/6/25. (A notice board is already in place in Larne town centre).
Status: Achieved	New notice boards have been installed at Wellington Court in Ballymena, and the Castle Green and Civic Centre areas of Carrickfergus. They have been used to promote the events taking place within our 3 main towns throughout the summer. We also circulate a newsletter to businesses within the borough's 3 main towns every month, with information tailored to each area, including details of Council-organised events, business support programmes, training opportunities, road closures and more.

Outcome	Support for businesses to start-up and grow through Go Succeed and other tailored supports.
Measure	50 jobs promoted through business start-up interventions by 31/3/26.
Status: On track	41 jobs have been promoted so far this year.

Outcome	An effective and efficient Planning Service.
Measure	A processing time for major planning applications within an average of 30 weeks by 31/3/26.
Status: Not achieved	Latest available data is for the period April 2024 to March 2025, when 45.2 weeks was recorded. Data for April to June 2025 will be published in our next update.

	We are currently developing a Pre-Validation Checklist to ensure planning applications are valid and complete at the point of submission. This will reduce delays caused by incomplete or poor-quality submissions and will enable quicker consultee response times.
Measure	A processing time for local planning applications within an average of 15 weeks by 31/3/26.
Status: On track	Latest available data is for the period April 2024 to March 2025, when 5.8 weeks was recorded. Data for April to June 2025 will be published in our next update.
Measure	At least 70% of planning enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks by 31/3/26.
Status: On track	Latest available data is for the period April 2024 to March 2025, when 81.3% was recorded. Data for April to June 2025 will be published in our next update.

Objective 3 - Planet: We will all play our part in making Mid and East Antrim a great place to live in and visit

Why this objective was chosen:

- Everyone has a part to play in making Mid and East Antrim clean and safe. While the borough is mostly clean, dog foul and litter are key issues in some areas.
- Our citizens want simpler recycling. With a decline in levels of household recycling, something needs to be done to protect the environment and meet legal requirements.

Progress update:

Outcome	A communications campaign to encourage everyone to play a part in making Mid and East Antrim cleaner, safer and more attractive.
Measure	Campaign developed by 31/3/26.
Status: On track	We have launched various campaigns this year to help make our borough cleaner, greener, and more welcoming. These included a dog foul and dog control campaign to encourage people to clean up after their pets, as well as targeted messages for promenade users in Carrickfergus and Larne to keep their dogs on a lead or face a fine. We also launched key messages to encourage reuse and recycling. Further campaigns will be developed for delivery later in the year.

Outcome	Simpler recycling through the launch of a fully co-mingled dry recycling collection service.
Measure	Launch of a new dry recycling collection service by 1/11/26.
Status: On track	The public consultation will end on 31/8/25. The results will be analysed by the Council and published.

Outcome	Achievement of statutory waste key performance indicators.
Measure	At least 50% of household waste collected sent for recycling by 31/3/26.
Status: Achieved	Latest available data is for the period April 2024 to March 2025, during which 50.73% was recorded. Data for April to June 2025 will be published in our next update.
Measure	A maximum of 16,387 tonnes of biodegradable collected municipal waste sent to landfill by 31/3/26.
Status: Achieved	Latest available data is for the period April 2024 to March 2025, during which a figure of 13,611 tonnes was recorded. Data for April to June 2025 will be published in our next update.
Measure	Less than 79,500 tonnes collected municipal waste arisings by 31/3/26.
Status: Not achieved	Latest available data is for the period April 2024 to March 2025, during which a figure of 75,880 tonnes was recorded, exceeding the 2024/25 target. Data for April to June 2025 will be published in our next update.

Play Your Part

Things you can do to help make Mid and East Antrim the best that it can be:

- Shop locally.
- Be a responsible pet owner.
- Bin your waste.
- Reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Donate unwanted items to charity.
- Report problems such as fly-tipping, dog foul and anti-social behaviour.
- Get involved in community and voluntary work.
- Support our older people.
- Support people who are vulnerable.
- As business owners, offer apprenticeships or work placement opportunities.
- Be safe on our roads.
- Use public transport when you can.

Get Involved

We would like your input, views and feedback.

If you would like to tell us about something that you think needs to be improved, you can do so at any time during the year through any of the following methods:

- Email: performance@midandeastantrim.gov.uk
- Telephone: 0300 1245 000
- Post: Policy and Performance Team, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena, BT43 5EJ.

If you live, work or study in Mid and East Antrim you can also submit questions directly to our Elected Members and Officers by completing a short form. More details can be found at: www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/publicquestions

Closing Remarks

Addressing the needs of Mid and East Antrim remains our highest priority, and we will continue to make improvements, where we can, to improve the quality of life and environment for our ratepayers and communities.

Working in partnership with our citizens and other stakeholders will help shape a future that reflects our shared values and ambitions, ensuring a prosperous and sustainable borough for the generations to come. I look forward to the year ahead and warmly encourage you to follow our journey through our website and social media channels.

Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive