

Title of Report:	Performance Improvement Objectives 24/25 Update
Committee Report Submitted To:	Corporate Policy & Resources
Date of Meeting:	22 October 2024
For Decision or For Information	For Information
To be discussed In Committee	NO

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)		
Strategic Theme	Improvement & Innovation	
Outcome	Council maintains its performance as the most efficient of NI's	
	local authorities	
Lead Officer	Head of Performance	

Estimated Timescale for Completion				
Date to be Completed	22 October 2024			

Budgetary Considerations		
Cost of Proposal		
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES	
Capital/Revenue		
Code		
Staffing Costs		

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
(RNA)	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

Data Protection			
Impact	DPIA Required and	Yes/No	Date:
Assessment	Completed:		
(DPIA)			

1.0 <u>Purpose of Report</u>

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Members, for information, an update on the performance against the 2024/25 Performance Improvement Objectives.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 These five Performance Improvement Objectives for 2024/25 were agreed by Council in June 2024 and form part of Council's Performance Improvement Plan for 2024/25.
- 2.2 Council is committed to regular reporting on Objectives such as these, and furthermore a year-end report will be provided for Council in June 2025.

3.0 <u>Recommendation</u>

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee notes the content of this update report attached at Appendix 1.

Appendix 1

Mid-Year Update on performance against 2024/25 Performance Improvement Objectives

October 2024

2024/25 Performance Improvement Objective 1

Council will improve its performance by delivering a comprehensive corporate Transformation Action Plan

Senior Responsible Officer

Chief Executive

Why has this objective been chosen?

At its Special Council Meeting held on 30 October 2023, Council considered the final reports detailing the implementation status of the recommendations of the NIAO Extraordinary Audit Report. Council resolved to accept each report and associated recommendations and remained, as previously resolved, committed to further improving the weaknesses identified in the NIAO Extraordinary Audit report.

This is the single largest area of improvement focused work for Council during 2024/25, encompassing 103 separate recommendations across 6 thematic areas.

Outputs (The things that we will do in 2024/25)

- Establish Committee and Governance structures to ensure full implementation
- Meet weekly to ensure a focus on progress
- Engage monthly with the Department for Communities
- Engage widely with colleagues, trade unions and stakeholders
- Fully implement all recommendations within the Transformation Action Plan

Outcomes (The measurable differences we will make in 2024/25)

- Implement all 103 recommendations by 31 October 2024
- Agree forward looking actions

What improvements are citizens likely to see moving forward?

A stronger and better governed Council with an extensive suite of updated policies, procedures and working practises.

Which of the 7 aspects of improvement does this objective relate to?

Strategic Effectiveness

Community Planning outcome

Healthy Safe Communities

Associated Corporate Plan 2021-25 Strategic Priority

Cohesive Leadership Improvement and Innovation

Council will improve its performance by delivering a comprehensive corporate Transformation Action Plan

October 2024 Update

Outcomes and Outputs

How is Council performing in relation to the planned outcomes and outputs for this Improvement Objective?

Council is performing strongly against the Outcomes and Outputs as originally set out. As of 10 October 2024 the following update applies:

- Of the 103 Recommendations within the Transformation Action Plan, 91% are classified as Complete
- Confidence remains very high that Council will meet all the Recommendations for which it is responsible.
- The Implementation Oversight Panel has now been meeting on a monthly basis since its first meeting on Monday 12th February 2024. A Chair and Vice Chair were nominated from within the six Elected Members who make up the Oversight Panel. The Oversight Panel did not meet in July 2024 in light of Council recess.
- The Implementation Steering Group has also continued to meet on a monthly basis since its first meeting on Monday 5th February 2024. The appointed Independent Advisor Chairs this meeting.
- Weekly meetings of the Officer led Implementation Working Group have continued, with these ensuring a regular focus on progress. This meeting is Chaired by the Chief Executive.
- Extensive engagement sessions have been held with Elected Members, Council Staff and Trade Union Representatives.
- Monthly engagement and update meetings continue between the DfC, the Independent Advisor and Council. The most recent of these meetings was held on 26th September 2024, where DfC received an update report from Council and the Independent Advisor. The next such meeting is planned for 24th October 2024.

Risks

What risks have been identified, and if required, what mitigations have been put in place?

- The Transformation Action Plan has an agreed Risk Matrix and Risk Module that is reviewed on a weekly basis.

Service Level Delivery

What are the ongoing arrangements for delivery of this Improvement Objective? Who is involved in this work and what are the ongoing staffing and time resources? Please attach any agreed work plans or project documents for this Objective?

This Improvement Objective is a significant area of priority for Council in 2024.

The Action Plan contains 103 separate actions across six different themes. Members of SMT lead on the themes as shown below:

Leadership – Chief Executive Governance – Director of Environmental Services Culture & Relationships – Chief Executive Financial Governance – Chief Finance Officer Land and Property – Director of Corporate Services Records Keeping and Information Management – Director of Corporate Services

Reporting

How often is progress reported to senior Service staff and SLT? What plans are in place for ongoing reporting?

There is a formal reporting structure, with a weekly officer led Working Group, a monthly Steering Group Chaired by an Independent Advisor, and a monthly Oversight Panel made up of elected Members of Council.

Formal reporting to Steering Group and Oversight Panel.

Weekly updates to the officer led Working Group

Quarterly reporting to Council's Audit Committee.

Monthly reporting to the Department for Communities Officer Team

Quarterly reporting to the Minister Department for Communities.

Budget

Is there a specific budget in place for this work, and if so, how is that being managed?

There is a clear budget allocated to this work, which is monitored by the Working Group.

Council will improve its overall performance by conducting a corporate Health Check process and an Organisational Structure Review

Senior Responsible Officer

Chief Executive

Why has this objective been chosen?

At its Special Council Meeting held on 30 October 2023, Council considered the final reports detailing the implementation status of the recommendations of the NIAO Extraordinary Audit Report. Council resolved to accept each report and associated recommendations and remained, as previously resolved, committed to further improving the weaknesses identified in the NIAO Extraordinary Audit report.

Principally, Council agreed to undertake a review of the organisation's Senior Leadership structure and to conduct an Organisational 'Health Check'.

Outputs (The things that we will do in 2024/25)

- Plan, conduct and report on a senior leadership structural review by October 2024
- Plan, conduct and report on a corporate wide "Health Check" by October 2024

Engage widely with staff, elected members, trade unions and stakeholders

- Outcomes (The measurable differences we will make in 2024/25)
 - Engage with over 300 individuals
 - Deliver 1 online survey
 - Deliver more than 10 engagement workshops
 - Deliver 1 report with outcomes and recommendations following the corporate Health Check
 - Deliver 1 report with outcomes and recommendations following the Senior Leadership Structure review

What improvements are citizens likely to see moving forward?

As with Improvement Objective 1, citizens will see a stronger and better governed Council with an extensive suite of updated policies, procedures and working practises. Specifically, here, citizens will see two main things. Firstly, they will have a Council that has carried out a wide review into how it operates and functions as a Corporate Body with a subsequent plan on how to improve any areas of weakness identified. Citizens will also see an organisation that is benefiting from a reviewed and renewed senior management structure.

Which of the 7 aspects of improvement does this objective relate to?

Strategic Effectiveness

Community Planning outcome

Healthy Safe Communities

Associated Corporate Plan 2021-25 Strategic Priority

Cohesive Leadership Improvement and Innovation

2024/25 Performance Improvement Objective 2

Council will improve its overall performance by conducting a corporate Health Check process and an Organisational Structure Review

October 2024 Update

Outcomes and Outputs

How is Council performing in relation to the planned outcomes and outputs for this Improvement Objective?

Council is performing well against the planned outputs and outcomes. As of 10 October 2024 the following update applies:

- Corporate Health Check

- The LG Staff Commission has completed its work on the "Health Check" and has reported back to senior staff as well as to Elected Members at the June 2024 Implementation Oversight Panel meeting.
- During the engagement process with staff, elected members and trade union representatives for the Health Check Council received 189 online survey responses and 19 direct staff reflections. Furthermore, 112 individuals attended the in-person focus groups and a further 11 engaged in confidential interviews.
- Council will now work closely with the LG Staff Commission to create a forwardlooking plan to address the "5 Fundamental Shifts" recommended in their Health Check report.

- Organisation Structural Review

- The consultant led review of Council's Senior Leadership Structure (tiers 1-3) is almost complete, and indeed a large proportion of the fieldwork has now been completed. At least 10 initial engagement sessions took place with staff in Tiers 1-4 of the organisational structure and Elected Members.
- Further sessions for engagement with staff, elected members and trade union representatives took place during August 2024 in relation to the Organisation Structural Review process. This has been extended during September and October 2024 with engagement sessions held with all the political parties, senior officers and trade union representatives.
- Council will now work closely with the LG Staff Commission who will bring this process to a final report at Council's Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in October 2024. IN advance of this a detailed update will be presented to the Implementation Oversight Panel during its October 2024 meeting.

Risks

What risks have been identified, and if required, what mitigations have been put in place?

 These two key pieces of improvement work are set within the Transformation Action Plan, which has an agreed Risk Matrix and Risk Module that is reviewed on a weekly basis.

Service Level Delivery

What are the ongoing arrangements for delivery of this Improvement Objective? Who is involved in this work and what are the ongoing staffing and time resources? Please attach any agreed work plans or project documents for this Objective?

The development of these two pieces of work are being advanced with the assistance of the LG Staff Commission and an Independent Consultant.

There is also significant input from Council's SMT Senior Officers.

Reporting

How often is progress reported to senior Service staff and SLT? What plans are in place for ongoing reporting?

Reporting updates for this Improvement Objective are included within the formal reporting structures of the Transformation Action Plan:

Formal reporting to Steering Group and Oversight Panel.

Weekly updates to the officer led Working Group

Quarterly reporting to Council's Audit Committee.

Monthly reporting to the Department for Communities Officer Team

Quarterly reporting to the Minister Department for Communities.

Budget

Is there a specific budget in place for this work, and if so, how is that being managed?

There is a clear budget allocated to this work, which is monitored by the Working Group

We will improve the validity and robustness of the performance data we use

Senior Responsible Officer

Head of Performance

Why has this objective been chosen?

Council has significantly improved the quality and volume of the performance data that it uses.

The one remaining prior year Audit Recommendation area for improvement that hadn't been fully addressed was in relation to the level of third-party independent verification of the performance data that we use. As such, this Objective sets out to address that and improve our performance in this area.

Outputs (The things that we will do in 2024/25)

- Commission an independent third-party review into the performance data that we use
- Report to Council services on the robustness of the performance data that they use

Outcomes (The measurable differences we will make in 2024/25)

- Test the validity and robustness of at least 50 key pieces of performance data
- Test the validity and robustness of performance data across at least 8 Service Areas.
- Deliver data validation reports to at least 8 Council Service areas.

What improvements are citizens likely to see moving forward?

A council with improved assurance over the performance data that uses and reports upon, leading to increasing confidence is the decision making processes based on such performance data.

Which of the 7 aspects of improvement does this objective relate to?

Efficiency Strategic Effectiveness

Community Planning outcome

Healthy Safe Community

Associated Corporate Plan 2021-25 Strategic Priority

Improvement and Innovation

We will improve the validity and robustness of the performance data we use

October 2024 Update

Outcomes and Outputs

How is Council performing in relation to the planned outcomes and outputs for this Improvement Objective?

Council is performing positively in this area. As of 10 October 2024 the following update applies:

- Council planned and facilitated a two-day data validation visit from an external party.
- Validation visit sessions were held with 11 separate Service Areas
- 100 separate pieces of performance data were reviewed and validated
- Validation reports have been completed for all 11 Service areas that took part in the validation exercise
- Council has committed to repeating this process in 2024/25

Risks

What risks have been identified, and if required, what mitigations have been put in place?

- The two main risks here were finding the appropriate third party to conduct the review and also manging the time requirements for Council staff. The supplier issue was mitigated through Council's membership of the APSE Performance Network, which were able to provide this external expertise.
- Council staff time was planned and agreed well in advance

Service Level Delivery

What are the ongoing arrangements for delivery of this Improvement Objective? Who is involved in this work and what are the ongoing staffing and time resources? Please attach any agreed work plans or project documents for this Objective?

- This Improvement Objective is managed by and reported on by the Council's Performance Team, reporting to the Head of Performance and Chief Executive
- Outcomes of the validation visits are also reported to Service Leads.

Reporting

How often is progress reported to senior Service staff and SLT? What plans are in place for ongoing reporting?

- Post validation reports have been prepared for the specific Service areas involved.
- Progress is reported centrally by the Council's Performance Team, reporting to the Head of Performance and Chief Executive
- Progress in this Improvement Objective is also reported quarterly to Audit Committee as it is part of the Quarterly report on outstanding areas for Improvement.

Budget

Is there a specific budget in place for this work, and if so, how is that being managed?

- No, there is no specific budget allocated to this work beyond the time allocations across the Services
- Council's paid membership of the APSE Performance Network and the Benchmarking Network enabled this work to be completed for no additional cost

2024/25 Performance Improvement Objective 4

We will continue to grow and improve Council's response to levels of poverty across the Borough

Senior Responsible Officer

Director Leisure and Development

Why has this objective been chosen?

During the public consultation on our Improvement Objectives, the most regular theme expressed by consultees was concerns in relation to poverty and the cost of living. The Borough suffers from 21% poverty rate (2nd highest in NI); 27% of households are in fuel poverty (ranked 3rd highest); almost 15% of the Borough's

population experience Relative Income Poverty (+2% NI average).

Outputs (The things that we will do in 2024/25)

- Council will lead on a Local Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Group
- Delivery of Social Supermarket Support Programme.
- Deliver local anti-poverty Action Plan

Outcomes (The measurable differences we will make in 2024/25)

- 16 Stakeholders participating in the Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Group
- 4 wider stakeholder events delivered
- 6 collaborative projects undertaken
- 160 households supported through Social Supermarket Programme
- 2 existing Social Supermarket models supported.
- 1 new test Social Supermarket model identified and supported

What improvements are citizens likely to see moving forward?

A Council that continues to improve and prioritise its approach to delivering support to the vulnerable within our community.

Which of the 7 aspects of improvement does this objective relate to?

Fairness

Sustainability

Community Planning outcome

Healthy Safe Community Thriving Economy

Associated Corporate Plan 2021-25 Strategic Priority Local Economy Healthy, Active and Engaged Communities

October 2024 Update

2024/25 Performance Improvement Objective 4

We will continue to grow and improve Council's response to levels of poverty across the Borough

Outcomes and Outputs

How is Council performing in relation to the planned outcomes and outputs for this Improvement Objective?

- Council has continued to facilitate the Anti-poverty Stakeholder Steering Group (APSSG) with membership made up of those organisations delivering poverty advice and emergency support services and relevant statutory bodies with the aim of increasing co-ordination and awareness of support services – 3 meetings have taken place this financial year to date.
- Organisations involved are: Community Advice Causeway, Vineyard Compassion (Causeway Foodbank & Reset Social Supermarket), Limavady Community Development Initiative (Foodbank, Babybank and Social Supermarket), Ballycastle Foodbank, Ballymoney Foodbank, St Vincent DePaul, Salvation Army, Public Health Agency (PHA), Northern Health & Social Care Trust (NHSCT), Western Health & Social Care Trust (WHSCT), Multi Disciplinary Team Social Workers, Councils Community Development, Community Planning and Energy Efficiency teams.
- Funding of £97,028 was secured from the Department for Communities for a Social Supermarket Support Programme.
- Contracts for service delivery have been awarded to Reset Social Supermarket operated by Vineyard Compassion in Coleraine and Limavady Community Development Initiative. To date 90 households have benefitted from a social supermarket service.
- The Community Development team are working with 3 organisations in Ballymoney, Ballycastle and Cushendall to test the feasibility and support the set up of social supermarkets in these areas.
- Council's Energy Efficiency team continue to provide information and advice on energy efficiency measures and promote the uptake in energy efficiency initiatives for target households.
- Council's Community Development team supported the APSSG to organise a Housing Poverty; Impact and Solutions event bringing together housing practitioners and policy influencers to look at solutions to the current housing crisis. 45 people attended and a report will be made available with a follow up meeting planned.
- Council has awarded a contract for the provision of Generalist Advice in the borough to Community Advice Causeway. To date 7,750 client contacts have been carried out, with 77% of these relating to benefits advice. £1.6 million in benefits income has been secured for the borough. Advice is also provided on housing issues, employment and a range of other issues and clients are referred for others supports such as foodbank, fuel and mental health support.
- A Food Hardship Grant was delivered to 16 community organisations to deliver a range of emergency food initiatives, which benefited1805 households.
- Council maintains an information hub on Councils website of support services <u>https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/advice</u>

• Members of the APSSG are currently planning a reinvigoration of the 'Where To Turn' awareness raising campaign of the support services that are available in relation to food, fuel and financial difficulties over the winter months.

Risks

What risks have been identified, and if required, what mitigations have been put in place? Delivery

Core funding isn't available for delivery of the Anti-Poverty Action Plan

- Outside of the specific Department for Communities funded Social Supermarket Support Programme and Generalist Advice service (and one off Hardship Fund in 2023-24) there isn't external funding for delivery of the Anti-Poverty Action Plan. Projects that are delivered are either at no or low cost as a result.

Ability of charities to cope with demand for support

- While promotion of the support services, such as foodbanks and charities that provide fuel support, is important, there is a risk that promotion of the services will increase demand beyond what the charities can manage without any additional financial resources to support them. Campaigns are planned carefully with the APSSG members; funding is sought where possible to help deal with increased demand.

Service Level Delivery

What are the ongoing arrangements for delivery of this Improvement Objective? Who is involved in this work and what are the ongoing staffing and time resources? Please attach any agreed work plans or project documents for this Objective?

The Community Development Team lead on facilitating the Anti-Poverty Steering Group and delivery of the Action Plan. Officers from Community Planning and Energy Efficiency support this delivery.

There are no specific staffing costs as this is carried out as part of the core work of the team.

The Anti-Poverty Action Plan is attached below:



CCG Anti Poverty Action Plan 24-25- Act

Reporting

How often is progress reported to senior Service staff and SLT? What plans are in place for ongoing reporting?

Monthly updates are provided as part of reporting on Council's Community & Culture Business Plan.

6 monthly reports are provided to DfC and Council.

Budget

Is there a specific budget in place for this work, and if so, how is that being managed?

- No core budget for Anti-Poverty Action Plan
- Budget of £97,028 for Social Supermarket Support Programme (100% DfC funded)
- Budget of £265,691 for Generalist Advice (£156,401 Council contribution) additional budget of £113,424 for Welfare Reform & Neighbourhood Renewal advice (100% DfC funded)

We will improve and increase our level of citizens engagement ahead of a new Corporate Strategy in 2025

Senior Responsible Officer

Head of Performance

Why has this objective been chosen?

This Objective was developed for the 2023/24 Performance Improvement Plan, but work here still continues and as such remains within this 2024/25 Plan.

Critical self-analysis had identified that Council requires a more innovative and direct engagement relationship with citizens and rates payers, especially when it comes to the development of significant pieces of work such as the Council's Corporate Strategy.

The first Citizens Survey was a success and provided a template for Council to build and improve upon.

In order for Council to fully understand the impact of its service delivery, for Council to understand where it needs to improve, and for Council to receive consistent and accurate feedback on how it performs, it is key that we continually improve and develop the arrangements that we have for engaging with our citizens.

Direction from the NIAO audit of arrangements for Performance Improvement highlighted that Council was lacking in defined, representative and statistically accurate arrangements for gathering the views and opinions of the citizens of the Borough

Outputs (The things that we will do in 2024/25)

- We will work with Elected Members as well as internal and external partners to conduct a Citizen's Survey which will be open to every household in Causeway Coast and Glens
- We will hold public engagement sessions across the Borough
- We will create a survey for Causeway Coast and Glens that will include key questions and measures on the services we provide, the perceptions of our citizens and indicators that are demonstrative of how we are delivering for our citizens.
- We will report to Council and to our citizens with the full outcomes of this consultation exercise

Outcomes (The measurable differences we will make in 2024/25)

- We will grow our Citizens Survey by 20% and receive responses from at least 2,700 households across the Borough (2,268 responses in 2021)
- We will plan and conduct 4 separate public engagement sessions (0 public sessions in 2021)
- We will publish the findings of the first Causeway Coast and Glens Citizen's Survey

What improvements are citizens likely to see moving forward?

Citizens will see a better engaged Council. Council will be much better informed of (and much more aware of) how it is performing leading to the ability to make more decisions based on the opinion of and feedback from citizens.

Which of the 7 aspects of improvement does this objective relate to?

Strategic Effectiveness

Service Quality

Innovation

Community Planning outcome

Outcome 5: The Causeway Coast and Glens area promotes and supports positive relationships

Outcome 11: The Causeway Coast and Glens area drives entrepreneurship & fosters innovation

Associated Corporate Plan 2021/25 Strategic Priority

Innovation and Transformation

Resilient, Healthy and Engaged Communities

2024/25 Performance Improvement Objective 5

We will improve and increase our level of citizens engagement ahead of a new Corporate Strategy in 2025

October 2024 Update

Outcomes and Outputs

How is Council performing in relation to the planned outcomes and outputs for this Improvement Objective?

Council is performing well against the planned outputs and outcomes. As of 10 October 2024, the following update applies:

The Citizen's Survey 2 was opened on 13th May 2024 and then closed on 30 July 2024.

A promotional communications campaign was developed and issued through Council's website and social media channels. Furthermore, posters and leaflets were displayed at all Council facilities and local press and media were also utilised.

The survey resulted in 2,701 responses in total, which is an increase of 433 from Citizens Survey 1. The survey had a completion rate of 76%.

Public engagement sessions have not yet taken place. These will be worked in to the upcoming engagement on Corporate Strategy.

Risks

What risks have been identified, and if required, what mitigations have been put in place?

The most significant risk that had contributed to delay in Citizens Survey 2 was the rising costs of postal distribution. This was mitigated by developing a communications plan that focused on digital media, social media, promotion within our facilities and use of local printed media.

Service Level Delivery

What are the ongoing arrangements for delivery of this Improvement Objective?

Who is involved in this work and what are the ongoing staffing and time resources?

Please attach any agreed work plans or project documents for this Objective?

This Improvement Objective is managed and reported on by the Council's Performance Team.

Reporting

How often is progress reported to senior Service staff and SLT?

What plans are in place for ongoing reporting?

Updates on this Improvement Objective are reported regularly at Performance Team meetings as well as directly to the Chief Executive.

There is also a wider update on this work being provided directly to Council's Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in October 2024.

Budget

Is there a specific budget in place for this work, and if so, how is that being managed?

Yes, there is an agreed budget for this work from within the Performance Team's annual budget.

This is managed by the Performance Team

All work is under budget.