



# **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2025-26**

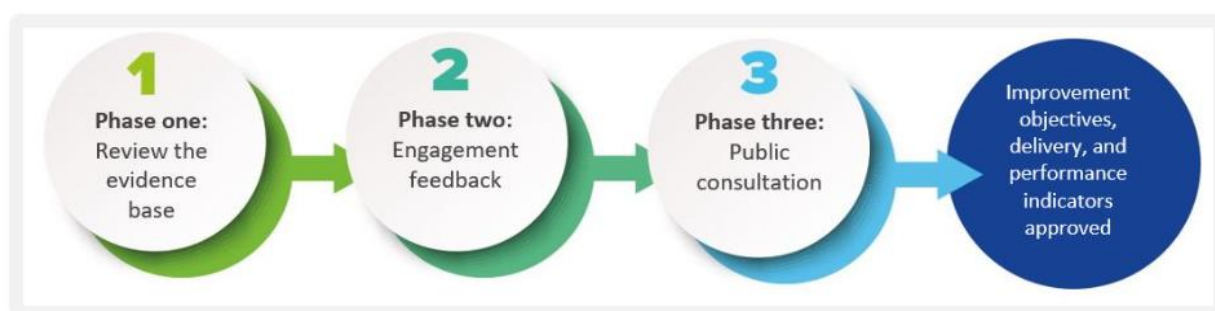
**Draft Consultation Summary Report**

# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to highlight the process for informing the development of Council's Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26. The report outlines the approach and feedback received during the consultation process.

## 1.1 Approach to developing our improvement objectives

The improvement objectives and related actions for 2025-26 were developed based on the implementation of a three-phased approach as summarised below. This report focuses on the findings from Phase 3 of the approach.



Phase 1: Review the evidence base
<p>Conducted a review of existing baseline information and data to contextualise potential improvement opportunities. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Results and trend data from our 2024-25 Performance Improvement Assessment report.</li><li>• Ongoing monitoring and review of 2024-25 Corporate Delivery Plan (via quarterly reporting).</li><li>• Inclusion of guidance issued by the Department for Communities and recommendations provided by the NI auditor (including the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Section 95 report).</li><li>• Evidence and issues arising from committee and meetings of the Full Council.</li><li>• Areas for improvement emerging from the internal audit and risk management processes.</li><li>• Priorities identified during the development of the new Corporate Plan 2025-28 and rate setting process.</li><li>• Alignment with key Council and city strategies including The Belfast Agenda and the Corporate Plan 2025-28.</li><li>• A review of customer complaints received.</li><li>• Good practice data benchmarking with other local authorities.</li></ul>
Phase 2: Engagement feedback
<p>A series of internal engagements were carried out with members, Chief Officers, departments and key staff across Council. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initial meetings with departments to identify priorities and improvement activity.</li><li>• Regular engagement with departmental teams and key officers, at every phase – ensuring alignment to departmental and service level budget setting and planning processes.</li></ul>

- Priorities identified during corporate planning engagement with Party Group Leaders, elected members and the Corporate Management Team (CMT).
- Reports presented and discussed at Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee and the Full Council.
- Approval granted via scheduled meetings with senior management teams, CMT, committee and full council meetings.

### Phase 3: Public consultation

An eight-week public consultation process was carried out to enable residents and stakeholders to inform our improvement objectives 2025-26. This included an online survey via council's Your Say Belfast consultation and engagement website ([yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk](https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk)) and two targeted focus groups. The survey was promoted using a range of communication methods including social media posts, posters in community buildings, email marketing to existing mailing lists, intranet promotion and websites. As part of phase three, we:

- Received 88 survey completions via the Your Say Belfast website.
- Facilitated 2 focus groups with 62 young people and 9 older people to reflect their priorities and areas for improvement.
- Worked closely with departmental teams and key officers to consider consultation feedback and refine the Performance Improvement Plan.
- Secured approval of the final objectives through the normal Council governance cycle (CMT, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Full Council meeting).

## 2. Public consultation

The eight-week public consultation period in relation to Council's draft improvement objectives 2025-26 ran between 17<sup>th</sup> February - 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 via Council's YourSay engagement platform. An online survey was carried out with 88 completed responses alongside 2 focus groups which engaged with 62 young people and 9 older people respectively. This section of the report presents and overview of the consultation findings including qualitative feedback received from survey respondents and focus group participants.

### 2.1 Draft improvement objectives

#### Draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26

##### Our Services

We will continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of our residents and stakeholders.

##### Our people and communities

We will improve our local areas and provide opportunities to support our residents to become healthier and engaged

##### Our place

We will create a more vibrant, attractive, and connected city (including the city centre).

## Our planet

We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast.

## Our economy

We will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.

## Compassionate city

We will support our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe, and inclusive city.

### 3. On-line survey – high level analysis

#### 3.1 Support for improvement objectives (survey responses)

**78.4%**

strongly agreed or agreed with  
the 'Our services' improvement  
objective

**86.3%**

strongly agreed or agreed with  
the 'Our people and communities'  
improvement objective

**81.9%**

strongly agreed or agreed with  
the 'Our place' improvement  
objective

**76.2%**

strongly agreed or agreed with  
the 'Our planet' improvement  
objective

**84.1%**

strongly agreed or agreed with  
the 'Our economy' improvement  
objective

**73.9%**

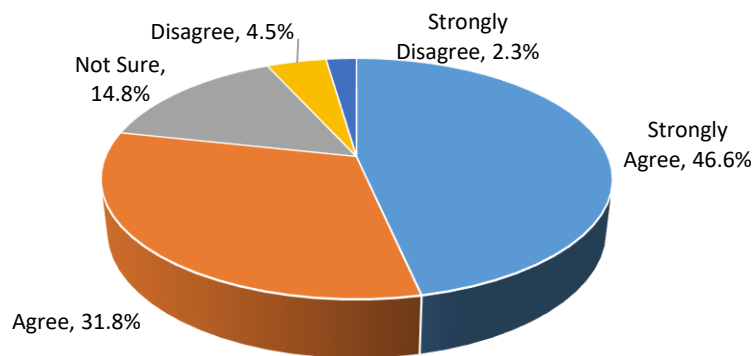
strongly agreed or agreed with  
the 'Compassionate city'  
improvement objective

#### 3.2 Generic feedback

The generic feedback received included minor suggestions and improvements to internal practices within Council, including the need to improve communications and raise awareness of the different levels of planning within the Council and how they all link together and providing more opportunities for staff to network and collaborate. These areas will be actioned by the Council as part of business-as-usual practices and communication and awareness raising internally will be taken forward as part of the formal launch of the Corporate Plan 2025-28.

## 4. On-line survey – Improvement objectives analysis

### 4.1 'Our services' Improvement Objective



- 46.6% strongly agreed
- 31.8% agreed
- 14.8% not sure
- 4.5% disagreed
- 2.3% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

### Qualitative feedback



- Develop solutions that prioritise waste minimisation instead of more recycling campaigns.
- Assign extra resources to ensure waste collection services are more efficient and can reduce littering and clogging up streets with bins.

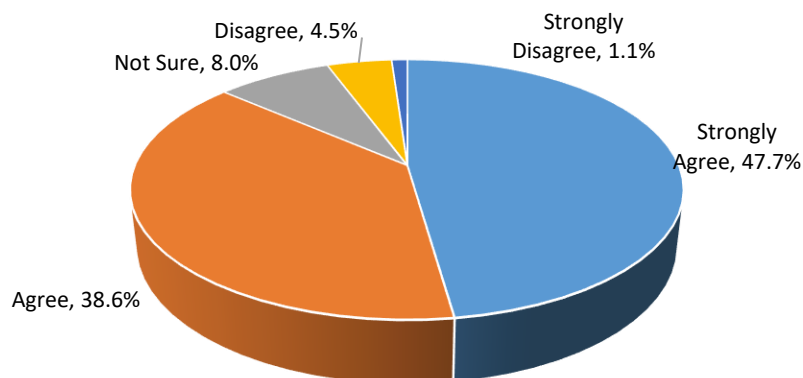


- Consider more specific improvement activity and actions relating to this objective.



- Whilst the implementation of the glass collection is a positive step forward, it should be extended across the city.

### 4.2 'Our people and communities' improvement objective



- 46.6% strongly agreed
- 31.8% agreed
- 14.8% not sure
- 4.5% disagreed
- 2.3% strongly disagreed

### Qualitative feedback

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree



- Enhance key local amenities such as re-surfacing works at the Bog Meadows to engage more people in their local areas.



- Invest further in sport and leisure facilities, specifically outdoor tennis courts to encourage more participation.
- Cost for leisure facilities is prohibitive for many people to access – consider more inclusive pricing to encourage participation.

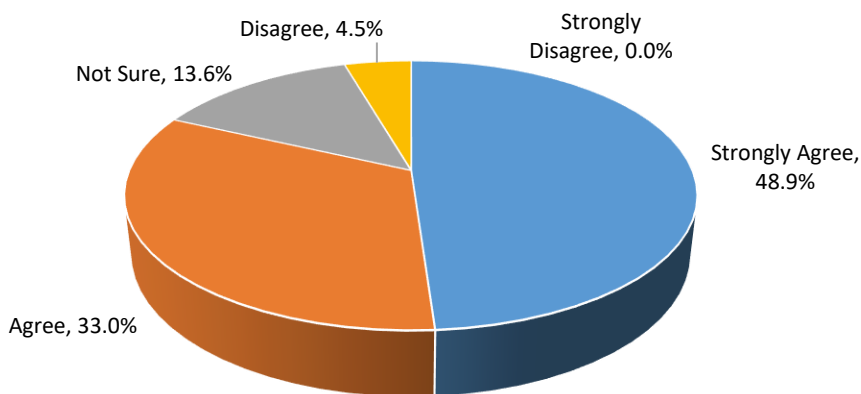


- Council should proactively prioritise participation of residents in civic society. Develop innovative ways to engage and support people and groups across the city.



- After decades of catching up, Belfast seems to have fallen behind the rest of UK and Ireland. Promotion of inclusion and reducing the segregation of our city should be prioritised.

### 4.3 'Our place' improvement objective



- 48.9% strongly agreed
- 33.0% agreed
- 13.6% not sure
- 4.5% disagreed
- 0.0% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

### Qualitative feedback



- Focus on greater pedestrianisation of city centre, reducing vehicles in and around commercial and shopping areas as well as enhancing active travel infrastructure.



- Consider how to prioritise increasing use of communal green spaces that are easily accessible and open to the public.



- Work with partners to enhance public transport provision and infrastructure, including provision of bus stops at Council facilities.



- Prioritise investment in addressing unadopted alleyways to deliver a 'cleaner and greener' city.

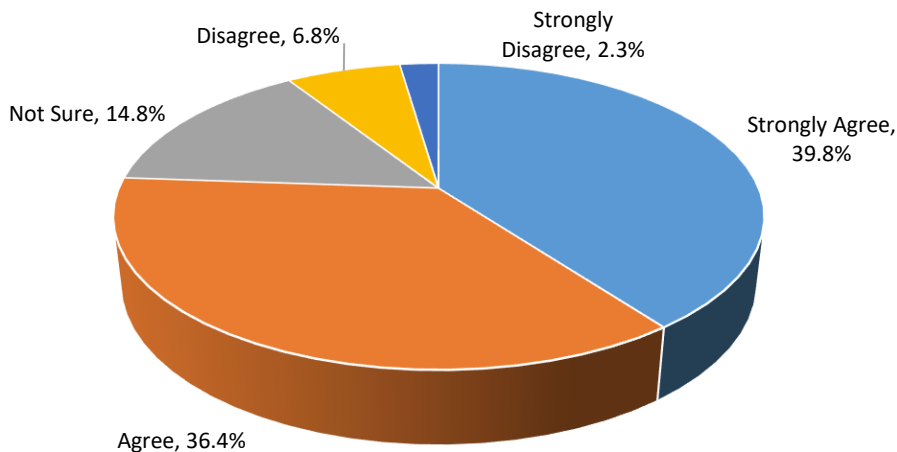


- Progress works with property developers and landowners to increase housing in areas where new housing is needed.



- Vacancy across the city not just the city centre needs to be addressed as dereliction is a major problem in housing as well as businesses.

#### 4.4 'Our planet' improvement objective



- 39.8% strongly agreed
- 36.4% agreed
- 14.8% not sure
- 6.8% disagreed
- 2.3% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

#### Qualitative feedback



- Whilst acknowledging positive tree planting ambitions across the city, it's also important to recognise the importance of hedges to the environment and beauty of the city.



- Reducing car use in the city and encouraging shared car schemes to try and address issues of parking across the city. Consider options to promote access to short term car usage, for example the GoCar in Ireland.



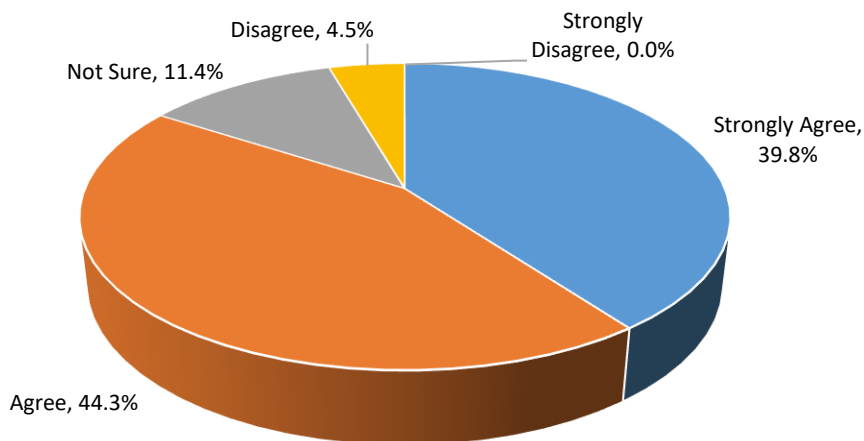
- Consider practical ways to educate and raise awareness in relation to climate change such as community science projects on air quality across the city.



- Council should use their leadership position as part of this theme to deliver positive action alongside partners.

- 39.8% strongly agreed
- 44.3% agreed

#### 4.5 'Our economy' improvement objective



- 11.4% not sure
- 4.5% disagreed
- 0.0% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

#### Qualitative feedback



- Council should be encouraging local supply chains and reducing exporting of resources as waste that could be used by other businesses as a material in production to deliver a 'circular economy'.

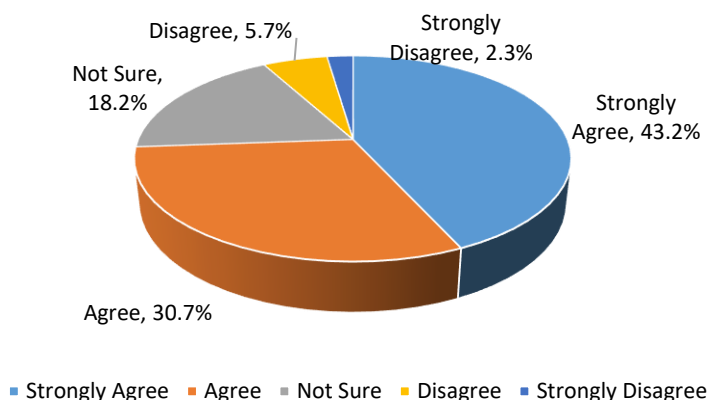


- An events strategy for outdoor concerts in Belfast is required to set out the approach in terms of event frequency etc in Belfast Parks in particular.



- Greater promotion, emphasis and visibility of arts and culture as key economic drivers that help to showcase what the city has to offer both for residents and visitors.

#### 4.6 'Compassionate city' improvement objective



- 43.2% strongly agreed
- 30.7% agreed
- 18.2% not sure
- 5.7% disagreed
- 2.3% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

#### Qualitative feedback





- Important that Council tackle the root cause for numerous issues in relation to violence against women and girls of which drug use and increased immigration are considered to be enablers.



- Whilst it is commendable that Council is taking the lead on poverty, this should be an issue for Central Government to deliver on.



- Council should make a commitment to rigorously understanding the causal factors of inequality, poverty and violence and to lead the city to change them so that the difference between those who are well off and those who are not is reduced.



- Focus on the services to support the most at risk, those with disability, homeless, addictions issues and review ways of working, For example - combining the family support hubs, complex lives, community safety etc and embrace joined up working.

## 5. Focus group feedback

Council's Strategic Performance Team facilitated two focus groups with 62 young people aged 18-24 and 9 members of the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum who represent the views of older people across the city. Workshops focused on identifying the needs and priorities for the two respective target groups. Key feedback is summarised below:

### 5.1 Older people focus group

#### Communication and awareness

Council should consider more traditional methods to engage and communicate with older residents. Many don't or can't access online methods and therefore don't stay informed, for example providing more frequent newsletters, brochures, key contact details and radio announcements would be beneficial.

#### Better understanding of older people's needs

The needs of older people can be sometimes overlooked, older people would welcome direct engagement, particularly with Elected Members to look at opportunities to help support them.

#### Increased public toilet provision

The lack of public toilet provision across the city restricts older people from getting out and about. Older people feel apprehensive that they won't be able to access toilet provision and therefore can become isolated from society. Reviewing toilet provision and how the city can better accommodate older people should be prioritised.

#### Working with partners

Council should be a civic leader and demand more from key partner organisations to improve the quality of life and provision for people across the city. Improving our roads, availability of public transport and improving accessibility of all facilities are key issues which should be delivered on.

### 5.2 Young people focus group

#### Mental health support

Mental health is a major issue for young people with more and more individuals seeking support. Service demand is vastly outweighing supply and thus many young people cannot access the support they need. Council should work with partners to consider interventions and supports to help address the challenges presented.

### **Social justice**

Young people want to live in a city that is inclusive and equitable, ensuring everyone has the same rights and access to basic necessities. Council therefore has a key role to play in terms of addressing systemic inequalities and discrimination, through delivering interventions and programmes that promoting a society where everyone can thrive.

### **Youth unemployment**

Accessing good quality jobs a priority for young people who feel that the cost of living crisis and political decisions (National Insurance increase) could lead to higher levels of youth unemployment. Young people would like to see better training and educational opportunities to ensure they are better equipped to access and sustain employment.

### **Homelessness**

Homelessness was noted as a key issue for young people who feel more dedicated and wholistic support is required. Council should consider how they can help tackle the issue to reduce stereotyping and review practical solutions to support those in need i.e. extend Complex Lives, transform derelict buildings into safe spaces etc.

### **Ending Violence Against Women and Girls**

Addressing the growing issue of violence against women and girls is a major priority for young people who feel that Council has a key role to play in terms of providing infrastructure, delivering legislation and education to help tackle the societal issue. Young people feel that Council need to show leadership and work with partners to ensure that Belfast is a safe place for everyone.

### **Climate change**

Young people noted the positive work of Council in terms of the leading role in helping to address climate change in Belfast. They also stressed the importance that this work continues to be prioritised and elevated further to safeguard future generations.