



Performance Improvement Plan

2025 - 26



Belfast
City Council

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Foreword

I'm delighted to introduce Belfast City Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 which is a key element of our arrangements to secure continuous improvement. Driving improvement is a priority for Council, evidenced by our recently developed Planning and Performance Framework which is a crucial component that will help us to embed a consistent approach to how we plan, deliver, monitor and measure the impact of our services and work across the organisation.

As we move past a decade since local government reform which was implemented to enhance service delivery and improve cost effectiveness for local authorities in Northern Ireland, as a Council we remain committed to improving the quality of life and environment for our ratepayers and communities over the next year and beyond.

This commitment is echoed in our new Corporate Plan 2025-28 which is closely aligned to The Belfast Agenda, our city's community plan. Our new Corporate Plan sets out our priorities and ambitions in terms of improving our services, supporting our people and communities, enhancing our place, growing our economy, protecting our planet, promoting a compassionate city and ensuring that we are an organisation fit to lead and serve.

Looking back on 2024-25, we are proud of the progress that we achieved and the positive impact that the work of council staff continues to have on our residents and stakeholders. Reflecting on last year's Performance, this plan highlights some of our key achievements, such the delivery of over £14.5m of investment in two PEACE IV projects- Shankill Shared Women's Centre and Black Mountain Shared Space.

These facilities will undoubtedly play a crucial role in connecting communities as we continue to strive towards a shared future for everyone.

We will continue to prioritise our commitment to creating a sustainable, nature positive city and championing climate action by increasing the climate resilience of Council assets and services.

To improve the health and wellbeing of our residents, we will maximise our contribution through investing in and offering a diverse range of activities in parks, open spaces, play and leisure facilities. Additionally, we uphold our dedication to stimulating inclusive growth and innovation and enhancing the prosperity of our city, through supporting local businesses and creating opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.

We have supported and continue to deliver real improvements for all our citizens, particularly those who are most vulnerable, underpinned by the desire to make Belfast a compassionate city, a city which is caring, safe and inclusive for all.

However, whilst much has been achieved, our continuous improvement journey is ongoing, and we remain determined not to stand still. As an organisation, we look forward to the year ahead as we strive to improve the quality of life and opportunities for all our citizens and stakeholders.

John Walsh, Chief Executive

Introduction

Our Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 sets out Council's key priorities for improvement over the next 12-month period to ensure that we fulfil our "Duty to Improve".

Duty to improve

Under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, we have a statutory duty to agree improvement objectives, publish an annual Improvement Plan and ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to achieve them.

Defining improvement

In accordance with the Act and accompanying guidance, for us "improvement" is about *enhancing the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities* rather than limited to gains in service output or efficiencies.

The development of this year's Performance Improvement Plan has coincided with the production of Council's new Corporate Plan 2025-2028. As a result, Council has been able to clearly define key priorities and areas for improvement this year, ensuring alignment between both plans and our overarching community plan, The Belfast Agenda.

Our Performance Improvement Plan has also been developed against the backdrop of Council's new Planning and Performance Management Framework to embed a consistent, streamlined approach to planning and performance management throughout the organisation. It will also help to build an effective culture of performance management to ensure all members, staff and stakeholders work to achieve the best possible outcomes and value for money for the residents and communities in Belfast. The Framework will also be a crucial tool to support informed decision-making, more effective use of resources and drive improvement across the organisation.

Our medium and longer-term arrangements to ensure continuous improvement are outlined in figure 1. This plan sets out our performance improvement objectives for 2025 – 26 which are compliant with the requirement for them to be:

- **legitimate** - making a *demonstrable contribution* to at least one (or, probably, more than one) of the aspects of improvement listed in the Local Government Act.
- **clear** - setting out the *visible improvement* that citizens can expect.
- **robust** - with defined *terms of success* (whether *quantitative* or *qualitative*).
- **deliverable** - with established *links to individual service programmes and budgets*.
- **demonstrable** - capable of being supported by *objective* (but *not necessarily measured or quantitative*) evidence.



Looking back -

performance improvement summary achievements 2024-25

Our 2024-25 year-end self-assessment will be published on our website in September 2025 and some key achievements are summarised below:

100%

of actions achieved or partially achieved

87.5%

of available performance indicators either met or exceeded target

89.6%

of available performance indicators have either maintained or showed improvement on previous years



Signed up 57 companies to the Belfast Business Promise pledge (target 50)



Delivered over €17m investment in two PEACE IV projects - Shankill Shared Women's Centre and Black Mountain Shared Space.

Occupied 46 previously vacant city centre properties as a result of the Vacant to Vibrant intervention. (target 26).



Completed 91.93% of service requests for missed bins within 5 working days (target 85%)



Achieved 84% customer satisfaction levels with customer hub contacts (target 80%)



Increased the % of household waste collected that is sent for recycling to 42.7% (target 42%)



Increased the % of council contracts (over £30k value) where the SVPP has been applied to 75% (target 40%)



Processed 77% of planning enforcement cases within 39 weeks – exceeding the statutory 70% target



Completed over 26 Physical Programme projects (target 10)

Our arrangements to ensure continuous improvement

The Council has a statutory duty to put arrangements in place to secure continuous performance improvement. We are also specifically required to produce an annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). However, everything we do in Council is focused on improving the lives of people who live in or visit Belfast. The following legislative context, plans and strategies combine to form our performance management framework for improving outcomes for the people of Belfast and demonstrates how the Council's corporate objectives are cascaded throughout the organisation.

FIGURE 1: Council's performance management framework.



These arrangements are in accordance with Part 12 (Section 84 (2)) of the Local Government Act which states that they should improve our functions in terms of:



Strategic context

Our community plan, the Belfast Agenda was updated in 2024, with input from partners, residents, and other stakeholders to reflect the city's current priorities. The overarching strategic plan explains the WHY of what we are doing, providing a holistic view of the needs and aspirations of the city, and articulating this in five long-term outcomes. It outlines how partners will work collectively to support the most vulnerable in our city while growing the economy, regenerating neighbourhoods, supporting communities, and achieving our climate targets. Figure 2 depicts the five strategic themes and priorities, the five things' people want for Belfast by 2035 (our outcomes) and our ambitions which outline our key targets to make our vision a reality.

The Council's Corporate Plan 2025-28 sets out our approach to delivering for local people in a time of both significant opportunity and considerable challenges for our city. The Corporate Plan is inextricably linked to the Belfast Agenda and explains WHAT the Council will do to contribute to the outcomes above as well as outlining the key priorities for us as an organisation. And finally, Committee plans, and other departmental and business plans detail the HOW. Our corporate priority themes for the next three years are outlined in figure 3.



FIGURE 2: The Belfast Agenda 2024-28

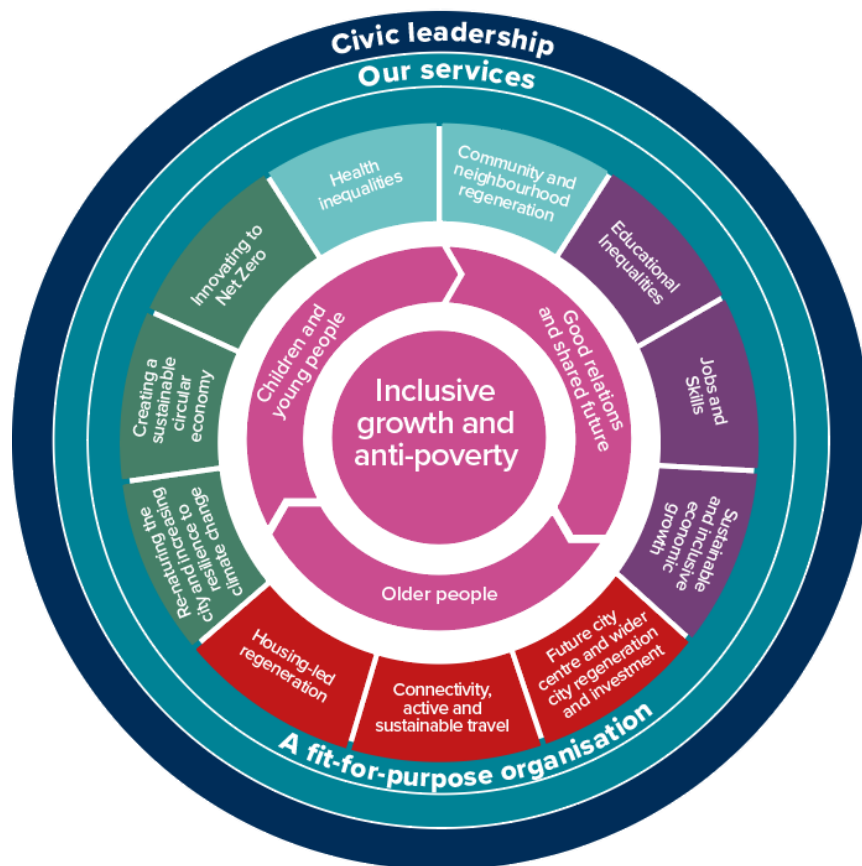
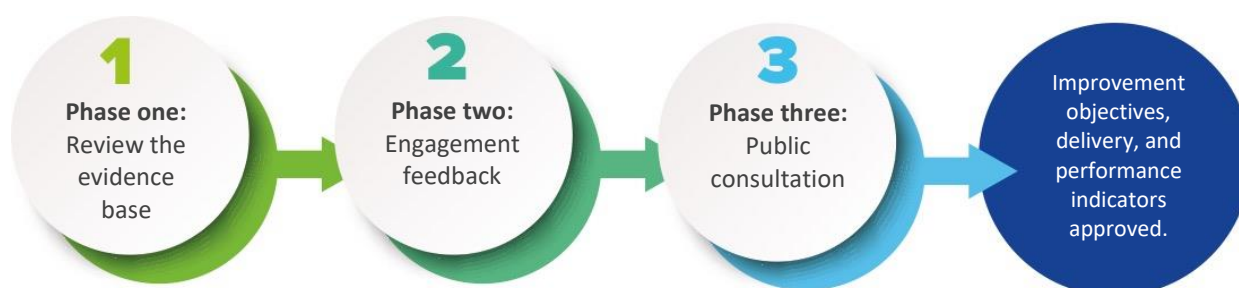


FIGURE 3: Council's Corporate Plan 2025-28

Identifying our performance improvement objectives for 2025-26

All our key strategies and plans are informed and developed by listening to our residents, businesses, partners, staff, and elected representatives. Our 2025-26 performance improvement objectives were developed via a three-phase process. In phase one, we reviewed the evidence base, in phase two, we engaged internally and in phase three, we conducted public consultation. The rich and diverse analysis and feedback we received throughout this process has been shaped into this revitalised Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.

FIGURE 4: Three-phase process



Phase one: Reviewing the evidence base.

Understanding the needs of users, citizens and the internal and external environment is critically important. We analysed baseline evidence drawn from existing engagement findings, survey results, performance data and a review of relevant strategies and plans, including:

- Results and trend data from our 2024-25 Performance Improvement Assessment report.
- Feedback gleaned from partners, residents, and other stakeholders as part of the consultation and engagement process for the Belfast Agenda's refresh.
- Ongoing monitoring and review of 2024-25 Corporate Delivery Plan (via quarterly reporting) to identify areas of potential under-performance.
- 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).
- Evidence and issues arising from Committee and meetings of the Full Council.
- Areas for improvement emerging from the internal audit and risk management processes.
- Priorities identified during the development of the new Corporate Plan 2025-28 and rate setting process.
- Alignment with key Council and city strategies including The Belfast Agenda, Corporate Plan 2025-28 etc.
- A review of customer complaints received.
- Good practice data benchmarking with other local authorities.

Phase two: Engagement feedback

Feedback was gleaned and approval granted from a series of internal engagements with members, Chief Officers, departments and key staff across the Council. This included:

- Templates completed and initial meetings held with departments to identify priorities and improvement activity.
- Regular engagement with departmental teams and key officers, at every phase – ensuring alignment to departmental and service level budget setting and planning processes.
- Priorities identified during corporate planning engagement with Party Group Leaders, elected members and the Corporate Management Team (CMT).
- Reports presented and discussed at CMT, 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.

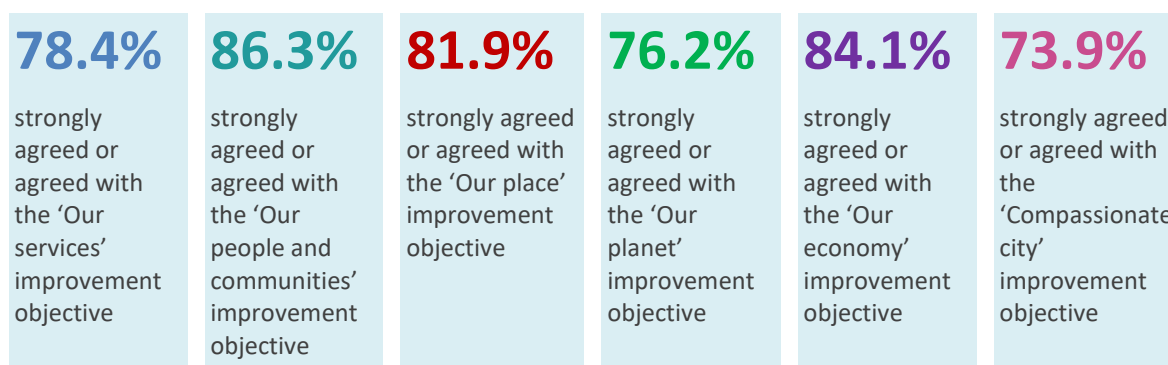
Phase three: Public consultation

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 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 final 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).

Consultation feedback summary

A summary of the consultation results is set out below:



The issues or improvements that respondents felt should be considered in relation to the draft 2025-26 improvement objectives are thematically summarised below. It is important to note that some of the areas highlighted as part of the public consultation process are already being progressed through existing strategies, plans, and programmes, and in partnership as part of the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, for example housing provision, homelessness, and mental health.

Survey feedback summary

Our services

- 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.

Our people and communities

- 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 and promote inclusion. Develop innovative ways to engage and support people and groups across the city.

Our place

- 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.

Our planet

- 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 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 more positive actions alongside partners.

Our economy

- 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.

Compassionate City

- 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.
- There needs to be more focus on disability – a disability strategy should be in place with associated improvement objectives around inclusion and accessibility in terms of goods, facilities and services.
- 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 and embrace joined up working.

Focus group feedback

Two focus groups were carried with sixty-two young people aged 18-24 and 9 older people to better understand the needs and priorities of these traditionally under-represented target groups. A high-level thematic summary of the key feedback from each respective focus group is provided below:

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. 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 are often overlooked, older people would welcome direct engagement 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.

Young people (aged 18-24) 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.

Looking forward – performance improvement objectives 2025-26

Our performance improvement objectives, are clearly aligned with the Belfast Agenda 2024-28 and Corporate Plan 2025-28. Reflecting on our 2024-25 performance and feedback from residents and stakeholders we will continue to progress five out of the six performance objectives identified in the previous year, with refined associated actions. To meet the evolving needs of the city we have broadened the scope of our Compassionate city objective:



We are, therefore, committed to the following improvement objectives during 2025-26:

Our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of our residents and stakeholders.
Our people and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will improve our local areas and provide opportunities to support our residents to become healthier and engaged.
Our place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will create a more vibrant, attractive, and connected city (including the city centre).
Our planet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast.
Our economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will support our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe and inclusive city.

We have assessed each of these objectives and consider that they all meet the following statutory aspects of improvement:

Strategic effectiveness	Service quality, availability, and fairness	Sustainability	Efficiency	Innovation
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Improvement objective 1: Our services

In addition to the specific improvement activities set out below, we will implement our regular programme of service redesign and adjustments to ways of working through the implementation of risk and audit actions to continually adapt and improve our services.

Belfast Agenda Outcome	Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city.
Corporate Plan themes and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our services – Delivering effective and efficient services. • Foundations for success - Creating a fit for purpose organisation
Improvement objective	We will continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of our residents and stakeholders.
Why is this important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from residents focused on improving the delivery of services. • Identified as a priority by Elected Members. • Aligned to the Corporate Plan
What will we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Customer Focus Programme to build organisational capacity to enhance our services and customer experience. • Continue to deliver the Planning Service Improvement Plan. • Deliver a street cleansing programme to create a cleaner and greener city. • Operate daily bin collections of household and commercial waste through the deployment of adequate and efficient resources. • Deliver phase two of the kerbside glass expansion programme to enhance customer service and improve recycling rates. • Initiate the development of an overarching Asset Management Strategy to set out how Council owned and managed land and property assets will be used to support service delivery and the delivery of objectives in the Corporate Plan and the Belfast Agenda.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our people and communities	Our place	Our planet	Our economy	Compassionate City
Resolving 65% of corporate complaints within timeframe.	✓				
Introducing improvement actions for 80% of corporate complaints.	✓				
Deliver Customer Service Training qualification to a cohort of staff.	✓				
Achieving the 30-week target for average processing time for major planning applications (statutory indicator).		✓			
Achieving the 15-week target for average processing time for local planning applications (statutory indicator).		✓			
Processing 70% of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks (statutory indicator).		✓			
Achieving less than 12 weeks average processing time for householder applications and advertisement consent applications.		✓			
Achieving less than 6 weeks average processing time of tree works applications and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).		✓	✓		
Completing 75% of service requests for open spaces and street scene within 5 working days.	✓	✓			
Completing 92% of service requests for missed bins within 5 working days.					
Providing 23,000 additional households with kerbside glass collections.			✓		
Collecting an additional 650 tonnes of glass.			✓		
Completing the Asset Management Strategy.	✓		✓		

**What is
our wider
policy
impact?**

- **Regional:** Waste Legislation NI (various), Waste Management Plan NI, Local Government Finance Act 2011, Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).
- **Local:** Belfast City Council Resilience Strategy, Local Development Plan (LDP) 2035, Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS), Belfast City Council Financial Regulations 2015, Putting You First: Transforming Customer Experience, Belfast City Council Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

Improvement objective 2: Our people and communities

In addition to the specifics set out below, we will improve our local areas and improve health and wellbeing for our residents, by delivering programmes of work and activities contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, the draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome

Belfast will be a city where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing.

Corporate Plan themes and priorities

- Our people and communities – Making life better for all our residents.
 - Health inequalities and community and neighbourhood

Improvement objective

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

Why is this important?

- Recent health data shows that life expectancy overall has stopped increasing and there is a growing need to tackle obesity and increase the levels of physical activity across Belfast.
- Based on resident feedback.
- Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities.

What will we do?

- Enhance our playgrounds, to ensure that we continue to provide high quality facilities and equipment across the city.
- Increase the number of people using our leisure centres, to participate in sport and physical activity.
- Deliver animation and outreach activities in community, play and leisure development programmes.
- Deliver and facilitate a range of events and community programmes within our parks and open spaces.
- Deliver improvements to parks and open spaces to improve people's health and wellbeing through multimillion pound transformational schemes.
- Progress the development of capital projects aligned to the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy to enhance the quality and accessibility of sports and physical activity provision in Belfast.
- Progress the development and delivery of the Council's Physical Programme to enable needs led investment across the city.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our place	Our planet	Our economy	Compassionate City
Investing £580k and delivering the annual playground improvement programme.		✓	✓		
Increasing the number of people using our leisure centres to 3.35million.	✓				
Increasing the number of community, play and leisure outreach programmes delivered to 200.	✓				
Increasing the number of outdoor leisure bookings (pitches, bowling greens) to 160,000.	✓				
Increasing the numbers attending events in our parks to 180,000.	✓				
Progressing major improvements to three parks (Ballysillan Playing Fields, Waterworks, Alexandra Park).	✓	✓			
Progressing major improvements to one open space (Cathedral Gardens).	✓	✓			
Commencing development work on three selected sites (aligned to the Leisure Programme, Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy).	✓	✓			
Completing 10 projects under the Physical Programme.	✓	✓			
Developing 100 projects under the Physical Programme.	✓	✓			
Supporting 20 organisations under the £10.28m NRF programme.	✓	✓			
Completing one project under NRF.	✓	✓			

What is
our wider
policy
impact?

- **Regional:** Programme for Government (PfG) 2024-27 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most', Active Living the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for NI (2022), Marking Life Better – Strategic Framework for public health, Whole Systems Approach to Obesity Prevention, Regional Development Strategy (2035), SPPS.
- **Local:** The Department of Health's Annual Health Inequalities report, The World Health Organisation's Belfast Healthy Cities Strategy, LDP, BOSS, Get Active Belfast – A framework for physical activity – Active Belfast Partnership.

Improvement objective 3: Our place

In addition to the improvement action below, we will create a more attractive, vibrant, and connected city by delivering programmes of work and activities contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, the draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome	Belfast will be a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city.
Corporate Plan themes and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our place – Creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connectivity, active and sustainable travel. ○ City regeneration and investment.
Improvement objective	Our Place - we will create a more vibrant, attractive, and connected city (including the city centre).
Why is this important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on resident feedback. • Identified as a priority by elected members. • Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities.
What will we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver the Vacant to Vibrant Programme 2025-26 to address city-wide vacancy rates. • Progress the Greenways and Access to the Hills Programme to improve the connectivity of the city. • Support and progress the delivery of neighbourhood tourism physical projects, improving the city's local tourism facilities and infrastructure. • Progress infrastructure works at the North Foreshore to support the development of the site. • Progress the Master Development Agreement for the 250-acre Giant's Park site in accordance with the schedule of works.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our People and Communities	Our planet	Our economy	Compassionate City
Occupying 20 previously vacant city-wide properties as a result of the Vacant to Vibrant intervention.		✓			
Awarding £470,000 through Vacant to Vibrant funding to city-wide traders.		✓			
Progressing two greenways and pathways to improve the connectivity of the city for example Sydenham Greenway, Colin Greenway and Black Mountain Pathway.		✓	✓		
Progressing three physical neighbourhood tourism projects - Act Initiative, Titanic People Exhibition Centre and Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre.		✓			
Progressing match funding for three projects from external partners for neighbourhood tourism physical projects.		✓			
Undertaking works with the developer to progress the development phase of the 250-acre Giant's Park site.		✓			
Progressing the delivery of landfill gas extraction system at the North Foreshore.		✓			
Progressing the delivery of additional NIE capacity at the North Foreshore.		✓			

What is our wider policy impact?

- **Regional:** Eastern Transport Plan 2035 (under development); Regional Development Strategy 2035, PfG.
- **Local:** Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS); A Bolder Vision for Belfast; Belfast Resilience Strategy, LDP.

Improvement objective 4: Our planet

In addition to the specific improvement actions set out below, we will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast by delivering our normal programme of work contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, Committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome	Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city.
Corporate Plan themes and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our services, Our people and communities, Our place, and Our planet.
Improvement objective	Our planet - We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast.
Why is this important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change is a global concern. Since we declared a climate emergency in 2019 and launched our Resilience Strategy in 2020, we have been taking action to transition the city to an inclusive, zero-emissions and climate-resilient economy in a generation. • Council has statutory responsibility. • Identified as a concern by residents and stakeholders. • Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities.
What will we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress the planet section of the Belfast Agenda, which aims to create a sustainable, nature positive city (including investable local energy projects, an UPSURGE demonstrator site and a neighbourhood retrofit pilot). • Commence delivery of the Council Corporate Climate Action Plan to increase the climate resilience of Council assets and services and progress towards Council net zero emissions, (over 20 priorities including a Sustainable Food Policy, energy audits of Council buildings and retrofitting of Council buildings). • Deliver an effective waste management service across the city. • Deliver year three of the Belfast Tree Strategy and action plan to help manage and improve the tree scape across the city, including the establishment of the woodland management programme.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our People and Communities	Our place	Our economy	Compassionate City
Progressing three Belfast Agenda Climate Projects (investable local energy projects, UPSURGE demonstrator site, neighbourhood retrofit pilot).		✓	✓		
Completing one Belfast Agenda Climate Project (Horizon Europe UP2030).		✓	✓		
Completing 19 short-term Council Corporate Climate Action Plan priorities.	✓				
Achieving 38.5% of council municipal waste arisings is sent for recycling.	✓	✓	✓		
Reducing the tonnage of biodegradable council collected waste that is landfilled to 7,000 tonnes (statutory indicator).	✓	✓	✓		
Maintaining the % of household waste collected that is sent for recycling at 42% (or prepared for re-use) (statutory indicator).	✓	✓	✓		
Achieving 160,000 tonnage of council collected municipal waste arisings (statutory indicator).	✓	✓	✓		
Planting 500 linear metres of new hedging.		✓	✓		

What is our wider policy impact?

- **Regional:** The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland)2022, Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024, Energy Strategy –The Path to Net Zero Energy, Draft Green Growth Strategy, PfG, Second Cycle NI Flood Risk Management Plan 2021-2027, Strategic Planning Policy Statement.
- **Local:** Belfast Resilience Strategy, A Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for Belfast, A Bolder Vision for Belfast, Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), Belfast Open Spaces Strategy, Belfast Air Quality Action Plan, Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan, Belfast (Draft) Economic Strategy, Belfast (Draft) Adaptation Strategy, Belfast Local Area Energy Plan.

Improvement objective 5: Our economy

In addition to the specifics set out below, we will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment by delivering our normal programme of work contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, Committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome

Belfast is a place where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy.

Corporate Plan themes and priorities

- Our economy – Creating inclusive and sustainable growth, learning and opportunity.

Improvement objective

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.

Why is this important?

- Based on resident feedback.
- Identified by elected members as a priority.
- Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities

What will we do?

- Work with the Enterprise Support Service to deliver 'Go Succeed' to increase the number of new business starts.
- Deliver employment and upskilling academies in priority sectors in line with industry demand.
- Deliver the Smart Belfast urban innovation programme to enhance Belfast's capacity for digital innovation.
- Deliver an enhanced Learning City Festival to promote and encourage lifelong learning for people of all ages across Belfast.
- Extend the delivery of Belfast Business Promise (BBP) initiative to support the provision of good jobs and a sustainable local economy.
- Support our suppliers by helping business cashflow through the prompt payment of invoices.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our People and Communities	Our place	Our planet	Compassionate City
Completing 325 business plans to promote business start-up and job promotion (statutory indicator).		✓			
Supporting 75% of participants to move into a positive outcome from an Employment or Upskilling Academy.		✓			
Supporting 425 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to engage in digital innovation.		✓	✓		
Awarding £600,000 of funding to organisations to engage in digital innovation.		✓	✓		
Delivering 130 events through the Belfast Learning City Festival.		✓	✓		✓
Supporting 10 businesses (existing BBP members) to improve their recognition level (reaching Member or Ambassador status).		✓			✓
Producing four good practice 'case studies' to highlight the Belfast Business Promise journey and 'inclusive growth in practice'.		✓			✓
Paying 90% of invoices within 30 calendar days.	✓				
Paying 80% of invoices within 10 working days.	✓				

What is our wider policy impact?

- **Regional:** A 10X Economy - Northern Ireland's Decade of Innovation; Innovation Strategy for NI 2014-25, Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland, Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Action Plan, PfG.
- **Local:** Belfast Economic Strategy 2022-30, Belfast Inclusive Growth Strategy, Belfast Region City Deal, SMART Belfast - Belfast Urban Innovation Framework 2022 – 26, Belfast City Council Social Value Procurement Policy.

Improvement objective 6: Compassionate city

In addition to the specific actions set out below, we will support our residents through the cost-of-living crisis by delivering of our normal programme of work contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, the draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome

Belfast is a place where everyone fulfils their potential.

Corporate Plan themes and priorities

- Compassionate City – Making Belfast a welcoming, caring, and inclusive city – leaving no-one behind.
- Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty.

Improvement objective

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

Why is this important?

- Based on resident and stakeholder feedback.
- Identified as an Elected Member priority.
- Part of our statutory duty.
- Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities.
- Evolution of policy environment (Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG)).

What will we do?

- Deliver local community actions plans as part of the PEACEPLUS programme, to fund community activities and infrastructure project that help build peace and reconciliation in Belfast.
- Establish an Anti-Poverty Network in Belfast to support and facilitate a co-ordinated approach to tackling poverty across the city.
- Extend delivery of the Hardship Programme to ensure that support is available for those most impacted by poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.
- Deliver a programme to help end violence against women and girls (EVAWG).
- Progress delivery of up to five capital projects across the city as part of the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan to promote inclusive and shared spaces across Belfast.

How will we measure success?

Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our People and Communities	Our place	Our planet	Our economy
Delivering 10 local community action plans (including relevant peace monitoring information).		✓	✓		
Establishing the Anti-Poverty Network		✓			
Delivering £1.1m of Hardship Programme funding		✓			
Awarding and delivering £255k as part of an open call small grants programme as part of the EVAWG programme.		✓			
Administering £1.2m of Regional Change Funding to 8 EVAWG expert organisations.		✓			
Engaging a minimum of 8,000 children and young people as part of the EVAWG programme		✓			
Progressing up to five capital projects under PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan (Sanctuary Theatre, Distillery Street Redevelopment Project, Annadale Open Space, Reconnected Belfast and LGBTQIA+ Hub)		✓	✓	✓	

What is our wider policy impact?

- **Regional:** The Executive's Child Poverty Strategy, NI Audit Office Child Poverty in Northern Ireland Report, The Trussell Trust State of Hunger Report, DfC Poverty, and Income Inequality (PII) Report, Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG), NI Act 1998 (Section 75), Race Relations Order 1997, PfG.
- **Local:** Belfast Inclusive Growth Strategy, Belfast City Council Social Value Procurement Policy, Equality Scheme, Good Relations Strategy, PEACEPLUS Programme.

Performance monitoring and reporting arrangements

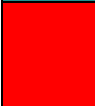








To ensure that we continuously improve and meet the needs and outcomes of our city and residents, we have established governance arrangements in relation to corporate performance management, summarised and set out in figure 5 below.

Governance arrangements

Monitoring and regular reporting of performance is essential to ensure that priorities are being achieved, and that the information that was collected informed decision making and plans.

Progress is monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to the Corporate Management Team (CMT), on a quarterly basis to the Audit Assurance Board and the Audit and Risk Panel, and regularly to relevant working groups, relevant committees, and the Full Council. At year end, corporate performance is assessed using the key below on figure 5.

FIGURE 5: Performance status and trend key

Actions/milestones		Performance indicator target		Performance indicator trend	
	Not achieved		Adrift of target (5% or more)		Negative change
	Partially achieved		Slightly adrift of target (between 1% and 5%)		No significant change
	Achieved/ completed		On target or exceeded target (within 1% or better)		Positive change

Corporate, Committee and departmental business plans and strategies containing statutory or self-imposed performance indicators, are monitored, and reported both internally to departmental and the Corporate Management Team and formally to the relevant Committee.

In addition, action plans and programme plans relating to council's key priority projects are monitored and reported through cross-departmental groups, management teams and boards, and regularly to the relevant committee.

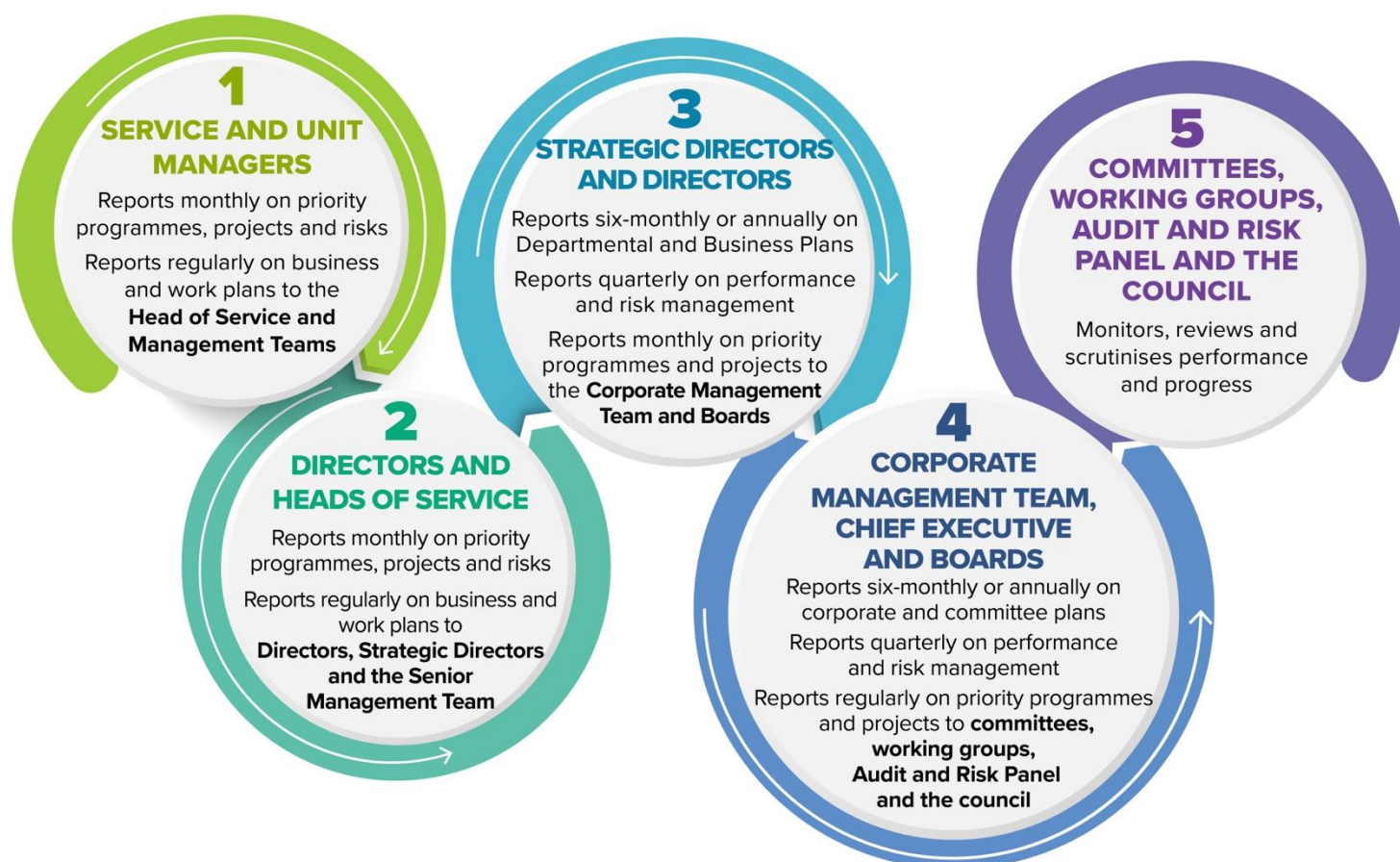
Figure 6 summarises the high-level governance arrangements and the responsibilities for implementing these.

Each year, we publish a self-assessment report, setting out details of how we have performed as a Council and benchmarked against other local authorities where possible. The Council is a member of the Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE), which is a public sector benchmarking organisation. This enables us to compare and improve our performance across a range of services and activities, with other comparable councils.

The Council's internal audit team regularly review the improvement framework, and this is reported to the Audit and Risk Panel. Annually the NIAO reviews the processes and arrangements as part of the annual performance improvement audit and publicly publishes this.

A new planning and performance management framework is currently being developed which will refresh the current arrangements, provide a co-ordinated focus and a robust framework to enhance our continuous improvement journey. This new framework will enable us to deliver our collective responsibility with community planning partners, as well as supporting us to carry out our statutory duty to improve, deliver best value and achieve the best possible impact for the people of Belfast.

FIGURE 6: High-level governance arrangements

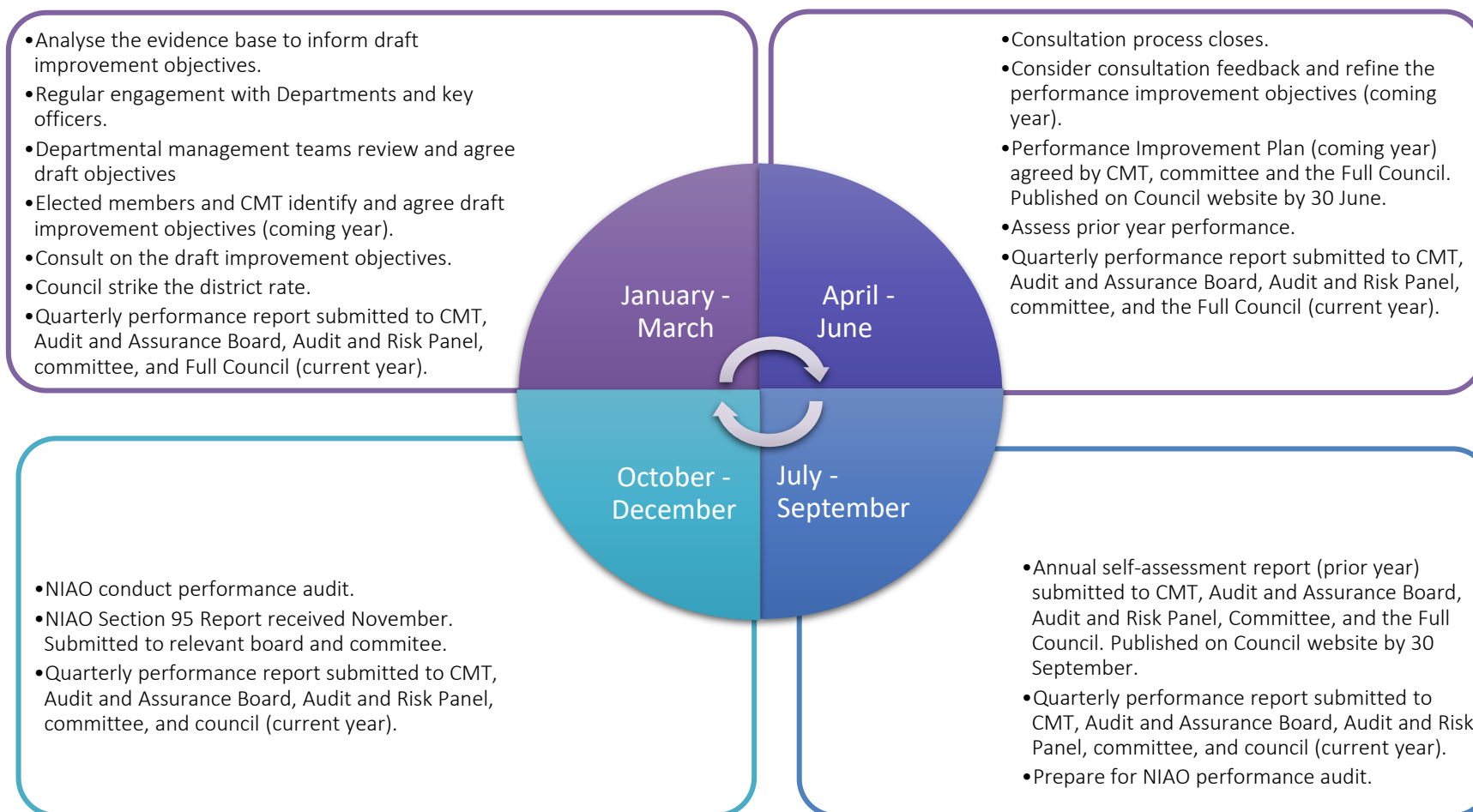


** Please note these arrangements may change as part of the development of the corporate planning and performance framework*

Annual performance management and improvement cycle

Every year, we review and update our performance improvement objectives and plan to ensure we are continuously improving. Our annual process to develop, monitor, report and review the council's progress to deliver performance improvement is set out in Figure 7 below.

FIGURE 7: Annual process.



Feedback on areas for improvement

We welcome ongoing feedback, comments, and suggestions on how we might improve our services and performance.

Your feedback matters

Please use one of the following methods to provide your comments or suggestions at any time of the year:

Email: performance@belfastcity.gov.uk

In writing to the:

Strategic Performance Unit
City Organisational and Strategy Department
Belfast City Council
Belfast City Hall
Room 212
BT1 5GS

You can also provide us with feedback or comments at any time via our website:
www.belfastcity.gov.uk/contact/complaints-comments-compliments

Alternative formats

This document is also available in hard copy format and can be provided in alternative formats by contacting the Strategic Performance Unit using the contact details above.

Contact us:

City and Organisational Strategy

City Hall

Donegall Square North

Belfast

BT1 5GS



performance@belfastcity.gov.uk



028 9032 0202



www.belfastcity.gov.uk/corporateplan



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