

Improvement Plan 2019 - 2020



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Belfast
City Council

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Foreword

We are pleased to present our Improvement Plan for 2019-20.

This document is one of a number of strategic planning documents that drives council activity. However, unlike our corporate plan, which reflects all the work that council does, this plan focuses on a small number of improvements.

Our approach to the Improvement Plan is guided by legislation and is designed to demonstrate to citizens and other stakeholders how we will deliver on our duty of improvement. It confirms our commitment to continually improve as a council.

Our improvement plan for 2019-20 sets out our improvement objectives for the year ahead, the actions we will take and how we will measure our progress or impact. It also explains why we have chosen these and how people will be better off as a result of the council's efforts.

Our improvement objectives form part of our Corporate Plan and have been aligned to these priorities and those of the Belfast Agenda - the community plan for Belfast. The Belfast Agenda provides the long-term vision for the city and sets the strategic direction for public service providers. It was developed following extensive consultation with local people and is based on what they

told us they wanted for the city and for those who live here. It commits council and its community planning partners to a wide range of actions aimed at delivering these aspirations. This is the basis of our improvement activity.

We have set six improvement objectives for 2019-20. Our improvement objectives reflect the critical civic leadership role that the council plays in Belfast and includes activity that takes account of both our service delivery and leadership responsibilities.

To achieve the impact that we want, our improvement objectives require a longer-term approach, but with an understanding of what needs to be done year on year to deliver ongoing success.

Our focus is on how we can deliver better services, stronger leadership and enhanced support for the benefit of all people in Belfast. Our aim is to make a real difference for local people and our city.

Signature.

Chair of Strategic Policy and
Resources Committee

Signature.

Chief Executive

Introduction

Purpose

Under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, local councils are legally required to set improvement objectives and have arrangements in place to deliver them. Referred to as our duty to improve or *improvement duty*, we must publish an annual Improvement Plan, which sets out our improvement objectives for the year ahead and the arrangements in place to achieve them.

Understanding Improvement Activity

When identifying improvement objectives, we are required to consider how they will drive improvement in respect to:

- **Strategic Effectiveness**
- **Sustainability**
- **Fairness**
- **Service Quality**
- **Service Availability**
- **Efficiency**
- **Innovation**

As a Council we define ‘improvement’ as more than just quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or our internal effectiveness. Improvement means activities which enhance the sustainable quality of life and environment for our ratepayers and communities.

Our planned improvements are set within the wider strategic context of the city and the role we play in leading and facilitating improvements to local quality of life. In particular, we have sought to identify where council can specifically contribute to these wider strategic goals or where we need to lead or focus our attention.

However, the improvement plan does not describe every single initiative or improvement the council intends to make. Instead, it focuses on a small selection agreed in consultation with local people. It is a specific subset of work we will focus on in the year ahead to give greater impetus to the ambitions and outcomes for our city.

Our improvement objectives are also assessed against criteria requiring that they should be:

- **Legitimate** - making a demonstrable contribution to at least one of the aspects of improvement listed in the Act, this directed us toward developing objectives where the potential impact would have greatest value.
- **Clear** - setting out the visible improvement that citizens can expect. This involved considering the ‘measurable’ aspect of our commitments and choosing objectives that were more likely to lead to tangible improvements.
- **Robust** - with defined terms of success (quantitative or qualitative). As far as possible objectives have been aligned to performance indicators with agreed targets to help demonstrate what contribution we expect our efforts to make to each improvement activity.
- **Deliverable** - with established links to individual service programmes and budgets. Every improvement objective contains deliverables that will be managed through our programme delivery arrangements.
- **Demonstrable** - capable of being supported by objective evidence. Progress for each objective will be demonstrated through a combination of quantitative (PIs) and qualitative (project reporting) evidence.

Strategic Context

The Belfast Agenda

The Belfast Agenda is the city's first community plan. Published in 2017 following extensive engagement with local people, it sets out a vision for Belfast and shared outcomes for the city. To help focus attention and ensure progress, the Belfast Community Planning Partnership agreed four priority areas that all partners would work towards during 2017 - 21:

- ❖ **Growing the economy**
- ❖ **Living here**
- ❖ **City Development**
- ❖ **Working and learning**

The Belfast Agenda is an ambitious and dynamic plan that has shaped and will continue to shape the plans and priorities of the council and its partners. Our Corporate Plan (2017-21) is reflective of the outcomes and priorities agreed in the Belfast Agenda. This Improvement Plan in turn, also aligns to the priorities of the Belfast Agenda, outlining the specific areas we intend to focus on in the year ahead to drive forward and bring about improvements in these areas.

Council Planning Framework

The council has always developed a Corporate Plan to set strategic direction. With the introduction of community planning and the development of the Belfast Agenda, our Corporate Plan is

now aligned to it. These represent the primary and overarching strategic plans for the city and council.

Beneath this, council also has a number of supporting strategic plans to help manage and direct particular activity, for example our Local Development Plan (LDP) - the spatial planning framework for the city and our Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) - the financial strategy for the council. These strategic plans, including the Improvement Plan, are supported by annual Departmental and Committee Plans to ensure activity for the year ahead is managed. This forms part of a wider strategic planning and performance framework.

STRATEGIC PLANNING & PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (FIGURE 1)



Identifying our Improvement Objectives

Informing our Improvement Objectives

The foundation for our improvement objectives is the Belfast Agenda. Developed following an extensive and wide reaching engagement process with the public and other stakeholders, it clearly identifies what is important to local people and where, collectively, we need to focus effort.

Agreeing the vision, outcomes and priorities within the Belfast Agenda involved:

- Engaging with local people, through our residents' survey, through the "Belfast Conversation" events and through formal consultation;
- Consideration of performance data and other sources of information, including an analysis of the challenges facing the city in terms of economic, social and environmental well-being;
- Consideration of the plans and strategies of partner organisations; and
- Consideration of anticipated future needs of the city.

By building our improvement objectives around the Belfast Agenda, we were confident that we would be able to provide a meaningful and balanced set of improvement objectives in response to what people told us mattered most.

Selecting Improvement Objectives - Annual Review

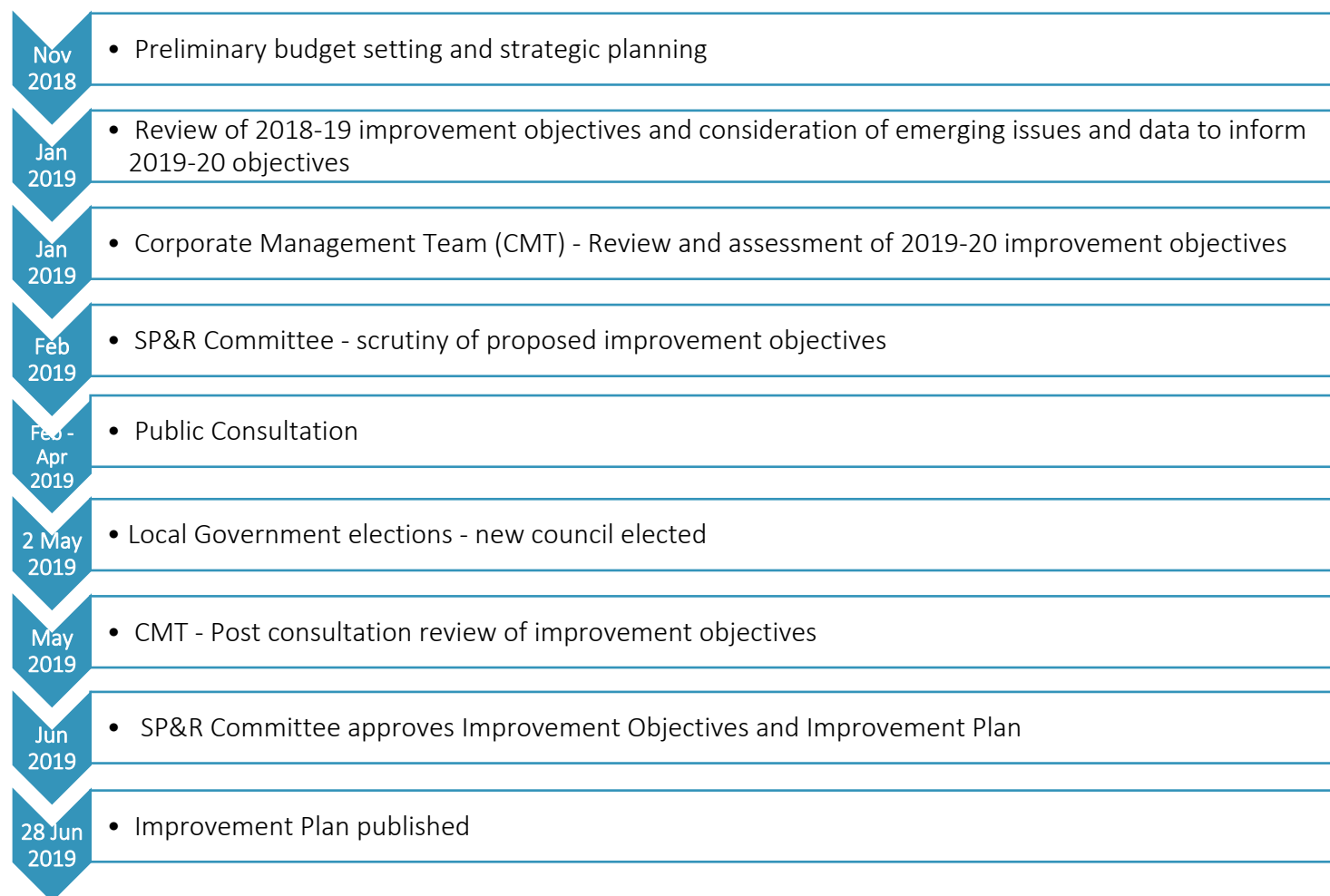
The Belfast Agenda sets out four broad priority areas of work for the period 2017 - 21, which along with our organisational improvement priorities, form the basis for our Corporate Plan. However, to ensure that our focus is correct and continues to meet need, each year we review and update the plan as part of our annual corporate planning process. This includes reviewing our improvement objectives.

In 2017-18, we revised our original 11 improvement objectives and streamlined them into six objectives, which took account of feedback from various consultation and engagement processes, advice from Members on what matters most to their constituents, and an analysis of where we felt we would have the greatest impact based on the council's capacity and authority to act.

To ensure that these improvement objectives reflected the broadest possible spectrum of work, we took care to select objectives that would continue to contribute to each of the four priorities of the Belfast Agenda. Following further review and consultation, we retained the same objectives for 2018-19, but with updated activities and evolving strands of work, building on the progress already achieved.

This year, we undertook a further review of the improvement objectives for 2019 - 20 as set out in our annual review process - see figure 2 overleaf.

Figure 2: Improvement Planning Process



Consultation

Each year, before we finalise our improvement objectives, we issue them for public consultation to enable residents and other interested stakeholders to influence and to have a say in agreeing them.

In February, SP&R Committee approved the following six draft improvement objectives for consultation.

- ❖ We will support investment and business growth in the city
- ❖ We will support people into employment
- ❖ We will support the regeneration of the city centre and encourage investment
- ❖ We will increase levels of household recycling and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill
- ❖ We will support people to lead healthier, more active lives by improving the quality of our parks and open spaces and increasing participation in physical activity and sport programmes
- ❖ We will support service improvement and increase customer satisfaction with council

The public consultation ran for a period of six weeks. Managed through our online consultation platform, it provided residents with an opportunity to learn more about the proposed

improvement objectives and included a link to an online survey to make it easier for residents to provide feedback.

Through this survey, we asked residents whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposed improvement objectives and gave them the opportunity to provide comments or to suggest other areas that they felt should be included as improvement objectives.

We used a range of communication channels, including Facebook and Twitter, to promote and direct people to the consultation. We also shared details of the consultation at four local area-based community planning events involving the community and voluntary sector to encourage wider dissemination and input.

42 individuals and one organisation responded to the survey. The majority of those responses supported the proposed improvement objectives. After assessing the feedback, we were confident that all of the issues raised by respondents would be addressed through other work outlined in our Corporate Plan or through the Belfast Agenda. Therefore, given the high levels of support shown in the public survey, Members adopted the draft objectives as our improvement objectives for 2019 - 20, subject to some small amendments.

However, based on the feedback received, we updated the health related improvement objective so that it included active travel related actions. We also recognised that we needed to explain our leadership and partnership role better and to demonstrate how our activity would help lead, support and facilitate progress against shared improvement objectives for the city.

Our Improvement Objectives 2019 - 2020

Working and Learning

We will support people into employment

Growing the Economy

We will support investment and business growth in the city

City Development

We will support the regeneration of the city centre

We will increase levels of household recycling and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill

Living Here

We will support people to lead healthier more active lives by improving the quality of our parks and open spaces and increasing participation in physical activity and sport programmes

A Fit for Purpose Organisation

We will improve council services and increase customer satisfaction with council

Improvement Objective 1:

We will support people into employment

Why this is an improvement objective

When we began consulting on the Belfast Agenda in 2014-15, creating jobs was the top priority for citizens. Job creation and supporting people into employment continued to be a strong theme throughout the development of the Belfast Agenda and, as a result, in 2016-17 we included this as one of our first improvement objectives. As this has remained a core priority for local people, we have retained this as an improvement objective for 2019-20.

The improvement objective will focus on developing skills and removing barriers to employment, especially for those who have been furthest removed from the labour market.

Belfast City Council provides a range of support programmes aimed at helping people gain the skills and experience needed to secure good jobs. Our improvement actions will therefore centre on council activity and on ensuring that our various programmes and initiatives are effective and fit for purpose.

However, if we truly want to address the multi-faceted issues associated with long-term unemployment or remove barriers that prevent people from benefiting from meaningful employment, both financially and in terms of their wider wellbeing and health, then strong leadership and partnership is required. We recognise

that to make a real difference, we need more innovative and joined up approaches to support people into employment.

We will therefore continue to work with partners and employers in a collaborative way to facilitate joined-up and sustainable strategies and programmes that realise the potential of Belfast's people. Additionally, the Belfast City Region Deal will strengthen and complement this aim at a wider regional and strategic level.

Our focus will be on ensuring that Belfast develops and retains people with the right skills and talent needed to help our city grow and, which in turn, enables local people to avail of decent jobs that pay well and provide opportunity for advancement.

What we want to achieve

- ✓ To increase the skills, qualifications and job experience of local people, thereby enabling them to compete and secure meaningful employment
- ✓ To promote and enable better access to job opportunities within council
- ✓ To increase access to employment by developing new interventions with our partners

What we will do

- ❖ Support residents to progress into employment through the delivery of:
 - Employment Academies
 - Jobs fairs /careers events
 - Five European Social Fund (ESF) projects in partnership with Urban Villages
 - An employer incentive initiative (pilot programme focusing on priority growth sectors))

- ❖ Work with partners to develop strategic approaches to employability and skills, focusing on:
 - The co-design of new employability initiatives and pilot schemes in collaboration with the Department for Communities Employability NI Programme
 - Delivering pilot initiatives for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET's) in partnership with Department of the Economy
 - Developing the process and ongoing engagement for securing employment and skills related contributions through Developer Contributions framework
 - Delivering career development support for young people and schools based employment academies
 - Developing and implementing a citywide GCSE revision programme targeting year 12 students at risk of not achieving grade C's in English and Maths.

How we will measure our performance and impact

- CIP.1 No. of jobs promoted through BCC employment programmes
- CIP.2 No. of Individuals attending job fairs supported by BCC
- CIP.3 No. accreditations delivered

Area of Improvement (statutory criteria)	
Strategic Effectiveness, Fairness and Innovation	
Belfast Agenda Outcomes	Associated Goals
Everyone in Belfast fulfils their potential	Create 15,000 new jobs by 2021
Everyone in Belfast benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy	Reduce the working age population economic inactivity rate to less than 23%
	Reduce the proportion of the working age population with no qualifications to less than 10%

Improvement Objective 2:

We will support investment and business growth in the city

Why this is an improvement objective

In our 2016-17 resident survey, “attracting investment to Belfast” was the highest ranked priority for our citizens, whilst during the ongoing conversations with local people as part of the Belfast Agenda, the importance of a strong local economy and a culture of entrepreneurialism emerged as a strong theme.

A healthy and vibrant business sector, and the ability to attract investment, was seen as vital to the success and wellbeing of our city and for those who live here. People want Belfast to be a prosperous, successful city that supports local jobs and wealth creation and enables all people to benefit through increased employment and opportunity. Supporting business growth and securing investment allows us to deliver our vision of inclusive growth. Initially approached as separate objectives, they have formed part of our improvement objectives for the past two years and continue to be important issues for local people and the city.

For 2019-20, we combined these issues into a single improvement objective to enable us to focus on the activity that council will lead and deliver, with wider partnership work on these issues continuing as part of the Belfast Agenda. This enables our ratepayers to better assess the contribution we are making. Belfast City Council plays an important civic leadership role in terms of representing and promoting the city. Through our economic development functions we also work with businesses and entrepreneurs to help support business start-ups and growth. The focus of our improvement objective this year will be on

strengthening the visibility and promotion of the city in order to attract investment and new business and on enhancing the support we provide to our existing and emerging local businesses.

What we want to achieve

- ✓ To make Belfast is a good place to do business by providing innovative and supportive solutions for businesses
- ✓ To improve the support we provide to encourage and help new businesses to start and set up in Belfast
- ✓ To ensure that Belfast is visible and accessible to an international audience and can successfully attract inward investment

What we will do

- ❖ Enhance the provision of business start-up support
- ❖ Support existing businesses to grow and become more competitive
- ❖ Promote and market the city internationally
- ❖ Profile Belfast as a location of choice for investment

How we will measure our performance and impact

- CIP.4 No. of jobs promoted through the Go for It programme (Statutory indicator)
- CIP.5 No. of jobs promoted through BCC business start-up activity
- CIP.6 No. of jobs supported through business growth activity
- CIP.7 No. of participants supported through business start-up programmes
- CIP.8 No. of businesses supported through business growth programmes
- CIP.9 No of organisations attending MIPIM with Belfast delegation
- CIP.10 Value of private finance contributions to MIPIM



Area of Improvement (statutory criteria)	
Strategic Effectiveness, Fairness and Innovation	
Belfast Agenda Outcomes	Associated Goals
Everyone in Belfast benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy	Attract £1billion in private sector investment including FDI by 2021 Support 4,000 small business start-ups by 2021

Improvement Objective 3:

We will support the regeneration of the city centre

Why this is an improvement objective

It is widely accepted that thriving, well-connected “core cities” and in particular city centres are vital to the prosperity of the whole city and the region. Belfast city centre plays a unique role, not just within Belfast, but also within the wider regional economy. A number of research studies have demonstrated the importance of vibrant city centres and their impact on local economies as well as their contribution to local wellbeing and social cohesion.

Improving Belfast city centre provides many positive benefits. Local people will benefit directly, and enjoy being in an attractive and culturally vibrant city, whilst the investment opportunities, increased rates and the ability to attract tourists will enable the city to prosper economically and enable improved investment in local services.

During the Belfast Conversation, local people highlighted the importance of the city centre and its role in rejuvenating the entire city. Although there was a strong sense of pride in how far Belfast had come, there was also a recognition that we still need to do more. Indeed, the growing pressure on high streets and the recent impact of the Bank Buildings fire has reinforced the need to protect and enhance our city centre.

We are therefore committed to creating a vibrant, well-planned and well-connected city centre environment for people to enjoy. In addition to continuing to deliver the overall City Centre

Regeneration & Investment Strategy, in 2019-20, we will specifically deliver a post-Bank fire recovery programme and work to encourage city centre living and to improve the liveability of the city centre. This will include advocating for our city, developing a fit for purpose and sustainable spatial planning framework for the city and taking forward various programmes to deliver key projects and master plans to make this happen.

What we want to achieve

- ✓ An attractive, accessible and vibrant city centre that people enjoy visiting and where businesses can thrive
- ✓ A well planned and environmentally sustainable city centre
- ✓ A liveable city centre - enabling more people to live in the city centre

What we will do

- ❖ Continue to work in partnership to develop and implement the city centre revitalisation programme (response to the Bank Buildings fire)
- ❖ Continue to deliver the Belfast Local Development Plan
- ❖ Review ways to encourage residential and employment related development with partners

How we will measure our performance and impact

CIP.11 Resident satisfaction with Belfast as a place to live

CIP.12 % of residents who agree the city centre is vibrant and attractive, with lots going on

Area of Improvement (statutory criteria)	
Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Fairness, Sustainability and Innovation	
Belfast Agenda Outcomes	Associated Goals
<p>Everyone in Belfast benefits from a thriving and prosperous city</p> <p>Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city</p>	<p>Grow the city's rates base by 5% by increasing the numbers of residential and commercial developments by 2021</p> <p>Create 1.5m square feet of Grade A office accommodation by 2021</p> <p>Create a minimum of 3,000 new hotel bed spaces by 2021</p> <p>Increase the % of residents satisfied with the city living experience</p>



Improvement Objective 4:

We will increase levels of household recycling and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill

Why this is an improvement objective

During 2018, we undertook extensive engagement with residents regarding our current kerbside collection arrangements and it became very clear that this is an important issue for local people. If we are to meet resident expectations, provide efficient and effective services that protect our environment for generations to come and secure best value for money, in particular by meeting landfill diversion (NILAS) and recycling targets, then new behaviours and innovative approaches will be required.

This is a new improvement objective reflecting the importance of sustainable development and the growing awareness of the impacts of waste and pollution on our environment. It is a core council service and will require substantial effort and investment if we are to significantly change practice and behaviours.

By recycling ever greater volumes of material and reducing the amount of waste disposed of to landfill, which limits the production of methane, we can manage waste and resources better, thereby contributing positively to the city and its climate change agenda. Increased recycling is not only better for the environment than landfilling, but it is also better value for money as it allows the council to re-direct this money to other city services. The council, along with its strategic partners, is also exploring ways by which materials can be reused in NI as often as possible through re-design, repair and recycling which increasingly supports local jobs in the emerging Circular Economy.

What we want to achieve

- ✓ More people recycling (at home and through our recycling centres)
- ✓ Less waste going to landfill

What we will do

- ❖ Introduce new pilot kerbside collections scheme - Wheelie-box, dedicated food waste and 180 litre residual bin
- ❖ Introduce carpet recycling at Household Recycling Centres
- ❖ Explore opportunities to extract re-use items from bulky household waste collections and work with contractors to increase recycling rates from waste streams
- ❖ Deliver a programme of engagement and awareness to encourage people to make better use of recycling services

How we will measure our performance and impact

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| CIP.13 | Amount of (tonnage) of biodegradable BCC collected waste that is landfilled | (Statutory indicator) |
| CIP.14 | % of household waste collected that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for re-use) | (Statutory indicator) |
| CIP.15 | Amount (tonnage) of BCC collected municipal waste arisings | (Statutory indicator) |

Area of Improvement (statutory criteria)	
Strategic Effectiveness, Sustainability, Service Quality, Service Availability, Efficiency and Innovation	
Belfast Agenda Outcomes	Associated Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city 	<p>Reduce the level of household waste going to landfill to 35%</p>



Improvement Objective 5:

We will support people to lead healthier, more active lives by:

- a) Improving the quality of our parks and open spaces**
- b) Increasing participation in physical activity, including walking and cycling**
- c) Increasing participation in sport programmes**

Why this is an improvement objective

In our 2016-17 resident survey, improving people's health and wellbeing and addressing health inequalities was the second highest ranked priority for our citizens. It continues to be a core issue for local people and communities. This is supported by statistical data that highlights the multiple and complex health challenges we face as a city.

In 2017-18, we established quite a broad improvement objective of working in collaboration to "design and deliver programmes to address health inequalities in the city". However, for 2019-20 we have decided to refocus our improvement objective on the areas that council can directly influence, and in particular, on the role that our parks and recreation facilities play.

Access to attractive, high quality, safe and welcoming parks and open spaces is essential to improving people's health and wellbeing. As part of this focus on encouraging people to be active, we will also work to ensure our leisure centres and physical activity programmes and initiatives are fit for purpose and accessible to all. Encouraging people to avail of these amenities is an important means by which we can help people to live healthier lives and address health inequalities.

In response to feedback from this year's public consultation we have also included actions aimed at improving "active travel" - encouraging greater use of cycling or walking for journeys to work or for leisure or social purposes. Not only will this help improve people's individual health, a reduction in car use will also help reduce levels of pollution and help improve overall air quality.

Although we will continue to work in collaboration to improve health and wellbeing, we feel that that this renewed focus better reflects the council's contribution whilst also responding to our residents desire to see improvements in local areas and council services.

What we want to achieve

- ✓ Enabling people to live healthier and more active lifestyles
- ✓ Increased use of and satisfaction with our parks and open spaces
- ✓ Increased use of our leisure centres and sports programmes
- ✓ Increased use of the Belfast Bikes scheme

What we will do

- ❖ Develop and implement a new Open Spaces Strategy
- ❖ In partnership with Urban Villages deliver three play park refurbishments (Glenbryn, Sandy Row and Rev Robert Bradford Memorial Park play parks)
- ❖ Retain our current Green Flag accreditations (19 parks) and achieve a new accreditation for Drumglass Park; retain the Green Flag heritage award for Botanic Gardens
- ❖ Continue to roll out the Leisure Transformation Programme, including the completion of the new Andersonstown, Brooke and Lisnasharragh activity centres; begin redevelopment processes for Avoniel and Templemore
- ❖ Develop and deliver the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative
- ❖ Develop a “Get Active Belfast Pledge 4” and implement actions from Every Body Active 2020
- ❖ Roll out the Support for Sport and Active Belfast grants
- ❖ Support people living with chronic conditions or experiencing moderate health conditions through our physical activity referral schemes
- ❖ Encourage greater usage of the Belfast Bikes scheme

How we will measure our performance and impact

- CIP.16 % of residents who agree that their local area has good quality parks and green space
- CIP.17 No. of parks and green spaces with Green Flag accreditation
- CIP.18 % of resident using council parks on at least a monthly basis
- CIP.19 BCC Leisure centre throughput
- CIP.20 % residents who spend at least 150 minutes per week being physically active
- CIP.21 No. of Belfast bikes journeys

Area of Improvement (statutory criteria)	
Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness, Sustainability, Efficiency and Innovation	
Belfast Agenda Outcomes	Associated Goals
Everyone in Belfast experiences good health and wellbeing	Invest £25m in health improvement initiatives by 2021 Roll out £105m in new leisure provision by 2021

Improvement Objective 6:

We will improve council services and increase customer satisfaction

Why this is an improvement objective

Last year, local people told us that they wanted to see improvement objectives that related more directly to improving council services. As a result, we added a new improvement objective for 2019-20 that focused specifically on service improvement and satisfaction with council. When we consulted local people about this, it was clear that the provision of high quality, customer focused and efficient services was very important to our residents.

Continually meeting resident expectations and ensuring that our services are efficient and fit for purpose is a key priority for council. To help us achieve this we are focusing on three core areas:

- neighbourhood working programme
- customer care programme
- continuous improvement programme

The aim of these programmes is to enable better service delivery and sustainable organisational structures; empower staff and provide greater customer care, value for money and efficiency.

What we want to achieve

- ✓ Improve how we manage and deliver services within local neighbourhoods

- ✓ Improve the customer relationship and increase customer satisfaction
- ✓ Improve council services through a programme and culture of continuous improvement

What we will do

- ❖ Design a new model of neighbourhood working, with teams which are better integrated, flexible and responsive.
- ❖ Develop and implement a customer care programme
- ❖ Deliver a programme of continuous improvement focusing on supporting the transition of key City & Neighbourhood services, the customer focus programme and our Building Control Service.

How we will measure our performance and impact

- CIP.22 % residents satisfied with Belfast City Council
- CIP.23 % residents who agree that council provides good customer service
- CIP.24 % residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live

Area of Improvement (statutory criteria)

Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness, Sustainability, Efficiency and Innovation

Continuous Improvement and our General Duty to Improve

Arrangements to Improve

The improvement objectives outlined in this Plan do not represent everything we will do in the year ahead. Rather they are a statement of intent about particular strategic areas of improvement that we intend to focus our efforts on during the coming year.

We are committed to continually improving as an organisation, both in terms of the services we provide and the leadership we show for the city. Through the delivery of our corporate plan and through our facilitation and leadership of the Belfast Agenda, we will continually strive to ensure that Belfast is a city that supports the needs and ambitions of local people.

We have well established governance arrangements in place to ensure delivery of all of our plans, including our improvement objectives. These arrangements include:

- Formal monitoring of plans and activity through our standing committees
- An aligned planning process – where activity is ‘planned’ in at the relevant level (Committee, Departmental, Service, Area)
- Consideration of the full costs (including where necessary ongoing costs) is included in our estimates process
- Delivery of contributing projects through a clear programme management framework

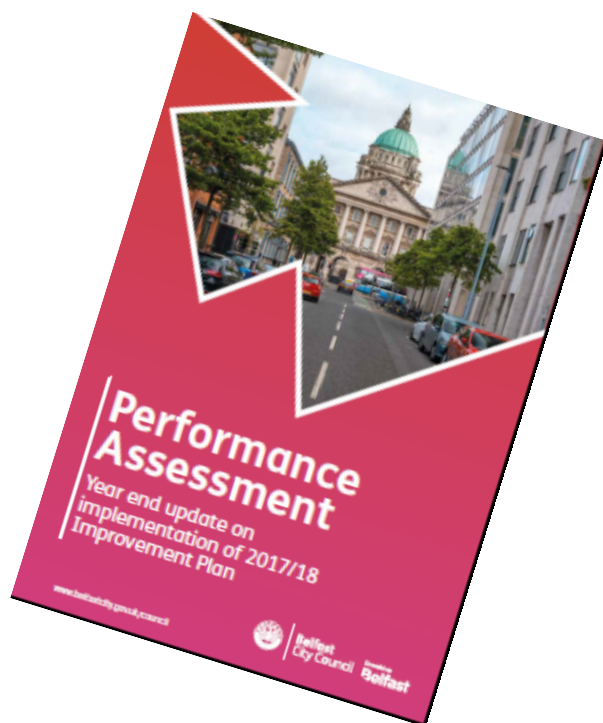
- Appropriate risk management in relation to main programmes of work
- Appropriate monitoring, reporting and performance management arrangements in place
- Aligned monitoring and reporting cycles for finance and other cross cutting performance information at a corporate management team level.

In response to the growing ambitions of our city, council began a major internal change programme designed to help us become the fit for purpose, high quality, efficient and responsive council that local people expect and demand. This includes introducing a more customer and people led approach to how we plan, manage and monitor our performance. Together with an improved approach to continuous improvement and performance management, this will further support the delivery of our improvement objectives and general duty of improvement.

We are moving towards an outcomes based approach to performance management. This means focusing on the impact of our actions rather than solely on how well or how efficiently we undertook them. We are reviewing the wide range of indicators and standards we currently use to ensure they are focusing on the right things and that they provide us with the best information to inform decisions about our performance and areas for improvement. This will be finalised over the coming year.

Improvement Objectives - Reporting Framework

Each September we publish an annual self-assessment report, setting out how we have performed against our improvement plan for the previous year, and during the year, we bring quarterly progress reports to the Audit Committee. In addition to these formal reporting mechanisms, our Corporate Management Team monitors progress against our improvement plan on a monthly basis as part of the management team's wider performance management responsibilities.



Arrangements for Achievement of Statutory Performance Indicators

The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 requires councils to collect and publish information to allow them to measure performance against a number of indicators set by the Department for Communities. This relates to activity in respect of economic development, waste management and planning applications. The indicators are outlined as follows:

Economic Development

- Number of jobs promoted through business start-up (i.e. measured through number of completed business plans)

The 'number of jobs promoted through business start-up' is based on the output of the 'Go For It' initiative which is delivered through the Enterprise Northern Ireland and Local Enterprise Agency Network. Go For It is part funded by Invest Northern Ireland and the European Regional Development Fund under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Northern Ireland (2014-2020) Programme. It provides individuals who wish to start a business with support in the production of their own business plans and in registering for self-employment.

Business plans produced as a result of this programme are quality assured by the Go For It management team. Once verified, the results of the programme are issued to each of the 11 councils and reported to Invest Northern Ireland and Department for the Economy (DfE). It is one of the indicators we use to measure progress against our improvement objective "support business growth in the city".

Planning Indicators

- Average (weeks) processing time for major planning applications
- Average (weeks) processing time for local planning applications
- % of Enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks

Major planning applications relate to developments with important economic, social and environmental implications; most are multiple housing, commercial and government and civic developments. Local planning applications are mostly residential and minor commercial applications. They also include applications for Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent and Advertisement Consent. Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control.

Whilst these indicators do not relate to a specific improvement objective for 2019-20, these are important service standards that we will continue to monitor as part of our improvement plan process.

Our Planning Service continues to work to improve the planning application process to more effectively respond to the needs of customers and enhance performance. In April 2018, as part of planned improvements to our planning service, we established 10 Operating Principles of good practice in managing planning applications based around performance, customers, communication and processes.

Waste Management

- Amount of (tonnage) of biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste that is landfilled
- % of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for re-use)
- Amount (tonnage) of local authority collect municipal waste arisings

The issue of Waste Management has been a priority for the council over many years and continues to be among our most important services.

To meet our legislative obligations under the Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) and to make the necessary contribution to future recycling targets, we need to significantly increase the amount of material we recycle as a city. As this will require changes collection methods, infrastructure and attitudes and behaviours, we have developed a 10 year Waste Strategy to enable us to manage this more effectively. In addition, we have established reducing waste and increasing recycling as an improvement objective for 2019-20. The Council is also keen to ensure that waste management plays a role in the development of the local circular economy and in doing so supports local jobs.

Delivery of the Waste Strategy is overseen by a dedicated Waste Programme Board. Additionally, council is also a member of arc21, a local waste partnership made up of six neighbouring councils and accounting for 54% of all Northern Ireland's municipal waste. Through Arc 21, councils work together to help reduce the costs of waste treatment and disposal.

Summary of our 2019 - 20 Improvement Objectives, including how they contribute to required aspects of improvement.

Improvement objectives 2019 - 20	Strategic effectiveness	Service quality	Service availability	Fairness	Sustainability	Efficiency	Innovation
We will support people into employment	✓			✓			✓
We will support investment and business growth in the city	✓			✓			✓
We will support the regeneration of the city centre	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
We will increase levels of household recycling and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
We will support people to lead healthier more active lives by improving the quality of our parks and open spaces and increasing participation in physical activity and sport programmes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
We will improve council services and increase customer satisfaction with council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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