



Corporate Plan 2023-2024

Year-end update report
April 2023 - March 2024

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

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Welcome

As the Interim Chief Executive of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, I am pleased to present our Corporate Plan 2023-2024 year-end update report.

This report provides an overview of our performance against the objectives laid out in our Plan. It highlights some of our key achievements across the year, noting the tangible benefits realised by our citizens, communities and businesses.

Despite facing economic pressures such as the cost-of-living crisis, inflation, and fluctuating consumer confidence, our communities and staff have shown remarkable resilience and resolve. Our outcomes not only reflect our commitment to the wellbeing of our communities, but also demonstrate our success in enhancing the economic and social fabric of the borough.

Looking forward, we are excited to introduce our new Corporate Plan for 2024-2028. Delivering under the four key

pillars of People, Place, Planet and Performance, the new Plan outlines our strategic direction for the next four years and marks the beginning of another ambitious chapter for Mid and East Antrim.

While we acknowledge there may be further challenges ahead, our dedication to enhancing the borough and improving the quality of life for all remains steadfast.

Together, we will continue to work to build a strong, vibrant, safe and inclusive community across Mid and East Antrim.



Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive

Our Vision

Mid and East Antrim will be a strong, vibrant, safe and inclusive community, where people work together to improve the quality of life for all



Key Achievements

£260,000 of grant funding awarded to local groups across the borough.



795 businesses engaged with through a variety of economic support programmes.



3.2 tonnes of toys donated through our Christmas Toy Container Project.





2,554 individuals participated in 88 outdoor recreation programmes.

150,000 visitors welcomed at our key tourist attractions.

45,250 attendees enjoyed 18 Council organised events.





60,000 trees planted across the borough.

416 participants supported through employability programmes, resulting in 340 qualifications and 182 jobs.



15 Autism Awareness workshops delivered.



Our Plan

Our Corporate Plan was designed to support the delivery of the Community Plan (2017-2032), sharing the same vision and aligning with its themes and priorities.

Our strategic priorities for the 2023-2024 year were:

- Jobs and Tourism
- Community Safety and Cohesion
- Learning for Life
- Good Health and Wellbeing
- High Performing and Sustainable Council
- Our Environment

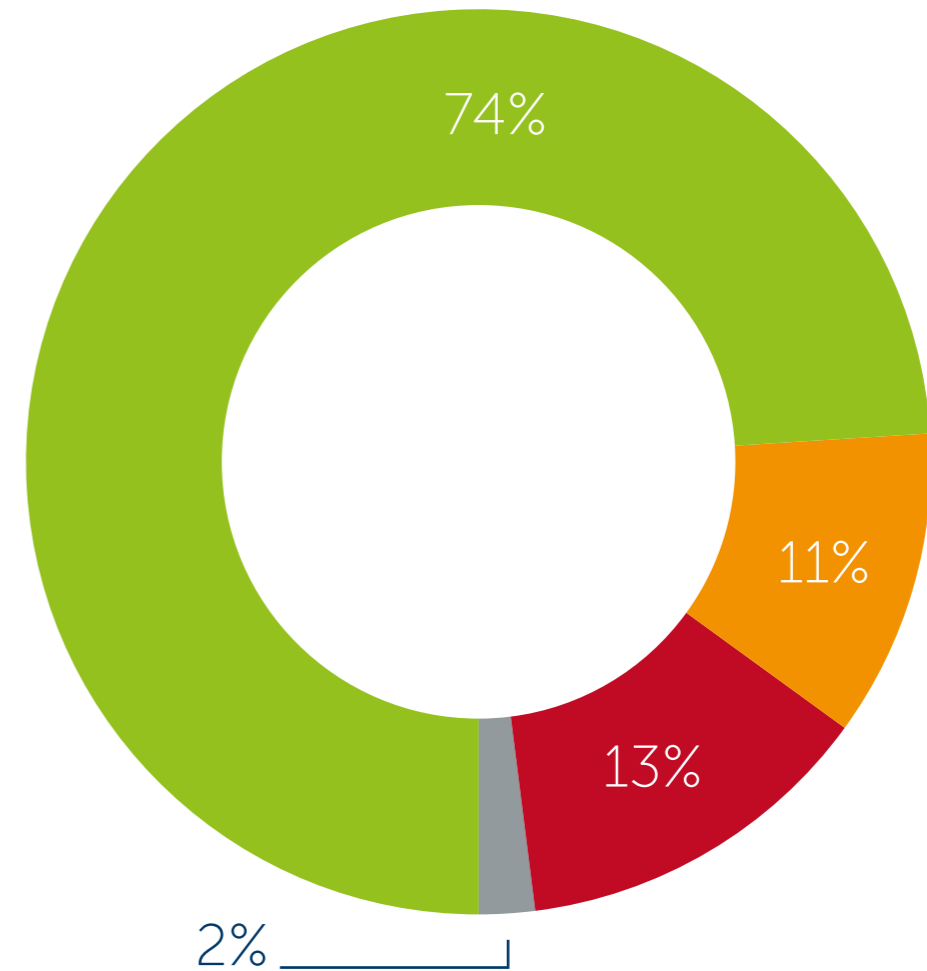
Performance Summary

To support the delivery of our Strategic Objectives and Actions, we established a set of 61 measures to help us track our success.

The chart below summarises our performance against these measures from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. Our performance by theme is outlined on the following pages.

Progress Key
We have outlined our progress throughout the report as follows:

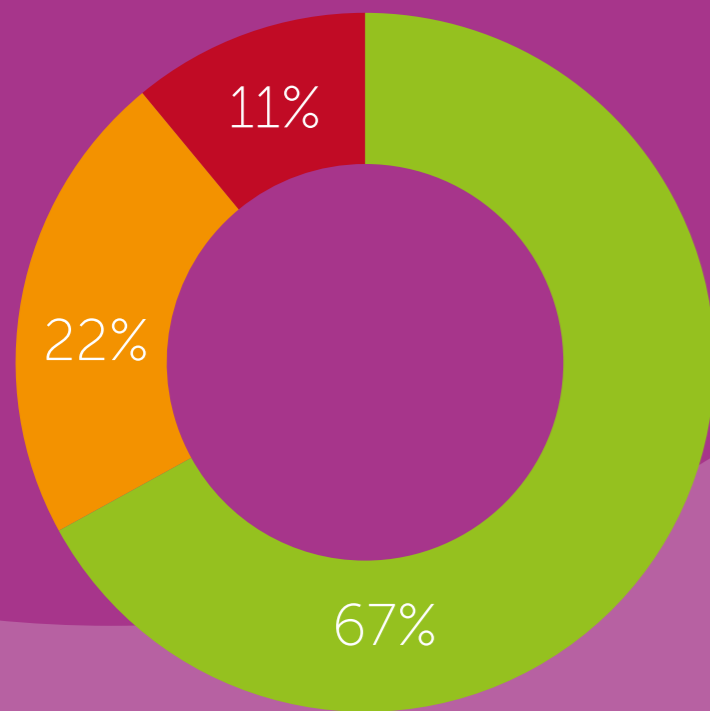
- Achieved or on track
- Delayed but progressing
- Not achieved
- Data not yet available



Jobs and Tourism

Strategic Objectives

- Position and promote Mid and East Antrim as a dynamic, outward-looking region that welcomes and supports inward investment.
- Through a variety of support programmes, grow, support and sustain new and existing businesses.
- Drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth through investing in our people, our places and our businesses.
- Create a compelling tourism proposition by investing in the development and promotion of our unique cultural, arts and heritage assets.
- Attract more domestic and international visitors to the borough to stay longer and spend more.



Actions and Measures

Action 1	<i>Continue to progress the development of the i4C Innovation and CleanTech Centre to support businesses and create jobs.</i>
Measure 1	Secure Outline Business Case Approval for i4C and HyTech by 31 March 2024.
Status	The i4C Innovation and Cleantech Centre, a new £23.5m, 7,000 m ² facility focusing on hydrogen innovation, is set to open in Ballymena in 2027 as part of the Belfast Region City Deal. The Outline Business Case for the i4C project has been approved, and the HyTech NI Outline Business Case is currently under appraisal.
Action 2	<i>Deliver a suite of business support programmes and projects designed to support business start-up and growth across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	400 businesses engaged across business support programmes by 31 March 2024.
Status	795 local businesses have benefited from a range of support programmes aimed at both start-ups and existing businesses. These programmes included: Start-Up Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go for It, Go Succeed and SPARK - Designed to assist new entrepreneurs in launching their ventures. Business Growth Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Escalator - Helps existing businesses scale operations. MEA Food and Drink Network - Focuses on businesses within the food and drink sector. Digital Surge - Aimed at enhancing digital capabilities. Additional initiatives focusing on town centre development have also been implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety in the Workplace - Training to ensure businesses comply with health and safety regulations. Cyber Security - Prepares businesses against digital threats. Festive Window Promotional Competition - Aims to boost local trade during the festive season through creative window displays.
Measure 2	85 jobs promoted through Business Start Interventions by 31 March 2024.
Status	By the end of March, 103 jobs had been promoted through business start interventions. Go Succeed, the new Northern Ireland Entrepreneurial Support Service, launched in November, leading to a surge in inquiries and numerous ongoing client projects.
Action 3	<i>Develop a dynamic 5-year tourism strategy that will drive economic growth, job creation and a thriving tourism economy.</i>
Measure 1	Welcome at least 83,000 visitors to strategic visitor attractions (Carrickfergus Castle, The Gobbins, US Rangers Museum, Andrew Jackson Cottage and Arthur Cottage) by 31 March 2024.
Status	98,455 visitors were welcomed across Council's strategic visitor attractions.
Measure 2	At least 7 businesses signed up to Discover NI by 31 March 2024.
Status	We are currently unable to get a final year end figure as this data is provided by a third party. However, the most recent available figures show that 26 businesses had signed up, therefore the target of 7 has been exceeded.

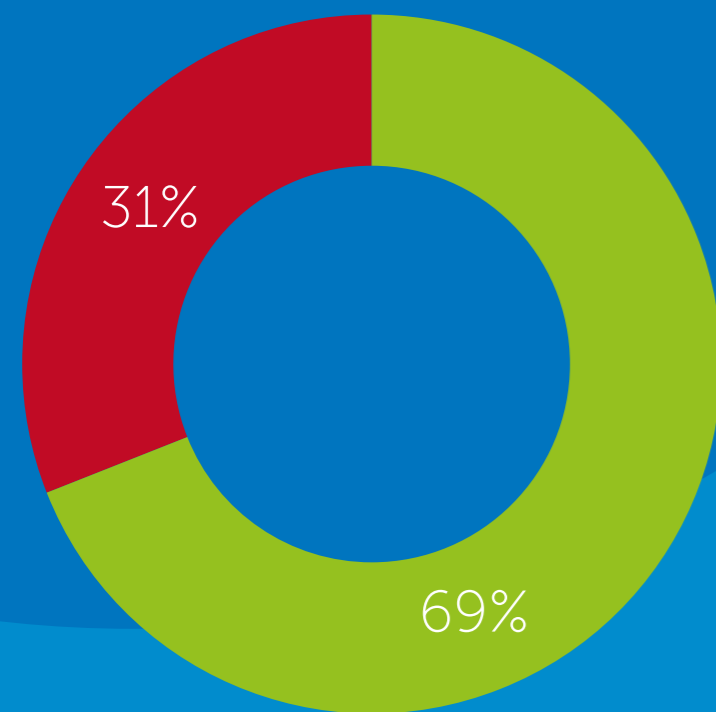
Action 3	<i>Develop a dynamic 5-year tourism strategy that will drive economic growth, job creation and a thriving tourism economy.</i>
Measure 3	Support businesses to develop at least 5 new tourism products by 31 March 2024.
Status	Unfortunately, during the reporting period, no funding was made available to pursue this objective. Officers will continue to work with key agencies on funding updates and opportunities.
Action 4	<i>Progress the delivery of Council's 10-year vision for the three town centres to develop, regenerate and attract inward investment.</i>
Measure 1	Finalise the development of the Town Centre Revitalisation Scheme and complete delivery of year 1 actions by 31 March 2024.
Status	The Town Centre Revitalisation Scheme continues to be successfully delivered. The first application for funding was successful, with a Letter of Offer received for over £400k. A second application was also successful, with a Letter of Offer for £54k received for street art within Ballymena and Larne. A further 3 funding applications are scheduled to be submitted in the 2024-25 reporting year. Some of the key highlights have included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 89 businesses availing of funding through the Shopfront Revitalisation Scheme. Pop-up shops are fully operational in each of the borough's main towns. The procurement of town centre sound systems for Ballymena and Carrickfergus, with installation planned during the summer. 13 businesses benefiting from the provision of pavement café furniture. A Steering Group, which consists of the Department for Communities, Council officers and community and business representatives continues to meet on a monthly basis.
Measure 2	Deliver the Public Realm Improvement Scheme by 31 March 2024.
Status	Public realm improvement projects were delivered at Point Street in Larne and Castle Street in Ballymena. Works completed at Larne in May 2023 and at Ballymena in January 2024.
Measure 3	Support businesses to develop the Townscape Heritage Initiative by 30 September 2023.
Status	Carrickfergus Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), supported by funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and building owners, is an ambitious regeneration scheme breathing new life into the town's conservation area, maintaining heritage, boosting tourism and growing the local economy. The tenth and final property of regeneration under the initiative is due to complete by the end of July 2024. Delays were experienced due to adverse weather conditions and complex design challenges. A post project evaluation, closing event and publication on the scheme will be delivered on completion. The project will be reported against in the 2024-25 reporting year and included within the Council's annual Performance Improvement Plan.

Community Safety and Cohesion

Strategic Objectives

Work alongside partners to:

- Encourage good relations, civic pride and a sense of belonging by creating vibrant, shared, cohesive and inclusive communities across the borough.
- Build the capacity of local communities to improve resilience and self-sustainability.
- Improve community safety and confidence, enabling people to feel and be safe by providing early intervention and supporting those most at risk of becoming involved in crime.
- Provide support to vulnerable people who need it.



Actions and Measures

Action 1	<i>Through the delivery of various programmes, support our local communities to improve their resilience and build self-sustainability.</i>
Measure 1	Continue to support the Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) to identify, review and shape proposals for the next phase of RCRG priorities by 31 March 2024.
Status	Our Corporate and Community Resilience Officer and local groups have developed a resource toolkit aimed at improving community preparedness for extreme weather events. As the strategic proposals for RCRG extend into the 2024-25 period, there are no further inputs required from the Council at this stage. Our involvement in the pilot ensures that the Council can significantly contribute to regional resilience planning.
Measure 2	Review the existing MEA Community Resilience Framework and requirement for an MEA Community Resilience Action Plan in tandem with RCRG proposals by 31 March 2024.
Status	In collaboration with Community Resilience groups across the borough, Council engaged in a joint study funded by RCRG alongside Derry City and Strabane District Council. This study successfully identified five key elements that characterise a resilient community and underscore the pivotal role these communities play in ensuring preparedness, response, and recovery from severe disruptions. The findings are set to guide the future strategies of the RCRG as it aligns more closely with the broader objectives of the Civil Contingencies Framework. Council secured funding that enabled the MEABC Community Resilience groups to develop a resilience toolkit and framework via community workshops.
Action 2	<i>Deliver comprehensive Good Relations activities, with the aim of influencing positive changes to attitudes and knowledge.</i>
Measure 1	Deliver the agreed Good Relations Action Plan by 31 March 2024.
Status	During the year, the Good Relations budget was reduced by 47%, which prompted a reprofiling and resubmission of the Action Plan. Two key initiatives, the Beacon project and the Integrate project, were prioritised and delivered, leading to the fulfilment of the revised action plan.
Measure 2	Deliver at least 2 Good Relations projects by 31 March 2024.
Status	The Beacon project and the Integrate project were both successfully delivered. It should be noted that both were single identity projects, which affected the achievable percentages in the measures below.
Measure 3	At least 50% of participants in Good Relations activities stating that their attitude towards people from different religious backgrounds has improved by 31 March 2024.
Status	38% of participants stated that their attitude towards people from different religious backgrounds has improved.
Measure 4	At least 50% of participants in Good Relations activities stating that their attitude towards people from different ethnic backgrounds has improved by 31 March 2024.
Status	30% of participants stated that their attitude towards people from different ethnic backgrounds has improved.
Measure 5	At least 50% of participants in Good Relations activities stating that their knowledge of cultural traditions/backgrounds has increased by 31 March 2024.
Status	31% of participants stated that their knowledge of different cultural traditions/backgrounds has increased.

Action 3	<i>Work in partnership with the Poverty Action Group to progress initiatives to support the most vulnerable across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	Conduct a review of the Safe, Warm and Well Programme delivery model by 31 March 2024.
Status	The review of the Safe, Warm and Well Programme was completed, and the report presented to the Neighbourhood and Communities Committee in December. Despite Elected Members' support and Council engagement with the Public Health Agency (PHA), no additional budget has been allocated for 2024-25, leading to scaled-back targets for the delivery of PHA initiatives. A process of continuous review will be implemented to prioritise spending and maximize the impact of the programme moving forward.
Measure 2	Deliver 90% of Public Health Agency target for the over 65s home safety checks by 31 March 2024.
Status	397 home safety checks were carried out, equating to 168% of the target.
Measure 3	Deliver 90% of Public Health Agency target for energy efficiency support by 31 March 2024.
Status	The Health and Wellbeing team received 391 referrals, equating to 134% of the target.
Measure 4	Support the Poverty Action Group by ensuring continued presence and contribution to meetings by 31 March 2024.
Status	During the summer we once again ran the highly successful School Uniform Scheme. The scheme was delivered in partnership with Mid and East Antrim Community Advice Services (MEACAS) and was supported by the Mid and East Antrim Poverty Action Group (MEAPAG). MEAPAG act as our vehicle for the delivery of the Hardship Fund and, in partnership with the Affordable Food Club they have been able to deliver several support schemes. In addition to the new work within the scope of the Hardship Fund, the members of the MEAPAG continue to support each other and act as referral agents for available support.
Action 4	<i>Through the Loneliness Network collaborate with statutory and voluntary partners and community groups to promote and deliver initiatives to tackle loneliness in the borough.</i>
Measure 1	At least 40 partner organisations engaged in the network by 31 March 2024.
Status	We have engaged with over 40 partner organisations.
Measure 2	At least 40 support programmes delivered by 31 March 2024.
Status	The Loneliness Network in Mid and East Antrim was launched in 2019 to create coordinated action, raise awareness, share best practice and encourage learning and prevention across the borough. The network brings together Council and the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, alongside other statutory, voluntary and community groups. Although resource constraints prevented the target of 40 programmes being delivered, 27 programmes aimed at enhancing community engagement and support were successfully delivered. These initiatives included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of 6 chatty benches and 2 chatty cafés. • Placement of 3 kindness post-boxes to boost community spirit. • Appointment of 6 loneliness champions. • Delivery of 5 activity programmes to engage the community. • Launch of a Facebook page to enhance online presence. • Organisation of a photography exhibition. • Setting up 3 information stands at roadshows to share community information.

Learning for life

Strategic Objectives

- Develop the skills needed to embrace opportunities for a prosperous and more sustainable future.
- Through our various programmes, develop a sense of ambition towards achievement regardless of location, community background or socio-economic factors.
- Promote to stakeholders the benefits of creating volunteer and enhanced work experience opportunities.
- Lead by example by developing and implementing a work placement programme within Council.
- Support our staff to achieve their full potential by investing in training, development and cross Council collaborative opportunities.



100%



Actions and Measures

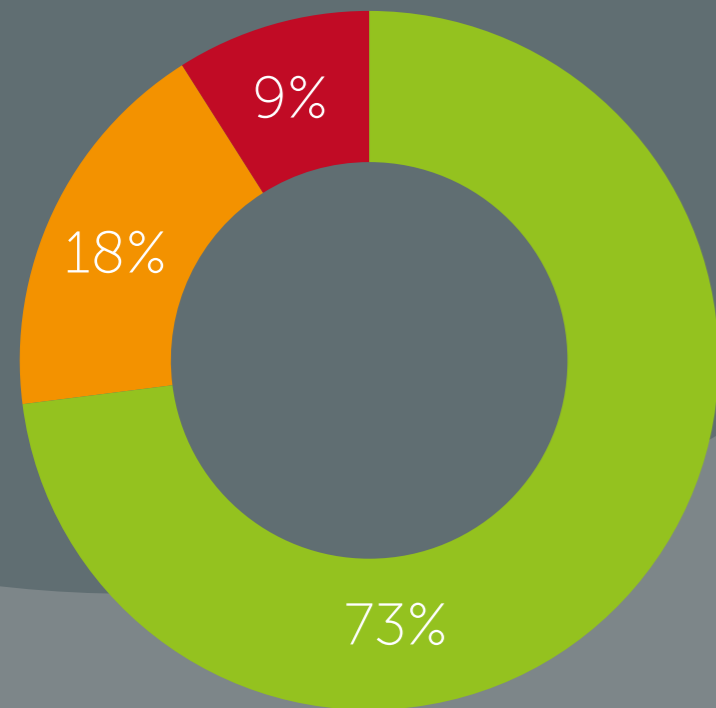
Action 1	<i>Deliver a suite of employability programmes to support our citizens to develop their skills, gain qualifications and secure employment.</i>
Measure 1	At least 140 participants in employability interventions and academies by 31 March 2024.
Status	268 people participated in employability interventions and academies.
Measure 2	At least 80 qualifications achieved by participants in employability interventions and academies by 31 March 2024.
Status	Participants achieved 319 qualifications through employability interventions and academies.
Measure 3	At least 80 participants gaining employment/self-employment as a result of employability interventions and academies by 31 March 2024.
Status	101 participants progressed into employment/self-employment as a result of employability interventions and academies.
Action 2	<i>Position MEABC as an employer of choice by providing opportunities for work placement/work experience.</i>
Measure 1	Deliver at least 8 work experience/work placements by 31 March 2024.
Status	We facilitated 17 work placement and volunteer opportunities across Council, including within Museums, Parks, Capital Works, Sustainability, Planning & Building Control, and the Gobbins.
Action 3	<i>Deliver a suite of environmental education programmes for citizens, businesses and young people across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	Deliver 8 climate and sustainability education programmes across schools, communities and businesses by 31 March 2024.
Status	Our Climate and Sustainability officers delivered a range of educational and engagement programmes promoting sustainable practices and encouraging greater awareness of our environmental impact. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Eco Schools Programme - Council supports 76 registered schools through financial backing, educational talks and partnerships. This support has led to 20 schools achieving Green Flag status, 36 receiving silver certificates, and 7 earning bronze certificates. Community Education - Talks on climate and sustainability, waste and recycling were delivered to various community groups across the borough. Business Communication - Monthly e-zines provide educational information on funding, training, and support to businesses across the borough. Student Placement - We facilitated a placement student from Queen's University Belfast, who contributed to ISO14001, the Plot to Plate PeacePlus review, and various other projects. Eco Homes Programme - Council is collaborating with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) and The Energy Team from the Republic of Ireland to enhance and promote the Eco Homes Programme, aiding residents in adopting renewable technologies and accessing funding.

Action 3	<i>Deliver a suite of environmental education programmes for citizens, businesses and young people across the borough.</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> ISO14001 Reuse Event - A new objective under ISO14001 was successfully achieved by hosting a reuse themed webinar with good attendance from MEA staff. Development of ECOS as a Sustainability Hub - Work continues to transform ECOS into a hub for educational and sustainability activities, with recent activities including a schools competition judged in partnership with Economic Development, with a tour for the winning school. MEANZ Business Project - The Mid and East Antrim Net Zero (MEANZ) Business Project, funded by Innovate UK, is spearheading an innovative and comprehensive programme of engagement, support and dissemination to businesses across the borough, centred around delivering Net Zero. Reuse Schemes - Designed to promote the development of a circular economy, initiatives have included the School Uniform Scheme, Christmas Toy Container Project and the Community RePaint Scheme.
Action 4	<i>Develop MEABC employees to deliver high quality and responsive services to citizens through the provision of comprehensive and bespoke training.</i>
Measure 1	Ensure at least 1.5 days are spent, per full time equivalent, on employee learning and development by 31 March 2024.
Status	3.46 days were spent, per full time equivalent, on employee learning and development.
Measure 2	Deliver at least 100 training courses to staff by 31 March 2024.
Status	296 courses were completed, encompassing both mandatory and skill development categories. <p>These included a variety of topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid at Work Accident Reporting COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Anti-Bribery CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) Cyber Security DSE (Display Screen Equipment) Environmental Awareness Fire Awareness Fire Warden Fraud Prevention GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) Manual Handling R&S (Risk and Safety) Resilience Slips, Trips, and Falls Working at Heights

Good Health and Wellbeing

Strategic Objectives

- Deliver a coordinated partnership approach to improve the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of our citizens.
- Ensure our citizens and visitors have accessible and inclusive Council facilities.
- Enable vulnerable groups within our borough to be active, respected and supported in their community.
- Encourage our staff to use the resources and tools available to improve and maintain their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.



Actions and Measures

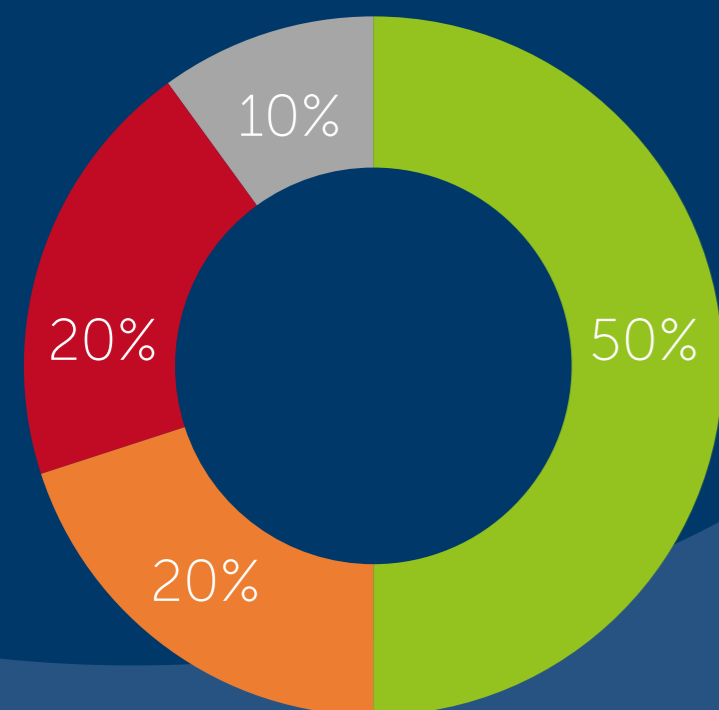
Action 1	<i>Support our citizens to lead healthy and active lives by increasing our offering of physical activity sessions and support schemes across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	Launch the MEAqua Strategy & Action Plan 2023-2025, including delivery of first year actions by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>Delivery of the MEAqua Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2025 is underway, with significant progress made in its first year.</p> <p>Key accomplishments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of additional qualified swimming teachers. • Introduction of parent and toddler swimming lessons at all three leisure centres. • £4,000 of funding secured from Disability Sport NI for the purchase of sensory equipment for the MEAqua Swim Academy. • Expansion of the programme to include the summer months at all three leisure centres. <p>The programme has seen tremendous growth, with participation more than doubling since September 2021, now boasting 296 classes and 2,075 participants per week. The implementation of the strategy will continue as part of Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25.</p>
Measure 2	Deliver the MEActive programme by 31 March 2024.
Status	We offered 1,389 sessions, including activities such as dodgeball, basketball, pilates, danderball, bocchia, pickleball, and walking netball. Out of the 10,157 participants who joined these sessions, 5,675 were women and girls. Additionally, we provided inclusive opportunities for 3,484 individuals living with a disability or lifelong illness. The program has been supported by 474 different groups.
Measure 3	Continue to support the delivery of the Move More programme by 31 March 2024.
Status	In collaboration with Macmillan Cancer Support, our Move More programme offers a free tailored programme to help individuals suffering from cancer to get and stay active at a level that is right for them. 1,809 individuals were offered opportunities to participate, and we delivered 418 classes.
Measure 4	Continue to support the delivery of the GP Referral Scheme by 31 March 2024.
Status	Delivered in partnership with the Public Health Agency (PHA) PARS is a 12-week prescribed physical activity programme. The scheme received 227 referrals, of which 64 are active. Of those approved for participation 52 completed the scheme.
Action 2	<i>Develop an Age Friendly Action Plan to ensure our older citizens feel supported and included within their local communities.</i>
Measure 1	Establishment of an MEA Age Friendly Alliance by 30 December 2023.
Status	The MEA Age Friendly Alliance has been established, with the first meeting held in November and the second in January.
Measure 2	Development of an MEA Age Friendly Action Plan by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>A draft Age-Friendly Strategy and Action Plan have been developed. These were subject to a public consultation which closed at the end of May. The feedback obtained during the consultation is being analysed and used to inform the final Strategy and Action Plan, with a planned launch over the summer.</p> <p>The project will be reported against in 2024-25 and included within Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25.</p>

Action 2	<i>Develop an Age Friendly Action Plan to ensure our older citizens feel supported and included within their local communities.</i>
Measure 3	Development of a borough-wide Landlord Forum by 31 March 2024.
Status	The Landlord Forum, featuring representatives from the Landlord Association (NI) and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is now fully established. Arrangements for the MEA Landlord Forum to act as a subgroup of the Landlord Association (NI) are now in place.
Action 3	<i>Encourage the use of outdoor spaces for health and wellbeing, through the delivery of our Outdoor Recreation strategy.</i>
Measure 1	Deliver at least 3 outdoor recreation programmes by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>The Natural Connections Photography initiative provided teenagers with the opportunity to connect with nature and each other through a series of workshops, culminating in a presentation of their work at Carrickfergus Town Hall.</p> <p>The Healthy Oceans Healthy Minds campaign, a collaboration with Live Here Love Here, included six sessions over three weeks with activities such as Beach Babbies, Rockpool Safari, Stand Up Paddleboarding, Pollution Art, and Seaweed Tasting.</p> <p>Additionally, the Plot to Plate programme was successfully delivered, focusing on sustainable food practices from cultivation to consumption.</p>
Measure 2	Support at least 60 participants in citizen focused health and wellbeing programmes by 31 March 2024.
Status	194 people took part in citizen focused health and wellbeing programmes.
Action 4	<i>Ensure we continue to provide reliable, value for money services to our citizens by focusing on the health and wellbeing of our employees, and through the management of employee attendance.</i>
Measure 1	Ensure absence levels do not exceed 14 days per annum, per full time equivalent, by 31 March 2024.
Status	A final absence rate of 16.46 days per full-time equivalent was achieved, which although an improvement on last year, does not meet the set target. The high rate has been influenced by ongoing difficulties in accessing medical consultations and treatments, leading to extended absences for many employees. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in diagnoses of severe health issues among staff. A scrutiny review of absenteeism is currently being conducted by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.
Measure 2	Deliver at least 2 health and wellbeing initiatives for staff by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>We delivered several initiatives aimed at supporting the mental health and wellbeing of staff. These included the delivery of Health and Wellbeing Week, Be Kind to Your Mind and Stress Awareness and Management.</p> <p>We have also enhanced support through the Staywell Hub, which provides staff with access to mental health support and free training.</p>

High Performing and Sustainable Council

Strategic Objectives

- Take the lead on delivering both the Community Plan and the Local Development Plan, working effectively with our partners and citizens.
- Increase customer satisfaction with our services through innovation and continuous improvement by proactively engaging with and listening to our citizens, customers and staff.
- Using an agile delivery model and adapting to changing landscapes, be recognised as a leading council, ensuring value for money and affordability of council services, facilities and assets.
- Deliver our activities and functions in a sustainable manner, integrating social, economic and environmental factors when planning or decision-making, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Embed our values in our day-to-day working environment, ensuring our employees feel supported and motivated to achieve their full potential.



Actions and Measures

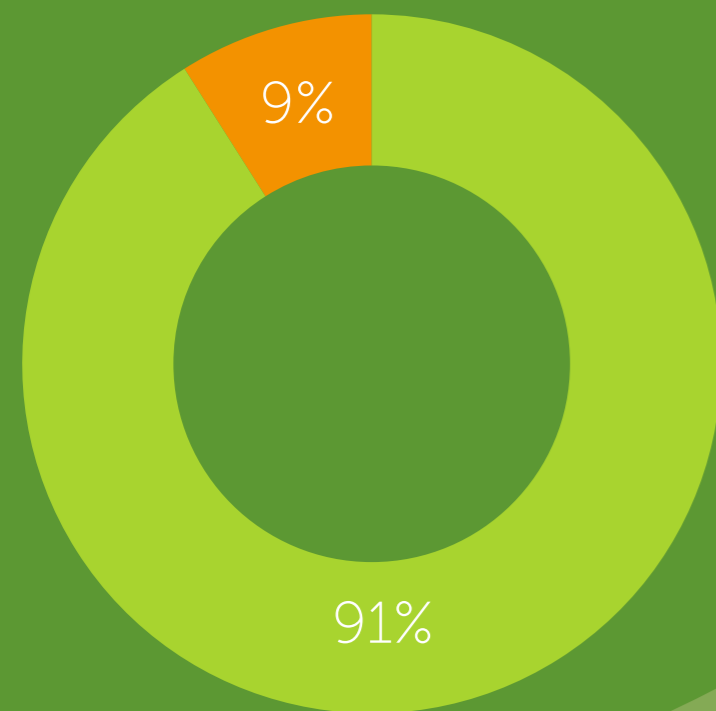
Action 1	<i>Ensure we remain responsive to citizen need by developing processes that allow us to engage with, listen to and act on feedback from our stakeholders to increase customer satisfaction with our services.</i>
Measure 1	Establish processes to gauge customer satisfaction levels by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>The Council is developing a Customer First approach, and processes to gauge customer satisfaction will be considered as part of that workstream.</p> <p>To progress the project, a scoping exercise into the methods currently used across Council to measure customer satisfaction has been completed and an analysis of the findings is underway. This will help to shape the next steps in the process. Furthermore, during the completion of the public consultation exercise for the annual Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25, respondents were asked an open-ended question requesting their feedback on areas which they felt the Council could improve upon. Of the 216 respondents, 108 provided feedback to this question and the responses have been analysed and reported to SMT, Officers and Elected Members.</p> <p>The results of the 2022 Citizens Survey will serve as a baseline to track progress in enhancing customer satisfaction levels as part of this initiative.</p>
Action 2	<i>Work collaboratively with our community planning partners, to consolidate and capitalise on shared resources to deliver positive outcomes for citizens.</i>
Measure 1	Engage with at least 8 community partners by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>The Community Planning process in Mid and East Antrim is dependent on multiple organisations working together to achieve positive outcomes for the citizens of the borough. Over the course of the past year Council has engaged with a number of community partners, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer Council • Council for Catholic Maintained Schools • Department for Communities • Department of Justice for Northern Ireland • Education Authority for Northern Ireland • Northern Ireland Housing Executive • Northern Health & Social Care Trust • Public Health Agency • Invest Northern Ireland • Libraries NI • Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service • NI Water • Northern Regional College • Patient Client Council • Police Service Northern Ireland • Sustainable NI • Sport Northern Ireland <p>In February we delivered 4 thematic workshops, each based on one of the themes from the Community Plan, these drew representation from over 30 partner organisations.</p> <p>Additionally, a Strategic Alliance meeting in March, further confirmed this achievement, with 13 community planning partners in attendance.</p>
Measure 2	Deliver at least 8 community planning initiatives by 31 March 2024.
Status	We successfully delivered a total of 13 community planning initiatives. These included the Loneliness Network, Autism Friendly, Dementia Friendly, Business Escalator, Place Promotion, Community Fridge, Sensory Gardens, Ageing Well, Affordable Food Hub, Uniform Exchange, Volunteering, Support Hub, and Safer Places.

Action 3	<i>Ensure we promote sustainable development for the borough across economic, social and environmental dimensions, through the delivery of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.</i>
Measure 1	Deliver a minimum of 10 programmes against each of the 17 Goals by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>Council continues to deliver programmes against each of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p>Every two years, we host an MSc Leadership in Sustainability student to conduct a study and produce a report on Council's progress on delivery against each goal. The most recent report was published in September and noted that Council were delivering towards 94 of the applicable 114 targets, and 120 of the applicable 168 indicators.</p>
Action 4	<i>Contribute to a healthy economy by delivering effective and efficient services for the benefit of citizens and businesses across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	Ensure that at least 53% of payments to suppliers are made within 10 working days by 31 March 2024.
Status	65% of payments to suppliers were made within 10 working days.
Measure 2	Ensure that at least 85% of payments to suppliers are made within 30 calendar days by 31 March 2024.
Status	Due to a variety of internal factors we failed to achieve this target, with 81% of payments to suppliers made within 30 calendar days.
Measure 3	Processing time for major planning applications within an average of 30 weeks by 31 March 2024.
Status	Our average processing time for major planning applications from April to December was 67.4 weeks. Verified data up to March 2024 is not yet available.
Measure 4	Processing time for local planning applications within an average of 15 weeks by 31 March 2024.
Status	Our average processing time for local planning applications from April to December was 10 weeks. Verified data up to March 2024 is not yet available.
Measure 5	70% of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint by 31 March 2024.
Status	The number of enforcement cases concluded, and corresponding processing times are not yet published by the Department for Infrastructure.
Action 5	<i>Ensure we remain responsive to employee needs by engaging, listening to and acting on feedback from our employees to increase staff satisfaction levels.</i>
Measure 1	Develop an action plan based on the results of the Listening to Staff survey by 31 March 2024.
Status	The Listening to Staff survey was completed, with findings analysed and shared with officers. Working groups were established to further investigate and identify next steps. A draft Action Plan has been developed and is currently awaiting review and approval.

Our Environment

Strategic Objectives

- Deliver the Local Development Plan in line with Council's climate and sustainability commitments.
- Empower, educate and work in partnership with our citizens and local businesses to progress towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- Support local communities to create an environmentally resilient and sustainable borough.
- Invest to improve and develop our parks, open spaces and built heritage, ensuring they meet the needs of citizens and visitors, and promote the considerate use of all spaces.
- Lead by example and reduce the impact of Council services, to improve and sustainably manage our environment, protecting it for future generations.



Actions and Measures

Action 1	<i>Utilise nature-based solutions to aid climate change adaptation and improve the health and wellbeing of our citizens across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	Deliver at least 3 nature-based solution projects by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>Across the year 3 major projects were delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ahoghill Natural Park - development of wet woodland to create habitat and enhance water retention. Ecos Conservation Grazing - aimed at developing appropriate management of the floodplain. Ballymena Urban Forest - planting to create habitat and also to alleviate flooding. <p>Additionally, a Conservation Grazing plan and two Ancient Woodland Management plans have been developed, with implementation scheduled for the 2024-25 period.</p>
Action 2	<i>Develop a Tree and Woodland Management Strategy to enhance biodiversity, increase carbon store and support ecosystems across the borough.</i>
Measure 1	Plant at least 2,000 trees on Council land by 31 March 2024.
Status	Approximately 2,000 trees were planted on Council owned land.
Measure 2	Plant at least 3,000 trees on public land through Council support by 31 March 2024.
Status	Council supported the planting of approximately 58,000 trees on public land.
Action 3	<i>Support communities, farmers and local businesses to be more sustainable, reduce carbon emissions and adapt to a changing climate.</i>
Measure 1	Work in partnership with Sustainable NI to promote sustainable practices by 31 March 2024.
Status	Council officers have worked in partnership with Sustainable NI to promote sustainable practices across our service delivery and with our local communities. Council officers have attended regular Sustainable Development Forum meetings. Council's Environmental Education Officer continues to meet Economic Development officers to review and update on net zero delivery with our business sector, including the agri-sector.
Measure 2	Recruit a Net Zero Officer to deliver the Mid and East Antrim Net Zero Business (MEANZ Business) project by 30 September 2023.
Status	Following the receipt of funding from Innovate UK KTN, we successfully recruited a Net Zero Innovation and Delivery Manager in July 2023. This officer is working alongside Innovate UK, under the Fast Followers Programme, to develop and deliver net zero activities to businesses across the borough.
Measure 3	Engage with at least 40 businesses to promote net zero activities by 31 March 2024.
Status	40 businesses have been engaged with to promote net zero activities.

Action 4	<i>Improve the resource and energy efficiency of our buildings and practices by first establishing baseline data of Council emissions with the goal to reduce costs and our MEABC operation emissions to net zero by 2040.</i>
Measure 1	Establish baseline emissions for Council buildings with a focus on those with larger consumption rates by 31 March 2024.
Status	Baseline emissions have been established and recorded. This data will be used to monitor carbon emissions moving forward.
Measure 2	Support the delivery of Council's Green Growth Strategy through the completion of 5 Renewable Technology projects by 31 March 2024.
Status	<p>Significant progress has been made in enhancing our sustainability efforts through the installation of solar arrays.</p> <p>Sullatober Household Recycling Centre, Springwell Street Multi-story Car Park in Ballymena, and Larne Leisure Centre have all been upgraded with new solar arrays.</p> <p>Additionally, enabling works at Carrickfergus Amphitheatre are underway, with completion targeted for summer 2024. The procurement process for solar installations at The Braid and Waveney Road Household Recycling Centre is ongoing, with completion anticipated by the end of January 2025.</p> <p>The application for installing additional solar arrays at ECOS experienced a minor delay due to a necessary redrawing of the project scope, but it is set to be submitted to the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) within the next few weeks.</p> <p>Further desktop reviews are ongoing to identify other potential sites for solar installations. Locations under consideration include Carrick Town Hall, the new development at Carnfunnock Country Park and Larne Cemetery.</p>
Action 5	<i>Deliver an effective and efficient waste service that supports citizens and businesses to reduce waste.</i>
Measure 1	At least 50% of household waste collected to be sent for recycling by 31 March 2024.
Status	The percentage of household waste collected that was sent for recycling from April to December 2023 was 52.5%. Verified data up to March 2024 is not yet available.
Measure 2	No more than 16,387 tonnes of biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste to be landfilled by 31 March 2024.
Status	10,302 tonnes were landfilled from April to December 2023. Verified data up to March 2024 is not yet available.
Measure 3	The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority collected municipal waste arisings. The Department for Communities requires that each council sets and monitors its own individual target annually. We have set a target of no more than 75,797 tonnes by 31 March 2024.
Status	57,614 tonnes have been collected from April to December 2023. Verified data up to March 2024 is not yet available.

Statutory Key Performance Indicators







The Department for Communities set statutory targets for councils in the areas of Planning, Economic Development and Waste.

These are outlined in our annual business plans, and as far as possible within our annual Performance Improvement Plan.

Performance updates are published on our website every three months at:

midandeantrim.gov.uk/improvement

Our results for the period April to December 2023 are summarised to the right. Data up to March 2024 is not yet available.

	Indicator 	Target 	Result 
	The average processing time of major planning applications	MAX 30 Weeks	67.4 Weeks
	The average processing time of local planning applications	MAX 15 Weeks	10 Weeks
	The percentage of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks	MIN 70%	This information has not yet been published by the Department for Infrastructure.
	The number of jobs promoted through business start interventions	MIN 85 Jobs	103 Jobs
	The percentage of household waste collected by district Councils that is sent for recycling	MIN 50%	52.5%
	The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	MAX 16,387 Tonnes	10,302 Tonnes
	The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	The Department for Communities requires that each council sets and monitors its own individual target for this indicator annually.	57,613 Tonnes

Feedback

We are committed to continually improving our services and as such we welcome your comments or suggestions for improvement areas at any time throughout the year. Please get in touch via:

Corporate Performance and Improvement Team

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
1-29 Bridge Street
Ballymena
BT43 5EJ

performance@midandeantrim.gov.uk

Closing Remarks

Reflecting on the past year, I am highly impressed with the collective achievements of all those involved in executing the Corporate Plan for 2023-2024.

Despite resource issues, the work completed has significantly enhanced the experiences and opportunities of citizens, communities, businesses, and visitors across the borough.

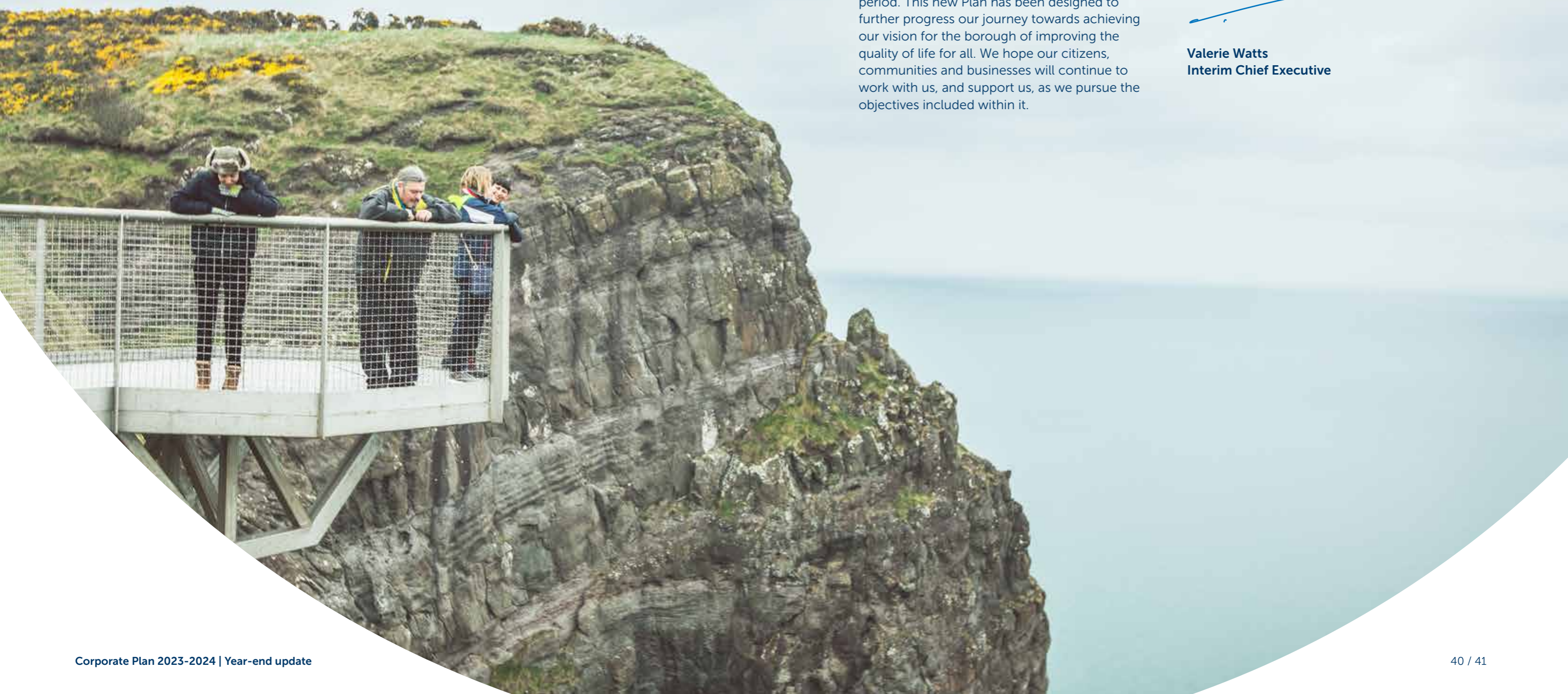
As we look to the future, I'm excited to introduce our new Corporate Plan for the 2024-2028 period. This new Plan has been designed to further progress our journey towards achieving our vision for the borough of improving the quality of life for all. We hope our citizens, communities and businesses will continue to work with us, and support us, as we pursue the objectives included within it.

As always, the needs of our citizens, communities, and businesses remain our top priority. For detailed information about our upcoming initiatives and to stay updated with the latest news, please visit our website and follow us on social media.

Thank you,



Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive





HYDROGEN ACADEMY
Supporting a greener future through skills and training.

...was inspired by elements of a culture that...
...history. Continue your...
...to discover a...
...of... by me and...


Changing Places



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

Mid and East Antrim
Borough Council
1-29 Bridge Street
Ballymena
BT43 5EJ

Tel: 0300 1245 000
enquiries@midandeantrim.gov.uk

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk

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