



ANNUAL REPORT

Performance Self-Assessment

2023-2024

September 2024

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2023/24 Annual Performance Self-Assessment Report looking back at how, during the year, we continued to pursue our vision for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to have a happy, healthy, and connected **community**, a vibrant and sustainable **economy** with appealing **places** for living, working, and learning.

This report provides an overview of Council's performance against self-imposed indicators and standards: including business planning, service standards and medium-term recovery; performance improvement objectives and statutory performance improvement indicators.

Reflecting on how we are performing has been a valuable exercise and will influence informed decision-making and business planning going forward and has helped shape the development of the new Corporate Plan for 2023-2027 and associated business plans for the next financial year including new performance improvement objectives.

This self-assessment report illustrates Council's performance against the Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023 over the previous year and sets out some of the achievements and progress made.




A new Corporate Plan was developed in March 2024 which sets Council's vision and priorities for 2023 – 2027.

2.0 PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

In reviewing Council Performance for 2023-24, we reviewed and assessed delivery of services and activities during the year that contribute to the 30 commitments contained within the Corporate Plan 2018-2023, focusing on the 4 on themes: **Committed Council, Economy, Community and Place**. A copy of that Corporate Plan can be found at the following link:

<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/corporate-publications/>

The following infographics give a visual overview in relation to Council performance in 2023/24. The key below is applicable to the following visuals.

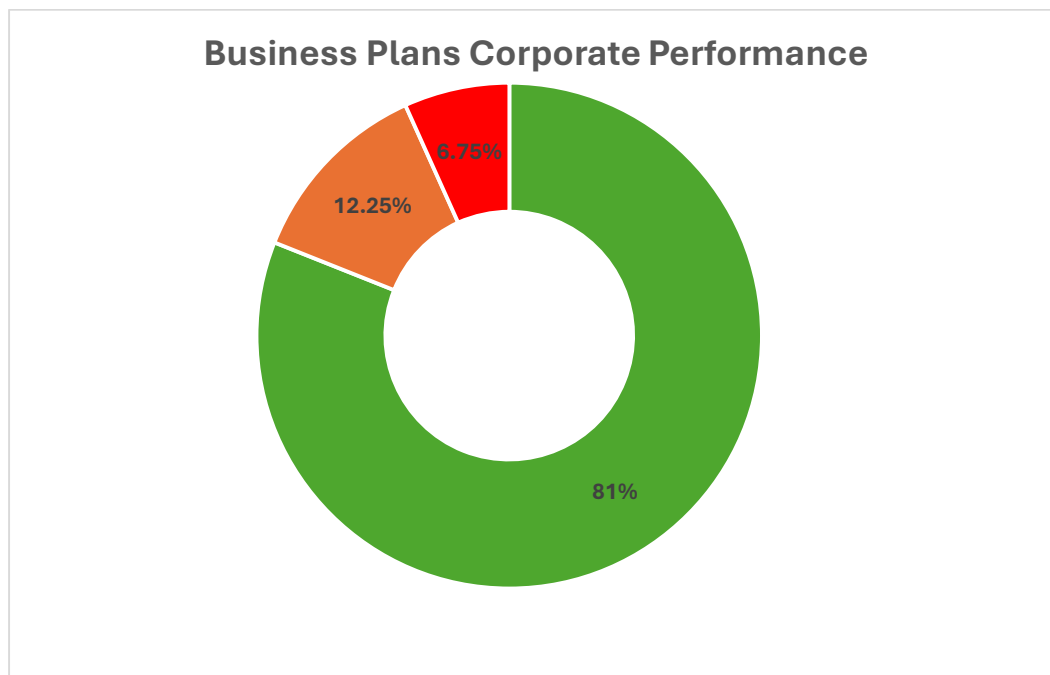
 Standards/targets were met	 Standards/targets fell slightly behind schedule	 Standards/target were missed/not achieved
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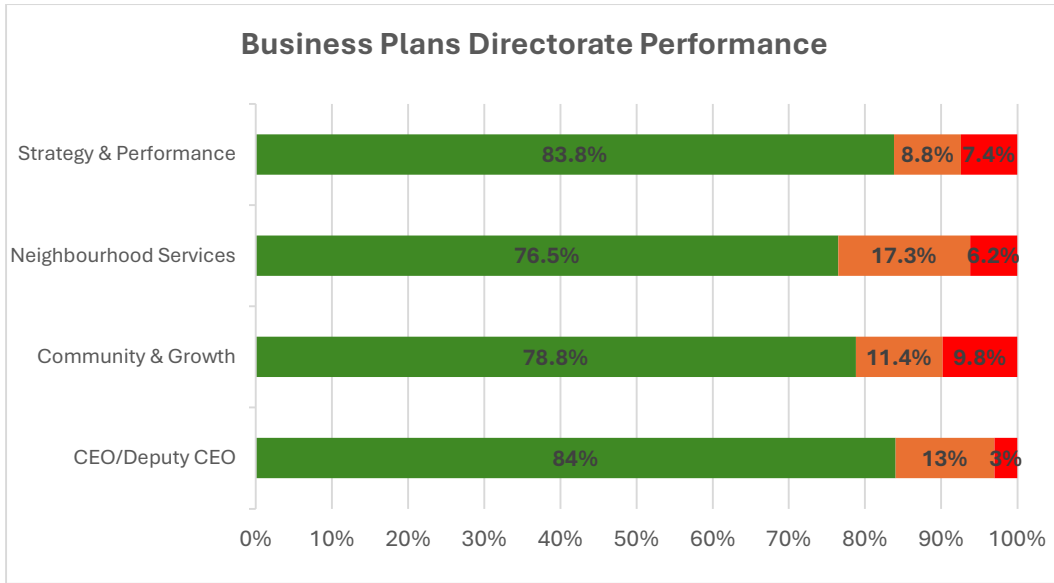
There are three categories under which performance is assessed as set out below. Further information is available within Appendix A: Performance Self-Assessment Report and the associated appendices.

2.0 Self-imposed performance indicators and standards

Business Planning

Business plans are developed and approved by Council on an annual basis and outline the work Council intends to undertake for the year ahead. Business plans are aligned to the corporate plan and progress is monitored and reported internally and externally. The charts below show performance at year at corporate and directorate level.



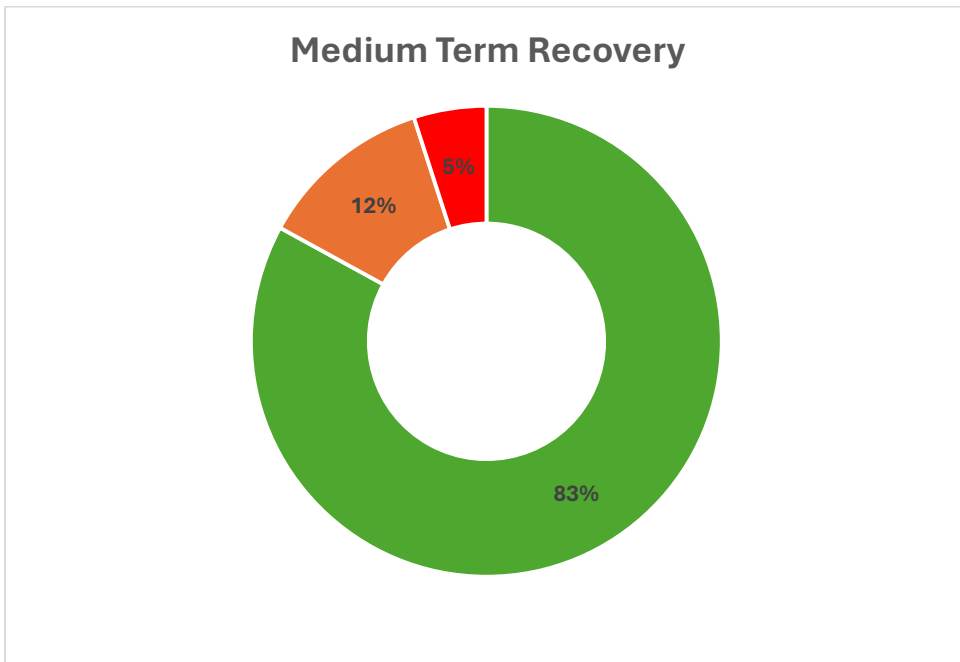


Medium Term Recovery

The Medium-Term Recovery Plan was a framework to guide our support and recovery of our organisation and the wider borough as well as delivering on our corporate vision.

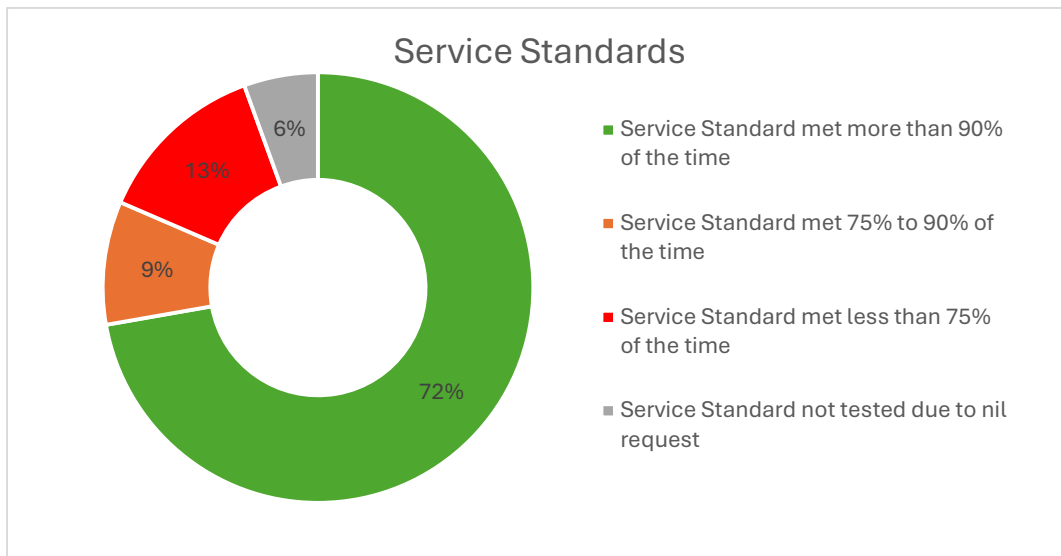
Performance at year end was as follows:

- 83% of standards/targets were met/exceeded.
- 12% of standards/targets fell slightly short/behind schedule.
- 5% of standards/targets were missed/not achieved.



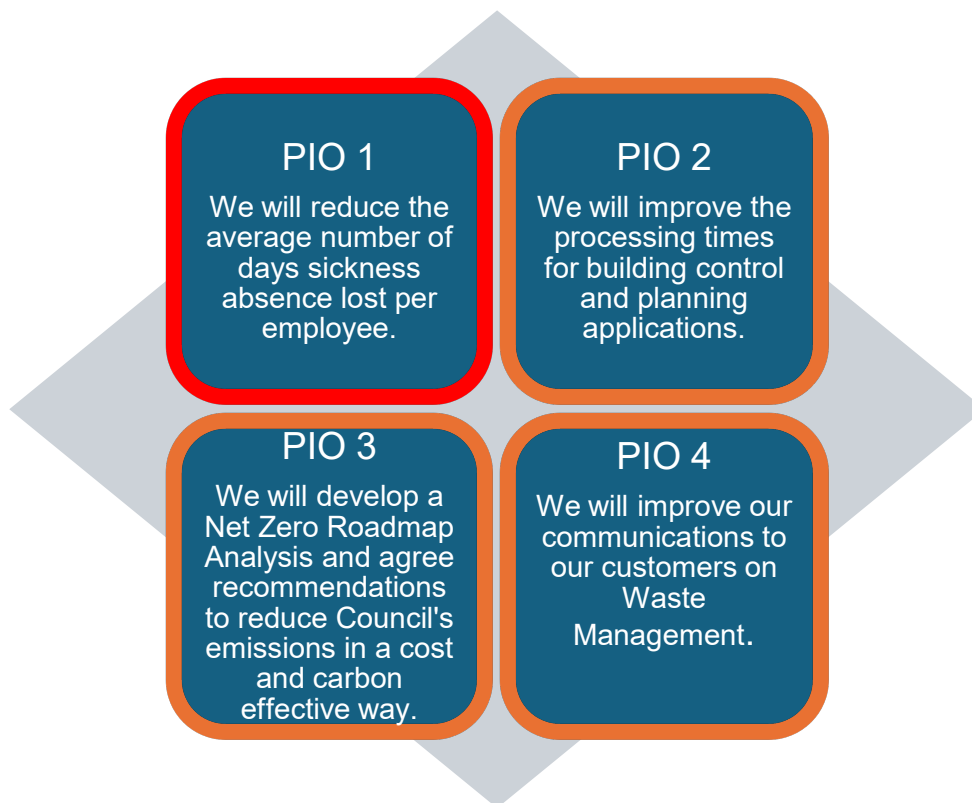
Service Standards

In March 2022, a suite of Service Standards was approved, both corporate and service specific. The chart below illustrates performance at year end.



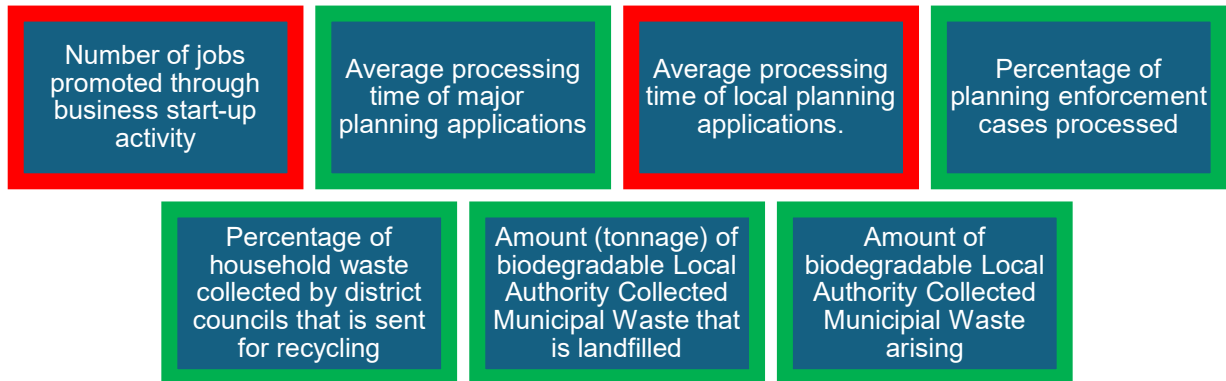
Performance Improvement Objectives

Council identified 4 performance improvement objectives within their Performance Improvement Plan 2023/24.



Statutory Indicators and Standards

There are currently seven statutory indicators and standards and Council's performance in the seven areas during 2023/24 is shown below:



3.0 ACHIEVEMENTS

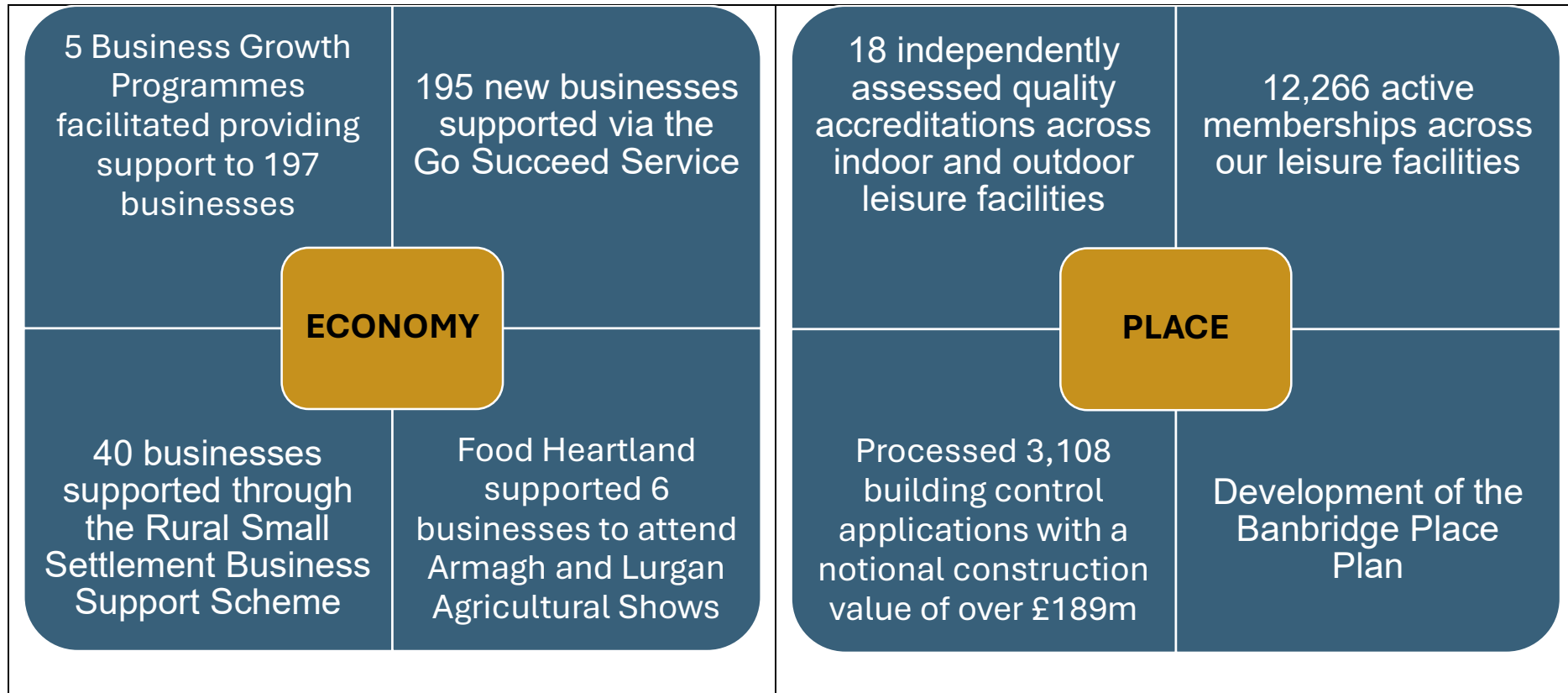
In this section we highlight some of our key achievements aligned to the following four themes of the Corporate Plan.

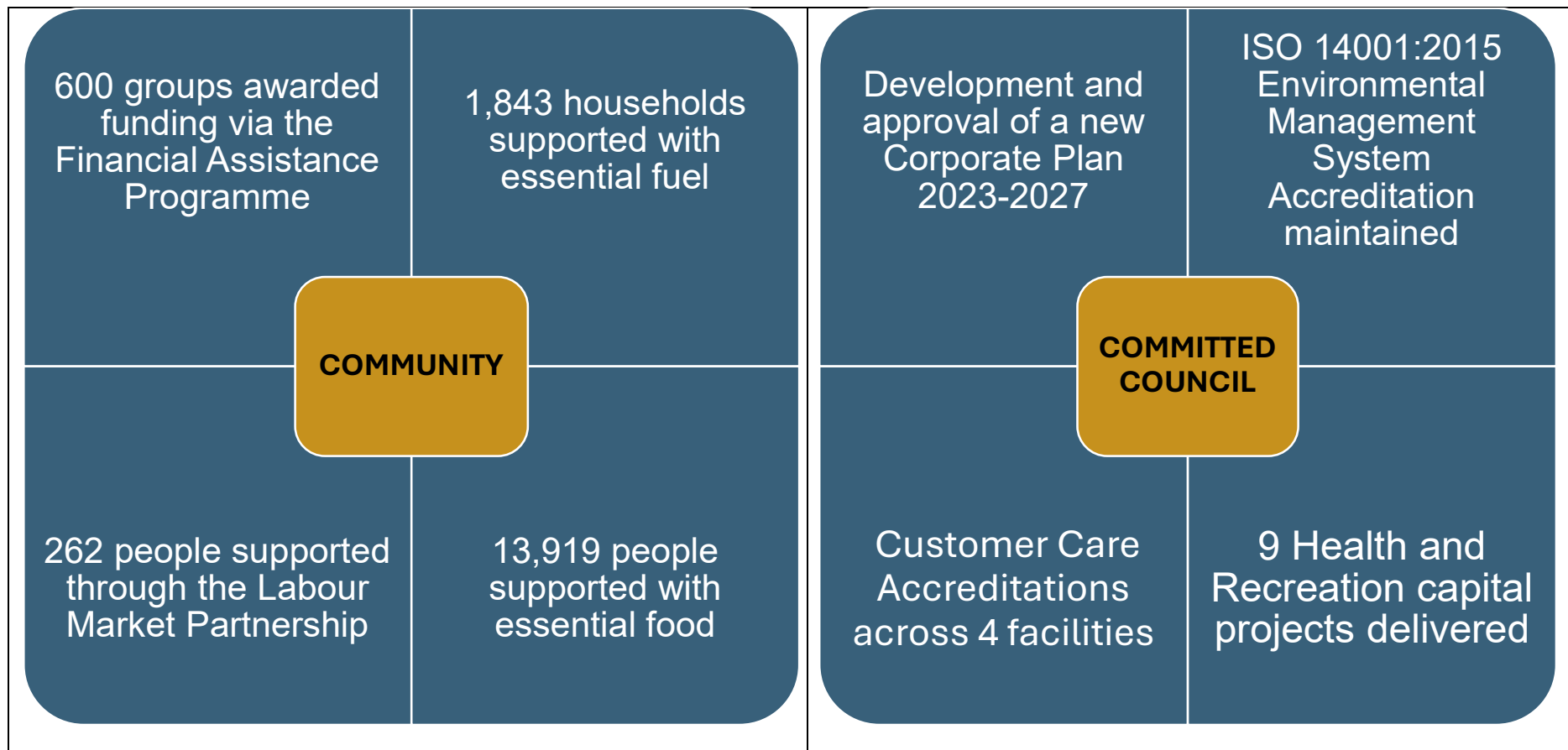
Economy: Our long-term commitment to our economy is to ensure our Borough is a centre of excellence for entrepreneurship, innovation, and investment. People will be better equipped to take advantage of the opportunities provided by our economy, and our borough will be the destination of choice for international visitors.

Place: Our long-term commitment to our place is to ensure our urban and rural areas are at the heart of community and economic life, to ensure our built heritage, natural assets are protected, enhanced and we can provide a creative place offering inclusive arts and cultural experiences.

Community: Our long-term commitment to our community is to ensure everyone has opportunities to engage in community life, they make positive lifestyle choices and are able to live, work and visit a safe, respectful, and peaceful Borough.

Committed Council: As a committed council we will have a one council approach with clear, robust, and accountable processes, our staff and elected members lead as ambassadors, promoting values and ambitions of the organisation. We are committed to increased customer satisfaction with Council services.





4.0 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

At the end of each financial year Council publish their Statement of Accounts outlining how we have used public money throughout the year. They are prepared on an accruals basis and are intended to present to readers a true and fair view of financial activity during the 2023-24 financial year. They demonstrate to ratepayers how the funding available to the Council (i.e. government grants, domestic and business rates) for the year, has been used in providing services in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by councils. They also show how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the Council's Directorates.

During a designated period after 31 March of the financial year, any member of the public, upon application in advance in writing to the Deputy Chief Executive, may inspect the accounts of Council for that year ended 31 March and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, and receipts relating to them. The appointed date and notice of public rights are published annually in the Notice of Audit of Accounts on the council website.

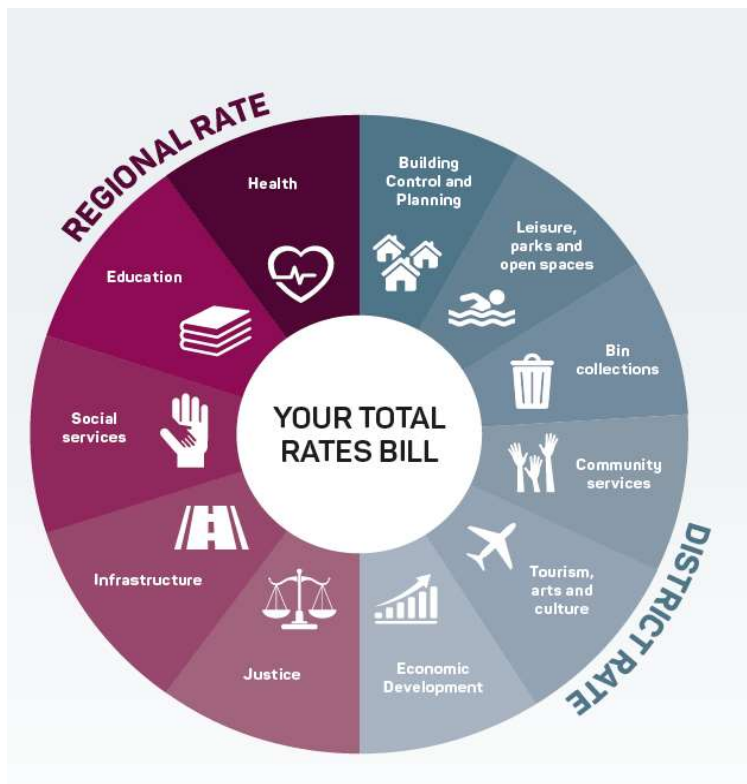
<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/finance-information/>

During the annual Estimates Process each year the Council must ensure that it has adequate resources to deliver the services expected by the local community, both business and non-business alike. To this end in 2023/24 the Council projected a requirement of net funding in the amount of £84.0m of which £76.7m was to be raised by way of Rates Income along with total projected Central Government grant funding of approximately £7.3m (i.e. Rates Support Grant, Transferred Functions Grants and De-Rating Grant).

In February 2023, the Council approved net budgets as follows:

- Community & Growth: £13.5m
- Deputy CEO & CEO: £8.3m
- Neighbourhood Services: £45.9m
- Strategy & Performance: £3.6m
- Other Services: £0.6m

The Council also budgeted for various capital projects across Council and set aside approximately £12.1m capital financing for this. Based on these figures, the Council set the District Rate and combined with the Central Government Regional rate, are used to calculate the Borough Rates bills. Details of the range of services provided from the rate setting process are detailed below:



More detailed information on Council's Income & Expenditure is presented within the Annual Statement of Accounts:

<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/finance-information/>

5.0 HOW TO CONTACT US

Elected Members:

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has 41 democratically elected members, representing 7 District Electrical Areas.

Further details on each elected member can be found at:

www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

We welcome your ongoing feedback and comments or suggestions on how we might improve any of our Council services.

Please use one of the following ways to contact us with your feedback/views:

Website: <https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/contact-us/>

Email: performance@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 0300 900 Ext 61688 / 61691

In writing: Strategy & Performance Department
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
Armagh Old City Hospital
Abbey Street
Armagh
BT61 7DY

This document is available in a range of formats upon request using the contact details above.

APPENDIX A: PERFORMANCE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

A1 Introduction

This report provides details for the statutory self-assessment of the performance of the Council in discharging the general duty under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) in relation to our performance improvement arrangements.

It sets out the self-assessment against the following requirements:

1. **Self-imposed indicators and standards**, Business plans, Medium Term Recovery Plan and Service Standards.
2. **Statutory performance indicators and standards** for the functions of Economic Development, Planning and Waste including comparison with the previous years.
3. **Performance improvement objectives** as set out in the Performance Improvement Plan 2023/24.

By publishing this information, the Council fulfils our statutory requirement under Part 12, Section 92 of the Act.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) will undertake an audit of how Council has implemented the statutory performance improvement duties and will produce an independent audit report, which will be available on the Council website when received, usually before 30 November 2024. Previous reports can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/performance-improvement>

Throughout this report, we reference statistical evidence and supporting narratives to demonstrate how we performed in 2023/24 against a set of targets/standards, as well as bench marking with previous years and other councils where appropriate. This demonstrates how we are implementing our performance framework and have put in place performance improvement arrangements.

Since 2015, Council has continued to show progress in several areas including achievement towards our statutory Indicators and delivery of actions contributing to performance improvement objectives. For those actions that fell behind target, an accompanying narrative is provided.

A2 SELF IMPOSED STANDARDS AND INDICATORS

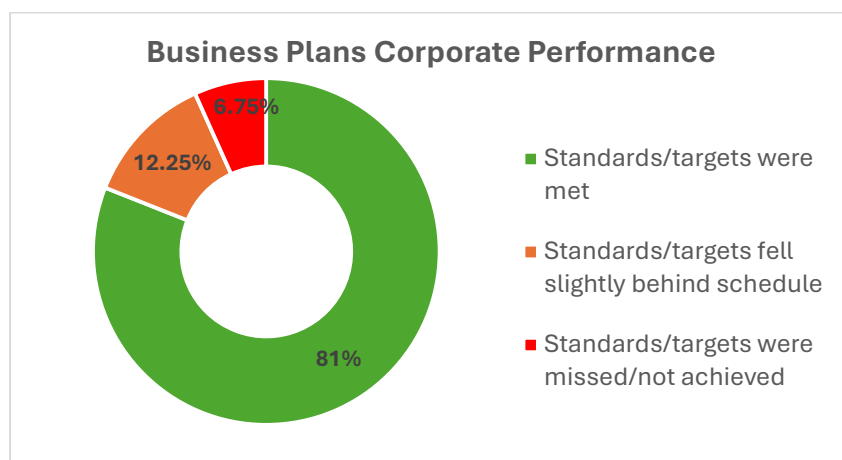
Business Plans

Business plans are developed and approved each year taking into consideration any outstanding actions from the previous year and any priorities for the coming year. Each Business Plan contains specific self-imposed performance measures. As part of Council's Performance Management Framework, review and monitoring of all business plans and associated performance measures are reported quarterly to the Executive Management Team and 6-monthly and annually to service committees and Council. From March 2024, the Performance and Audit Committee now also receive a quarterly Corporate Performance Report.

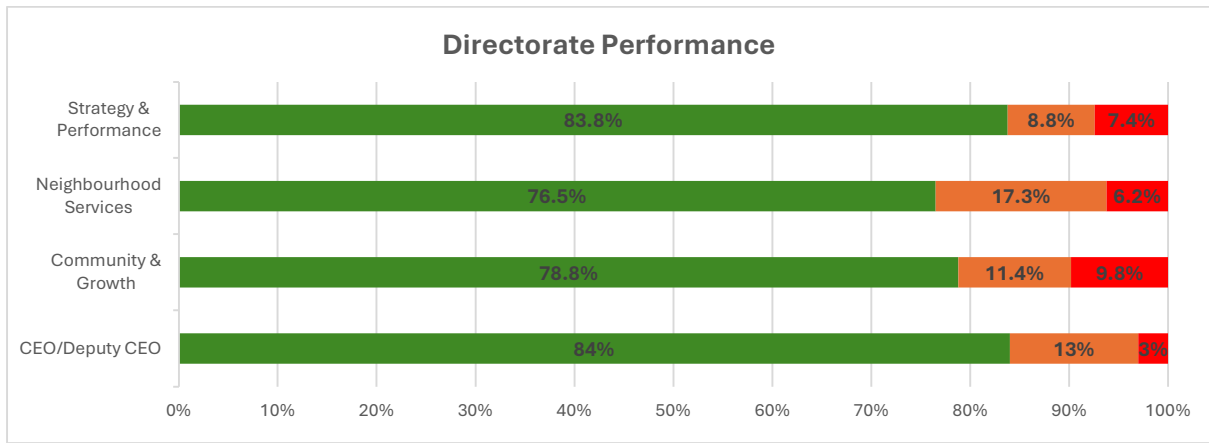
In December 2023, the Performance & Audit Committee received a summary business plan progress report as part of the 2023/24 Mid-Year Performance Report. Detailed annual progress reports on business plans were presented to service committees during May and June 2024. Please refer to the Minutes section of Council's website for further information: [Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council - Meetings \(public-minutes.com\)](https://public-minutes.com)

Business plans were aligned with the Corporate Plan commitments, performance improvement objectives, statutory and self-imposed performance indicators, and standards. In 2023/24, Council committed to undertaking 210 actions with an associated 474 performance indicators.

Corporately, 81% of standards/targets were met with 12.25% falling slightly behind schedule and 6.75% of targets not achieved.



Performance by Directorate is illustrated below.

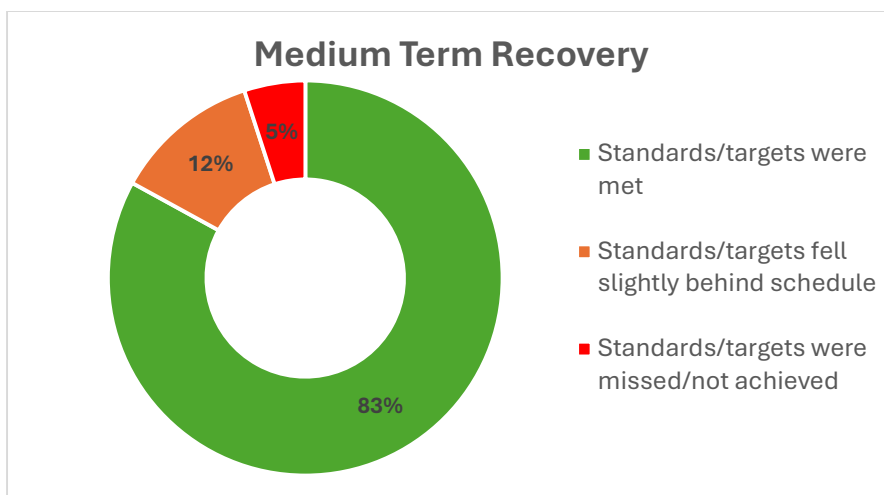


All directorates performed well over the past year delivering between 76.5% – 84% of agreed targets met in full. Where relevant, any outstanding actions were taken into consideration during the business planning process for 2024/25. Recruitment timelines, staff turnover, staff absence and legal issues accounted for some of the targets falling short of the target or behind schedule.

As a Council we remain committed to delivering high quality services to our citizens and will continue to review learning from performance to date and the way this has been impacted by external and internal factors. Such reviews provide the knowledge that will help to continually improve services and influence all aspects of our business planning processes for subsequent years.

Medium Term Recovery Plan

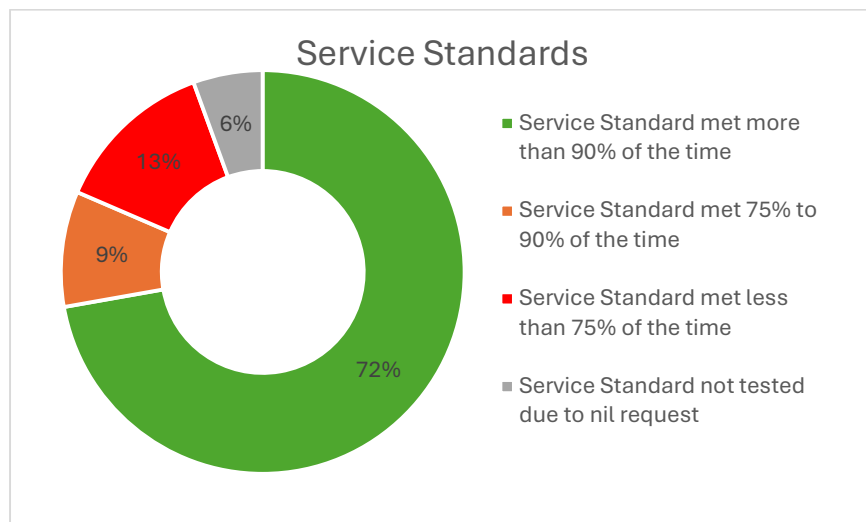
The data below illustrates that Council are on target with 83% of the standards/targets associated with the relevant actions. Similarly with overall corporate progress for those standards/targets that have fallen slightly behind schedule or have been missed has been attributed to staff absences and reprioritising of resources to ensure continued service delivery.



Service Standards

A suite of 58 service standards were developed and approved in March 2022 to help identify and improve on service delivery. It should be noted that subsequent to the introduction of the new Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) Local Government Complaints

Handling Procedure the former service standards on complaints were no longer valid and not reported on. Therefore, 54 of the service standards are included within this report. At year end 72% of service standards were met more than 90% of the time, 9% of service standards met 75% to 90% of the time and 13% of service standards were met less than 75% of the time. During the reporting period 6% of the service standards were not tested. For those standards that fell short of the target contributing factors included staff absence, recruitment, and issue with IT infrastructure. Individual charts on service standards is within Appendix G.



Performance on Handling Complaints

From Monday 01 January 2024, the way councils in Northern Ireland handle complaints changed.

Launched by Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman (NIPSO), the new Model Complaints Handling Procedure for local government aims to:

- Bring consistency to how councils in Northern Ireland handle complaints,
- Make it easier for customers to communicate when things go wrong and
- Help all of us learn and make improvements to our service, faster.

The new model will see all local councils in Northern Ireland work under a **two-stage complaints procedure**. When a customer makes a complaint, we will respond as quickly as possible to resolve the issue. This ethos of the new procedure is to focus on early resolution, engaging with the customer and making improvements where we can. If the customer remains dissatisfied, the new model ensures a consistent approach in how we carry out a fuller investigation.

As required, we will publish a separate annual Complaints Report for the period 1 January 2024 – 31 December 2024 showing any learning from complaints received during the year and actions taken to prevent them happening again.

A3 STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND STANDARDS

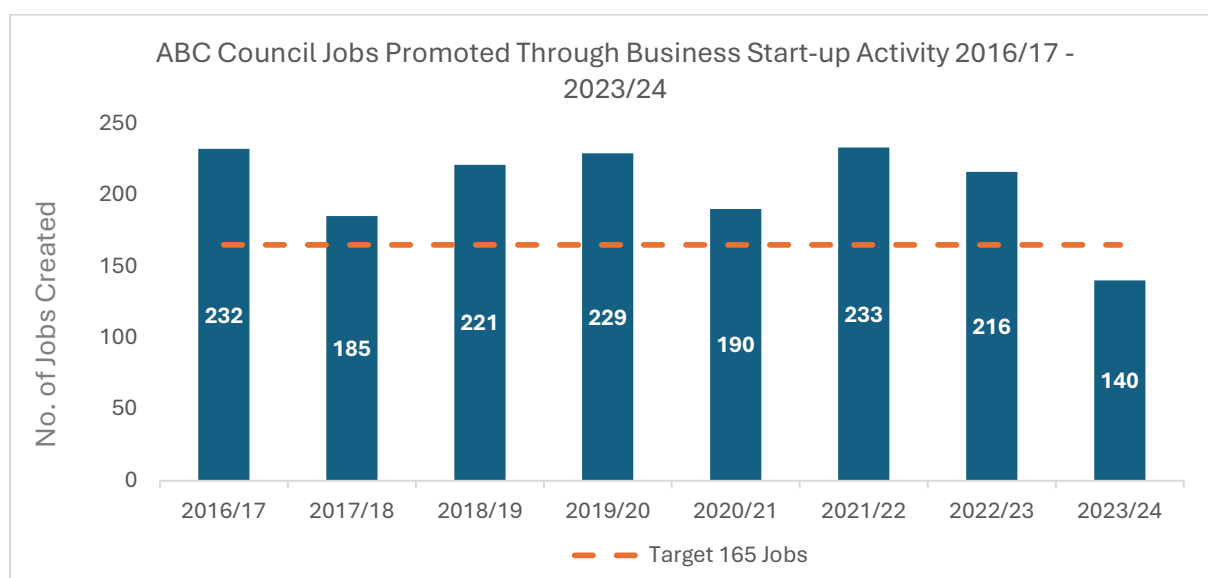
Under the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, performance indicators and standards are set for each of the 11 Northern Ireland councils. These indicators and standards will continue to apply until an amending order or new order is enacted and include Economic Development, Planning and Waste Management functions.

The aim of the performance measures is to promote the consistency and improvement of service delivery in these three service areas across all councils.

Since 2015, Council has continued to show progress in several areas including achievement towards our statutory Indicators and delivery of actions contributing to performance improvement objectives. For those actions that fell behind target, this report includes an accompanying narrative.

Economic Development

The Department of Economy set the Economic Development indicators and standards as part of the governance and performance management arrangements for the Economic Development functions. Information on the 11 Councils performance for 2023/24 is set out in Appendix C. The economic development indicator relates to the number of jobs promoted by Council through business start-up activity.



There were 140 jobs promoted through business start-up activity in 2023/24. This represents a decrease of 76 jobs compared to 2022/23 and is 25 jobs below the statutory target of 165 jobs created. Figures are subject to verification with the Department for the Economy.

It has been acknowledged that Business Start-up activity performance regionally has been impacted by challenges in mobilising a new service. The NI Business Start Up Programme (Go for It) ended during the financial year 2023/24, and the new NI Entrepreneurship Support Service (NIESS) commenced in year 2023/24. This new service is branded Go Succeed.

It is recognised that the changes in the provision of Business Start-Up Activity means that it is recommended there will be no direct comparison going forward of actual performance against statutory target included, or variation stated. Despite the reporting challenges regionally, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council continues to perform well in terms of

job creation figures for Business Start-up activity performance, sitting third highest on the league table. The Borough continues to be an entrepreneurial region where homegrown talent thrives.

We work collaboratively on a regional basis with the other 10 councils to continuously improve the service offered through the new Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service, to improve the Total Early-Stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) across NI.

Locally we continue to work with a range of enterprise support partners including our local enterprise agencies, local colleges, schools, social economy networks and stakeholders to ensure that the programme is promoted widely and made accessible to the whole community. Fostering an entrepreneurial culture leading to business start-up and growth continues to be a key corporate objective of our Council.

The NI Entrepreneurship Support Service, 'Go Succeed' is Funded by the UK Government and powered by the government's Levelling Up Fund. Go Succeed represents a multi-million-pound investment in local entrepreneurs and businesses, providing holistic tailored to individual needs, includes easy-to-access advice and support at every stage of their growth journey including mentoring, masterclasses, peer networks, access to grant funding and a business plan.

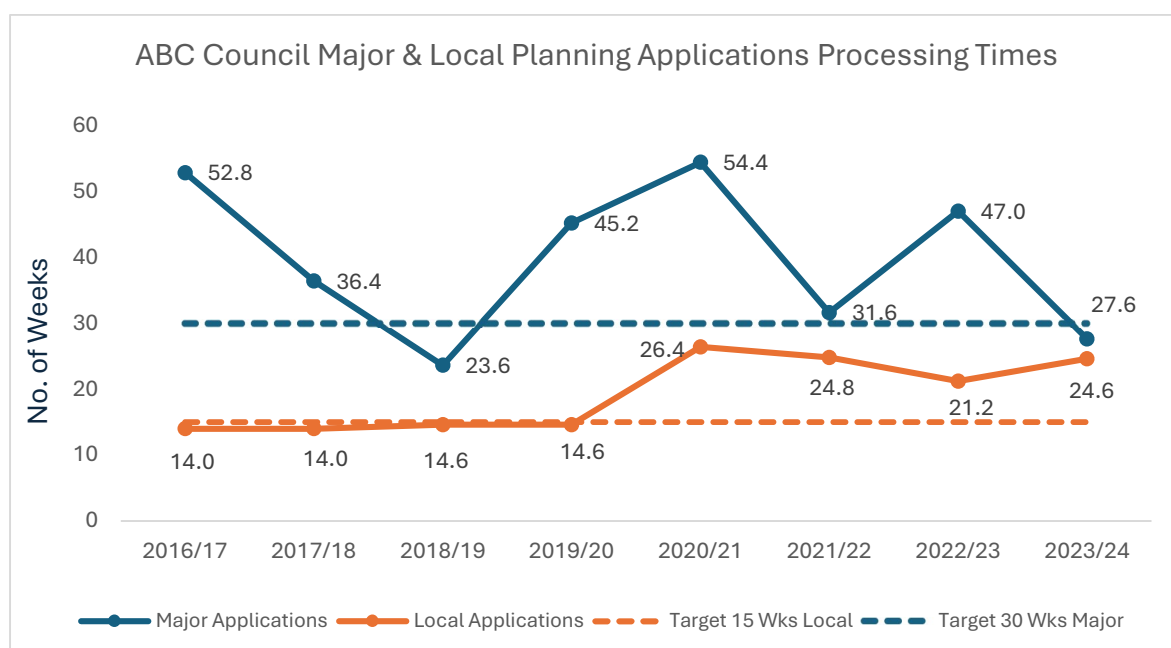
The support fits with local and regional policy including 10X Economy and the Minister for the Economy's commitment to drive inclusive growth and highlight the importance of fostering a culture of entrepreneurship in driving place-based growth in NI decade of innovation.

Planning

The Department of Infrastructure set the Planning indicators and standards as part of the governance and performance management arrangements for Planning functions. The Department publishes performance by council area on a quarterly basis through the NI Planning Statistics Report. Information may be accessed using the following link:

[Northern Ireland planning statistics April 2023 - March 2024 | Department for Infrastructure \(infrastructure-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-april-2023-march-2024)

Planning activity and processing performance during 2023 - 2024 was impacted by several issues, including key staff vacancies and long-term sickness absences. The new Planning IT system was implemented towards the end of Quarter 3 giving rise to some technical challenges which also had an impact on service delivery.



During 2023/2024, the average processing time for Council to decide major planning applications was 27.6 weeks, which is 2.4 weeks less than the 30-week statutory target and significantly better than the NI average of 46.5 weeks. It represents a reduction of 19.4 weeks on 2022-2023 (47 weeks). During 2023-2024, only 3 of the 11 councils, including this Council, met the statutory target of 30 weeks.

The average processing time for the Council to decide local applications during 2023/2024 was 24.6 weeks, which is outside the 15-week statutory target and is 3.4 weeks longer than during 2022/23 (but an improvement on the 24.8 weeks processing times for local planning applications during 2021/22). The 2023/24 processing times in the Borough are higher than the NI average of 20.8 weeks. However, just 3 of the 11 councils achieved the statutory target of 15 weeks.

It should also be noted that the Department for Infrastructure has reported that the number of planning applications received across Northern Ireland was 11% down on the previous financial year. In our Borough, the number was down by 9.6%. The following factors should be borne in mind when interpreting the data provided and when making comparisons with other time periods.

During 2023-2024:

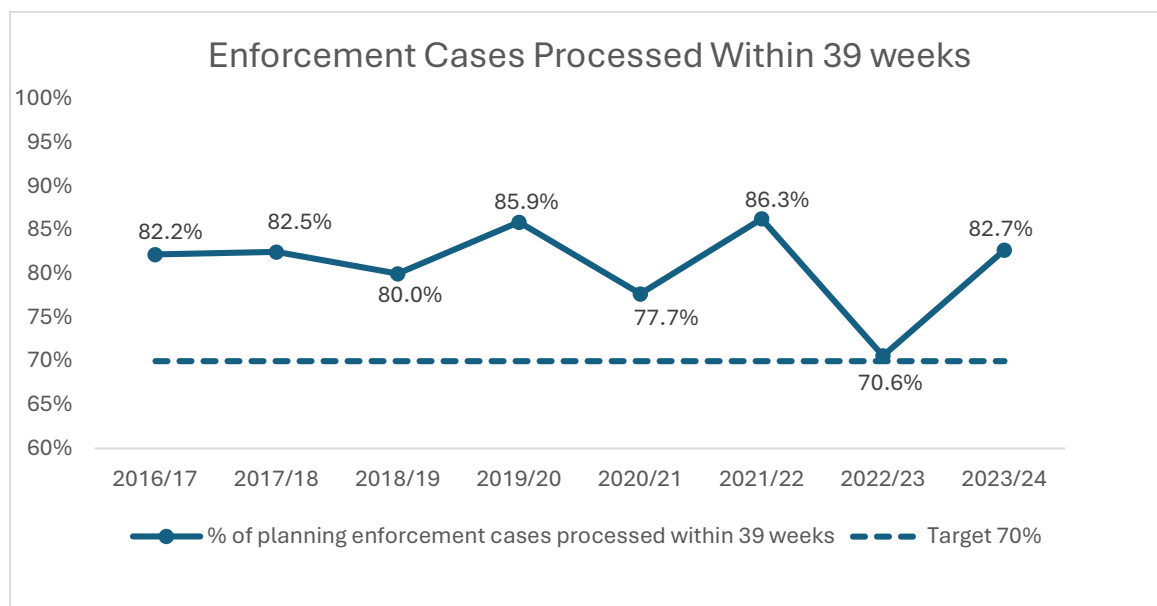
- 963 applications were received (5th highest across Northern Ireland).
- 1,086 applications were decided (3rd highest across Northern Ireland).
- 300 enforcement cases were closed (3rd highest across Northern Ireland) – a decrease of 132 on the previous financial year.

The number of major applications received in 2023-2024 was 15. These included:

- 2 major energy/quarry development
- 3 major industrial developments
- 2 large scale residential developments
- 2 mixed use developments
- 1 major leisure development
- 1 major educational development
- 4 major public realm developments

The applications above represent not only major investment into the regeneration of the Borough, but extensive work from our Planning Department.

The number of planning applications referred to above has been taken from an official statistical bulletin published by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). However, that bulletin does not include statistical information pertaining to the following types of application: discharge of planning conditions, certificates of lawful development and non-material changes. In 2023/24 the Council received approximately 235 such applications which, while not reported on by DfI, had a significant impact on the Council's resources and its overall performance.



During 2023/24, the Council processed 82.7% of its enforcement cases to a conclusion within 39 weeks, which is significantly better than the statutory target of 70%. It also closed 300 enforcement cases during the same period which is the 3rd highest number across all councils, although a decrease of 132 on the previous year.

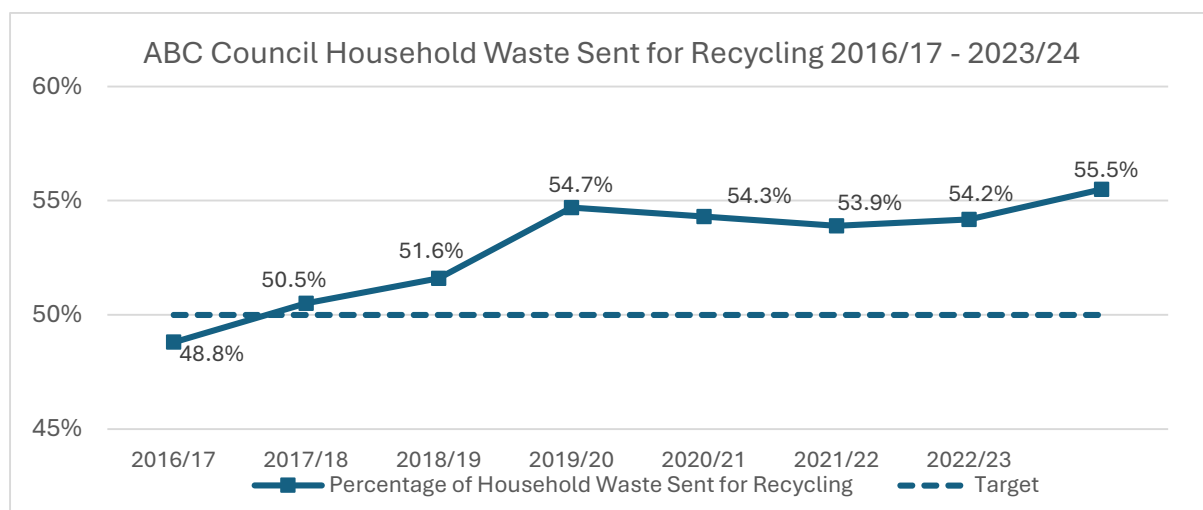
Waste Management

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEARA) set the Waste Management indicators and standards. The Department publishes performance by council area on a quarterly basis through the NI Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics report. Information may be accessed using the following links:

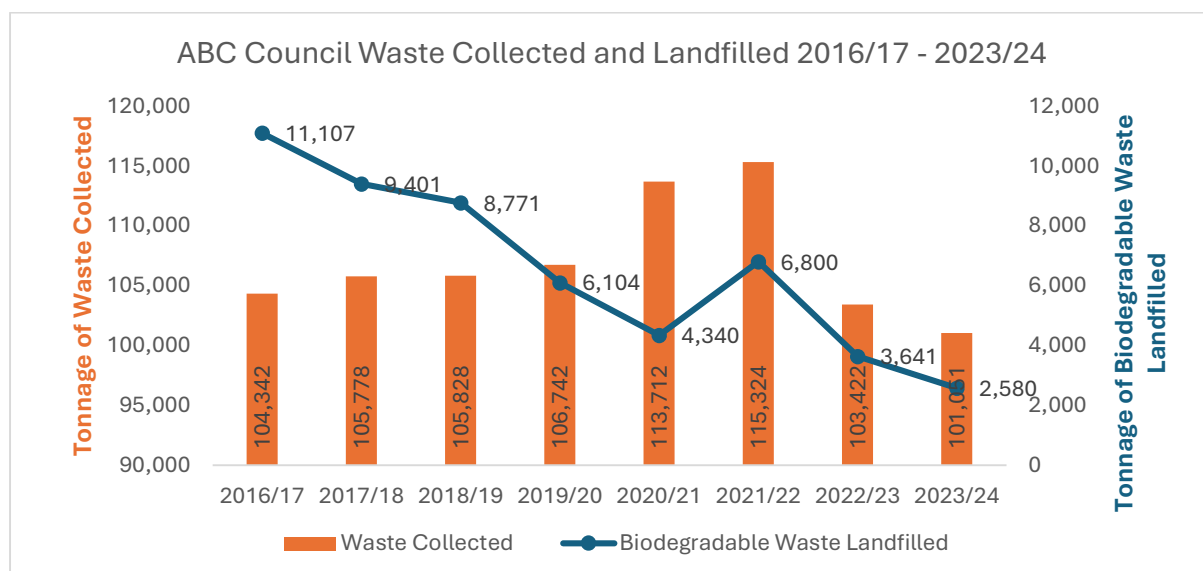
[Northern Ireland local authority collected municipal waste management statistics | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

[Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Waste Statistics \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

Council is currently meeting the 2020 statutory target with recycling figures continuing to sit above the current target of 50%.



The current unverified figures for 2023/24 show the percentage of household waste sent for recycling at 55.5% during the year which is an increase of 2.4% on 2022/23 figures. The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 requires for at least 70% of waste to be recycled by 2030 with an interim target of 55% by 2025. Council is on track to meet this interim target.



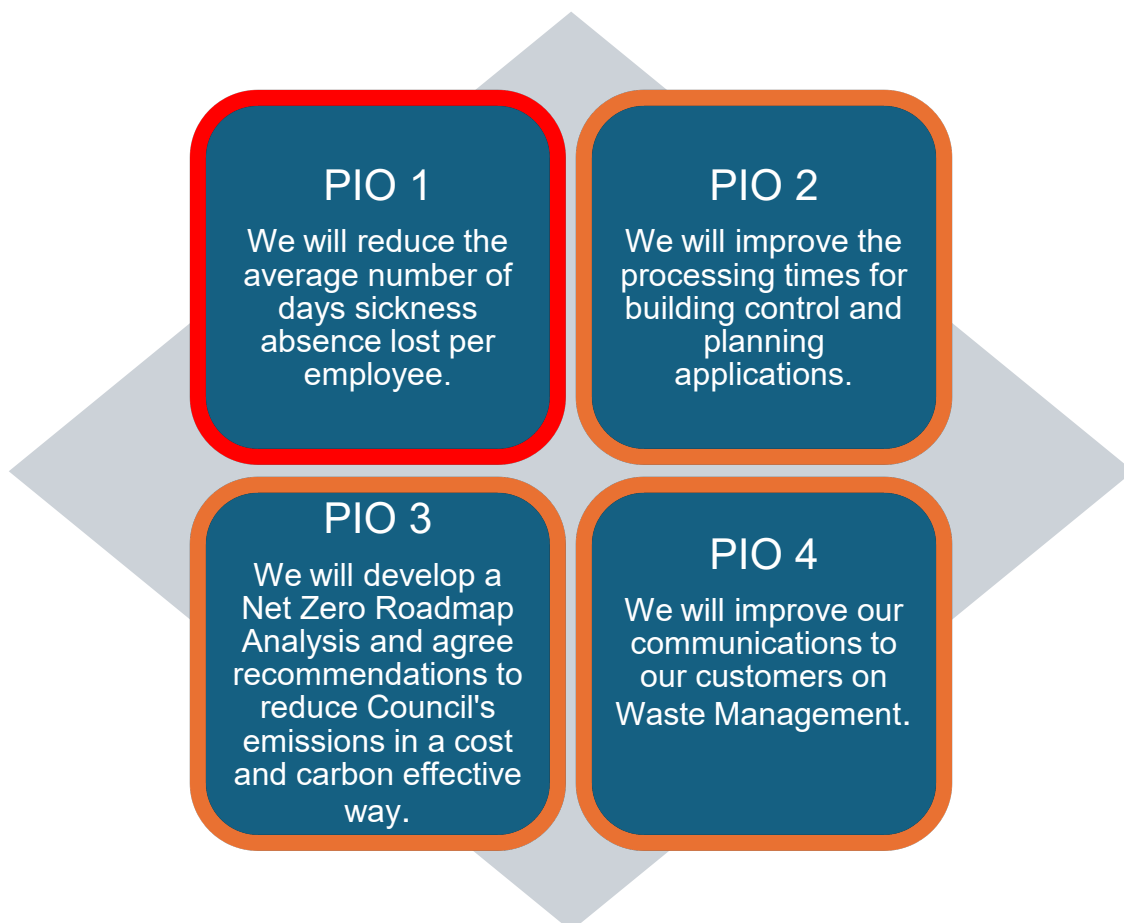
The total amount/tonnage of waste collected had been increasing since 2016/17, reaching a high of 115,324 tonnes in 2021/22. However, in 2022/23 and 2023/24, the total amount/tonnage of waste collected fell to 103,422 and 101,025 tonnes collectively with 2023/24 being the lowest of the years presented. Industry experts believe that overall waste arisings peaked during the pandemic related lockdown (with everyone at home). Then fell during the cost-of-living crisis. The theory is that household waste production mirrors a countries economic status (with an approximate 1-year lag time).

The amount of biodegradable waste being landfilled had been decreasing year on year until 2021/22 when the amount of biodegradable waste being landfilled increased from 4,340 tonnes in 2020/21 to 6,800 tonnes in 2021/22. The chart shows that the amount of biodegradable waste being landfilled has continued to fall by 29% from 3,641 tonnes in 2022/23 to 2,580 tonnes in 2023/24. No new targets have been set for the landfilling of municipal waste, (NILAS Scheme ended in 2020).

A4 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES

Within the Performance Improvement Plan 2023-/4, we identified specific areas we wanted to improve. We have reviewed, monitored, and assessed how we have performed on these.

Council selected four Performance Improvement Objectives for 2023/24. The graphic below indicates progress at year end. The border colour indicates performance status at the end of the reporting year.









In agreeing the above objectives, Council identified key actions and associated performance measures to ensure achievement of the objectives and improvements that benefit residents, businesses, and other stakeholders.

Gathering data from across all departments, an analysis of the progress of the Performance Improvement Objectives agreed for 2023-24 showed that we missed the targets on PIO1 and fell slightly short/behind schedule in the achievement of PIO2, PIO3 and PIO4.

The following tables contain detailed information and narrative on the achievement of these objectives during this period. Reference to performance data from previous years (where relevant) has also been included to identify trends in continuous improvement.

Improvement Objective 1: *We will reduce the average number of days' sickness absence lost per employee.*

 <p>Why</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This objective has been carried forward from 2022/23. - Trends remain unchanged with Chest/Respiratory the main reason for absence. - Absence management continues to be a priority to reduce the impact on service delivery. - The management of absenteeism continues to receive a high focus within Council and therefore remains as one of our improvement objectives for 2023/24.
 <p>What Action will we take</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to monitor and manage absence closely. - Monitor, review, and analyse staff turnover /retention within Dept. - Deliver health & wellbeing initiatives. - Develop and implement of Staff Health & Well-being Action plan. - Increase number of Mental health first aiders available within Council - Develop Hybrid Working policy.
 <p>How we will measure progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target of 16 days or lower, for the average number of days sickness absence lost per employee is 16 days or lower. - Target of 1.4% or lower, for the average rate of short-term absences - Target of 5% or lower for, the average rate of long-term absences - 12 health and wellbeing initiatives/activities delivered. - Quarterly review and monitoring of Action plan - Roll out of mental health first aid training with an additional 10 staff trained. - By March 2024, policy developed and agreed.
<p>Status at Year End</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18.81 average number of days lost per employee. <i>(this represents a further reduction of 1.36 average days lost since 2022/23)</i> - 1.0% average rate of short-term absences - 5.02% average rate of long-term absences - 41 Health and Wellbeing initiatives delivered. - Quarterly updates are presented to the Health and Wellbeing committee on the Action Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental Health training continuing to be rolled out and an additional 17 mental health first aiders have been trained taking the total to 42 across the organisation. - The Hybrid Working Policy is still in development.
 <p>Benefits to you</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This objective will contribute to the overall health and well-being of our Borough, as a large majority of our employees reside in the Borough. - If progress is made, then it should also result in better continuity of service delivery.
 <p>Who is responsible</p>	<p>The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for this Objective was the Deputy Chief Executive.</p>

HOW DID WE PERFORM?

During the reporting period, the Human Resources & Organisational Development Department made progress in several key areas. 41 Health & Wellbeing sessions have been delivered to over 400 employees, with most of these running under the theme of our Feel-Good Week.

The 2023-2024 Health and Wellbeing Action Plan was implemented and quarterly updates on progress were presented to the Health and Wellbeing Working Group. The Managing Attendance Policy and Procedure review has taken place and is progressing through Union consultation.

The table below illustrates year end performance against targets for staff absences for 2023/24. It is important to note that whilst the target set (i.e 16 days) was not met, comparing year end data with the previous year (2022/23) Council can demonstrate the continuous improvement made in this area, with a further reduction of 1.36 average days lost.

	2023/2024 Target	2023/2024 Actual	2022/2023 Actual
Average Days Lost per Employee	16.00	18.81	20.17

This is split between short and long-term absence as follows:

Absence Type	2023/2024 Target	2023/24 Actual
Average Short-Term days lost per Employee	4.00	3.61

Average Long-Term days lost per Employee	12.00	15.20
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The Council's Lead Officer continues to address the number of absences in excess of 12 months working closely with line managers and Occupational Health. Trends have shifted slightly; with Stress/Depression/Mental Health (Non-Work Related), Musculoskeletal and Stress/Depression/Mental Health (Work Related) being the top 3 reasons for absence.




Council has improved access to Sickness Absence data recognising that for the impact of sickness absence to be more widely understood, it needs to be measured. The development of a Quality Management System (QMS) has provided improvements in the recording of absence and data management to ensure teams have the information they need to more effectively manage sickness absence. This provides managers with a drill down of the position at team level, including days lost, trends in short term and long-term absence and reasons for absence.

Formal review and reporting on sickness absence, as part of the wider QMS, has been established since January 2024 through monthly team meetings, Executive Management Meetings and though committee to ensure a continuous focus on the data enabling issues to be identified and resolved in a timelier way.

With staff being the most valuable resource absence will continue to be a focus for the organisation and therefore this improvement objective was carried over into the current Performance Improvement Plan for 2024/25.

Improvement Objective 2: *We will improve the processing times for building control and planning applications.*

 <p>Why</p>	<p>This objective has been revised and carried forward from 2022/23.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It relates to improvement of the application processes, with the aim of improving customer satisfaction as well as processing times. - acknowledgement ABC Council fall below the required processing times for Domestic and Non-Domestic Full Plan Applications. (Building Control) - Acknowledgement ABC Council fall below meeting the required processing times of local and major planning applications. (Planning)
 <p>What Action will we take</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued roll out of new Planning Portal - Processing Applications as per Service Standards - Implement recruitment campaigns. - Continue to monitor and manage absence closely.
 <p>How we will measure progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Average processing time for Major planning applications 30 weeks - Average processing time for Local planning applications 15 weeks - 70% of all planning enforcement cases progressed to conclusion within 39 weeks. - 6 posts filled in Planning Dept by March 2024 - 62% of Building Control Domestic Full Plan Applications assessed within 21 days. - 54% of Building Control Non-Domestic Full Plan Applications assessed within 35 days. - 75% of Building Control Domestic & Non-Domestic resubmissions assessed within 14 days. - 1.5 posts filled in Building Control Dept by March 2024.
<p>STATUS at Year End</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 27.6 weeks average processing time for major planning applications - 24.6 weeks average processing time for local planning applications - 82.7% of all planning enforcement cases progressed to conclusion within 39 weeks. - 6 posts were filled during 2023/24 (but a few new vacancies arose during same period. At end of 2023/24, Planning had 4 vacant posts).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 71.25% of Building Control Domestic Full Plan Applications assessed within 21 days. - 72.41% of Building Control Non-Domestic Full Plan Applications assessed within 35 days. - 86.35% of Building Control Domestic & Non-Domestic resubmissions assessed within 14 days. - 1.5 posts filled in Building Control Dept by March 2024 – in progress – alternative options being explored due to recruitment difficulties.
 Benefits to you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved building control and planning application processes - Improved processing times for building control and planning applications - Improved understanding of the processes involved. - Improved Customer Satisfaction with the processes involved in building control and planning applications
 Who is responsible	<p>The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for this objective was the Strategic Director of Community & Growth.</p>

HOW DID WE PERFORM?




Planning




Official statistics relating to Planning’s performance against statutory targets show that Planning met 2 out of 3 of the statutory targets for processing times. Major planning applications were processed in an average of 27.6 weeks (target 30 weeks); and 82.7% of planning enforcement cases progressed to conclusion within 39 weeks (target 70%). In the last year it has taken an average of 24.6 weeks to process local planning applications, missing the target of 15 weeks. However, as stated in the Northern Ireland Planning Statistics Annual Bulletin only 3 of the 11 councils met the target for local planning applications. The reasons for missing the target are attributable to the level of long-term sickness absence and number of staff vacancies within the department during 2023/24, which have now been successfully managed and addressed. To ensure that we continue to improve in relation to the Planning Processing times the planning element of this improvement objective was carried over into the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024/25. Council will also continue to contribute as a partner to the delivery of the Cross Government Planning Improvement Plan Programme which is aimed at making the planning system in Northern Ireland more effective and efficient.

Building Control

Building Control have met all the processing of applications targets in the year 2023/24. This achievement has been possible due to a coincidental downturn in the industry as the Department has continued to work through a cycle of vacancies and sickness absences. Although there continues to be a turn-over of staff the Department has continued to focus available resources to successfully meet agreed targets and for this reason the Building Control element of this performance improvement objective was not carried over into 2024/25.

Improvement Objective 3: *We will develop a Net Zero Roadmap Analysis and agree recommendations to begin to reduce Council's emissions in a cost and carbon effective way.*

 <p>Why</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This sets a strategic direction for Council to reduce our carbon footprint. - Recognition of corporate and civic responsibility to take action to reduce our carbon emissions. - At the end of March 2023, we had developed a Net Zero Carbon Road Map and Action Plan. - Council recognised this as a first step and therefore agreed the need to continue to prioritise this long-term objective.
 <p>What Action will we take</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commence implementation of a Net Zero Carbon Roadmap Analysis. - Establish a robust process to identify and agree baseline going forward for Council's carbon footprint. - Develop a suite of practicable recommendations that can be adopted to begin to reduce emissions in a cost and carbon effective way. - Establish a baseline for Council's emissions. - Identify energy usage /cost savings for 4 key leisure sites, pro rata. - Explore and consider Renewable Energy sources for electricity
 <p>How we will measure progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery of Roadmap initiated, and progress reported on quarterly. - Process developed, established and funding secured to agree baseline by Sept/Oct 2023 - Recommendations developed and agreed by full council by Autumn 2023. - Baseline established and begin monitoring no later than 31 March 2024 - An average of 3% reduction in energy usage (Gas/Oil/Electricity) across 4 identified sites. - Options for Renewable Energy sources for electricity identified.
<p>STATUS at Year End</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis is complete and draft Net Zero Roadmap is waiting on updated figures before going to Council in Autumn 24. Progress is reported quarterly via Business Planning platform. - Councils carbon footprint and the footprint of the Borough is included in the Net Zero Roadmap. Ongoing monitoring will continue to comply with new legislative requirements on emissions of GHG. - Draft Action Plan to reduce GHG is near completion in cooperation with all Depts in Council. The Action Plan will go to elected members along with the Road Map documentation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Officers have identified 4 key sites, the energy use of these buildings and energy use in general is now being monitored. One site has already started to action recommendations. - A funding application has been drafted, to be submitted when funding call is open regarding energy saving applications in SLLC. Other feasible sites for renewable energy will be explored.
 Benefits to you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There will be better evidence base available to inform the Councils Sustainable Development & Climate Change Strategy. - Help set meaningful targets for the reduction of energy and resource consumption from 2023 onwards. - In the long term there will be a positive impact on the health and well-being of our citizens.
 Who is responsible	<p>The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for this Objective was the Strategic Director of Neighbourhood Services.</p>

HOW DID WE PERFORM?

The need to act on climate change is reflected in global, national, and local policy and targets. The 2015 Paris Climate Agreement is an international commitment to achieve 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and try to keep global warming to 1.5C. This target has been adopted by both the UK and Stormont governments. Locally, the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 has introduced new duties on public bodies to report on their progress on both mitigation and adaptation.





This legislation sets specific requirements on Council to record and monitor all actions regarding climate mitigation and adaptation. The Net Zero Road Map and the Action Plan are designed to ensure that Council complies with the regulations in actions and in spirit.



The draft Net Zero Roadmap document has been produced with input from Members and staff and was agreed by Council in November 2023. All internal departments have been consulted and have identified actions that they will take forward in line with the Net Zero Roadmap principles.

Council has identified climate measures as a priority in the Corporate Plan and Business Plans now include climate mitigations/adaptation actions and where possible Council will explore and seek funding for renewable energy projects and efficiency measures.

The actions identified will be monitored by Heads of Department and via Smartsheet to be reviewed in a Working Group established to ensure that actions are on target. It is recognized that this is a long-term objective for Council that requires adequate and specialised resources. To reflect the work that has been carried out within this last year and to define the focus for the coming year this performance improvement objective was revised and was carried over into the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024/25.

Improvement Objective 4: *We will improve our Communications to our customers on Waste Management.*

 <p>Why</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our improvement objectives are based on understanding our citizen's needs. - Analysis of a number of sources of data have included: Customer Care Strategy & Action Plan / Complaints / Info@ analysis / social media/Council's Consultation Hub etc
 <p>What Action will we take</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the Waste Management section of the Council's website. - Provide standardisation of relevant, accurate and up to date information - Undertake regular analysis of customer communication methods including Contact Us/ complaints@/ service requests/ Website hits/ App Usage/social media
 <p>How we will measure progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update new Waste Management section on website, including Frequently Asked Questions, live by 30 June 2023. - Internal review of customer communications completed by end April 2023. - Quarterly Analysis of customer enquiries from a number of communication channels - Quarterly review/monitoring number of hits on website section - Quarterly review/Monitoring App usage - Monthly Review of waste management information reports
<p>Progress at Year End</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council Website The waste section on the council website is continually reviewed to ensure accurate and up to date information is available to residents. - Social Media Updates and information in relation to Bins & Recycling are updated regularly on the corporate social media channels. Direct messaging is also monitored and responded to. Due to ongoing Industrial Action a considerable number of queries have been received and therefore more monitoring is required. - Website Website views on Bins and recycling pages (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024) – 429,095 views. Website users (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024) – 78,425. - ABC Council App As of 31.03.24 there are 10,891 live users. 01/04/22 – 31/03/23 4612 app downloads

	<p>01/04/23 - 31/03/24 5314 app downloads – increase of 15%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report it. 405 reported issues received through the ABC Council app. This includes missed bins, fly tipping/litter/dog fouling etc. - A communications plan for Environmental Services is now in operation with an emphasis on waste reduction, recycle more and recognition of community and volunteer initiatives to keep areas clean. - The communications plan uses a wide range of methods to deliver effective messaging with a greater emphasis on video content and increased awareness to download the ABC Council App.
 <p>Benefits to you</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased customer satisfaction with Council services. - Providing customers with improved accessible information on Waste Management. - Expedite response to customer enquiries as relevant information is more easily obtained/ navigated on Council's website
 <p>Who is responsible</p>	<p>The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for this Objective was the Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services.</p>

HOW DID WE PERFORM?

The regular Communications Team Meetings with lead officers in the Environmental Services Department has facilitated the development of a Communications Action Plan, which is regularly updated.

This action plan addresses communication needs, challenges, and campaign requirements.

The Communications Officer with lead responsibility for Environmental Health and Environmental Services has been employed to deliver the communication needs identified – both external and internal communication.

Over the last year, communication has featured the excellent work of the new Blitz Squad team within Environmental Services. This feature generated over 23,000 impressions on social media, while the story was widely circulated by local media. From an internal perspective a video profile of the Blitz Squad was also well received.

To promote the Recycle Your Food Waste campaign in February, we featured a local gentleman Walter Ferris in a social media, which received 1,800 views on Facebook as was widely shared.

Whilst a lot of work has been done in relation to this Performance Improvement Objective analysis of communication channels indicates that our customers still want more communication in relation to our waste services. This will be delivered via the communication plan and continued monitoring over the coming year. Therefore, this objective has been revised and was carried over into the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024/25.

A5 BENCHMARKING

Understanding current levels of performance is a prerequisite to understanding what improvements might be possible in the future. Benchmarking is one approach that can be used to identify both efficient and inefficient activities in the public sector. Understandably given the changing priorities, need for recovery and challenging circumstances local and central government have faced throughout the last few years, the proposed work to explore the development of an NI Regional benchmarking framework has been delayed.

In compliance with the Statutory Guidance on the General Duty, benchmarking and comparison information forms part of our assessment report and we have included comparisons with other councils relating to the statutory indicators and standards, and comparisons on prompt payment and staff absenteeism data. These are attached in accompanying appendices B - E.

A6 RURAL NEEDS MONITORING 2023-24

The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (The Act) came into operation for government departments and district Councils on 1 June 2017. The Act requires policy makers and public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing and implementing policies and when designing and delivering public services.

In order to fulfil its obligations under section 1 of the Act, policymakers within the Council completed 24 Rural Needs Impact Assessments for the year 2023/24. This information is attached in Appendix F.

During this period, the Council provided further training on the Rural Needs Duty to Heads of Department and Senior Managers. This training includes some of the training materials that were provided by DAERA. Guidance for developing Council policy and the Framework for developing a Strategy includes advice for Officers on the Rural Needs Act and the duty to rural needs impact assess policies/strategies. These guides together with relevant rural statistics and the Guide to the Rural Needs Act provided by DAERA are made available on the Council's Intranet. Rural Needs Impact Assessments are placed on the policy section of the website alongside the equality screening exercises.

During this period 2 Council policies were relevant to rural needs and evidence of the due regard duty was detailed in the rural needs impact assessment. This information is summarised in the template attached.

The Council's Statistical Data Analysis Officer has assisted policy makers in collating relevant rural statistics to complete the Rural Needs Impact Assessments.

COMMITTED TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND GENERAL DUTY TO IMPROVE

The Council wants to assure all residents, businesses, and all other stakeholders that it is fully committed to delivering services that are efficient, economical and of an exemplary standard. Council looks forward to working with residents, local businesses, our statutory partners, and all other stakeholders to ensure that this happens.

During the past year there have been many challenges for our Council and residents and it is vital we provide the right services in the right way to meet the needs of our customers and to improve customer experience and satisfaction.

In terms of continuous improvement and our General Duty to improve, Council acknowledges the importance of setting meaningful performance measures, realistic but ambitious targets. This will be integral and taken on board as part of our annual Business Planning processes.

Officers continue to develop the ways in which performance and quality management data is collated and monitored internally by Senior Managers and how best it can be used to focus resources where needed to ensure continuous improvement.

During the latter part of the current year, Council developed and consulted on the new Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 which is one of a suite of strategic documents that Council uses to manage its business effectively. This new Corporate Plan can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/corporate-publications/>

Council performance related documents are also available to view on our website using the following link:

<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/performance-improvement/>

Appendix B

Summary Table: Statutory performance improvement indicators and standards for the functions of Economic Development, Planning and Waste.

Ref.	Statutory Performance Indicators	Standards/Targets 2018/19	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Performance Key 2023/24 (RAG)
ED1	Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity. <i>(Business start-up activity means the delivery of completed client-led business plans under Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's Regional Start Initiative or its successor programmes)</i>	Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council target 165	232	185	221	229	190	233	216	140	
P1	Average processing time of major planning applications. <i>(An application in the category of major development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015 (a))</i>	Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 30 weeks.	52.8 weeks	36.4 weeks	23.6 weeks	45.2 weeks	54.4 weeks	33 weeks	47 weeks	27.6 weeks	
P2	Average processing time of local planning applications <i>(An application in the category of local development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015, and other applications for approval or consent under the Planning Act (NI) 2011 or any Regulations made under the Act)</i>	Local applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 15 weeks.	14 weeks	14 weeks	14.6 weeks	14.6 weeks	26.4 weeks	24.8 weeks	21.2 weeks	24.6 weeks	
P3	Percentage of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks.	70% of all enforcement cases progressed to target	82.2%	82.5%	80%	85.9%	77.7%	86.3%	70.6%	82.7%	

	(Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control under Part 5 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 or any Regulations made under the Act)	conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint.										
W1	Percentage of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse).	NI Landfill Allowance Scheme (50% by 2020)	48.8%	50.5%	51.6%	54.7%	54.3 %	54.4%	54.18%	55.5%**		
W2	Amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled. (Targets set via NILAS)	NI Landfill Allowance Scheme 2015/16: (30,759 tonnes) 2016/17: (29,173 tonnes) 2017/18: (27,588 tonnes) 2018/19: (26,002 tonnes) 2019/20: (24,417 tonnes) 2020/21: (End of NILAS, no more additional targets)	11,107 tonnes	9,401 tonnes	8,771 tonnes	6,104 tonnes	4340 tonnes	6,800 tonnes	3641 tonnes	2,580** tonnes		
W3	Amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arising (the total amount of waste collected).	No statutory standard has been set	104,342 tonnes	105,778 tonnes	105,828 tonnes	106,742 tonnes	113,712 tonnes	115,324 tonnes	103,422 tonnes	101,051** tonnes		

*The Enforcement performance statistics are currently unavailable and DfI have stated the following in their statistical bulletin for 2022/23

** Unverified figures

'This publication incorporates all planning statistics published in previous bulletins by the Department for Infrastructure with exception of the data relating to the number of enforcements concluded and processing times for these, which will be published at a later date. Users will be notified when this information becomes available.'

Appendix C

Economic Development

Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council unverified figure for job creation in 2023/24 = **119 + 21 = 140**

	Actual BPA to Sept 23	Actual Jobs to Sept 23	6 Months Statutory	Jobs Delta versus 6 Month Statutory	6-month BPA delivery via NIESS	6-month Jobs delivery via NIESS	Total Jobs	Statutory Jobs Target (2015)	Variance	Statutory Jobs Target 23/24 (Midpoint 2015/2023)	Variance
Antrim & Newtownabbey	91	56	40	16	26	15.9822	72	80	8	80	8
Ards & North Down	106	65	43	23	19	11.4	77	85	8	117	40
Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon	173	106	83	24	21	12.6	119	165	46	179	60
Belfast	263	162	163	-1	34	20.4	182	325	143	325	143
Causeway Coast & Glens	110	68	63	5	21	12.6	80	125	45	127	47
Derry & Strabane	118	73	70	3	39	23.4	96	140	44	140	44
Fermanagh & Omagh	147	90	85	5	49	29.4	120	170	50	170	50
Lisburn & Castlereagh	103	63	43	21	32	19.2	83	85	2	111	28
Mid & East Antrim	110	68	43	25	39	23.4	91	85	-6	107	16
Mid Ulster	134	82	79	3	14	8.4	91	210	119	163	72
Newry Mourne & Down	128	79	78	1	23	13.8	92	155	63	170	78
Totals	1,483	912	787	125	317	190.2	1102	1625	523	1689	587

Economic Development Cont.

ENGAGE & FOUNDATION ENTERPRISE ACTION PLANS (EAP) and BUSINESS PLAN (BP)

Council Area	2023/24 EAP Targets	2023/24 Foundation Targets	TOTALS		FOUNDATION - BP	Total
			ENGAGE - EAP	ENGAGE - BBP		
Antrim & Newtownabbey	85	15	21	5	0	26
Ards & North Down	92	20	7	12	0	19
Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon	126	30	1	20	0	21
Belfast	212	68	11	22	1	34
Causeway Coast & Glens	82	18	7	12	2	21
Derry & Strabane	92	21	4	35	0	39
Fermanagh & Omagh	68	20	1	47	1	49
Lisburn & Castlereagh	87	25	8	12	0	20
Mid & East Antrim	77	17	5	33	1	39
Mid Ulster	95	23	1	13	0	14
Newry Mourne & Down	110	43	0	22	1	23
Total	1126	300	66	233	6	305

*BPA = Business Plan Approvals

Appendix D

PROMPT PAYMENTS

Council Name	18/19			19/20			20/21			21/22			22/23			23/24		
	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days
<i>Antrim and Newtownabbey</i>	17,083	21799	4924	18390	22760	3810	12,792	15,284	1,817	13,855	17,101	4,232	12,999	17,938	4,625	18,300	22,083	4,315
<i>Ards and North Down</i>	6931	13,731	8,194	14560	20174	1414	10,576	12,706	549	13,649	15,826	329	13,997	17,468	626	12,702	16,842	634
<i>Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council</i>	6,504	25,201	5,547	5,713	20,105	10,120	9,272	17,204	1,766	11,957	20,659	1,053	15,408	21,457	1,209	18,850	22,706	885
<i>Belfast City</i>	44240	5,223	9,592	50885	63385	4425	39,959	48,218	3,375	57,882	66,649	4,553	72,656	79,378	7,081	61,301	70,456	5,173
<i>Causeway Coast and Glens</i>	10219	18403	4022	12066	23786	6216	14,614	18,361	2,705	17,823	23,839	2,117	17,367	23,220	2,421	20,126	24,146	3,507
<i>Derry City and Strabane</i>	9049	19585	6078	12078	21643	4979	6,305	13,894	3,755	5,375	13,311	7,273	7,881	16,838	6,066	8,390	18,074	3,897
<i>Fermanagh and Omagh</i>	8836	13900	2679	15332	17715	1111	14,888	16,183	1,048	14,553	16,077	1,095	15,431	16,957	751	14,615	15,548	901
<i>Lisburn and Castlereagh</i>	10204	18651	3405	13957	19570	1888	9,842	12,045	1,768	13,898	16,006	1,491	13,338	15,380	2,247	11,478	15,826	2,012
<i>Mid and East Antrim</i>	12491	21517	3690	13082	22550	3609	16,368	23,808	4,660	27,210	38,164	2,120	29,230	34,130	5,171	17,093	21,250	4,843
<i>Mid Ulster</i>	10714	15785	221	15148	17141	1025	10,931	12,873	635	18,790	19,953	284	17,668	18,024	100	16,673	16,827	37
<i>Newry, Mourne and Down</i>	1967	14443	7527	8320	21647	2447	1,676	13,098	2,125	3,042	15,442	1,998	6,730	13,746	2,243	8,832	16,812	887
	161668	268,777	40,875	179531	270476	41044	147,223	203,674	24,203	198,034	263,027	26,545	222,705	274,536	32,540	208,360	260,570	27,091
		309,652			311,520			227,877			289,572			307,076			287,661	

Council Name	18/19			19/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23			2023/24		
	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days
<i>Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council</i>	6,504	25,201	5,547	5,713	20,105	10,120	9,272	17,204	1,766	11,957	20,659	1,053	15,408	21,457	1,209	18,850	22,706	885
			36,252			35,938			28,242			21,712			22,666			23,591
	17.5%	67.7%	14.9%	15.9%	55.9%	28.2%	32.8%	60.9%	6.3%	55.1%	95.2%	4.8%	68.0%	94.7%	5.3%	79.9%	96.2%	3.8%

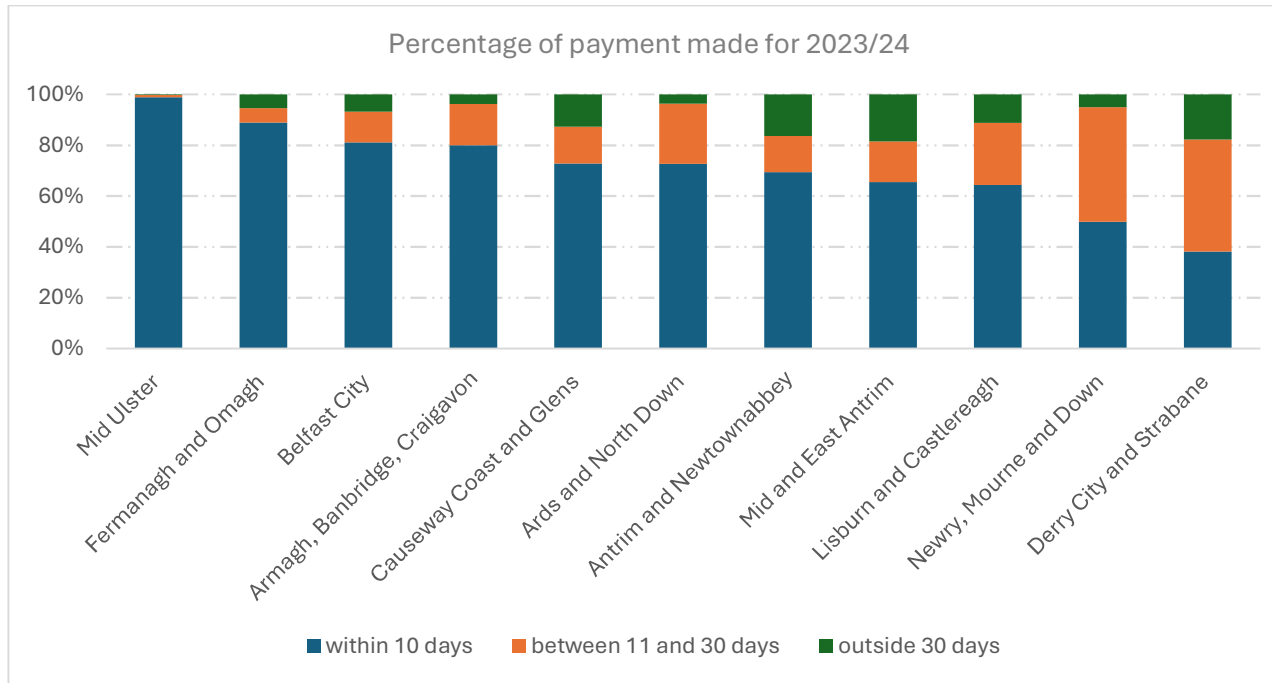
PROMPT PAYMENTS 2023/2024

Compliance with prompt payment 2023/24

	Paid within 10 days		Paid between 11 and 30 days		Paid outside 30 days	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Antrim and Newtownabbey</i>	18,300	69.32%	3,783	14.33%	4,315	16.35%
<i>Ards and North Down</i>	12,702	72.68%	4,140	23.69%	634	3.63%
<i>Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon</i>	18,850	79.90%	3,856	16.35%	885	3.75%
<i>Belfast City</i>	61,301	81.05%	9,155	12.11%	5,173	6.84%
<i>Causeway Coast and Glens</i>	20,126	72.78%	4,020	14.54%	3,507	12.68%
<i>Derry City and Strabane</i>	8,390	38.19%	9,684	44.08%	3,897	17.74%
<i>Fermanagh and Omagh</i>	14,615	88.85%	933	5.67%	901	5.48%
<i>Lisburn and Castlereagh</i>	11,478	64.35%	4,348	24.37%	2,012	11.28%
<i>Mid and East Antrim</i>	17,093	65.51%	4,157	15.93%	4,843	18.56%
<i>Mid Ulster</i>	16,673	98.87%	154	0.91%	37	0.22%
<i>Newry, Mourne and Down</i>	8,832	49.90%	7,980	45.09%	887	5.01%

In the 2023/24 financial year, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon processed and paid almost 80% of their invoices within 10 days with just 3.75% of the payments being made outside of 30 days. When compared to the other councils, Armagh is ranked 4th for prompt payments for the financial year 2023/24.

Percentage of payment made for 2023/24.

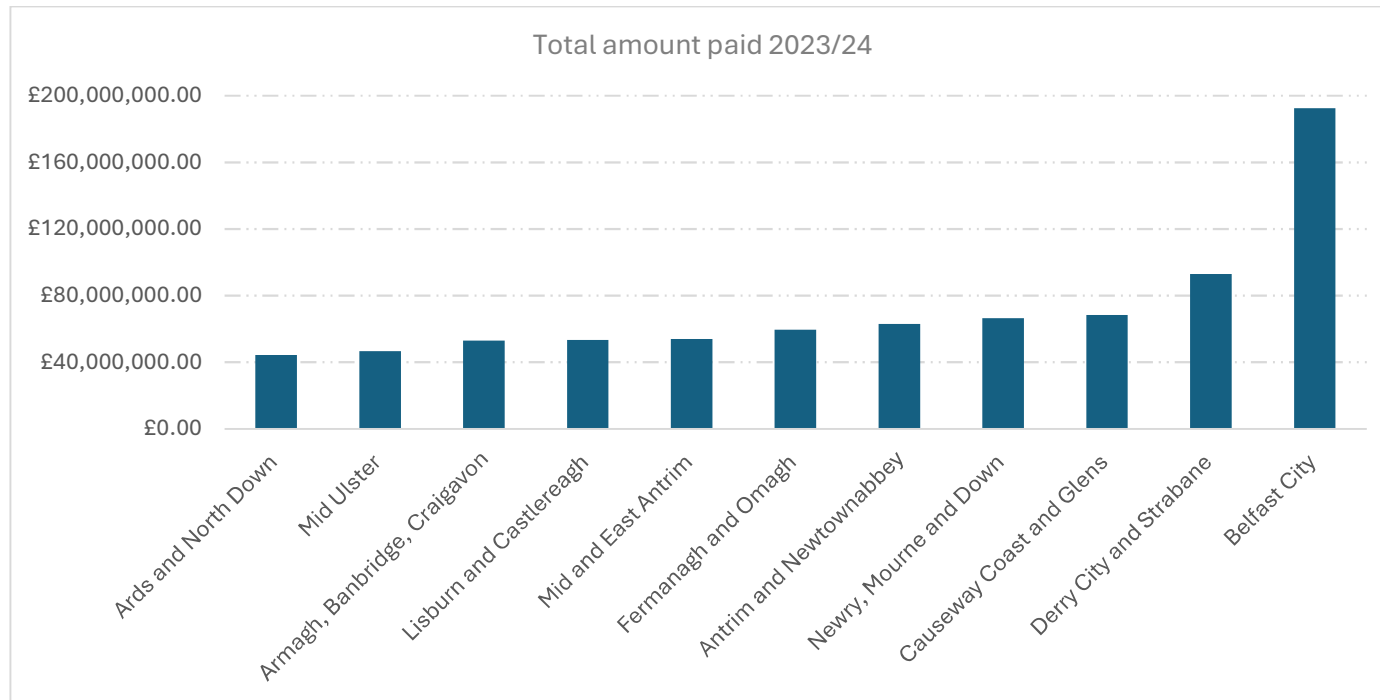


Average number of days taken to pay suppliers 2023/24.



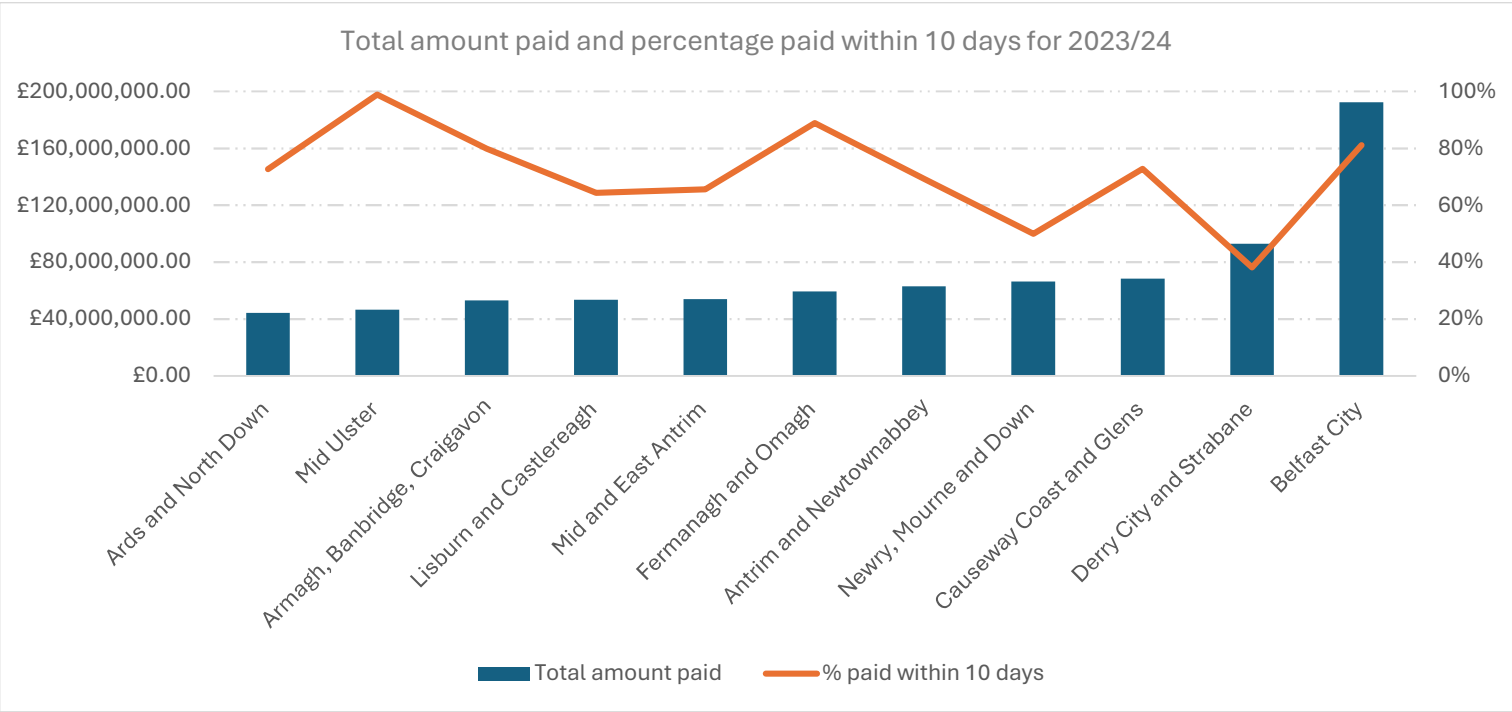
During 2023/24, the average number of days taken to pay suppliers ranged from 6 days in Mid Ulster to 21.86 days in Antrim and Newtownabbey. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon took an average of 9.66 days to pay suppliers during 2023/24 which was the second lowest number of days after Mid Ulster and a further improvement on the previous two years.

Total amount paid 2023/24.



The total amount paid per council area in 2023/24 is presented in the chart above. Belfast City council made payments to the value of £192.4m during 2023/24 compared to Ards and North Down who paid out the least amount at approximately £44.3. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon had the third lowest total amount of payments at £52.9m during 2023/24.

The chart below shows the total amount paid out during 2023/24 and the percentage of payments made within 10 days. Those councils with lower annual payments typically had a higher percentage of their payments made within 10 days and as the total annual amount paid out increased, the percentage of payments made within 10 days decreased however this was not the case for all council areas.



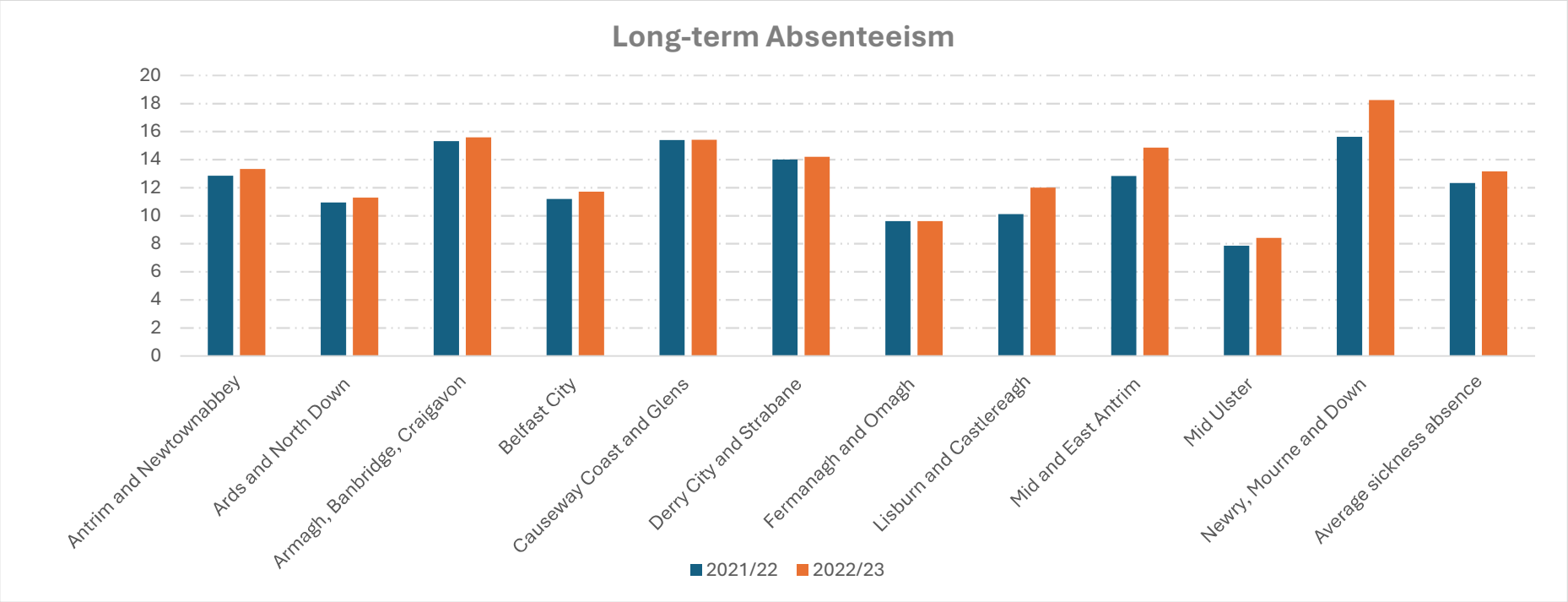
Appendix E STAFF ABSENCES

At time of reporting ABC data remains unverified by NIAO. Data for other ten councils in 2023/24 is unavailable as not yet verified therefore the comparison with other councils is for 2021/22 and 2022/23.

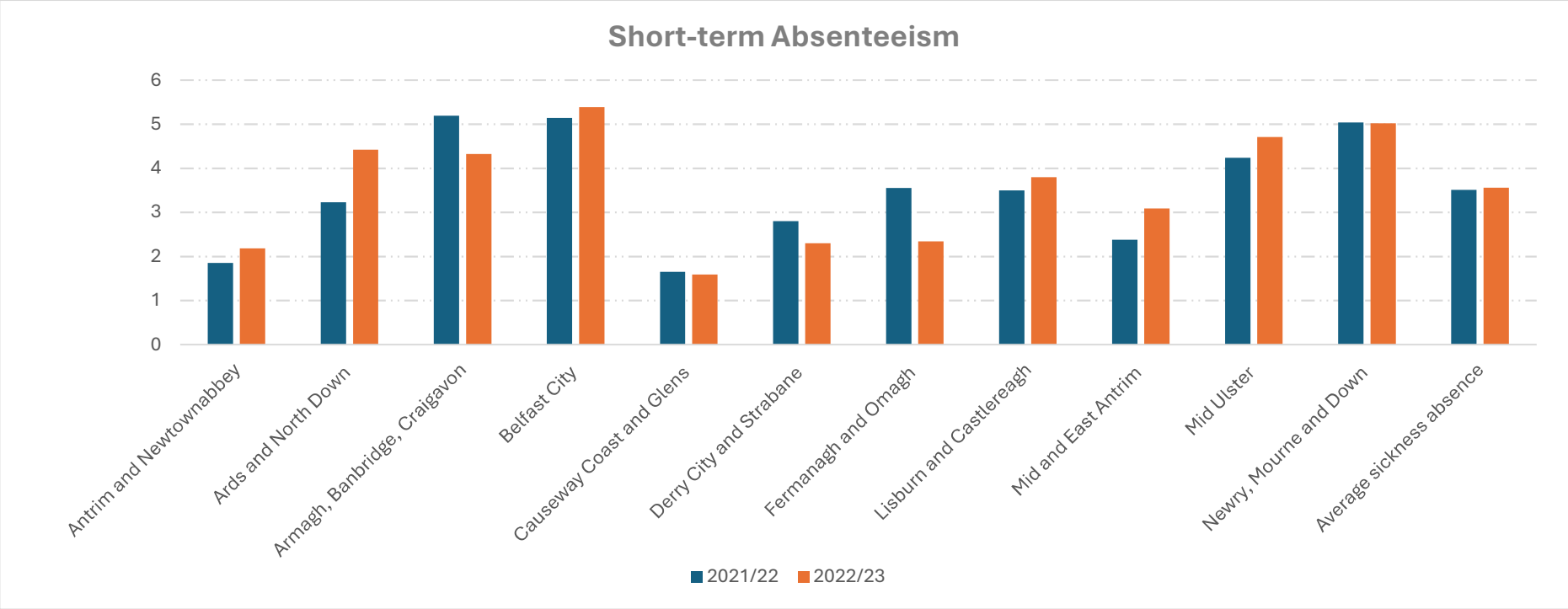
Council	2023/24			2022/23			2021/22			2020/21		
	Long-term absenteeism	Short-term absenteeism	Total	Long-term absenteeism	Short-term absenteeism	Total	Long-term absenteeism	Short-term absenteeism	Total	Long-term absenteeism	Short-term absenteeism	Total
<i>Antrim and Newtownabbey</i>				13.33	2.18	15.51	12.85	1.85	14.7	7.15	0.72	7.87
<i>Ards and North Down</i>				11.28	4.42	15.7	10.94	3.23	14.17	8.87	1.72	10.59
<i>Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon</i>	15.47	3.34	18.81	15.59	4.32	19.91	15.32	5.19	20.51	13.11	2.56	15.67
<i>Belfast City</i>				11.7	5.39	17.09	11.19	5.14	16.33	8.28	2.58	10.86
<i>Causeway Coast and Glens</i>				15.4	1.59	16.99	15.38	1.65	17.03	10.17	1.17	11.34
<i>Derry City and Strabane</i>				14.2	2.3	16.5	14	2.8	16.8	8.1	2.27	10.37
<i>Fermanagh and Omagh</i>				9.6	2.34	11.94	9.6	3.55	13.15	7.84	1.85	9.69
<i>Lisburn and Castlereagh</i>				12	3.8	15.8	10.1	3.5	13.6	10.3	1.2	11.5
<i>Mid and East Antrim</i>				14.85	3.09	17.94	12.83	2.38	15.21	1.19	3.49	4.68
<i>Mid Ulster</i>				8.41	4.71	13.13	7.85	4.24	12.09	7.15	2.57	9.72
<i>Newry, Mourne and Down</i>				18.24	5.02	23.26	15.62	5.04	20.66	11.2	2.4	13.6
Average sickness absence				13.15	3.56	16.71	12.33	3.51	15.84	8.49	2.05	10.54

STAFF ABSENCES Cont.

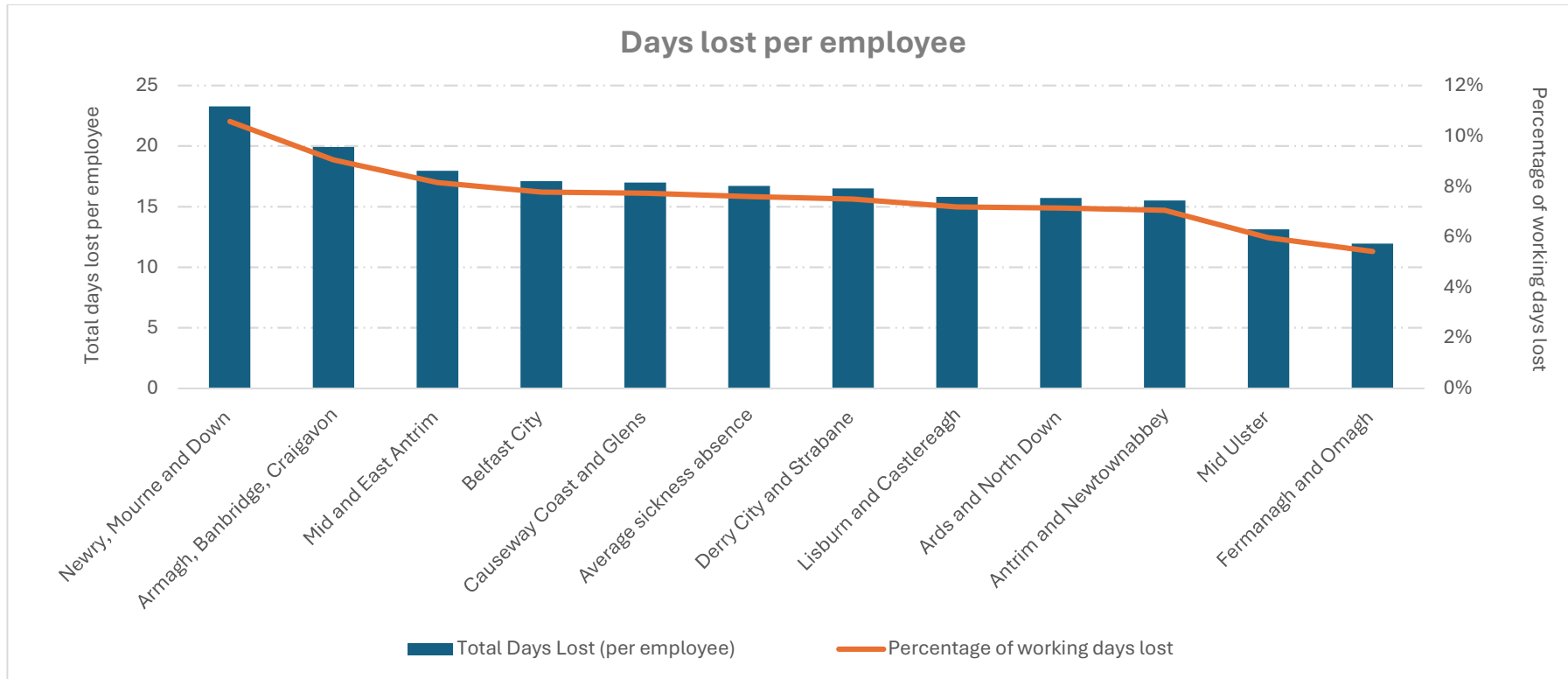
	2019/20			2018/19			2017/18		
Council	Long-term absenteeism	Short-term absenteeism	Total	Long-term absenteeism	Short-term absenteeism	Total	Long-term absenteeism	Short-term absenteeism	Total
<i>Antrim and Newtownabbey</i>	9.56	2.85	12.41	11	2.73	13.73	8.89	2.99	11.88
<i>Ards and North Down</i>	10.48	3.71	14.19	10.53	3.7	14.23	12.16	4	16.16
<i>Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon</i>	14.72	3.56	18.28	13.11	3.62	16.73	12.22	3.84	16.06
<i>Belfast City</i>	8.95	4.63	13.58	9.25	4.46	13.71	8.81	4.91	13.72
<i>Causeway Coast and Glens</i>	15.11	2.55	17.66	14.91	2.22	17.13	12.92	2.87	15.79
<i>Derry City and Strabane</i>	9.4	5.1	14.5	9.1	3.2	12.3	11.3	2.7	14
<i>Fermanagh and Omagh</i>	10.47	3.3	13.77	7.41	3.03	10.44	8.88	3.99	12.87
<i>Lisburn and Castlereagh</i>	11.6	2.2	13.8	11.2	2.1	13.3	14.2	2.5	16.7
<i>Mid and East Antrim</i>	8.11	2.53	10.64	10.87	3.18	14.05	13.96	3.12	17.08
<i>Mid Ulster</i>	7.84	3.86	11.7	8.73	4.17	12.9	8.1	4.27	12.37
<i>Newry, Mourne and Down</i>	11.7	4.1	15.8	10.97	3.73	14.7	12.58	4.58	17.16
Average sickness absence	10.72	3.49	14.21	10.64	3.29	13.93	11.27	3.62	14.89



Between 2021/22 and 2022/23, long-term absenteeism has increased for all councils in Northern Ireland except Fermanagh and Omagh which remained the same. Long-term absenteeism remains a significant issue for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council with the average days lost per employee on long-term absenteeism at 15.59 in 2022/23 which is 2.44 days per employee above the Northern Ireland average of 13.15. This also represents a further increase on 2021/22 making it the second highest of all councils in Northern Ireland. Newry, Mourne and Down experienced the largest increase in long-term absenteeism with an increase of 2.62 days per employee between 2021/22 and 2022/23.



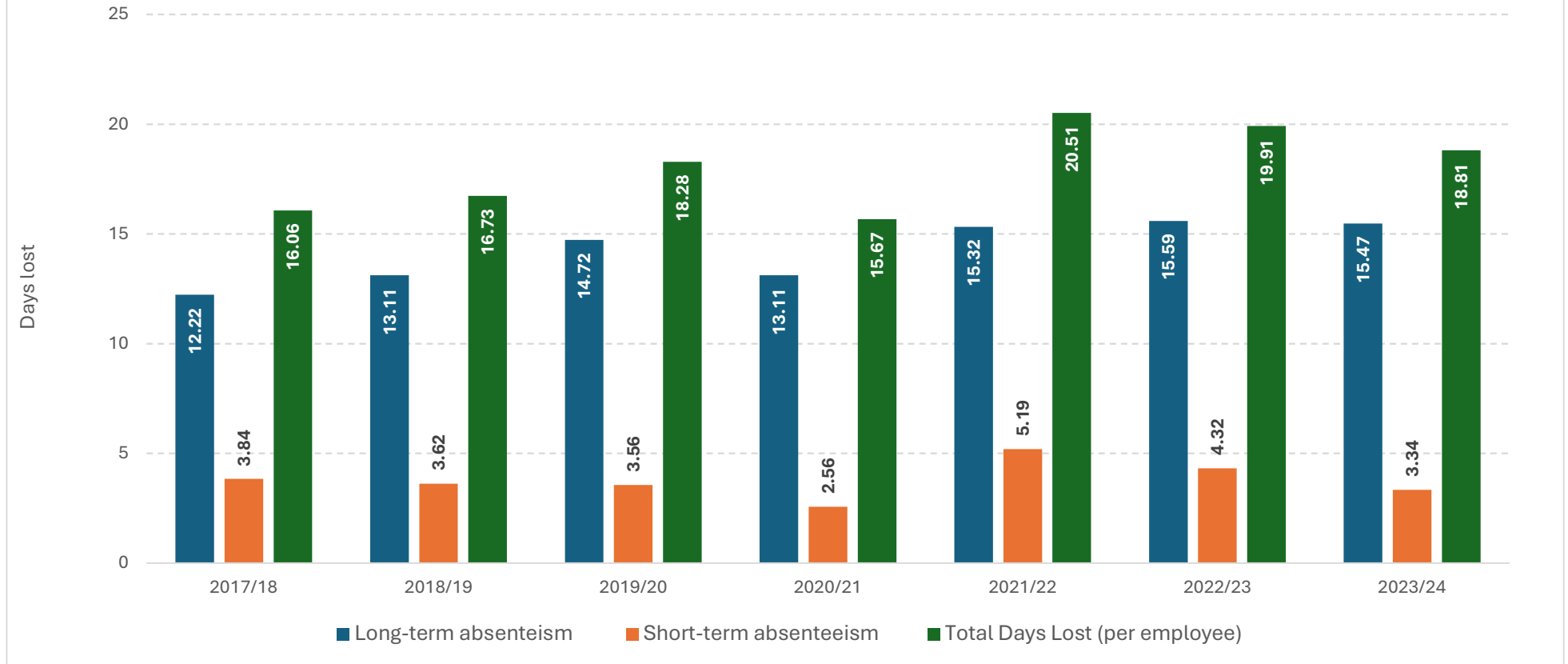
In terms of short-term absenteeism, the number of days lost has increased in seven of the eleven LGD's between 2021/22 and 2022/23. In Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, the number of days lost due to short-term absenteeism has fallen by 0.87 days to an average of 4.32 days per employee leaving the Borough with the fifth highest rate of short-term absenteeism of all LGD's in 2022/23, down from being the highest in 2021/22. Nonetheless, short-term absenteeism in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough remains above the Northern Ireland average of 3.56 days per employee in 2022/23. Belfast now has the highest rate of short-term absenteeism at 5.39 days per employee while Causeway Coast and Glens has the lowest at 1.59 days per employee.



In 2022-23, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council had the second highest number of total days lost at 19.91 days per employee which equates to a rate of 9.05% of working days lost¹. Newry, Mourne and Down had the highest number of days lost per employee at 23.26 while Fermanagh and Omagh had the lowest amount at 11.94 days per employee.

¹ Based on an estimated 220 working days per annum.

Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Absence Figures



Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council show a downward trend in days lost for long-term absenteeism and short-term absenteeism resulting in an overall decrease in the total days lost per employee from 19.91 in 2022-23 to 18.81 days per employee in 2023-24. However, it is important to note that at the time of reporting, 2023/24 figures had not yet been verified by NIAO.

Appendix F

Information to be compiled by Public Authorities under Section 3(1)(a) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

(To be completed and included in public authorities' own annual reports and submitted to DAERA for inclusion in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report).

Name of Public Authority:

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

Reporting Period:

April

20

23

to March

20

24

The following information should be compiled in respect of each policy, strategy and plan which has been developed, adopted, implemented or revised and each public service which has been designed or delivered by the public authority during the reporting period.

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016¹.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to².</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising the policy, strategy, or plan or when designing or delivering the public service³.</i>
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Armagh Free Presbyterian Church – Request to hold a bible camp in Killylea Recreation Area	Other	No rural needs were identified.
Development of a Contract Management Policy	Internal Policy	No rural needs were identified
Development of the Banbridge Place Plan	Cross Cutting: Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism/Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas/Rural Development	<p>We recognised the potential rural implications of this policy as a result of area wide surveys and engagement sessions with stakeholders both in person and online.</p> <p>The social and economic needs identified as a result of this engagement were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to services • Better transport connectivity <p>The following issues were considered in relation to the needs of people in rural areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social isolation and the need for more integrated public transport provision. • Access to services in the town and not competing with rural settlements providing essential more regular services than in Banbridge town. • Employment and access to jobs and opportunities in the town.

		More and better alternative transport options for getting into and out of the town have been incorporated into the plan to include exploring a study on the future of transport in Banbridge and surrounding rural areas to explore and promote walking, cycling, public transport, implementing more greenways to connect cyclists into and out of the town and looking at traffic congestion in Church Square.
Revision of Clean Neighbourhoods Enforcement Policy	Other	No rural needs were identified
Revision of Community Facility Charges	Other	No rural needs were identified
Implementation of a Corporate Complaints Policy	Internal Policy	No rural needs were identified
Revision of Efficiency Plan	Internal Policy	No rural needs were identified
Revision of Environmental Health Fees Policy	Other	No rural needs were identified
Revision of Fee Setting of a Street Trading Policy & Procedure	Other	No rural needs were identified
Revision of Food Sampling Policy	Other	No rural needs were identified

Revision of Land and Property Inspection Policy	Other	No rural needs were identified
Revision of Learning and Development Policy	Internal Policy	No rural needs were identified
Implementation of a Policy -Light Up for Israel and book of condolence for all the innocent victims in the Middle East	Other	No rural needs were identified
Lurgan Park – Request from Lurgan District LOL 6 to use Lurgan Park for car parking approximately 2000 cars on Wednesday 12 July 2023	Other	No rural needs were identified
Development of a Museums Access Policy Statement – Armagh County Museum/FE McWilliam Gallery & Studio/Craigavon Museum at the Barn	Other	No rural needs were identified
Development of Performance Improvement Objectives	Internal Policy	No rural needs were identified
Revision of Performance Policy	Internal Policy	No rural needs were identified
Portadown Running Festival	Other	No rural needs were identified
Revision of Procurement Policy	Internal Policy	No rural needs were identified

<p>Revision of the Public Right of Way Policy</p>	<p>Cross Cutting:</p> <p>Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism/Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas/Deprivation in Rural Areas/Rural Development/Agri- Environment</p>	<p>We recognised that the investigation, assertion, and management of public rights of way has the potential to have both positive and negative impacts on the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • farming community • other rural businesses • other landowners and householders along routes and • those that reside in and visit rural areas. <p>However, 2023 research for the GreenspaceNI map estimates that there is only a total of 165 miles of asserted public rights of way in the whole of Northern Ireland. As so few public rights of way have been asserted and considering the lengthy and often difficult process involved if the status of a route is contested, it is anticipated that the impact on people in the wider rural area will not be extensive.</p>
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		<p>Potential adverse impacts are likely to be localised to the vicinity of the alleged public right of way – impacting on individuals or a localised area.</p> <p>Potential positive impacts will be mainly local. Physical and mental health and wellbeing are improved through access to the outdoors. Access to the outdoors can facilitate the more active lifestyles which central and local government strategies aim to promote.</p> <p>In terms of considering the impact on individuals, particularly landowners, the procedure provides for a 2-stage consultation process with landowners prior to a decision being made as to assertion or otherwise. Landowners are invited to provide evidence for or against the public right of way claim. There is also an opportunity for interested parties to make representations in person to a committee of the Council between the 2 decision making stages. However, legally, the only consideration is ‘Does the evidence show beyond a reasonable doubt that the route is a public right of way.’ If it does, the Council is bound to assert.</p> <p>Mitigations:</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Order provides that the Council shall have regard to the needs of agriculture and forestry and the need to conserve the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside in the exercise of its functions under the Order. • The Council aims, subject to resources, to provide a responsive service to deal with problems or queries that arise and to carry out discretionary maintenance on asserted routes. • The Council supports and promotes responsible access to the countryside through its social media messaging and by supporting campaigns such as the 'Rightside of Outside' by Outmore NI & (Outdoor Recreation NI) which promotes responsible behaviours whilst enjoying the outdoors and raises awareness of the impacts of possible unintentional harm through, for example, lack of dog control and impact of this on stock.
Revision of the Safeguarding Policy	Internal Policy	No rural needs were identified

Solitude Park – Request from Bells Amusements to provide a fun fair attraction at Solitude Park for a two-week period in June 2023	Other	No rural needs were identified
Revision of Sports Grant Aid Scheme	Other	No rural needs were identified
Revision of Test Purchasing	Other	No rural needs were identified

[Equality - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council \(armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk\)](http://armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)

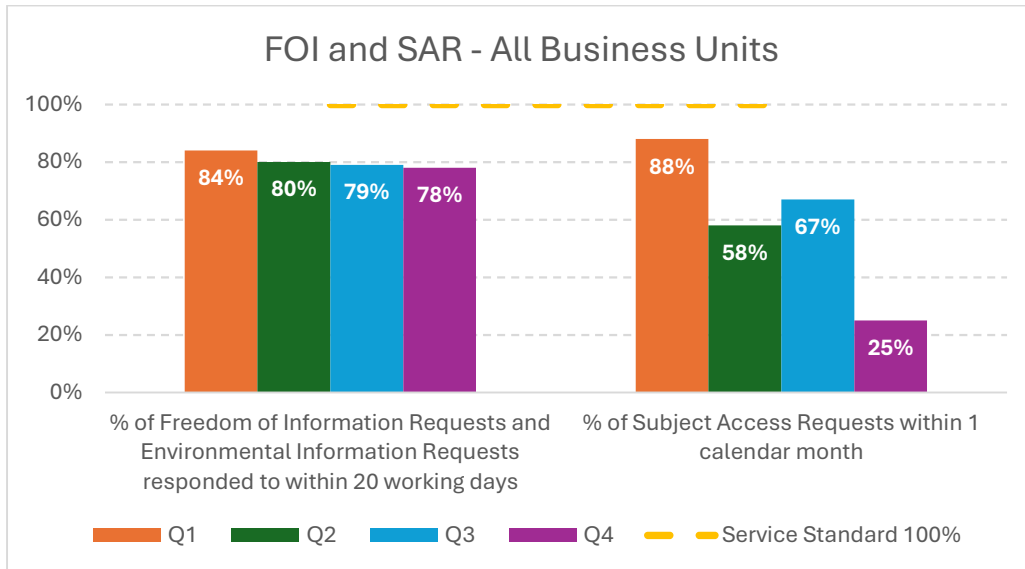
NOTES

1. This information should normally be contained in section 1B of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
2. This information should normally be contained in section 2D of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
3. The information contained in sections 3D, 4A & 5B of the RNIA Template should be considered when completing this section.

Appendix G

Service Standards Charts

All Business Units

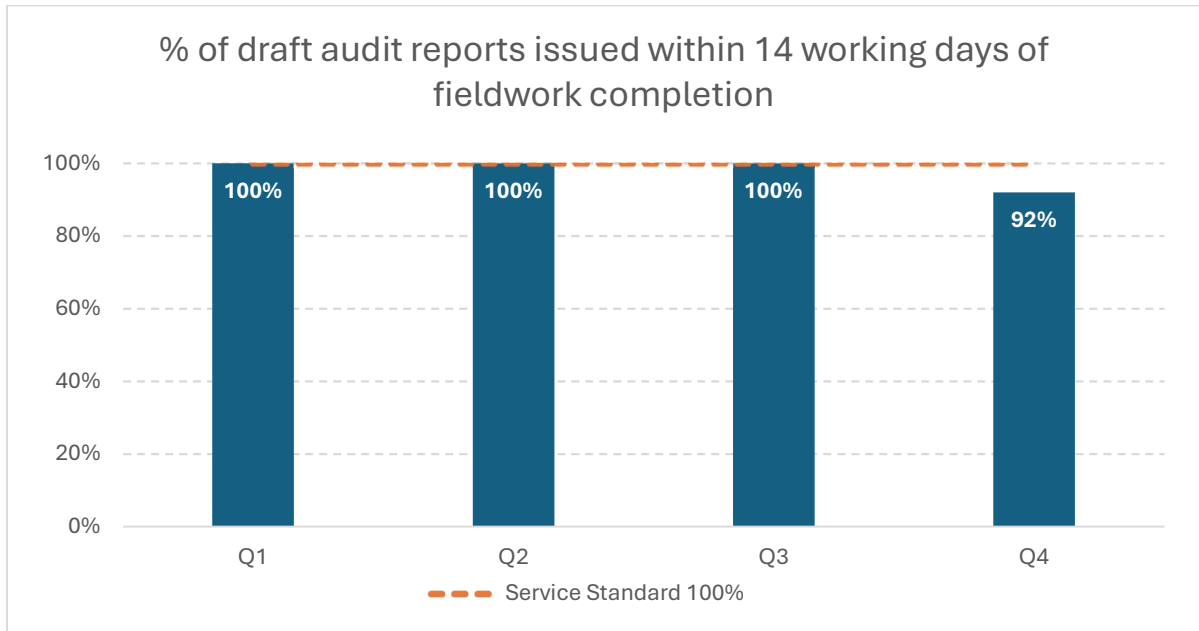


Equality Complaints

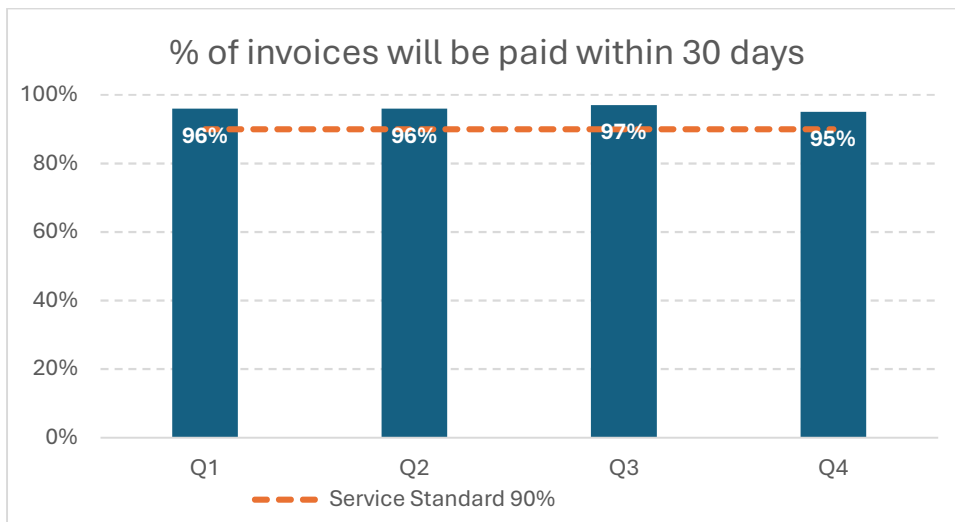
	Service Standard	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
100% of Equality Complaints acknowledged within 3 working days	100%	No complaints received	No complaints received	No complaints received	No complaints received
100% of Equality Complaints responded to within 20 working days	100%	No complaints received	No complaints received	No complaints received	No complaints received

Chief Executive & Deputy Chief Executive Office

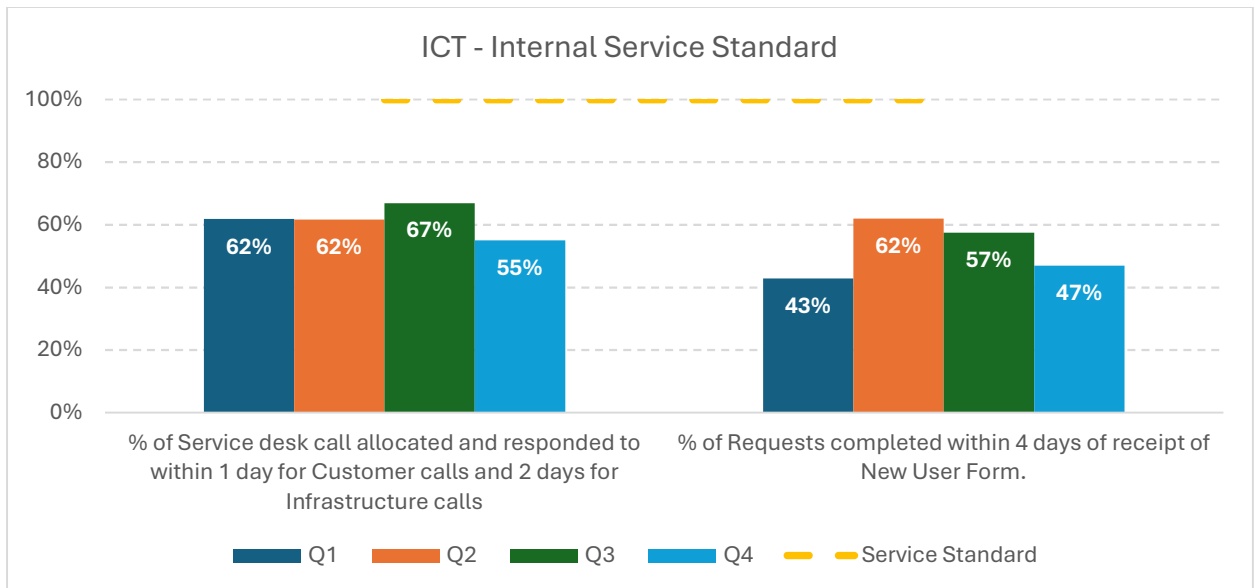
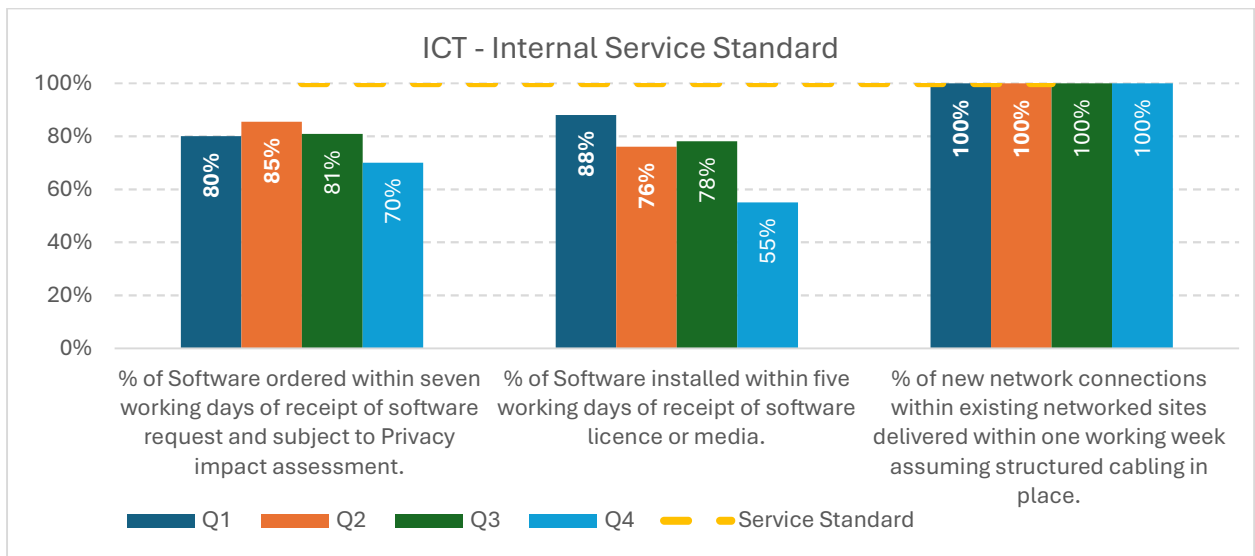
Internal Audit



Financial Services



ICT – Internal Service Standard

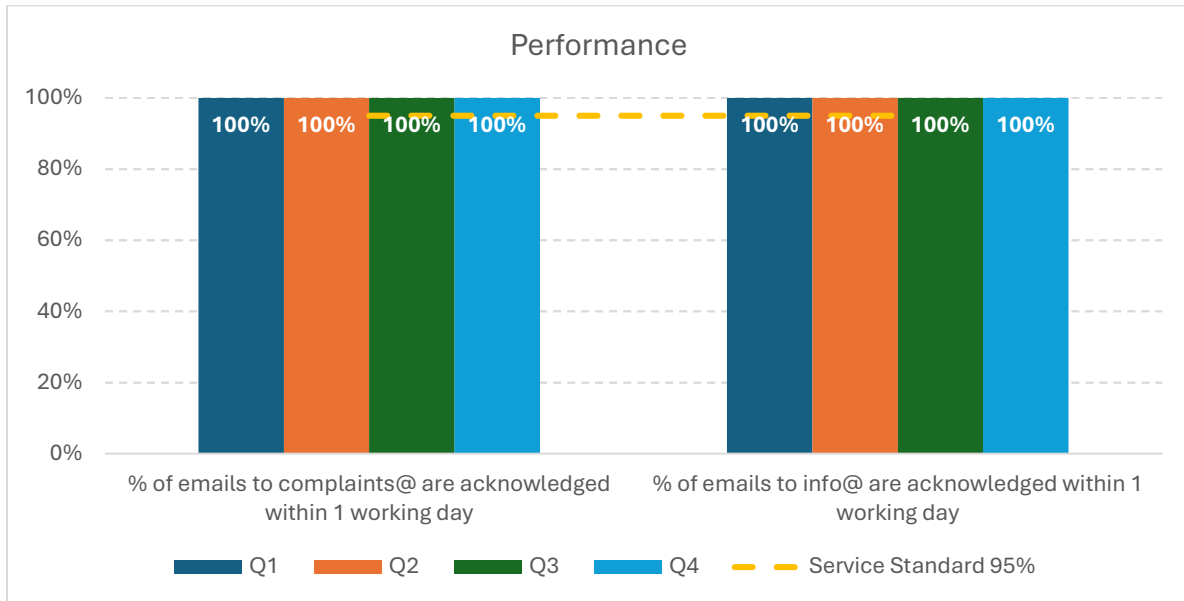


Service desk and New User requests have been impacted by staff absence.

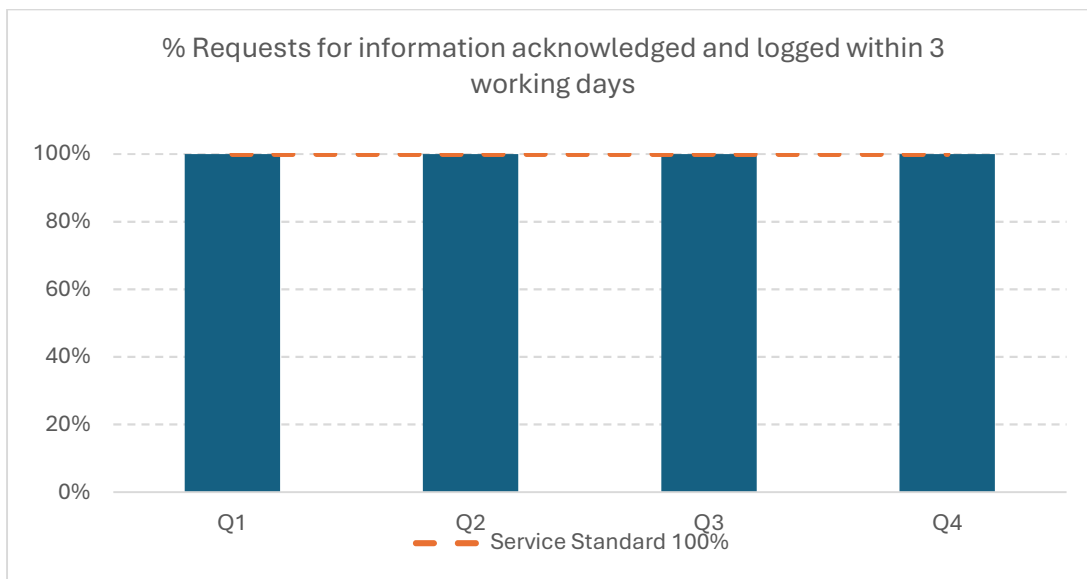
	Service Standard	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
100% on User Start Date or date request by Line Manger	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Strategy & Performance

Performance

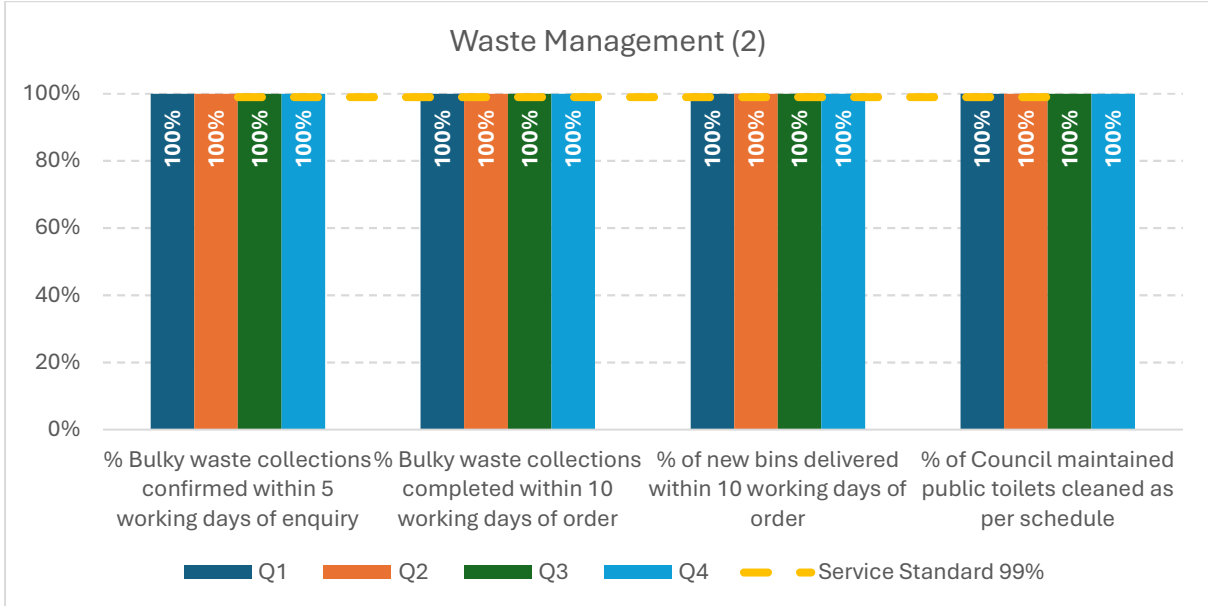
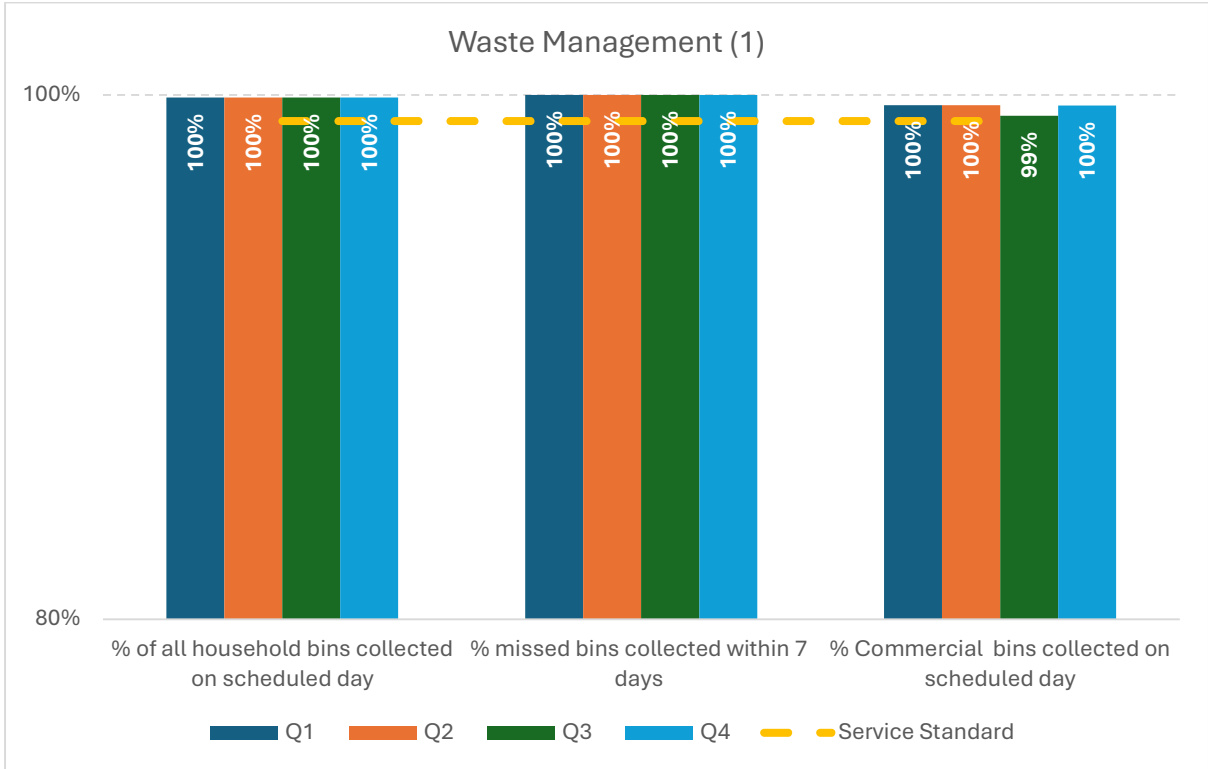


Information Governance



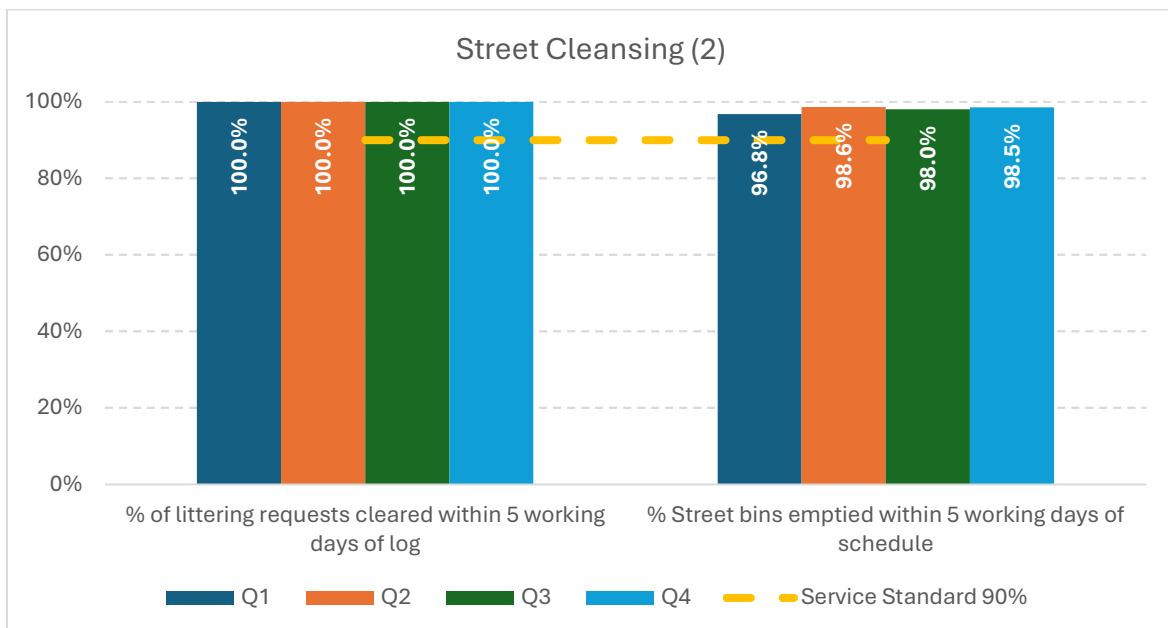
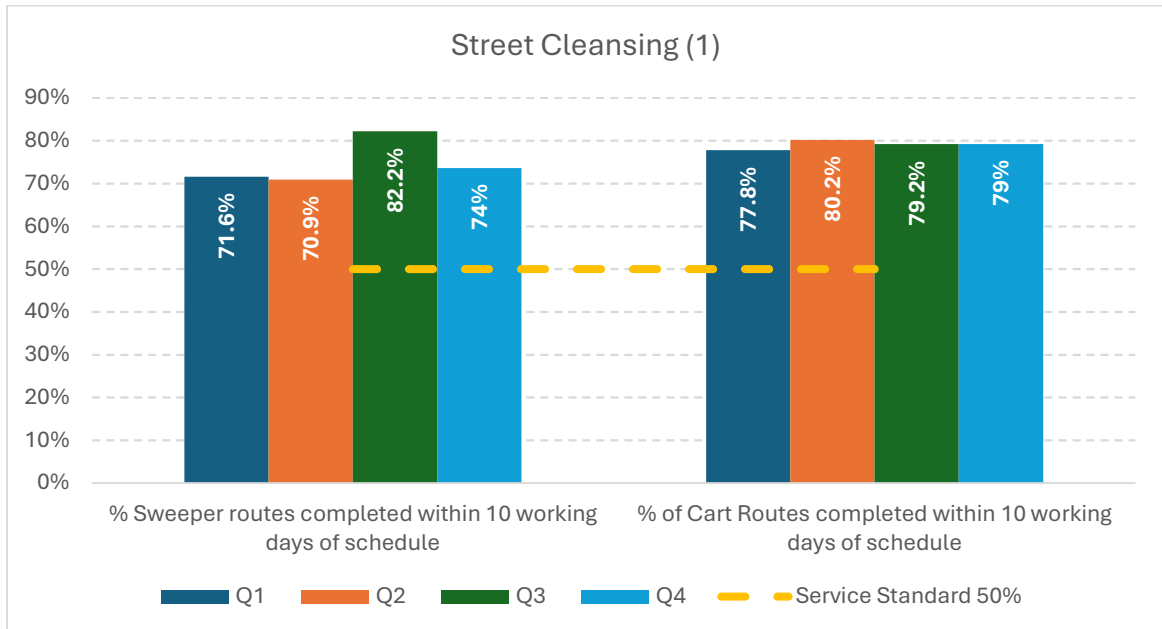
Environmental Services

Waste Management

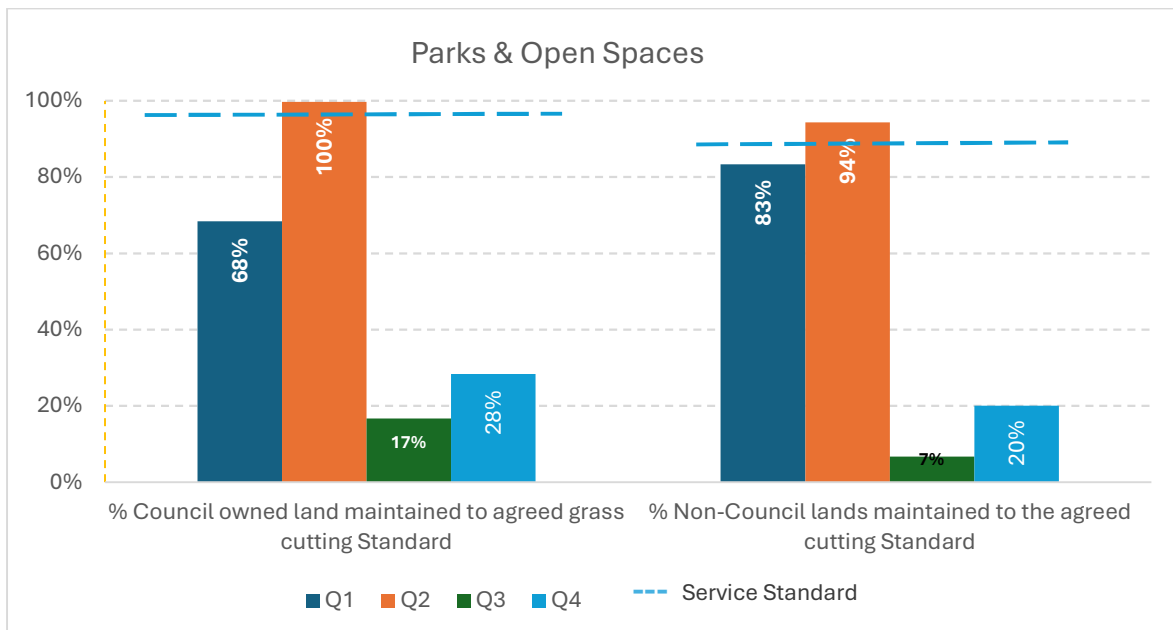


Environmental Services

Street Cleansing



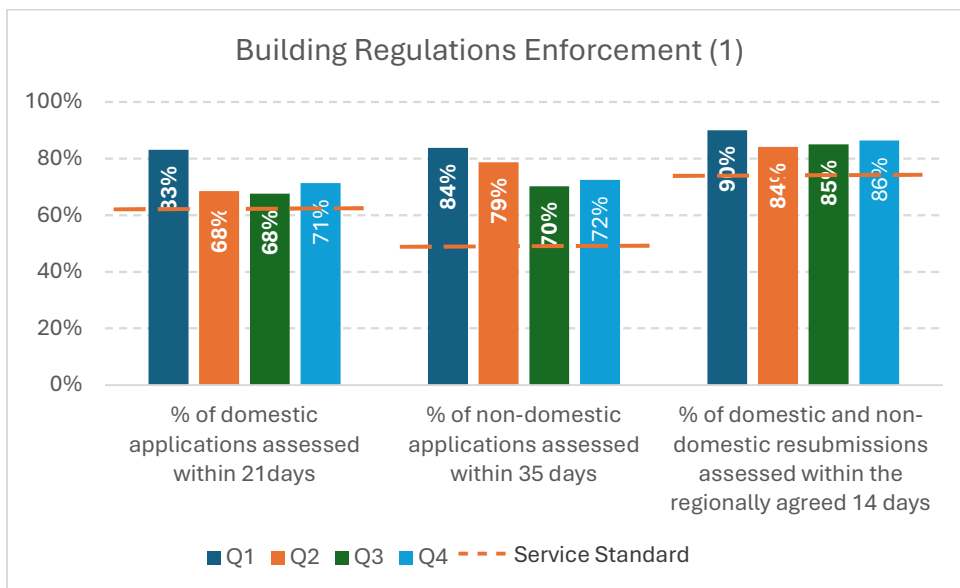
Parks & Open Spaces

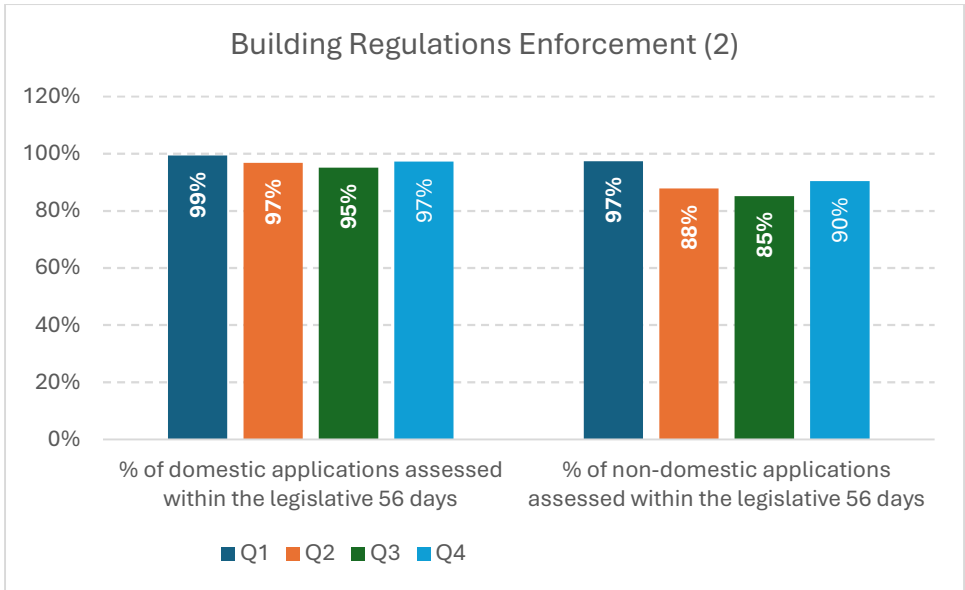


Data for Q3 and Q4 is impacted by reduced grass cutting in winter months.

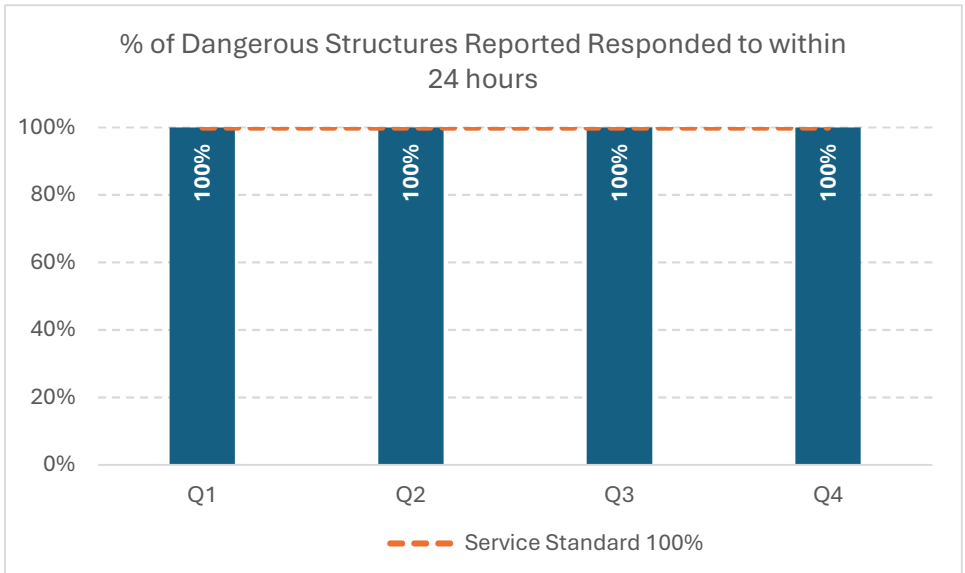
Building Control

Building Regulations Enforcement

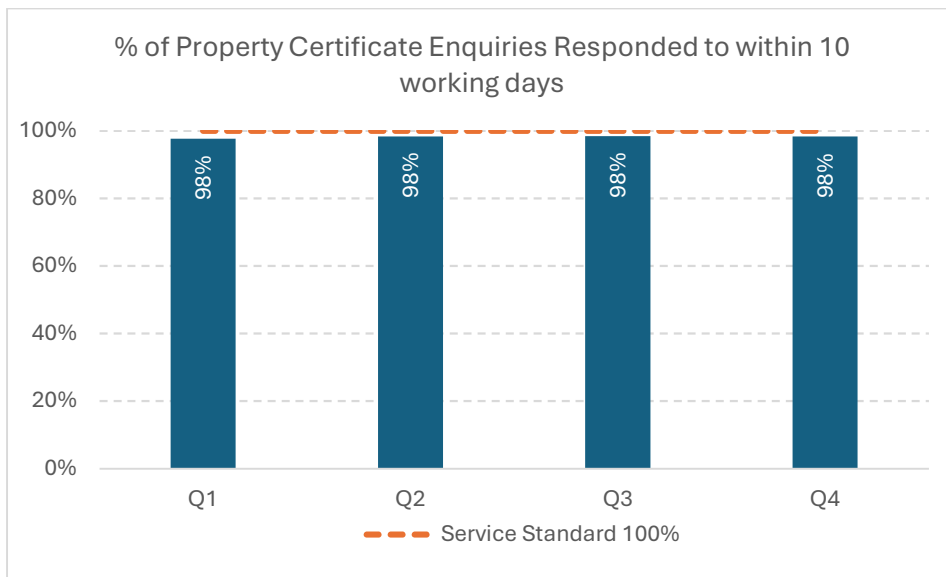




Dangerous Structures Enforcement Legislation

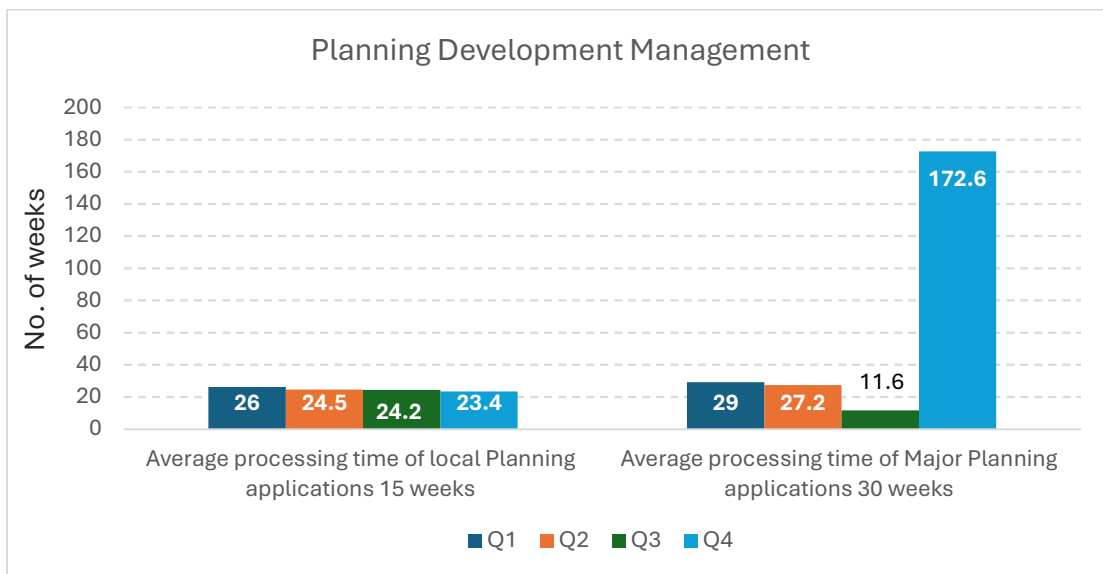


Council Property Certificates Function



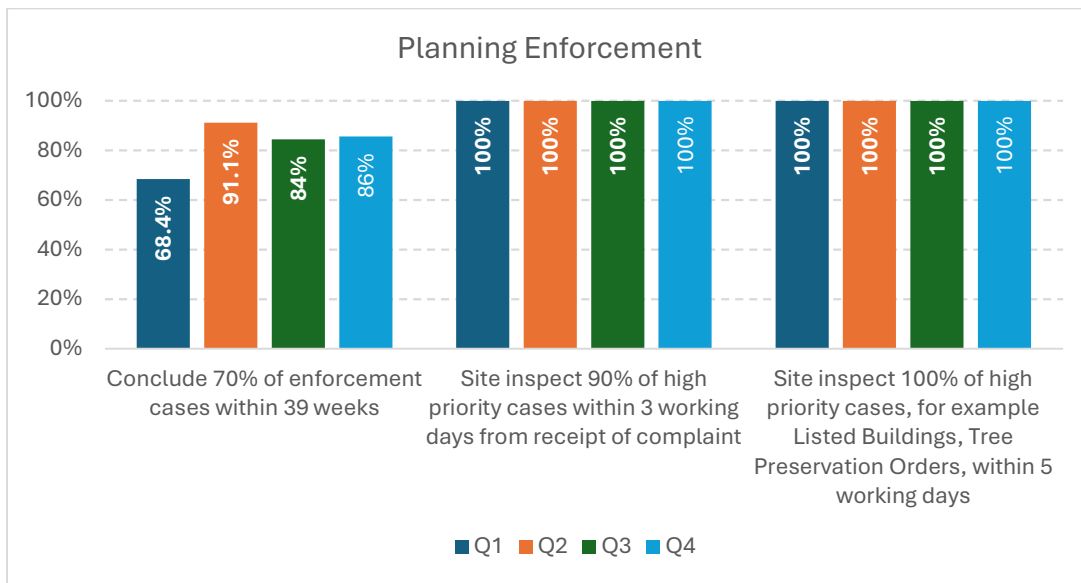
Planning Department

Planning Development Management

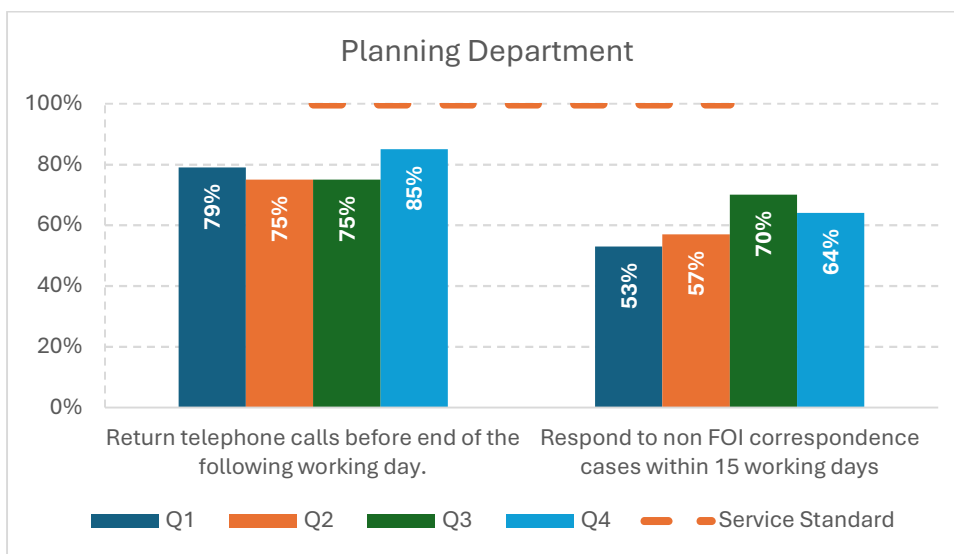


While the figure for Q4 is high we achieved an average processing time for the whole year (2023/24) of 27.6 weeks which meets and exceeds the stat target of 30 weeks. The 2024 performance against the stat target is based on the average processing time across the whole year. The average processing time for the year is based on the median figure across all 4 quarters.

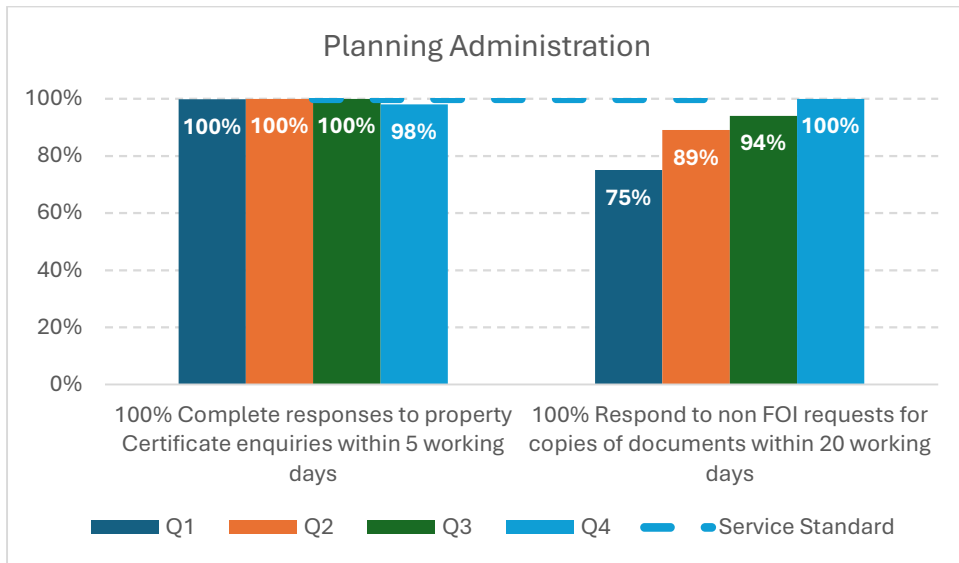
Planning Enforcement



Planning Department

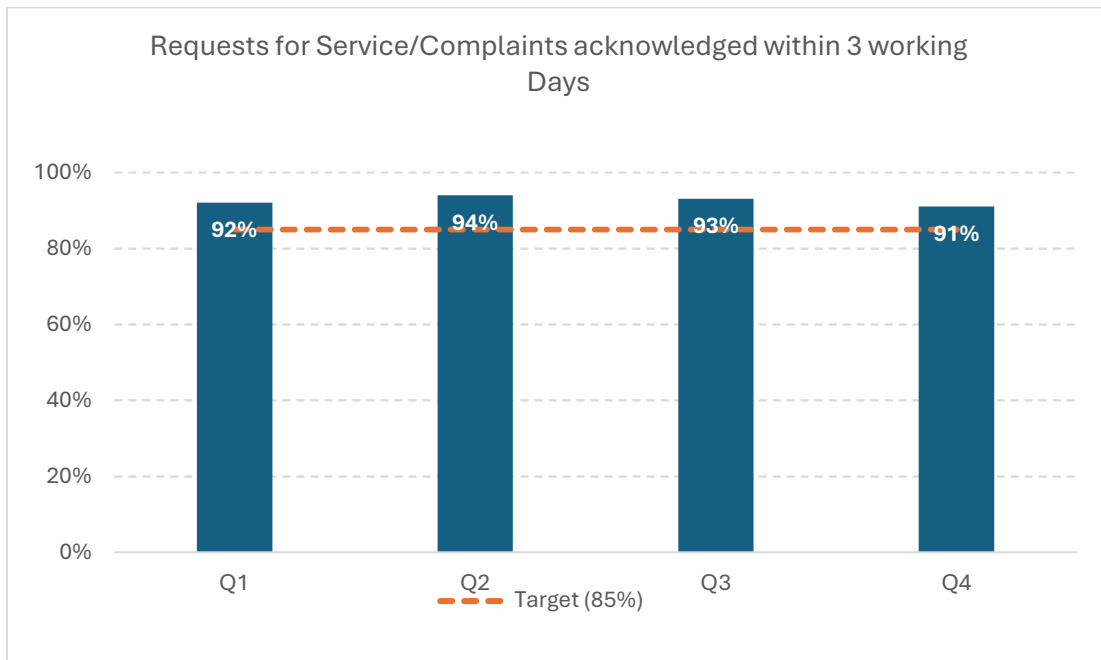


Planning Administration

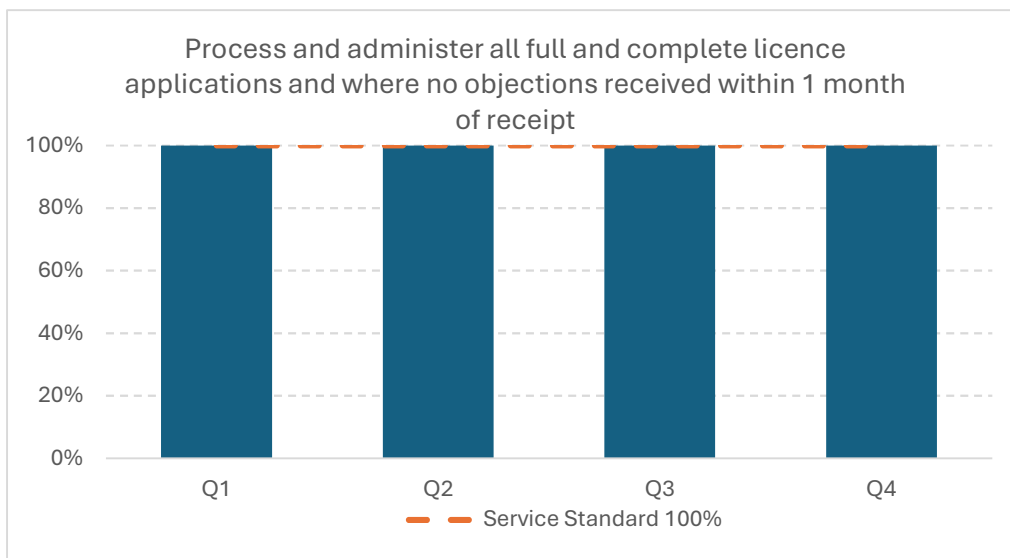
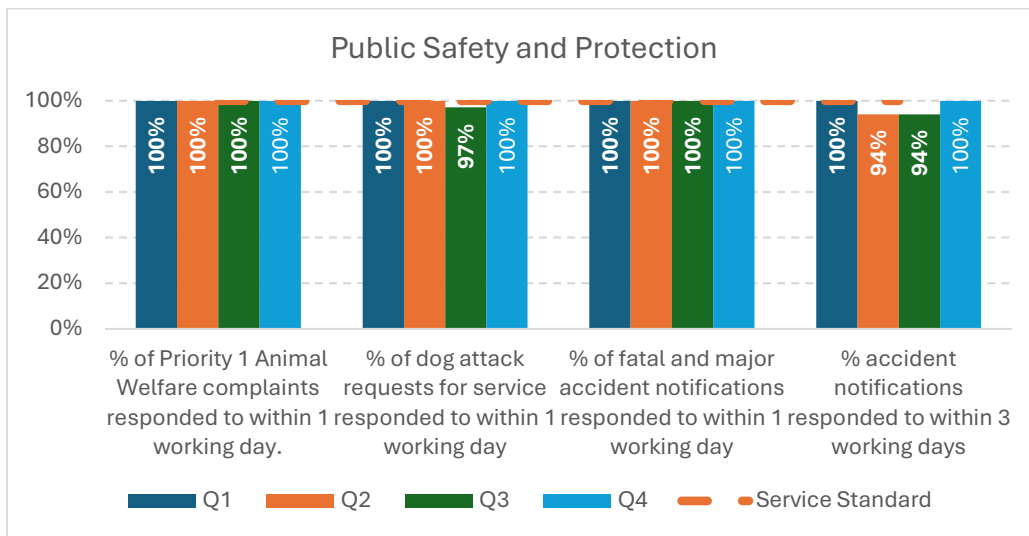


Environmental Health

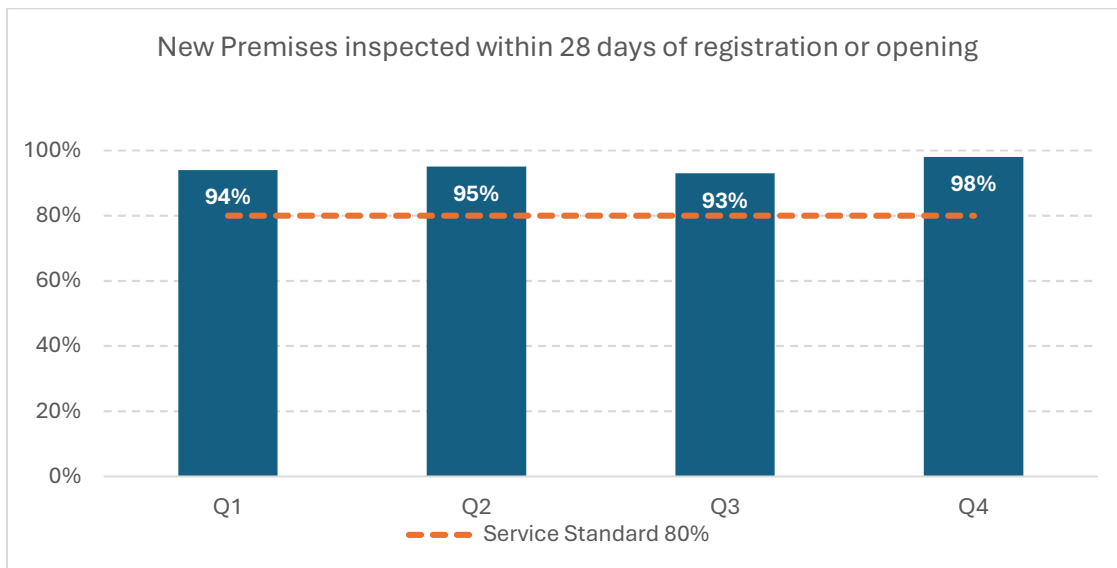
All Environmental Health



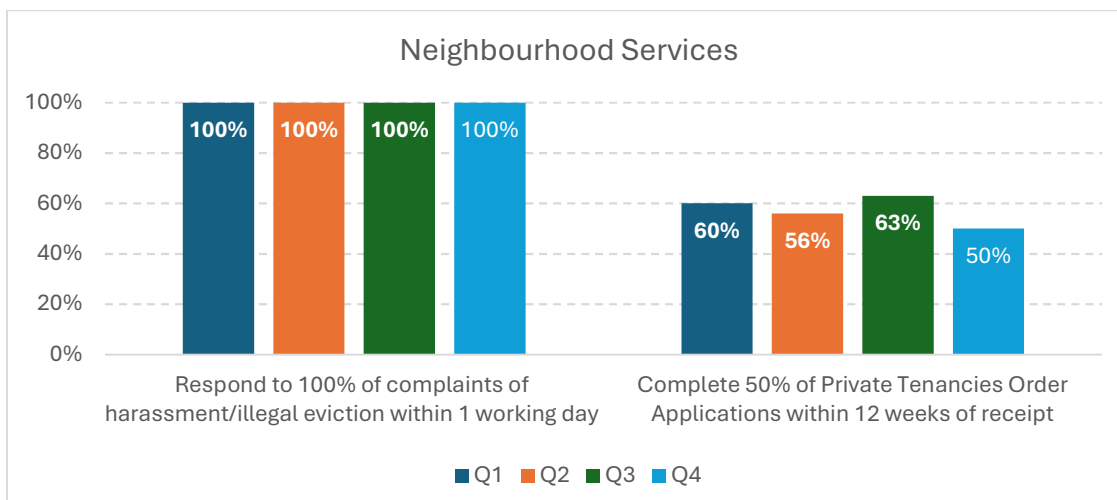
Public Safety and Protection



Food Control



Neighbourhood Services



Economic Development

	Service Standard	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Make initial contact with 100% of businesses by the end of next working day of receipt of notification from Invest NI.	100%	No requests received	No requests received	No requests received	No requests received