

Draft Improvement Objectives 2024-25

Consultation Report



1. INTRODUCTION

The 6-week Consultation on Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's **Draft Improvement Objectives** for 2024/25 closed on the **15th May 2024**.

The Improvement Objectives and associated projects consulted upon were:

Performance Improvement Objective	What will we do in 2024/25?
We will continue to improve our citizen engagement methods and ensure accessible processes for contacting the Council	We will improve the customer's experience when engaging with council services by providing outreach support to residents who are not digitally enabled, ensuring no one is left behind. This means residents who are not able to connect to our services digitally (via the website) will be offered alternatives. Digital devices will be provided in specific council facilities to enable residents to carry out online council service requests.
	We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by developing and implementing a Planning Service Improvement Programme by the end of the financial year 24/25.
	We will continue to enable our citizens to influence decision making through community conversations in specific council locations.
	We will develop a community development toolkit to assist groups to establish and effectively manage sustainable community and / or voluntary organisation.
We will continue to deliver Council led activities that seek to maintain and improve the physical and mental wellbeing of our citizens	We will continue to improve the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of our citizens through a number of programmes which include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. developing skills in horticulture and biodiversity ii. physical activity programmes iii. health programmes (GP referral/cardio referral)
	We will continue to respond to local labour market needs by delivering a range of employability programmes. We aim to support residents within our Council area to achieve relevant qualifications that will enable them to gain employment.
	We will further develop our activities for all by providing more dedicated and inclusive opportunities across the Council.
	We will progress a pilot community ownership / lease initiative of a council owned football pitch.

2. CONSULTATION METHODS

An online consultation exercise on the draft improvement objectives and projects was carried out during April and May 2024. Three focus groups were held in various locations within the Council area, at different times to enable as wide a reach and opportunity for feedback as possible. A sign language interpreter was present at the focus group held in Lagan Valley Island as this session was promoted as being accessible for the deaf community. An additional focus group was held for the Age Friendly Forum, they were consulted as one of our 'hard to reach' groups. **46 consultees** participated in the various focus groups across the four days.

The Council made use of social media to promote the consultation, as well as the Council's online survey tool 'Smart Survey'. Furthermore, the Council website provides contact details encouraging individuals or organisations to submit views at any time during the year.

The consultees included residents, staff who are also residents, community groups, local businesses, as well as representatives from the statutory and voluntary sector.

The Performance Improvement Objectives and Projects for 24/25 were made available in draft format on the Council's website and promoted through social media during April and May. Social Media analytics indicate that a total Facebook reach of all posts (16 posts in total) was 51,725 and total Twitter impressions (16 tweets total) was 6,753. Average reach per Facebook post was 3,232 and average impressions per Tweet was 422. The most popular Tweet of the consultation was on the 15th April, it saw 732 impressions – 58% higher than the average. The Facebook post on 27th saw the highest reach with 6,857 – 13% higher than the average.

These social media analytics are lower than the 2023 consultation where we had a reach of 92,309 users via Facebook and 15,557 impressions on Twitter. Despite this, at the close of the consultation a total of **187 responses** were received from the online survey a 2.8% increase on the responses received last year and a significant improvement on recent years as the table shows below.

Consultation Year	Number of Responses to On-line Consultation
2019	50
2020	No PIP or consultation due to Covid-19 pandemic
2021	14
2022	74
2023	182
2024	187

3. CONSULTATION FINDINGS - detailed overleaf

The outcome of the consultation was that consultees support the draft performance improvement objectives and associated improvement projects for 2024/25.







A broad spectrum of responses was received, and the following pages detail the outcome and themes from the consultation. Specific comments will be shared with the relevant Council services and directorates. General comments about Council business were also made and these will be considered when planning future improvement objectives and projects. Comments were also received about issues that are not the responsibility of the Council these were mainly about transport and road issues. As these matters do not pertain to Council they will be shared with the relevant responsible organisation, such as Department of Infrastructure, Transport NI & Department for Communities.

More information on the improvement projects including the measures of success, the key performance indicators and expected outcomes are detailed in the Performance Improvement Plan, which will be published by end June 2024.

The following pages contain a detailed analysis of the online survey.

DRAFT Performance Improvement Objectives 2024/25 (Consultation)

1. Performance Improvement Objectives 2024/25 – proposed approach

1. What is your main interest in responding to this consultation? (Please tick ALL that apply)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Citizen / Ratepayer		79.14%	148
2	Local business		4.28%	8
3	Community group		16.58%	31
4	Statutory sector		1.60%	3
5	Voluntary sector		6.95%	13
6	Member of staff who is a ratepayer		14.44%	27
			answered	187
			skipped	0

Improvement Objective 1




We will continue to improve our citizen engagement methods and ensure accessible processes for contacting the Council.

The Improvement Projects below detail how we are going to deliver this Improvement Objective.

Improvement project 1:

We will improve the customer's experience when engaging with council services by providing outreach support to residents who are not digitally enabled, ensuring no one is left behind. This means residents who are not able to connect to our services digitally (via the website) will be offered alternatives. Digital devices will be provided in specific council facilities to enable residents to carry out online council service requests.

Have we got this improvement objective and project correct?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		72.28%	133
2	No		13.04%	24
3	Don't know		14.67%	27
			answered	184
			skipped	3

Themes from comments on Improvement Project 1

- Concern raised that digital is going to be the only option for accessing Council services. In person, telephone and written contact must still be an option.

Improvement project 1:

We will improve the customer's experience when engaging with council services by providing outreach support to residents who are not digitally enabled, ensuring no one is left behind. This means residents who are not able to connect to our services digitally (via the website) will be offered alternatives. Digital devices will be provided in specific council facilities to enable residents to carry out online council service requests.




Have we got this improvement objective and project correct?

- People who are elderly or disabled must have appropriate access for them to council services.
- Consideration of assistance being provided for public in using these devices. Suggestion to work with charities for IT Support
- Consideration of how this will be communicated and promoted to the public.
- Excellent idea and project – will be of benefit socially and mentally and to the wider health in the community.
- Availability of this across the Council area.

Improvement project 2

We will improve the processing times of planning applications and enforcement cases by developing and implementing a Planning Service Improvement Programme by the end of the financial year 24/25.

Have we got this improvement objective and project correct?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		67.20% 125
2	No		7.53% 14
3	Don't know		25.27% 47
		answered	186
		skipped	1

Themes from comments on Improvement Project 2

- Concern around planning turnaround times and general service from Planning.
- Specific concerns on the appropriate infrastructure not being in place to cope with new developments.
- Concerns that the Planning portal is confusing, difficult to navigate and not kept up to date.
- Concern that planning issues are not fully solved in the correct manner and are skipped over for expediency.

Improvement project 3




We will continue to enable our citizens to influence decision making through community conversations in specific council locations.

Have we got this improvement objective and project correct?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
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Improvement project 3

We will continue to enable our citizens to influence decision making through community conversations in specific council locations.
Have we got this improvement objective and project correct?




1	Yes		70.81%	131
2	No		11.89%	22
3	Don't know		17.30%	32
			answered	185
			skipped	2

Themes from comments on Improvement Project 3

- Access to information about these community conversations.
- Important that they are accessible for all to participate and inclusive of all areas of the council.
- Consider online as an option to boost engagement.
- Positivity around the Grand Choice projects across the council area.

Improvement project 4:

We will develop a community development toolkit to assist groups to establish and effectively manage sustainable community and / or voluntary organisation.
Have we got this improvement objective and project correct?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		71.58%	131
2	No		6.01%	11
3	Don't know		22.40%	41
			answered	183
			skipped	4

Themes from comments on Improvement Project 4

- Positivity around this being a great initiative as many groups are struggling, especially with sustainability.
- Comments raised around training and that it is not always during the day as not all community organisations are made up of people working etc.
- Comments about the need for regular meetings for groups who would like to create a committee, is really needed.
- Concerns that the grant application process is so long winded, any improvement is welcomed that will make it simple and easy to apply.

Improvement Objective 2

We will continue to deliver council led activities that seek to maintain and improve the physical and mental wellbeing of our citizens.




The Improvement Projects below detail how we are going to deliver this Improvement Objective.

Improvement project 1:

We will continue to improve the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of our citizens through a number of programmes which include;

- i. developing skills in horticulture and biodiversity
- ii. physical activity programmes
- iii. health programmes (GP referral/cardio referral)

Have we got this improvement objective and project correct?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		70.81%	131
2	No		15.14%	28
3	Don't know		14.05%	26
			answered	185
			skipped	2




Themes from comments on Improvement Project 1

Common themes were:

- Access to services both on a geographical and availability basis
- Positivity around the initiatives
- The need for Investment in facilities
- Availability of allotments at Bells Lane
- Need for Arts and Crafts programmes to be considered

Improvement project 2: We will continue to respond to local labour market needs by delivering a range of employability programmes. We aim to support residents within our Council area to achieve relevant qualifications that will enable them to gain employment.

Have we got this improvement objective and project correct?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		75.54%	139
2	No		5.98%	11
3	Don't know		18.48%	34
			answered	184
			skipped	3

Themes from comments on Improvement Objective 2 & Improvement Project 2

Improvement project 2: We will continue to respond to local labour market needs by delivering a range of employability programmes. We aim to support residents within our Council area to achieve relevant qualifications that will enable them to gain employment.




Have we got this improvement objective and project correct?

- Positivity around upskilling, practical skills and employment opportunities
- Possibility to extend these opportunities to people already in work
- Potential for childcare for participants

Improvement project 3:

We will further develop our activities for all by providing more dedicated and inclusive opportunities across the Council.

Have we got this improvement objective and project correct?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		67.76% 124
2	No		8.74% 16
3	Don't know		23.50% 43
		answered	183
		skipped	4




Themes from comments on Improvement Objective 2 & Improvement Project 3

- Suggestion for front line staff to be trained in basic sign language.
- Positivity around inclusivity opportunities - museum/sports/employment program, all great. Sensory tent a great idea
- Suggestion to consider transgender toilets in Hillsborough forest or BEM only classes in the horticultural development initiative.

Improvement project 4:

We will progress a pilot community ownership / lease initiative of a council owned football pitch.

Have we got this improvement objective and project correct?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		54.05% 100
2	No		7.03% 13
3	Don't know		38.92% 72
		answered	185
		skipped	2

Themes from comments on Improvement Objective 2 & Improvement Project 4

- Positivity around this as a good commercial opportunity for the council
- Concerns around monitoring and management of this initiative.

Improvement project 4:

We will progress a pilot community ownership / lease initiative of a council owned football pitch.

Have we got this improvement objective and project correct?

- Concern relating to number of football pitches and need for other pitches incl. GAA
- Concerns that the costs to maintain the pitch will be prohibitive for the local sports club.
- Need to ensure that legalities are in place to ensure the safety/indemnity of the community owning/leasing the football pitches.