

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT **REPORT** 2020/21



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SECTION 1: Introduction

Context of the Annual Self-Assessment Report

Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 put in place a framework to support continuous improvement in the delivery of council services within the context of strategic objectives and issues that are important to those who receive those services. The Act specifies that the Council must make arrangements for the publication of an assessment of its performance during a financial year.

It should be noted that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and these unprecedented times the Department for Communities (DfC) confirmed, in June 2020, that it did not expect Councils to publish a performance plan for the 2020/21 financial year. As a result there will be no assessment of performance against improvement objectives for 2020/21.

This report therefore summarises the main actions taken by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020/21. It also includes a self-assessment of LCCC's performance in relation to the statutory performance indicators for 2020/21 as well as comparisons with its own performance and that of other NI councils in previous financial years.

COVID-19 Response and Arrangements

In March 2020 the UK Government announced measures to tackle the COVID-19 global pandemic. These included the closure of all non-essential businesses and restriction on movement to enforce social distancing, reducing the spread of the virus. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council invoked its Emergency Plan in response to the pandemic. This had an impact on service provision with some services closed, for example; sports facilities and parks, in order to protect the public and staff.

Many services continued to operate as normal with staff redeployed into these services and some vital new services were introduced to meet the needs of residents, at very short notice. The Council ensured minimal disruption to many services, for example; Waste Services, Planning & Building Control services and many more. Additionally, we established a Community Hub to provide residents and business owners with advice and support. We also expanded our business support programmes to support local businesses during the crisis. The Council increased its communication activities to residents, businesses, partners and other relevant stakeholders during this time.

During the past year the Council has worked extensively with local communities to provide support to those most in need. The Community Support Grant Scheme was launched to provide financial support to projects that have aimed to assist those most vulnerable.

The Council has introduced innovative services during the lockdown period. For example, the Council provided online classes to its Vitality members to stay connected virtually, in other initiatives the council also created virtual museum visits. The Council has had to be flexible and this emergency situation has impacted on the delivery of some of our plans and objectives for 2020/21. However, we are confident that all objectives will be fully delivered once normal business resumes.



FURTHER DETAIL ON SOME OF THE EXCELLENT WORK THAT THE COUNCIL HAS DELIVERED DURING THE PAST YEAR REACTING TO THE PANDEMIC CAN BE FOUND IN SECTION 2. THESE CASE STUDIES DEMONSTRATE THE OUTCOMES OF THE THEMES OF THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN.

Statutory Performance Indicators



A set of seven statutory indicators have been set for Local Government via the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015 as part of the performance improvement arrangements for Councils. These relate to three Council functions, i.e. waste management, economic development and planning.

The results of the self-assessment are included at Section 3.

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, Section 92 requires councils to compare their performance, so far as reasonably practicable, against the performance during that and previous financial years. The Council will continue to work in conjunction with the Department for Communities to develop a comprehensive benchmarking framework to provide clear and transparent information to allow comparison across a number of council areas.

Section 4 outlines the results of external benchmarking based on data available in the public domain. In addition to results of other internal benchmarking undertaken in relation to absence and prompt payment.

SECTION 2

COVID-19 Response by LCCC

Strategic Theme No 1 - Leading Well

Outcome: Our community has confidence in civic leadership.

We aim to develop the community's confidence in civic leadership by:

- i. Continuing the drive towards digitalisation of services to enhance the customer journey
- ii. Providing continued financial management and probity
- iii. Promoting and embedding a green growth agenda across the council area

Key achievements:

Leading Well in Action - Building Control and the drive towards digitalisation of services to enhance the customer journey

Achievements:

**Further
Developing
Agile Working
Practices through
digital innovation
and investment in
technologies**

**Earlier site
inspections -
going directly
to the site**

**Virtual
inspections
through mobile
technology**



The Covid-19 pandemic presented a number of challenges for every service throughout LCCC. The Building Control Service response and recovery to these involved the development & innovative use of technology, business process improvement and agile working arrangements to maintain and improve customer service delivery.

Time and financial effectiveness were created for customers and officers alike. Developer & builder were able to request inspections on line and officers could facilitate site inspections earlier in the day. This was effective for both parties and allowed builders with the opportunity to plan greater efficiencies through their work, programming for each day.

These improvements were enhanced by a previous investment to digitise archived plans which could be accessed by the surveyor providing greater information on properties and enhancing knowledge and decision making on site.

The necessary assessments and restrictions to reduce risk and maintain the safety of officers and customers alike limited the ability for site inspections, especially to occupied property. This could have been problematic for the industry as customers, builders and developers rely on the assurance of site inspections to confirm compliance with the Building Regulations for legal, financial, grant payment and conveyancing considerations. There was an obvious need to continue with this service provisions throughout this challenging time.

This follows on from the introduction of a suite of online applications for building notices and property certificates that saw a marked increase in use during the Covid-19 restriction periods. A wide range of customers including homeowners, architects and solicitors have provided us feedback on the time, financial and efficiency opportunities that these options have provided.

Leading Well in Action – Affordable Warmth

Alongside these adaptations to the building regulations functions was the ability to maintain and sustain our commitment to the Affordable Warmth Partnership Scheme. This scheme includes the assessment of eligibility for customers from a targeted list of addresses that are in most need of thermal improvement through DfC grant funding.

The team devised a safe and secure method of contacting clients and obtaining personal data to confirm eligibility using laptop technology and digital signature capabilities. This maintained security and safety for both officers and the customers. This proved very successful in what was a very challenging time to ensure that the referral targets were met each month. However, with the dedication and commitment of the staff, **251 referrals were provided to the NIHE resulting in 246 measures installed to 155 homes at a value of £611,275.78.**

A satisfaction survey carried out with Affordable Warmth customers returned a 100% satisfaction result with a number of positive comments listed below:

"I must say I am very happy with the works that I was awarded. The process was straight forward and everyone was very helpful and gave us good direction. The situation we were in meant that our heating system was ready to stop working altogether- Now we walk into every room and feel the heat. I feel like all my Christmas's have come early getting this work done. Thank you!"

"The Affordable Warmth Scheme has made such a difference to my life-my home is so much warmer. I can't thank everyone enough! Never in my life has anyone done something like this for me. "

"The scheme has made a great difference to my home."

"The Affordable Warmth Scheme has made such a difference to the warmth in my home. Everyone was absolutely brilliant! Just a follow up phone call to LCCC and then it all happened-it was no hassle and I'm so happy."

SECTION 2

COVID-19 Response by LCCC

Strategic Theme No 2 – Our Economy

Outcome: We benefit from a growing and vibrant economy.

We aim to have our community benefit from a growing and vibrant Economy by:

- i. Supporting businesses to recover from COVID-19
- ii. Maximising opportunities arising from the new post-Brexit economy
- iii. Maximising income through targeted asset management
- iv. Implementation of the Workforce Strategy and Labour Market development
- v. Supporting West Lisburn investment

Key achievements:

Economic Development - Supporting businesses to recover from COVID-19

Economic Development was quick to adapt a range of Business Support initiatives to ensure ongoing virtual access, to critical mentoring support and training for businesses. Pre Covid a range of in-person business networking events and business engagement visits took place however, more recently a lot of our general contact comes via a dedicated helpline, website hub, webinars, virtual meetings and e-zines.

Achievements:

The digital services offering has expanded and the feedback from businesses has been positive.

Online webinars have proved successful with more businesses able to attend due to accessibility and ease of participation.

Over 30 business webinars on a range of topics, has been delivered over the past year - with over 1100 registrations, averaging approximately 33 businesses per webinar.

Businesses have been quick to adapt, and the uptake of online events has been high. In comparison there were 574 businesses registered to attend Business Solutions events in 2019-2020. Due to their virtual nature, some of 1100 registrations during 2020-21 may have been from outside the Council area.



LCCC
Lisburn &
Castlereagh
City Council

**Business
Solutions**

To further support businesses during the pandemic, the council has created a dedicated webinar hub: www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/business/business-webinars-and-resources which allows businesses to dip in and out of further training and up skilling in their own time.

Digital delivery has played a huge part in supporting the continuation of the International Trade Programme of activity. The London Trade Programme which was due to take place in March 2020, transferred to a virtual programme of meetings. With travel no longer possible, the trade mission was still able to go ahead with a swift move to an online itinerary.

Potential/estimated jobs:

(these have not been verified)

Mentor Growth - 235 proposed jobs in 20-21. The outputs of the programme are to have 432 jobs created by December 2022, Covid dependant.

Digi Growth - 106 businesses have been supported in 2020-2021. Programme aims to create 287 proposed jobs by December 2022, Covid dependant.

Actual job creation:

NIBSUP - 112 jobs created 2020-2021, 182 completed business plans with an aim for new businesses and self-employment in LCCC.

Supporting the Digital Agenda with our Digi-Growth Programme

The digital agenda has become vital as companies adapt their business models during the pandemic. Many businesses are now operating differently than they were even one year ago. Some have taken to online sales and customer service like it is second nature; and others are still finding their feet in this new terrain. This programme continues to be a very timely intervention and has assisted local businesses to find digital solutions to help them survive. This bespoke business support programme will help businesses to enhance their ecommerce capabilities and integrate digital technologies to improve engagement and change their business model.

OUR ECONOMY IN ACTION – DIGI GROWTH

4SM LIMITED

4SM Limited are a publishing company based in Hillsborough, who have been publishing magazines for over 20 years. As well as publishing trade magazines, they also run events including awards evenings and corporate golf days. Once Covid-19 began to affect the event side of the business, director Garfield knew a bigger focus would be needed on their digital side of things. Through the Digi-Growth Programme 4SM gained knowledge on the running of both their websites, SEO and how to use this effectively.



“The two websites were developed into what they are now, which is all singing all dancing. Everything is working at high speed. We’re getting a lot of traffic. Without this Digi-Growth Programme we simply wouldn’t be where we are now.”

BAY TREE BOUTIQUE

Opening in 2017, Bay Tree Boutique B&B was met with great success and welcomed both local and global guests. When Covid-19 forced Bay Tree to close for 3 months, proprietor Susan was faced with the need to adapt. It provided Susan with the opportunity to reassess and reinvent the business and so, Bay Tree Self Catering Cottage emerged. The Digi-Growth programme allowed Susan to dedicate time to improving her website, SEO, as well as focusing on Email Marketing for Bay Tree which Susan has found invaluable in not only communicating with guests but promoting the business too

“I would certainly recommend the Digi-Growth programme for any business out there who is looking for help during this difficult time.”



Supporting Businesses to Pivot via the Mentor Growth Programme

The Mentor Growth Programme has also provided invaluable support to businesses during challenges in relation to Covid and Brexit. Businesses have experienced concerns around staffing, accessing grants and finance, and selling using new channels. The programme switched to virtual delivery immediately and was able to continue to respond to all businesses requests.

As a result the programme celebrated its 200th business participant during the pandemic



Mentor Growth Programme
Calling all businesses in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's **Mentor Growth Programme** enables local businesses to access essential business knowledge, expertise and impartial advice in areas including: sales & marketing development, strategic planning, digital marketing, branding and financial management through the provision of 1 to 1 mentoring, signposting support, workshops and networking opportunities.

Benefits of participation:

- Flexible tiered support offering up to 30 hours of **FREE** tailored mentoring
- Impartial advice to support your business's growth and sustainability
- Develop and grow into new markets
- Increase profitability and job creation opportunities

Interested? Get in touch with our Business Solutions Team now via
Email: patricia.mallon@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk
Tel: 028 9244 7383
Web: www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/business_solutions/growth
@Invest_Lccc **/InvestLisburn**

Invest Northern Ireland **Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council** **Business Solutions** **European Union**
Mentor Growth Programme
This project is part funded by Invest Northern Ireland and the European Regional Development Fund under the Investment for Growth & Jobs Northern Ireland (2014-2020) Programme.

Case Studies for Mentor Growth

On Track Technicians

On Track Technicians, Mentor Growth Participant, joined the programme with 45 employees and have grown to 104, and have plans to grow further to 120 over the next 6 months.

Our passion is People - we understand that our work is critical to ensure the railway is ready for People to use - for work, holidays or social.

We care that People get to where they want to go, when they want to get there.

We care about the People in our Business. We want them to have security of employment, to be able to plan their own, and their families, future with confidence.

Start-up Grants March 2021

In March 2021 a total of 20 new business start-ups were funded up to £1000 per business through the grant scheme, which assisted the establishment of the new businesses, the marketing of products, capital costs, rent, set-up costs, or cost of renovating premises.

The funding was allocated in a first come first serve basis, and as expected the grant was oversubscribed. Those businesses who were unsuccessful have had support from Economic Development to check their eligibility for other avenues of support.

SECTION 2:

COVID-19 Response by LCCC

Strategic Theme No 3 – Health and Wellbeing

Outcome: We live healthier, more fulfilling and longer lives.

We aim to help our citizens live healthier, more fulfilling and longer lives by:

- i. Implementing agreed actions within the capital and investment programmes
- ii. Continued investment in the working environment for our staff
- iii. Continuing to focus on mental and physical wellbeing post COVID-19
- iv. Developing further the Vitality Household membership and associated programme

Key achievements:

HR & OD: - Continuing to focus on mental and physical wellbeing post-COVID

A range of Health and Wellbeing activities were planned by the HR & OD Unit to be delivered to staff during 2020 however, due to the onset of Covid-19 the Unit had to adjust their plans and focused instead on Health and Wellbeing initiatives that employees could take part in remotely such as Mindfulness, How To Build Emotional Resilience and How To Combat Stress And Anxiety.

Health and Wellbeing bulletins have been issued to employees throughout Covid-19 pandemic, providing advice on topics such as Managing stress, Home workouts, Support Services for Employees and general advice on Working from home.

There have been a number of Health and Wellbeing activities which are being utilised to support employees in the workplace on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

Examples of these are shown below:

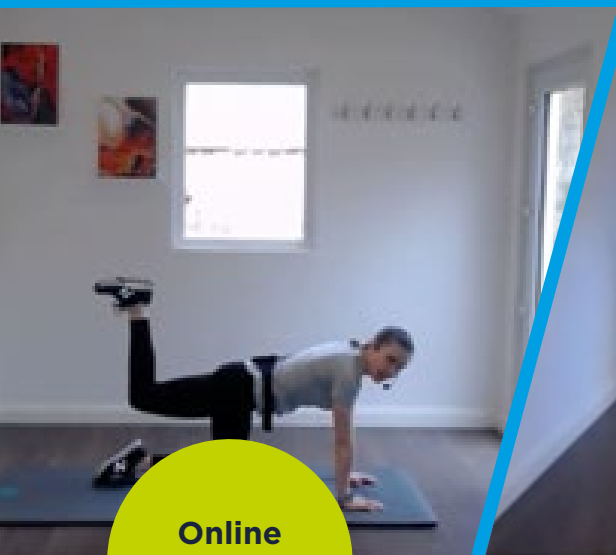
Additional Health Champions have been appointed. This brings the total in the Council to 12.

Development of a Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan.

Promotion of Health and Wellbeing initiatives aligned to campaign days such as World Mental Health Day through activities and briefings.

Ensuring easy access to mental health information and support such as through the Learning Management System.

28 employees are Mental Health First Aiders. The Mental Health First Aiders provide first aid support for employees experiencing mental health problems at work. Network meetings are being held with the First Aiders on a quarterly basis to enable the first aiders to support each other and generate ideas to support employees experiencing mental health issues.



Online Pilates



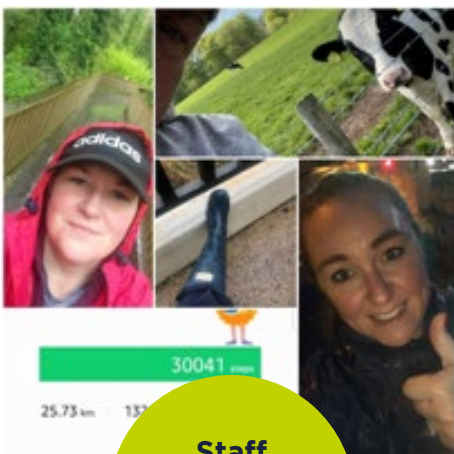
Fitsteps



Staff flower arranging classes

As an Investor in People organisation and holder of the IiP Health and Wellbeing Award we are always striving to develop our staff, provide the necessary support and training as these are key to high staff morale and therefore efficient service delivery. Investors in People provides a framework for the Council to use in planning, implementing and reviewing the steps we take to improve the performance of our people through better health and wellbeing.

Attendance Management reports were provided to Corporate Services Committee on a monthly basis and a more detailed report is provided to the same Committee on a quarterly basis and during COVID-19 we continued to monitor attendance on a daily basis. The Council had its lowest recorded absence during the period 2020-2021.



Staff walking challenge

Sports Services - Developing further the Vitality Household membership and associated programme



Health & Wellbeing In Action – Online Pilates

Input - Overall description/intent of programme

Output - Programme activities organised

Outcomes - What impact/results did it have?

Online Pilates

is an LCCC Every Body Active 2020 class for all abilities focusing on different themes each week delivered by Victoria Montgomery. Classes take place on Zoom and began in November 2020. Participants do not require any equipment as the class is mostly delivered and participated in the standing position. Themes for the class include energizer, flow, legs, arms and shoulders, back care and relaxation. This is a fundamental approach to Pilates but allows participants to focus on their bodies, become aware of postural changes and identify areas of stress and tension. Participating in the class online has taken away stress of getting children minded, finding the time for the journey to a leisure centre and engaging participants who

wouldn't have attended as they do not have the equipment usually required for this class. The class had to be adapted for online delivery due to the COVID pandemic. This class was and continues to be very successful and had a large group of participants returning each week, the lowest number 48 and the highest 57, an average of 51 participants per class. The themed classes proved to be beneficial providing a different experience even for those who had been to a Pilate's class before. Delivering the class online allowed participants to perform the class in the comfort of their own homes and also feel at ease. As a follow up to the class, feedback forms were sent to all participants and a selection of the comments can be seen below.

Is Anyone Better Off? Feedback and statements from programme users; also include any details about media/social media feedback Participants comments:

"This series of classes have been invaluable. It has helped to provide a coping mechanism for what we are living through."

"I sleep better after the class. I am much more aware of tensing muscles when doing exercises and have really enjoyed the fact the moves are low impact but you can feel the benefits. This weekly class has been something to look forward to during lockdown when there really is not a lot going on."

"This class has really helped me cope with lockdown stresses especially with work and teenagers homeschooling. I really look forward to each class and find it's a great length and very good variation each week."

"It has given me the headspace I need away from work and home commitments. I have been able to focus on me."

Health & Wellbeing In Action – Fitsteps

Input - Overall description/intent of programme

Output - Programme activities organised

Outcomes - What impact/results did it have?

FitSteps

is a dance fitness class based on ballroom and Latin dances delivered by Victoria Montgomery. Each class involves taking participants through a range of dances such as waltz, quickstep, cha cha, jive, salsa and many more. The focus is on having fun and getting a workout rather than the technical ballroom and Latin steps. The best aspect of Fitsteps is that it's performed without a partner. This class is designed for all abilities and has been adapted to be delivered through Zoom due to COVID 19 and the lockdown restrictions.

The class is and continues to be very successful with between 28-40 participants attending every class. The variation of dances and songs each week has worked

really well, including a themed Valentine's Day class. This class, although designed to give participants a well- rounded workout, aims to bring fun, laughter and light moments to the week.

This class has proved very popular and brought some much need 'light' in to people's lives. As an EBA team we recognise that being in lockdown is difficult, especially if they are living alone. This class provided a much needed social aspect and a 'good feeling' to those who need the hour of dancing for some 'me' time. A feedback form was sent out at the end of the first 6 week block. A selection of the participants' responses and social media comments are below.

Is Anyone Better Off? Feedback and statements from programme users; also include any details about media/social media feedback Participants comments:

"This class has been a great stress reliever. Great music and a few giggles!"

"I feel less tense and I feel I have more of a social life than I did before COVID."

"I have taken part in FitSteps once a week and I have lost about 6lbs. It has kept me motivated, helped change my mindset to get me into a more positive place which has helped me to exercise more and eat better. This has really helped me an incredible amount. Thank you!"

"Thanks to online classes I can take part. Before this I could not join any classes as I live too far away, have dependent kids and cannot find/afford a babysitter! I am really enjoying the classes!"

"Brilliant class with exceptional teacher! Thank you!"

SECTION 2:

COVID-19 Response by LCCC

Strategic Theme No 4 – Where We Live

Outcome: We live in resilient and environmentally friendly places.

We aim to help our citizens live in resilient and environmentally friendly places by:

- i.** Delivering a programme of environmental improvements across our DEAs
- ii.** Providing opportunities for active participation in community and civic led events
- iii.** Creating and investing in proposals to improve public realm spaces in our towns

Key achievements:

Communities: Providing opportunities for active participation in community and civic led events

Many of our facilities were closed for long periods of time during the pandemic and services adapted to on-line platforms to maximise connectivity with our customers.

Where we live in action – Virtual Arts & Museum Services

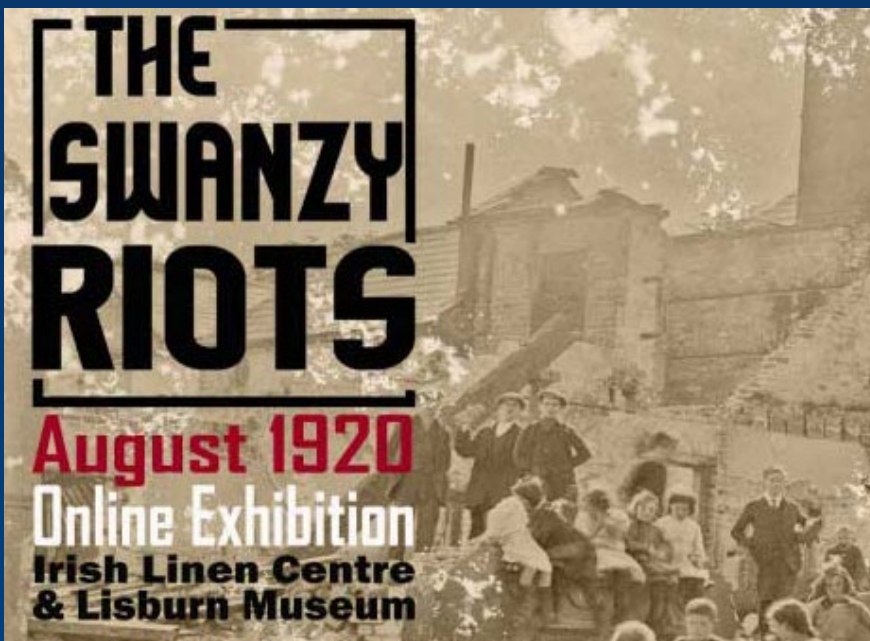
Both the Arts and Museum services delivered a range of interactive workshops and programmes. Planned exhibitions, designed and made available online.

1



The Museum included VE75, VJ Day, The Swanzy Riots 1920 and Planting a Parliament: The Foundation of Northern Ireland.

The live streaming of the museum's annual talks programme had 4000 views on Youtube and increased digital content has led to a 70% increase in views and engagements generally. It has also met with critical acclaim with staff invited to present case studies to various organisations and the Museums 'Covid 19 and Me' has been recognised by the House of European History in Brussels and it received Thrives Audience Delight Award.





In respect of the Arts Service, once again it transformed content to the digital platform marking both Ulster Scots Week and Irish Language Week with a range of bespoke content to engage audiences.

Local residents were offered and enrolled in significant numbers in our 30 creative workshops which included arts and crafts, pottery, painting and many more.

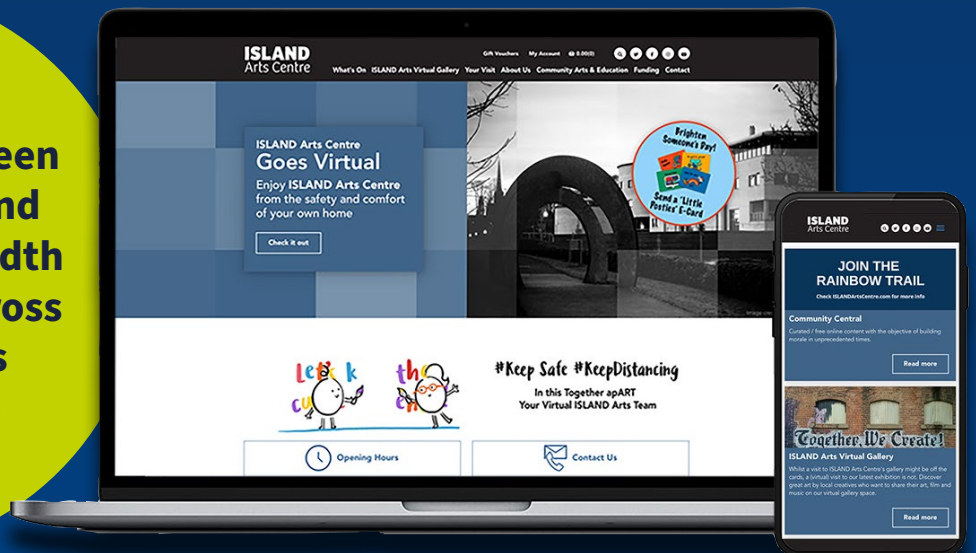
The team delivered a virtual professional arts gallery, virtual 'Poem of the Day' programme running for 265 days attracting 191,083 engagements, 26 virtual 'how-to' create art at home guides.

Delivery of 1 870 ISLAND bespoke arts kits and 5000 activity sheets to local communities.

14 virtual theatre performers, 38 outdoor theatre performances, an award winning socially distanced outdoor festival.

The Arts Service was awarded the THRIVE 2020, 'Audience Delight Award' for 'Best socially distanced festival for families.'

Feedback from participants has been hugely positive and increased the breadth of engagement across all communities throughout the 7 DEAs.



SECTION 2:

COVID-19 Response by LCCC

Strategic Theme No 5 – Our Community

Outcome: We live in confident, harmonious, safe and welcoming communities.

We aim to help our community live in confident, harmonious, safe and welcoming communities by:

- i. Reaching a firm conclusion on the preferred kerbside and associated waste models to reduce reliance on landfill
- ii. Developing the provision of cemetery space
- iii. Building on the success of community engagement, launch a number of community focused grant schemes
- iv. Enabling our citizens to influence decision making through community based initiatives
- v. Increasing transparency in council decision making processes

Key achievements:

Communities: Building on the success of Community Engagement, launch a number of community focused grant schemes

The Communities Unit played a crucial role in supporting our customers during a significantly challenging year, creating structures to enhance engagement with those who are familiar to the Council and new communities who would not have traditionally been involved in our work. The Unit played a pivotal role in delivering against critical and services whilst supporting those most vulnerable during the covid-19 pandemic.



Our Community in action – Working together in tough times

We delivered a significant community programme in response to Covid-19 through our teams in community services, arts, museum and heritage, building on the established principles of community planning. We worked collaboratively across the Council and externally with central government departments, to get over 11,000 food parcels to those in need and distribute £1m of funding to local groups and charitable organisations to address isolation, hardship and provision of essential supplies.

We developed partnerships at a local level with key organisations who could assist in the delivery of food, financial management and aid mental health recovery through the delivery of bespoke programmes.

80 tablets and data bundles were provided, through an open competition, to those who were deemed digitally excluded to work towards the Council's ambition that no one is left behind.



Cemeteries: Improving the provision of the Cemetery Service

At the beginning of the pandemic it was recognised that COVID-19 could have a serious impact on our burial services within the Council. To help assist the Council with managing an increase in burial requests and to support our service providers, the Council purchased an online Funeral Director Burial booking portal.

This portal allows Funeral Directors 24/7 access to provisionally book a burial time within our main Cemeteries.

This system has greatly benefited our Funeral Directors to enable them to discuss burial booking times with families outside of normal working hours. It also provides the ability for Council staff to work remotely if required.

Furthermore, the Council recognised the need to enhance a more digital facing system for service providers and ensure that remote working could be fully supported at all times for our administration and operational teams. As a result, the Council has financially invested in developing the current Burial Management system to ensure that the Councils Burial Management System is up to date with current IT/digital capabilities.



Screen shot from the new Burial Management System.

SECTION 3: Statutory Indicators – Self Assessment

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is committed to meeting and, where possible, exceeding the standards set by central government departments through the following seven statutory performance indicators. Below are the results for 2020/21, the Council's data for 2019/20 and 2018/19 has also been included to show comparisons.

Ref	Statutory Indicator	Annual Standard to be met	Year End Results			Explanation of 2020/21 result
			2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	
ED1	<p>The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity</p> <p><i>[Business start-up activity means the delivery of completed client led business plans under the Department of Economy's Regional Start Initiative or its successor programmes.]</i></p>	85	140	112	106	<p>Target Achieved</p> <p>Northern Ireland Business Start Programme for NI launched in September 2017 as a collaboration between all 11 Councils. Job creation targets for the programme are being achieved Nationally.</p> <p>For LCCC this has resulted in 106 jobs being created in 2020/2021 versus a statutory indicator of 85. Whilst this remains well in excess of the statutory requirement of it was below previous years. This was due to the impact of COVID primarily in the months of March and April 2020.</p> <p>For 2020/2021 the Council has risen to 1st place in NI in terms of jobs promoted versus this statutory target, this number of jobs is reflective of the council's total business base and number of population within the Council area who are economically active.</p> <p>Forecast for 2021/2022 is 126 jobs against an unchanged statutory indicator of 85 jobs.</p>

Ref	Statutory Indicator	Annual Standard to be met	Year End Results			Explanation of 2020/21 result
			2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	
P1	<p>The average processing time of major planning applications.</p> <p><i>[An application in the category of major development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015(a)]</i></p>	Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 30 weeks.	78 weeks	55.2 weeks	79.7 weeks	<p>Flexibility arrangements for Council meetings requiring new legislation only came into place at the end of Q1 to allow major and called in local application processes to be concluded and this impact on performance.</p> <p>An improvement in processing times is noted towards year end and into the new reporting period more aligned with the statutory target albeit it is not met for the major category of application. The Council was also able to process to decision approximately the same number of applications as received and there is no evidence to suggest any significant fall-off in application activity during the year. An increased interest in application processes was also noted with increased numbers of pieces of correspondence.</p> <p>There was also a rise in the number of planning appeals received and processed over this period.</p>
P2	<p>The average processing time of local planning applications.</p> <p><i>[Local applications means an application in the category of local development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, and any other applications for approval or consent under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (or any orders or regulations made under that Act)]</i></p>	Local applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 15 weeks.	17.7 weeks	16.6 weeks	23.8 weeks	<p>The response to the Covid-19 emergency required the Council to adapt and embed new work practices. The changes were most acutely felt in the early stages of the pandemic with restrictions on travel and access to Council buildings.</p> <p>The Council focus in Q1 and into Q2 was on local applications that had been visited and a full suite of consultation responses were available. The processing times reported reflect that there was limited opportunity to preform against the statutory target for new local applications and this impacted on year end performance.</p> <p>The processing times for all new applications coming into the system were also adversely affected by phases of lockdown throughout the year and the need to ensure safe working practices in terms of social distancing.</p>

Ref	Statutory Indicator	Annual Standard to be met	Year End Results			Explanation of 2020/21 result
			2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	
P3	<p>The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks.</p> <p><i>[Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control under Part 5 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (or under any orders or regulations made under that Act). (b).]</i></p>	70% of all enforcement cases progressed to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint.	84.5%	84%	83.6%	<p>Target achieved through a very challenging year of the Covid Pandemic which saw an unprecedented increase of planning enforcement complaints to the council and enforcement officers having to adapt to alternative working practices to ensure continuity of service through the pandemic.</p> <p>Officers had to prioritise cases to ensure a high level of service was maintained and this will continue to be the case in the near future as the unit balances workloads in line with the agreed enforcement protocols.</p>

SECTION 4:

Comparing LCCC performance with other NI councils

From 2017 The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, Section 92 requires councils to compare their performance, so far as reasonably practicable, against the performance during that and previous financial years of other councils.

Like previous year's comparison is limited, however we are continuing to work in conjunction with the Department of Communities to develop a comprehensive benchmarking framework to provide clear and transparent information to allow comparison across a number of council areas.

Benchmarking is still work in progress for all councils, as we continue work together as a sector to develop a model that will benefit our ratepayers.

The following section provides a comparison of LCCC with the other 10 NI councils performance under two of the statutory KPIs. In addition to this, comparisons have been made in two other areas namely Absence and Prompt Payments.

It should be noted that only data available in the public domain has been used for these comparisons. In some cases 2019/20 is the most up to date annual, validated data available.

Economic Development KPI comparisons 2020/2021

Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity - KPI comparisons 19/20 vs 20/21

Council Area	Statutory Target	2018/19			2019/20			2020/21		
		Actual	% Delivery	Ranking	Actual	% Delivery	Ranking	Actual	% Delivery	Ranking
Antrim & Newtownabbey	80	105	131%	4	106	133%	3	84	105%	7
Ards & North Down	85	111	131%	5	105	124%	5	101	119%	2
Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon	165	221	134%	3	229	139%	2	190	115%	3
Belfast	325	264	81%	11	258	79%	11	210	65%	9
Causeway Coast & Glens	125	142	114%	7	120	96%	8	133	106%	5
Derry & Strabane	140	139	99%	9	133	95%	9	113	81%	8
Fermanagh & Omagh	170	170	100%	8	172	101%	7	101	60%	11
Lisburn & Castlereagh	85	140	165%	1	112	132%	4	106	125%	1
Mid & East Antrim	85	124	145%	2	122	144%	1	94	111%	4
Mid Ulster	210	204	97%	10	185	88%	10	132	63%	10
Newry Mourne & Down	155	184	119%	6	183	118%	6	164	106%	6
Total National	162.5	1805	111%		1726	106%		1429	88%	

The table conveys the number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity in each of the 11 Northern Ireland Councils. Business start-up activity means the delivery of completed client led business plans under the Department of Economy's (DfE) Business Start programmes. The targets are Statutory targets set for each of the Councils by DfE and have been worked out based upon each Council's local business base and percentage of economically active population.

For 2020/2021 LCCC is ranked 1st in terms of jobs promoted versus this statutory target, this target number of jobs is reflective of the council's total business base and number of population within the Council area who are economically active.

In terms of overall jobs promoted from 2019/2020 to 2020/2021 the overall absolute jobs total declined across the region from 1,726 to 1,429.

Waste Data KPI comparisons

Waste data for performance comparison purposes is based on the Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics Annual Report 2019/2020, published in November 2020. *This is the most up to date annual, validated data available.*

The Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics Report for 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 was published on 26 November 2020 by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. This publication provides finalised figures on the key measurements of local authority collected municipal waste for councils and waste management groups in Northern Ireland.

A copy of the report can be accessed at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-local-authority-collected-municipal-waste-management-statistics-2019

The Council's Local Authority Collected municipal waste arisings increased by 1.3% from the previous year.

The Council's household waste reuse, dry recycling and composting rate was 50.8% up from 48.1% the previous year.

The Lisburn & Castlereagh household waste composting rate was 31.1%, above the NI average of 27.7%.

The Council's household landfill rate decreased by 4.6 percentage points compared to 2018/19 however the 40.1% reported for 2019/20 was higher than in any other council.

Overall, there was considerable variation between household dry recycling and composting rates. Lisburn & Castlereagh recorded the lowest dry recycling rate at 19.5%, well below the NI average of 24.1%.

Comparison of Absence Figures

At the time of writing this report, the Department for Communities (DfC) advised that the absence information was not available to allow the inclusion of comparison with other Northern Ireland councils in this assessment report. Instead a year on year comparison of the Council's own absence has been analysed and has been included.

There has been a decrease of 2.75 days' absence per employee, from 13.90 days in the period 2019-2020 to 11.15 days in the period 2020-2021. (This is the lowest absence rate since the Council formed in 2015).

The Council maintains a strategic approach to absence management using proactive, preventative strategies and interventions. It is continuously reviewing its approach to absence management and adopting new methods.

A range of Health and Wellbeing activities were listed for 2020 however due to the onset of Covid-19 the HR&OD Unit had been unable to implement these. We have therefore focused on Health and Wellbeing initiatives that employees could take part in remotely such as Mindfulness, How to build Emotional resilience and How to combat stress and anxiety.

Comparison of Prompt Payment Information

Data summarising DfC Quarterly Prompt Payment Reports.

Council Name	2015/16			2016/17			2017/18			2018/19			2019/20			2020/21		
	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
Antrim & Newtownabbey	11,435	17,180	6,444	13,433	22,573	4,546	18,320	22,505	3,772	17,083	21,799	4,924	18,390	22,760	3,810	12,792	15,284	1,817
Ards & North Down	6,931	13,731	8,194	10,657	18,347	4,134	9,575	17,478	4,047	13,928	20,204	2,328	14,560	20,174	1,414	10,576	12,706	549
Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon	3,000	17,656	7,376	6,611	21,555	8,057	5,200	18,352	12,282	6,504	25,201	5,547	5,713	20,105	10,120	9,272	17,204	1,766
Belfast	44,240	52,231	9,592	43,898	53,600	7,492	39,355	51,403	6,916	39,940	56,029	5,491	50,885	63,385	4,425	39,959	48,218	3,375
Causeway Coast & Glens	10,219	18,403	4,022	11,314	21,624	3,923	11,964	23,430	5,056	12,824	24,846	5,362	12,066	23,786	6,216	14,614	18,361	2,705
Derry & Strabane	9,049	19,585	6,078	8,234	18,024	6,070	12,584	18,163	4,005	10,679	19,834	5,827	12,078	21,643	4,979	6,305	13,894	3,755
Fermanagh & Omagh	8,836	13,900	2,679	9,914	16,487	2,395	10,692	15,935	2,367	16,506	19,401	1,184	15,332	17,715	1,111	14,888	16,183	1,048
Lisburn & Castlereagh	10,204	18,651	3,405	10,742	20,383	4,869	11,864	20,685	6,440	15,028	21,538	3,729	13,957	19,570	1,888	9,842	12,045	1,768
Mid & East Antrim	12,491	21,517	3,690	12,227	22,563	3,050	8,597	21,194	4,015	11,716	21,594	4,457	13,082	22,550	3,609	16,368	23,808	4,660
Mid Ulster	10,714	15,785	221	15,979	18,554	271	16,676	19,275	469	15,206	17,127	1,188	15,148	17,141	1,025	10,931	12,873	635
Newry Mourne & Down	1,967	14,443	7,527	2,081	19,086	3,214	1,979	21,554	3,653	2,225	20,904	2,238	8,320	21,647	2,447	1,676	13,098	2,125
Total	129,086	223,082	59,228	145,090	252,796	48,021	146,806	249,974	53,022	161,639	268,477	42,275	179,531	270,476	41,044	147,223	203,674	24,203
			282,310			300,817			302,996			310,752			311,520			227,877

Year	within 10 days	within 30 days	outside 30 days
2015/16	45.72%	79.02%	20.98%
2016/17	48.23%	84.04%	15.96%
2017/18	48.45%	82.50%	17.50%
2018/19	52.02%	86.40%	13.60%
2019/20	57.63%	86.82%	13.18%

Source: Unaudited data from Department for Communities quarterly publications

Comparison of LCCC ‘prompt payment’ performance with NI Councils

The table on previous page shows prompt payment performance statistics for all Councils in Northern Ireland over the past 6 years.

Comparing Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council with the other councils, the following table details how LCCC ranks compared to the other 10 Northern Ireland councils:

Payment Made	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
Within 10 Days	5 th	6 th	3 rd	6 th	6 th	6 th
Within 30 Days	4 th	6 th	5 th	6 th	5 th	7 th
Outside 30 Days	9 th	4 th	4 th	6 th	5 th	7 th
Invoices Paid	32,260	35,994	38,989	25,267	21,458	13,813
Total Invoices Paid by Councils	282,310	300,817	302,996	310,752	311,520	227,877

A caveat of the information above is that, there may be inconsistencies in the way data is collated within individual Councils therefore direct comparison may not be meaningful.

Finance staff continue to explore further benchmarking opportunities with other Councils to develop best practice.

The LCCC Finance Team has set up a Prompt Payment User/Working Group with other departments.

The Finance Team in April 2021 moved to a new workflow involving the central registration of invoices in Finance, this also involved updating processes and procedures across the Council with a collaborative approach across all departments to develop and improve on LCCC’s Prompt Payment figures and ensure suppliers are paid promptly and efficiently.

Contacts for Feedback and Review

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If you would like further information or if you wish to get in touch, please do so by one of the following methods:

Website:

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

Telephone:

Performance Improvement Officer on 028 9250 9559

Email:

performance@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Write to Us:

Performance Improvement Officer, Chief Executive's Office,
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, Civic Headquarters,
Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn, BT27 4RL

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