

## **ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

21 August 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor on **Wednesday, 28 August 2024 at 7.00pm.**

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

### **A G E N D A**

1. Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Mayor's Business
5. Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the Month of August 2024 (Copy attached)
6. Minutes of Council meeting dated 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 (Copy attached)
7. Minutes of Committees
  - 7.1 Planning Committee dated 6 August 2024 (Copy attached)
8. Consultations
  - 8.1 Review of The Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (PACE NI) Codes of Practice A to H and new PACE Code I. Response date 16 October 2024. Document available at Consultation on Codes of Practice issued under the Police and Criminal Evidence Northern Ireland Order 1989 | Department of Justice (justice-ni.gov.uk) (Copy correspondence attached)

- 8.2 Safe and Effective Staffing Consultation Launch. Response date Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024. Document available at Citizen Space - Safe and Effective Staffing Consultation (Copy correspondence attached)
- 8.3 Consultation on Department for Communities Budget 2024/25 allocations - (Report attached)
9. Resolutions
  - 9.1 Letter from Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council - Hospitality and QR codes (copy attached)
10. Street naming - The Firs, Holywood (Report attached)
11. Nomination to Outside Bodies (Report attached)
12. Changes to conducting Committee and Council meetings and changes to the Standing Orders (Report attached)
13. Request for local Government representatives to the Area of Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs) (Report attached)
14. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG July 2024) (Report attached)
15. Good Relations Funding (Report attached)
16. Community Development Christmas Festival Fund (Report attached)
17. Winter Hardship Fund 2024/25 (Report attached)
18. Grant of an Entertainments Licence (Report attached)
19. Proposal for a Change to Death & Still-Birth Legislation (Report attached)
20. Notice of Motion response - Greyabbey Street Lighting (Report attached)
21. Ards and North Down Olympic Homecoming Event (Report attached)
22. Sealing Documents
23. Transfer of Rights of Burial
24. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)
25. Notices of Motion
  - 25.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Creighton and Councillor Moore

This Council notes the importance of organ donation in saving lives and improving the quality of life of residents of this Borough.

This Council further notes that there are plans for the production and installation in the Borough, of a bench celebrating organ donation. This project began in 2013 and is supported by a number of organ transplant charities. Council resolves to work with the charities involved to finalise the detailed design and expedite installation of this bench in a prominent place in the Borough. A fund to cover all the manufacturing costs and any necessary support structures has already been raised.

The hope is that this will be a place for people to engage in conversations about and spark interest in this important issue and somewhere to reflect and remember loved ones.

#### 25.2. Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Brooks and Councillor Chambers

That Council Officers be instructed to consider options for appropriate signage to direct the public to the Camera Obscura in Donaghadee. That Council Officers should explore and consider opportunities for securing sponsorship for the signage from local businesses and organisations.

#### 25.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Gilmour, Councillor Hollywood, Councillor McClean and Councillor McKee

That this council notes that significant investment was previously made to deliver a play park, MUGA and amateur league sized football pitch on the Clandeboye road. Notes with regret there have been ongoing issues with the pitch. Instructs officers to reinstate the goalposts and mark out the pitch so that it can be played on by the local community.

Furthermore, following consultation with the local community, that a report is brought back regarding the longer-term maintenance and enhancement of the site, to ensure any necessary provisions can be considered during the rate setting process to ensure that the football pitch is fit for purpose and can be used as previously agreed.

#### 25.4 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Adair and Alderman Cummings

That Council notes the increasing complaints from local sports clubs regarding the poor annual summer maintenance of football pitches across the Borough and tasks officers to bring forward a report on options to improve the maintenance of our football pitches to ensure our pitches are maintained to a high standard to meet the sporting needs of local clubs and league requirements.

#### Circulated for Information

- (i) Consultation on The Executive Office Budget Allocation for 2024-2025 - Equality Impact Assessment, Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Children's Rights Impact Assessment (Copy correspondence attached)

**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

26. Civic and Office Rationalisation: Appointment of Business Case Consultants for Bangor Castle/North Down Museum (Report attached)
27. Proposal to create a War Memorial in Conlig (Report attached)
28. Potential Request from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - UK Shared Prosperity Fund (Report attached)

**MEMBERSHIP OF ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Alderman Adair	Councillor Harbinson
Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Councillor Hollywood
Alderman Brooks	Councillor S Irvine
Alderman Cummings	Councillor W Irvine
Alderman Graham	Councillor Irwin
Alderman McAlpine	Councillor Kennedy
Alderman McRandal	Councillor Kendall
Alderman McDowell	Councillor Kerr
Alderman McIlveen	Councillor McClean
Alderman Smith	Councillor McCollum
Councillor Ashe	Councillor McCracken
Councillor Blaney	Councillor McKee
Councillor Boyle	Councillor McKimm
Councillor Cathcart (Mayor)	Councillor McLaren
Councillor Chambers (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor Moore
Councillor Creighton	Councillor Morgan
Councillor Cochrane	Councillor Rossiter
Councillor Douglas	Councillor Smart
Councillor Edmund	Councillor Thompson
Councillor Gilmour	Councillor Wray



## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Ards and North Down Borough Council was held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor on Wednesday 31 July 2024 commencing at 7.00pm.

<b>In the Chair:</b>	The Mayor (Councillor Cathcart)	
<b>Aldermen:</b>	Adair	McAlpine
	Armstrong-Cotter	McDowell
	Brooks	McIlveen
	Graham	Smith
<b>Councillors:</b>	Ashe	Irwin
	Blaney	Kennedy
	Boyle	Kendall
	Creighton	Kerr (7.12pm)
	Cochrane	McClellan
	Douglas	McCracken
	Edmund	McKee
	Gilmour	McKimm
	Harbinson	Moore
	Hollywood	Rossiter
	S Irvine	Smart
	W Irvine	Thompson

**Officers:** Chief Executive (S McCullough), Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Interim Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Interim Director of Place (B Dorrian), Head of Communications and Marketing (C Jackson), Democratic Services Manager (J Wilson) and Democratic Services Officer (P Foster)

### 1. PRAYER

The Mayor (Councillor Cathcart) welcomed everyone to the meeting and commenced with the Chief Executive reading the Council prayer.

**NOTED.**

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Aldermen Cummings & McRandal and Councillors Chambers, McCollum, McLaren, Morgan & Wray.

**NOTED.**

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Mayor sought Declarations of Interest from members at this stage.

Councillor Kendall declared an interest in Item 6 - Deputation – Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations.

**NOTED.**

### **4. MAYOR'S BUSINESS**

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor began by extending his thanks and best wishes to Councillor Peter Martin who resigned from the Council earlier this month to take up the role as MLA in the Northern Ireland Assembly. He added that he would like to thank him for his service and wish him the very best in his new role. Furthermore he took the opportunity to welcome Councillor Carl McClean back to the Chamber in Peter Martin's place. The Mayor also commented on the recent General Election congratulating both Jim Shannon and Alex Easton on their election to Westminster as MPs.

Additionally, on behalf of the Council, he added that he would like to wish all the athletes, coaches and support staff who lived, trained and/or worked in the Borough, an enjoyable and successful trip to the Paris Olympics. Some of the representatives included athletes Ciara Mageean and Rachel McCann, dressage rider Abigail Lyle, golfer Rory McIlroy, gymnast Rhys McClenaghan, hockey players Michael Robson and Peter McKibbin, and swimmers Grace Davison and Victoria Catterson. Continuing he took this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication and commitment to their sports and the many sacrifices that had been made for competitors to be selected for the Games. He also made mention of friends and family who had supported the athletes on this incredible journey adding that he knew their followers would join him in wishing all local Olympians a safe and successful Games.

**NOTED.**

### **5. MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ENGAGEMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF JULY 2024**

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the month of July 2024.

The Mayor reported on his trip to the Somme at the beginning of July and continuing highlighted the many Regattas which he had attended throughout the Borough including The Narrows Series at Portaferry and Cockle Island Boat Club. Also of particular significance was the ongoing EurILCA 6 Youth European Championships and Open European Trophy taking place at Ballyholme Yacht Club where some 300 competitors from 37 nations were participating.

(Councillor Kerr entered the Chamber at this stage – 7.12pm)

Continuing the Mayor also reported on the recent Portaferry Gala Festival which had been themed to acknowledge the Olympics and he took the opportunity to wish Portaferry native Ciara Mageean good luck in her Olympic bid.

Finally he confirmed that at a Green Flags Awards Ceremony which had taken place earlier that day the Borough had been awarded a total of seven Green Flags and he congratulated all of those involved within the Council's Parks and Cemeteries Team.

At this stage Councillor Hollywood commented that it had been an honour to attend the Somme Pilgrimage with the Mayor and Chief Executive at the start of July and he thanked his colleagues for nominating him to attend.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the information be noted.**

(Councillor Kendall left the Chamber at this stage having declared an interest in the next item – 7.16pm)

## **6. DEPUTATION – NORTHERN IRELAND FEDERATION OF HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS** (Appendix II)

The Mayor welcomed Seamus Leheny, Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) and Carol McTaggart, Chief Executive of Clanmill Housing Association to the meeting and invited them to make their deputation.

Mr Leheny thanked members of the Council for the opportunity to attend the meeting and make their presentation. He then proceeded to guide members through a PowerPoint presentation outlining the role of Housing Associations throughout Northern Ireland, its financial contribution and existing housing types. It was noted that while 1,449 new social homes had been completed in 2023 there still remained concerns about the housing crisis in Northern Ireland and indeed across the entire United Kingdom. Mr Leheny commented that there remained many budgetary pressures which restricted the amount of homes which could be built and added that going forwards there would be more requirements for the provision of homes for those aged over 60.

At this stage Mr Leheny handed over to Ms McTaggart who proceeded to provide an overview of the Clanmill Housing Association and detailed its schemes within the Borough as well as the current housing need. She advised that the financial impact of social housing was immense with great investment made in respect of improvements and maintenance to existing homes. Sustainability was also of huge significance with 86% of its existing homes meeting the EPC rating of C. Ms McTaggart informed members that currently housing needs in the Borough saw

2,267 applicants currently in housing stress with current budgets only enabling 400 new homes to be built this year.

The Mayor thanked Mr Leheny and Ms McTaggart for their interesting and informative presentation and invited questions from members at this stage. The following comments were made.

Expressing his thanks for the presentation Councillor McKimm commented that up to 45% of his constituency casework was based around housing related issues. As such he asked if further breakdowns could be provided for the Borough detailing age and the number of people within each family.

Ms McTaggart confirmed that it was the number of households included in the figures rather than the number within each family.

Referring to the number of repairs reported Councillor McKimm sought clarification on how many remained outstanding adding that he would welcome further education on such matters by the Housing Associations and to learn how the Council could support them going forwards.

Ms McTaggart advised that those repair request figures had been obtained from the Housing Commission Prospectus drafted by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) which was publicly available however she indicated that she would be more than happy to provide a link for that to the Chief Executive. In respect of the housing repairs she suggested that perhaps Mr Leheny could provide that information to the Chief Executive. Continuing she welcomed Councillor McKimm's comments around providing further support and as such outlined four key asks which were:

- Housing Supply – Support requests to Ministers to make additional funding available
- Decarbonisation
- Sustainable Communities
- Make Housing a Stand Alone Outcome within the Programme of Government

Also expressing his thanks for the presentation Alderman Adair commented that the figures quoted were startling and he concurred with Councillor McKimm's comments around what else the Council could do to offer its support to Housing Associations. Continuing Alderman Adair commented on the gaps within his constituency where many of the homes being built were three bedrooms whereas many people were looking for smaller homes with two bedrooms. He added that there were also many pensioners who were keen to give up larger homes and downsize therefore freeing up larger homes for families. As such he asked if there was any consideration being given to pensioners or smaller families with the building of smaller homes.

In response Ms McTaggart advised that current builds were based upon families, singles and pensioners. She added that because currently the supply was not there it made it difficult to free up those larger homes for families and smaller homes for pensioners and that she stated was extremely challenging. Referring to the recent Census statistics Ms McTaggart noted that the number of people aged over 65 by

the year 2030 would outweigh the number of people aged under 16. As such she suggested that future thinking was needed to consider the type of homes being built going forward to ensure they were future proofed.

Alderman Adair asked if consideration could be given to those living in rural areas where there was very much a need for housing of this nature.

At this stage Councillor Boyle asked if there was a reason why Housing Associations were so slow to respond to repair requests. Secondly in respect of the distribution of housing Councillor Boyle asked who was responsible for the allocation of housing and if the Housing Associations worked together in collaboration with the NIHE.

In response Mr Leheny referred to KPIs which he stated were strictly regulated by the Department of Communities in respect of grant monies. Recent figures in respect of routine maintenance showed the KPI at 86% for repairs carried out on time while the KPI for emergency repairs was at 90%. He added that those figures were very similar to those of the NIHE. Continuing he advised that the big problem was that across Northern Ireland there were now only 14 contractors who actively tendered for maintenance work for both the NIHE and Housing Associations. As such there was a real shortage of labour as the result of it going to either London or over the border into the Republic of Ireland. He added that conversations were ongoing with the Construction Employers Federation in an attempt to secure more skilled labourers.

Ms McTaggart at this stage referred to the matter of allocations advising that those were carried out using the Housing Selection Scheme which was maintained by the NIHE and as such it was imperative that they worked collaboratively together.

Councillor W Irvine acknowledged the presentation which had been made and sought further clarification around the Housing Associations collaboration with community associations. He also sought an update on the ongoing development at the Savoy complex in Bangor.

Ms McTaggart reported that while there had been some delays with construction at the Savoy that had subsequently been resolved and work had recommenced which was progressing well. She added that they were hoping to reopen the scheme again at the end of the year and added that their customers remained in Block A. Continuing she stated that Clanmill took customer engagement very seriously and encouraged active aging with those within other Housing Associations adding that there were many examples where this was already successfully taking place.

Alderman McAlpine commented on the interesting but alarming presentation which had been made and continuing she referred to the repair statistics noting that 26,000 requests had been made for 6,000 homes. As such she asked how many of those requests were repeat requests.

Ms McTaggart indicated that she would report back on that in due course.

At this stage the Mayor took the opportunity to ask a number of questions. He noted that Mr Leheny had commented that the NIFHA was a good model because of its

borrowing powers however he was aware of the NIHE's intention to start building again. As such Councillor Cathcart asked if that would be considered to be the best use of public money.

In response Mr Leheny commented that Housing Associations had been building homes for almost 28 years and the way they were funded was that for every £100 received from the DfC they were able to obtain a further £84 through banks and pension funds. He added that private funding such as that was not available to the NIHE and therefore the Housing Associations were able to secure more money to build more homes. Mr Leheny added that he had written to Angela Rainer, Housing Minister to ask that any additional money from Barnett was ringfenced for housing in Northern Ireland.

The Mayor then referred to the large number of empty homes and asked if there was a strategy in place to consider them in an attempt to increase property numbers.

Ms McTaggart advised that to date Clanmill had brought 150 homes back into use throughout Northern Ireland adding however that the funding for that meant they could not be used for social housing. She added that Clanmill continued to work with the DfC and was hopeful more money would become available to enable more of that type of work to be undertaken given the large numbers currently on waiting lists.

As there were no more question from members the Mayor thanked Mr Leheny and Ms McTaggart for their presentation and wished them well for the future.

(Mr Leheny and Ms McTaggart left the Chamber at this stage – 7.46pm)

**NOTED.**

(Councillor Kendall returned to the Chamber at this stage – 7.47pm)

## **7. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING DATED 26 JUNE 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the minutes be signed as a correct record.**

## **8. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

### **8.1. Audit Committee dated 24 June 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Hollywood, seconded by Councillor Cochrane, that the minutes be approved and adopted.**

## **8.2. Planning Committee dated 2 July 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Item 4.1. - LA06/2024/0075/F - 6a Cultra Terrace, Holywood

Councillor Creighton stated that she had not proposed the recommendation and instead that it had been proposed by her colleague Councillor Morgan and as such she asked that the minutes be amended to reflect that.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the minutes be approved and adopted subject to the above amendment.**

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

### **9.1 The Executive Office – Truth Recovery Programme**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Consultation from The Executive Office – Truth Recovery Programme – Consultation available at: <http://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/truth-recovery-mother-and-baby-institutions-magdalene-laundries-and-workhouses-public-consultation> Responses to be submitted by 19 September 2024

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the consultation document.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.**

### **9.2. Department for the Economy – The ‘Good Jobs’ Employment Rights Bill**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Consultation from the Department for the Economy – The ‘Good Jobs’ Employment Rights Bill – Consultation available at: <https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/df/e/good-jobs-employment-rights-bill> Responses to be submitted by 30 September 2024

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the consultation document.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.**

### **9.3. Housing Executive – draft Community Safety Strategy 2025-2030**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Housing Executive – draft Community Safety Strategy 2025-2030 – Consultation available at <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/working-with-us/partners/consultations>. Responses to be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the consultation document.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**10. RESPONSE TO RESOLUTION – AUTISM WAITING TIMES IN NORTHERN IRELAND** (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive advising that at the Council meeting on 24 April 2024, Council discussed a resolution from Derry City and Strabane and agreed as follows:

*“That this Council acknowledges the unacceptable waiting times for autism assessments in Northern Ireland, causing significant hardship and developmental delays.*

*Council recognises that early intervention is critical for developing key skills in children with autism, yet the backlog hinders timely support, impacting individual potential and straining educational and healthcare services.*

*Council resolved to formally write to the Minister of Education and the Minister for Health to urgently develop and present a comprehensive business case outlining specific, actionable strategies to address and resolve this backlog. Including a detailed analysis of its impacts, clear reduction targets, proposed measures for ongoing assessments, and the necessary financial and staffing resources. This plan should involve and support families throughout the process.*

*Council demands immediate action and insists on a collaborative effort among the Minister for Health, Minister for Education, and Minister for Finance, together with key stakeholders to develop a detailed report on the business case and action plan, including a clear implementation timeline, within this mandate period to immediately address and resolve the existing backlog.”*

The Chief Executive wrote to the Minister for Health and the Minister of Education on 30 May 2024. The Minister for Health responded on 6 June 2024 and the Minister of Education responded on 13 June 2024, as attached.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

Councillor McKimm proposed, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer Councillor McKimm commented that through his professional work he witnessed on a daily basis the number of people affected by this backlog who were now being left behind in society as the result of the absence of a progressive programme of assessment.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McKimm, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.**



## **11. CHANGES TO THE STANDING ORDERS FILE CX210 (Appendix IV)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive stating that on 27 June 2024 the Chief Executive received a letter from the Department for Communities advising that the Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 had been approved, becoming operational from 25 June 2024. In order to allow remote meetings to take place, the Council must now update Standing Orders to govern remote attendance at Council and Committee meetings.

### **Changes to Standing Orders**

It was proposed to insert the following as Standing Order 29:

#### **29 Remote Attendance**

##### **29.1 Definition of remote attendance**

In line with the Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024, any reference in these Standing Orders to a Council or Committee meeting is not limited to a meeting of persons all of whom, or any of whom, are present in the same place and any reference to a "place" where a meeting is held, or to be held, includes reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations and web addresses.

##### **29.2 Elected Member remote attendance**

An Elected Member in remote attendance attends the meeting at any time provided they are able:

- (a) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard, and where practicable be seen by, the other Members in attendance;
- (b) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public in attendance in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and
- (c) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public in attendance.

##### **29.3 Press and public remote attendance**

Any reference in these Standing Orders to a member of the public or press being present at a meeting includes such persons attending by remote access, and the reference in Standing Order 8 [1] to every meeting being "open to the public and press" includes through enabling remote access. This also applies to deputations as per Standing Order 12[3].

##### **29.4 Voting when attending remotely**

Any vote that would otherwise be taken by a show of hands in line with Standing Order 21.4 will, if any of the Elected Members entitled to vote are in remote

attendance, be taken by way of a virtual show of hands from each Member as to whether they are for or against the motion.

### 29.5 Miscellaneous remote attendance provisions

References in Standing Orders 10 and 28 to excluding the public and press from the Council Chamber or removing them from the meeting room, shall be read as removing their remote access where their attendance is, or would be but for their exclusion, remote attendance.

There is no requirement for an Elected Member in remote attendance to stand when addressing the Presiding Chairperson in line with Standing Order 20.6.

A Presiding Chairperson in remote attendance shall call a meeting to order, rather than rise to do so, in line with Standing Order 20.19.

### 29.6 Remote meeting etiquette

An Elected Member in remote attendance must adhere to the following meeting protocols:

- Members should situate themselves in an environment which is free from distraction, and similar to the conditions in the Chamber;
- Members should be situated in a location befitting the meeting i.e. a private room with a closed door;
- Members should be alone, with the exception of any other Elected Member who is entitled to attend that meeting.
- It is essential that Members attending Council and Committee meetings prevent others from hearing the business of the meeting, especially that which is “in confidence”;
- Members must notify the Chair of the meeting if they are leaving the meeting and again on their return to the meeting;
- Members should conduct themselves in a manner as if they were in attendance in the Chamber;
- Members should attend from a location with a strong internet connection and should endeavour to test the connection and audiovisual prior to the meeting;
- Members must turn their camera on and it must remain on for the duration of the meeting;
- Members must remain on mute unless given the opportunity to speak by the Chair or when exercising their speaking rights in line with the Standing Orders.

The following additional amendments were required to Standing Orders Version 11 April 2024 to facilitate this:

- Renumber Standing order 29 as 30
- Renumber Standing Order 30 as 31
- Renumber Standing Order 31 as 32
- Change Standing Order 17.2 (m) reference to Standing Order 29 to Standing order 30.

- Amend the Glossary of Terms definition of “Remote access” to *“Remote access” means the ability to attend or participate in a meeting by electronic means, including by video conference, live webcasts, and live interactive streaming.*

It was proposed to insert the following at Annex 1:

#### Remote meetings

##### Committee Members taking part virtually in a Planning Committee Meeting

92. Members of the Planning Committee can participate via remote access in line with Standing Order 29

##### Members of the Public taking part virtually in a Planning Committee Meeting

93. Members of the public are welcome to speak about specific applications at Planning Committee meetings virtually in line with the “Public Speaking” section of this Annex. Registered speakers will be required to make their representations to the Committee using the Council’s selected virtual meeting platform.

94. Comments can only be made verbally; however, at the Chairman’s discretion you may be able to highlight something on the presentation by the planning officer if you wish to point out something of importance or clarify an issue.

95. If you think you may not be able to participate in the meeting but would like to submit representations, you can do this – it will be covered in the troubleshooting section of this document

96. When taking part virtually:

- Ensure you have the appropriate application installed on your device – you may be able to access via your web browser, but we recommend you download the app if you are able, using the store/site relevant to your device;
- Please ensure your Account Name is set up to reflect your full name, in order that the Host can identify you in the attendee list, and Members will be aware of who is speaking;
- Disconnect any non-essential devices from the internet, disable any applications you are not using on your computer / iPad / mobile device and turn off any streaming services;
- Ensure that your device is fully charged and that you have easy access to a charger to ensure you do not run out of battery;
- Choose a location in your home where you may take part in the meeting without being disturbed
- It is good practice to join 10-15 minutes prior to the meeting commencing, however you will only be able to see proceedings once the meeting has started to be broadcast

- Registered speakers must not activate their camera or microphone unless instructed by the Chair

In addition to the above changes to the Standing Orders to facilitate the Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024, the following addition to the Glossary of Terms is required to provide clarity:

Standing Orders Version 11 states:

“Working days” excludes Public or Bank holidays, a Saturday or a Sunday

The deadline in respect of call-in is 5.00 pm

The deadline for Notice of Motions is 11.59 pm

This shall be changed to read:

“Working days” excludes Public or Bank holidays, a Saturday or a Sunday

The deadline is 5.00pm except for in respect of Notice of Motions where the deadline is 11.59 pm

Amendment to Standing Order 17.1 [1] (additional text in red):

Notice of every motion, other than a motion which under Standing Order 17.2 may be moved without notice, shall be given in writing, signed by at least two Members of the Council giving the notice, to the Chief Executive not later than at least five working days before the next meeting of the Council. Each motion must have a proposer and seconder. The motion must be clear in meaning otherwise it shall be rejected until such time as it is resubmitted in clear language. Prior to lodging a notice of motion, Members should take the opportunity to engage with the relevant Director on current action being taken and options available to have the subject matter addressed including any budgetary implications. This may assist members in formulating the terms of notice of motion. The motion must be submitted no later than five working days before the meeting.

### **Making Changes to the Standing Orders**

Members should be aware when making these decisions, that under Standing Order 29.2 of Version 11, Any motion to, add to, vary or revoke these Standing Orders would when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned and be referred without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council and any resultant amendment will be ratified at an ordinary meeting of the Council.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees for these Standing Order additions and variations to stand adjourned and be referred, without discussion, to the next Council meeting on 28 August 2024.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **12. WHITESPOTS COUNTRY PARK UPDATE AND LETTER OF OFFER (FILE PCA104)** (Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community & Wellbeing advising that in October 2021, Council agreed to proceed to the next stage of the

development of Whitespots Country Park, in accordance with the Councils agreed vision for the park, which was:

“To create a unique open landscape, fully accessible Trails Experience of national significance, at the heart of Ards and North Down Borough, bringing the rich heritage of the site to life, through innovative infrastructure and interpretation whilst linking seamlessly for the visitor to the proposed Greenways Network and Cairn Wood and creating a gateway to Strangford Lough and the Ards Peninsula”.

In October 2021, Council agreed to the following

1. That officers produce an internal revenue Business Case and if approved this was to be used as part of the rate setting process in early 2022.
2. That officers carryout pre internal work associated with the procurement of consultants ahead subject to Business Case approval
3. Council uses the Levelling Up funding of £125,000 towards achieving planning permission for the Whitespots Scheme, (subject to UK Government approval)
4. The Council applies for capital funding in the region of £10 to £17m to the complimentary fund, application of which are due 1 September 2021

Subsequently, McAdam Design were appointed to oversee the detailed designs of the park based on the vision and masterplan that had been approved in 2020/21. A detailed design process was now underway and planning approval would be sought between Q3 of 2024 and Q4 of 2026.

This planning application would seek approval for all of the following development proposals. Council planned to implement those over three phases, as summarised in the table below.

Phase	Detail will include
Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgraded paths and trails</li> <li>• Review of access for Trial Bikes</li> <li>• A small Visitor Hub</li> <li>• Minor restoration of mining mine shafts and Windmill Stump</li> <li>• Enhancement of the Woodland</li> <li>• A new playground and car park upgrade</li> </ul>
Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viewing tower</li> <li>• Restoration of historic Chimney Stacks</li> <li>• The creation of new Woodland Areas</li> </ul>
Phase 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• zip wires</li> <li>• Adventure Playground and pump track</li> <li>• A high-ropes course</li> <li>• Elevated timber boardwalk</li> </ul>



At this stage Alderman Adair recalled the initial meetings which had taken place during the Covid-19 Pandemic at which his colleague Michelle McIlveen MLA along with the Chief Executive and Interim Director of Place had been in attendance. He suggested that those meetings had been game changers and would help to ensure the project a success. Alderman Adair also welcomed the investment which had been committed to the project.

At this stage Alderman Graham referred to the Trial Bike activity which was very popular at Whitespots Country Park and asked if the retention of those facilities was part of the considerations going forwards.

In response the Director of Community & Wellbeing confirmed that Trial Bikes were included within the plans going forward as part of the overall project.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the recommendation be adopted.**

### **13. APPLICATION FOR INDOOR ENTERTAINMENT LICENCES**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment advising that applications had been received for the Grant of an Entertainment Licence as follows:

#### **1. The King's Quay 9-11 King Street, Bangor, BT20 3AH**

**Applicant:** Elizabeth Bonhomme, 10 Upper Crescent, Belfast, BT7 1 NT

**Days and Hours:** Monday-Sunday, 11 am to 11pm (Licensed premises)

**Type of entertainment:** Dancing, singing or music or any other entertainment of a like kind.

There were no objections received from the PSNI or NIFRS.

Environmental Health had requested an Acoustic Report which had been provided. They had no objection to the application provided the following Terms and Conditions were applied to the licence (a copy of their report was attached):

As such, the following conditions should be attached if the entertainment licence was to be granted:

1. All mitigation measures or Noise Control Measures recommended by the acoustic consultant and outlined in the Noise Impact Assessment should be adhered to.
2. In the event of a late liquor licence being granted, Entertainment shall be restricted to an end time of midnight.
3. Sound levels shall be restricted to 85 dB LAeq (five minutes), two meters from the sound source.
4. The music shall only be of an easy listening nature with no heavy bass tones.

5. When entertainment was taking place, the ability to talk or to hear what a person was saying should also be used by a competent person to gauge the sound level. If talking or hearing what was said became difficult, the sound level was too high.
6. Periodically, a competent member of staff should patrol the exterior of the premises and at the nearest dwellings assess the overall sound levels. Specifically, the bass levels shall be considered and if the sound and bass levels were distinctly audible and likely to cause disturbance then they would ensure that the entertainment providers lowered the volume.
7. If, following monitoring of entertainment by the Council's Environmental Health Service, there appeared to be unreasonable disturbance, the noise level stated in Condition 3 above may be reduced and/or the licensee may be required to re-engage their noise consultant to propose what further mitigation measures may be required. Any necessary mitigation measures shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the Council officers.

## **2. Londonderry Park Pavilion- Londonderry Park, Newtownards, BT23 5EU**

**Applicant:** Ally McArthur, Ards and North Down Borough Council, 2 Church Street, Newtownards.

**Days and Hours:** Monday-Sunday, 9am to 1am

**Type of entertainment:** Dancing, singing or music or any other entertainment of a like kind.

There were no objections to this application.

## **3. The Commons Pavilion, Millisle Road, Donaghadee, BT21 OHZ**

**Applicant:** Ally McArthur, Ards and North Down Borough Council, 2 Church Street, Newtownards.

**Days and Hours:** Monday-Sunday, 9am to 1am

**Type of entertainment:** Dancing, singing or music or any other entertainment of a like kind.

There were no objections to this application.

RECOMMENDED that:

1. Council grants the licence in respect of The King's Quay
2. Council grants the licence in respect of the Londonderry Park Pavilion
3. Council grants the licence in respect of The Commons Pavilion

Councillor Boyle proposed, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.



The proposer Councillor Boyle noted the issues which had been raised in respect of the first application for the King’s Quay and welcomed the common sense approach which had been adopted.

Alderman Graham asked for him to be recorded as not being in support of Entertainment Licences being issued for venues for Sunday trading.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of, Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**14. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS FORUM GRANTS** (Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing stating that members would be aware that on the 26 August 2015 Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £45,000 had been allocated within the 2023/2024 revenue budget for this purpose.

The Council further authorised the Forum under delegated powers to award grants of up to £250. Grants above £250 still required Council approval. In addition, the Council requested that regular updates were reported to members.

During May 2024, the Forum received a total of 21 applications: 1 Anniversary, 3 Coach Education, 2 Equipment, 2 Event, 1 Goldcard and 12 Individual Travel/Accommodation Grants. A summary of the 19 successful applications were detailed in the attached Successful Anniversary, Successful Coach Education, Successful Equipment, Successful Event and Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation Appendices.

For information, the annual budget and spend to date on grant categories was as follows:

<b>2024/25 Budget £45,000</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Proposed Funding Awarded May 2024</b>	<b>Remaining Budget</b>
Anniversary	£1,000	*£750	<b>-£749.90</b>
Coach Education	£3,000	*£1,105	<b>£1,638.75</b>
Equipment	£14,000	*£1,466.87	<b>£11,533.13</b>
Events	£6,000	*£1,000	<b>£2,637.89</b>
Seeding	£500	£0	<b>£500</b>
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£1,818.96	<b>£2,099.54</b>
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	<b>£1,000</b>
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	<b>£5,000</b>
<b>0 Goldcard Awarded in May (5 Goldcards in total during 2024/25)</b>			

\*The proposed remaining budget for Anniversary of -£749.90 was based on a proposed award this month of £750.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Coach Education of £1,638.75 was based on a proposed award this month of £1,105.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of £11,533.13 was based on a proposed award this month of £1,466.87.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Events of £2,637.89 was based on a proposed award this month of £1,000 and a withdrawn amount of £317.94.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of £2,099.54 was based on a proposed award this month of £1,818.96, a withdrawn amount of £200 and a reclaimed amount of £17.50

The proposed remaining budget for 2024/25 was £23,659.41 (47% of the 2024/25 budget spent).

RECOMMENDED that that Council approves the attached applications for financial assistance for sporting purposes valued at above £250, and that the applications approved by the Forum (valued at below £250) are noted.

Councillor Boyle proposed, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer Councillor Boyle stated that the more success the Borough enjoyed the more funding would be required through the Sports Forum Grants.

Concurring with those comments Councillor Kendall welcomed the report adding that it was important to support the potential sporting legends of the future.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **15. NOM REPORT BALLYWALTER ROAD CAR PARK, MILLISLE**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment stating that at the June Council meeting the following Notice of Motion was agreed:

*“That Council tasks Officers to bring forward urgent proposals for ground maintenance to address the poor and unkept condition of Millisle Beach Park in order to ensure the area is clean, tidy and well-kept to welcome visitors to Kite Festival to be hosted in Millisle by the Ards Peninsula village partnership on August 26th. Further Council bring forward a report on actioning repairs to disability access to Millisle and Portavogie Beaches following recent storm damage.”*

## **1. Condition of the Car Park**

Whilst the Notice of Motion specifically mentioned Millisle Beach Park, it was actually referring to the Ballywalter Road Car Park. Members should note that Council undertook an extensive programme of maintenance at this location and the area was generally well maintained given the resources available.

The following works take place on a routine basis at Ballywalter Road Car Park:

- Fortnightly litter picks
- Routine mechanical sweeping
- Emptying of bins three times a week
- Regular maintenance and vandalism repairs of the public toilets
- Routine clearing of wind-blown sand from the seaward side (in line with NIEA approval)
- Routine condition inspections of both the car park and public toilets
- £45,000 was spent resurfacing the busier end of the car park, adjacent to the toilets (in 2021)

## **2. Sand build-up along the road-side of the Car Park**

Whilst the annual NIEA approval covered the removal of sand from the seaward side of the car park, it did not cover the road-side. This sand had built up over many years (even prior to Council ownership in 2015).

Since the car park had approximately 200 spaces still available, and was never full, it was not thought best use of available resources to remove the sand to free up additional spaces.



*Google Maps image showing the areas of routinely cleared sand, and the area in which spaces have been lost.*

### **3. Repairs to Access ramps to Millisle and Portavogie Beaches following recent storm damage**

The ramped access to Millisle and Portavogie beaches were not disabled access and had never been designed as such. The ramps had recently suffered from tidal erosion, leaving a drop to the sand at the end where the concrete finishes. Due to the environmental sensitivities and protections in place, advice was sought from NIEA who confirmed that they would not permit additional concrete to be poured to extend the ramps. Furthermore, the end of the ramp at Portavogie Beach was not on Council land, so therefore could not be extended without approval by the landowner, even if permission was granted by NIEA.

At the Millisle ramp, officers had been repositioning sand and rock from the beach to build the levels back up to previous levels and remove the drop. Over the winter, periodic storms had washed those away but the last effort to address this, in April, still remained largely in place.

Neither beach lent itself to accessible access due to the presence of large rocks and soft, uneven sand. Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Council was required to make “reasonable adjustments” to improve the accessibility of Council property. Council had tried numerous times to make the beach more accessible, but due to the natural environment with shifting sand and large rocks, those areas would never be truly accessible, thus officers believed Council’s legal obligations had been met.

#### 4. Further Improvements and Associated Costs

Given the imminent Kite festival at Millisle and the anticipated large crowd in attendance, members may wish to add to the existing c330 spaces (c200 at the car park plus approximately 130 at the adjacent Beach Park).

Since the matter was first raised with officers, permission had been sought, and granted by NIEA and a price/methodology from the Council's term contractor had been obtained.

The work would include scraping back the top of the windblown sand to remove weeds and other contaminants. This waste would be transported offsite to an appropriately licensed facility. The remaining sand could then be deposited back onto Millisle beach and used to build up the sand around the ramped access, in the hope of slowing the erosion and subsequent exposure of the end of the ramp.

The estimated cost of this work was approximately £13,000 but the actual cost would vary depending on the amount of waste to be disposed of off-site and the overall time taken to do the work. However, no budget currently existed for this work, meaning other works would have to be omitted to accommodate it. It should be noted that due to the coastal location of the carpark, the sand would build up again over time and would therefore require yearly removal if Council were minded to do so.

If approved, this work could take place prior to the Kite festival on 26 August 2024.

RECOMMENDED that Council decide if they wish to proceed with the above-mentioned works at a cost of approximately £13,000.

Alderman Adair proposed, seconded by Councillor Kerr, that Council proceed with the above mentioned works at a cost of approximately £13,000 and furthermore that Council write to NIEA to request a site meeting to discuss the need to repair access to beaches at Cloughey, Millisle and Portavogie.

The proposer, Alderman Adair stated that he believed this was the most cost-effective way of getting this work carried out in advance of the Ards Peninsula Kite Festival which would take place in Millisle on the Bank Holiday in August. He noted that in previous years this event had attracted thousands of visitors and as such it was important that locations such as this were accessible and welcoming. Continuing he commented that he was aware that the car park in Millisle was in a very sorry state with almost 91 car parking spaces currently covered by sand as well as noxious weeds. As such he would ask members to support the proposal for the work which needed to be done, particularly as at a recent constituency surgery held in Millisle that was the number one issue which had been raised with him.

Continuing Alderman Adair reminded members that this Borough had the largest coastline in Northern Ireland and therefore the jewel in its crown should be its beaches. As such he stressed the importance of working in tandem with those other statutory agencies to get the beaches cleaned up for the benefit of those living and visiting the Borough. He added that the Ards Peninsula Village Partnership had put

in a great deal of effort preparing for the Kite Festival and he therefore encouraged members to support his proposal.

Referring to the second part of his proposal Alderman Adair commented that it was to write to the NIEA in relation to the access to the beaches at Millisle, Portavogie and Cloughey. The access at Millisle and Portavogie had been eroded while the access at Cloughey needed to be formalised. Continuing he reported that many constituents were being affected by this coastal erosion issue and as such he believed it was the Council's responsibility to make the Borough's beaches as accessible as possible for all. As such he suggested that a site meeting with NIEA would be useful particularly given the regulations they had in place in respect of matters such as this. He asked members to support his proposal as put forward.

Commenting as seconder Councillor Kerr stated that he had recently visited the car park at Millisle and agreed that the sand and weeds were the first thing that you saw as you drove in. He also noted the presence of ragwort which was very harmful to a variety of animals and as such he would have concerns with its presence there. He added that he would welcome the commencement of the works as soon as possible on site to show off the great beauty and potential of Millisle village.

Alderman Smith indicated that he had a number of questions which he wished to ask particularly as this had not been budgeted for and he was therefore keen to establish if there was a need for this money to be spent. His first question was concerning the remaining 200 spaces which were not covered in sand and if those would be adequate for normal use within the area and furthermore if the additional spaces referred to were required for this one off event.

In response, the Chief Executive confirmed that the current capacity of the upper and lower car park was sufficient for everyday use and that was why this work had not been carried out to date. However the Kite Festival was a large one off event and if members were so minded to have that extra capacity for this event it would be greatly welcomed by the event organisers. In relation to the request for the budget she advised that she had been informed that the £13,000 required could come out of current budgets but the challenge would then be if that would reduce their budgets for ongoing maintenance elsewhere.

Alderman Smith asked if the Council did undertake the work would that stop a repeat of the sand coming back again if it was maintained on an annual basis.

The Chief Executive stated that it was her understanding that the Council currently obtained a yearly licence to remove the sand in one section of the car park and could also request a licence for this section as well. She added that if the Council was minded to do so that it could be built into the rates process to remove the sand from both sides of the car park and ensure a budget was in place for that on an annual basis. It was noted that would also be dependent upon obtaining NIEA approval for this.

Rising to ask his final question Alderman Smith asked if no action was taken would there be a danger that the sand build up and weeds would encroach into other car parking spaces, thereby reducing the number of car parking spaces available.

The Chief Executive indicated the section of the car park being referred to had been like this for a considerable length of time, highlighting the maintenance challenges due to the coastal location.

Councillor Boyle expressed caution with what was being proposed particularly as it had not been budgeted for, however he recognised that the Kite Festival was very much a growing Festival. As such he suggested that consideration was given to setting aside an appropriate budget for this on an annual basis and added that he was supportive of the proposal which had been put forward. He also acknowledged the comments around tourism and promoting tourism throughout the Borough adding that the sum of money required to be spent would in his opinion be money well spent for the continued success of the Kite Festival.

At this stage Alderman McAlpine suggested that the Council went back to Dfl regarding the poor maintenance of its car park at this location.

The Chief Executive responded stating that she did not believe that it was a transfer from Dfl however she indicated that she would look into that.

Continuing Alderman McAlpine commented as a member of the Ards Peninsula Village Partnership which ran the Kite Festival and noted that it had been estimated they had 7,000 visitors last year to Ballywalter where Lord Dunleath had given them the use of a field to park cars in and it was estimated there were some 900 cars parked there at Dunleath Estate. Continuing she referred to a test which had been carried out on approximately 2,000 visitors to the Festival last year and it was noted that 61% were from the Borough, 37% from elsewhere in Northern Ireland and 2% were international visitors. It was further noted that 21 stall holders had been in attendance along with 40 volunteers and Alderman McAlpine stated that this was a massive undertaking mainly by volunteers. As such, she felt it was important for the Council to support it and while acknowledging the concerns which had been raised she felt the unwavering dedication of so many volunteers warranted the support of the Council.

Councillor McKimm stated that what was being considered was as the result of the reclamation of nature adding that what was being suggested was to support a growing festival. He commented that this decision would then lead the Council into a situation where other decisions would also be taken around future rate setting. As such he indicated that his question was around those mechanisms and processes, adding that the wider issues of nature reclamation and climate change were issues which the Council did not air as often as it should. Referring to projection maps for the Ards Peninsula in 25 years' time, those did depict huge amounts of flooding and coastal erosion and therefore in the context of this particular debate he queried what the future process would be for consideration of future spend. Continuing he also asked what the process was for further consideration of matters such as this going forwards.

In response, the Chief Executive confirmed there was a Coastal Erosion Group already in place which many members of the local community sat on which lobbied central government along with the various powers to be. Continuing she



acknowledged that future mapping did indicate significant parts of the Peninsula which could suffer from coastal erosion.. It was noted that the Director of Environment had recently attended a Northern Ireland wide group meeting to look at this matter and reports of that nature would be brought to the attention of members.. In relation to the decision making process for future budgets the Chief Executive indicated that she had been assured by the Head of Service that if members were minded to proceed with the decision this evening that cost could be built in with further discussions to take place as part of the rates setting process.

In response Councillor McKimm suggested that this demonstrated how much future rate setting processes would be influenced by coastal erosion and rising sea levels. He added that he looked forward to such matters being further debated in due course by the Council.

At this stage Councillor Thompson recalled at a previous meeting he had had with members of the Ards Peninsula Village Partnership and noted that the Festival itself had taken place over the past five years at various locations throughout the Ards Peninsula. This year it was the turn of Millisle to host it however the sand build up had occurred over a number of years and what was being proposed would see the recovery of existing car parking spaces. Continuing, he stated that if over 7,000 people were to arrive in Millisle for the Festival there would be a problem with car parking if it was not organised properly. Tourism was also an important factor to be taken into consideration with people coming from near and far to attend the Festival and as such he encouraged full support for what was being proposed.

Acknowledging the work undertaken by all those volunteers involved with the Kite Festival, Councillor Smart reminded members of the current small budget in place for car park maintenance. He added that he was aware of many car parks currently in Newtownards which were losing money on a daily basis as the result of overgrown vegetation and as such he would have concerns if that budget was to decrease without consultation. He asked if that matter could be brought to Committee prior to any decision being taken.

The Chief Executive indicated that the challenge with this would be the ability to accommodate the Kite Festival and as such a decision needed to be made this evening as the Festival was scheduled to take place within a number of weeks. However she indicated that she would ask the Director to bring forward an update on car park maintenance through the Environment Committee.

Councillor Smart acknowledged that adding that his concern was ensuring the funding being referred to would come from Council reserves or existing budgets and he was content for that discussion to happen after a decision was taken to spend.

Rising to sum up, Alderman Adair expressed his thanks to members for their support particularly as £13,000 was a large amount of money required. He stated that due to the build-up of sand and weeds at the car park this amount of money was now required to clear it and he hoped that going forwards the Council could be more proactive to ensure that it would not be necessary to spend a similar amount in the future. Carrying out the works now would ensure the car park could be fully utilized during the Kite Festival and promote the Borough as being clean and vibrant.



Alderman Adair took the opportunity to thank Councillor McKimm for his contribution adding that contact had been made with a number of other Councils throughout Northern Ireland which also managed coastlines to get a steer on what practices they had adopted to deal with matters such as this. Continuing Alderman Adair thanked members for their support for the proposal which he hoped would turn a negative into a positive.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Kerr, that Council proceed with the above-mentioned works at a cost of approximately £13,000 and furthermore that Council write to NIEA to request a site meeting to discuss the need to repair access to beaches at Cloughey Millisle and Portavogie.**

**16. STREET NAMING - CASTLE LANE MEWS, COMBER FILE FP/2024/1671/MAST / 91200**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of the Environment stating that a small development comprising of thirteen dwellings, being six houses and seven apartments, were currently under construction on lands to the rear of 23-61 Castle Street, Comber.

The entrance to the new development was accessed off Castle Lane. The developer had suggested the name Castle Lane Mews for the new development which was in keeping with the general neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDED that the street name of Castle Lane Mews be adopted for this development.

That the Council accepts the general name and delegates acceptance of suffixes to the Building Control department.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Douglas, seconded by Alderman Smith, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**17. NOMINATION TO TRUSTEES ON NORTHERN COMMUNITY LEISURE TRUST**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive stating that places on working groups and most outside bodies were filled through nomination at the Council's Annual Meeting and were thus held by individual members rather than Parties. When a position became vacant, it reverted back to Council to nominate a member to fill the place rather than Party Nominating Officers.

Following the resignation of Councillor Martin a place had now become available on the Northern Community Leisure Trust. The Council was represented by two Trustees, the other Trustee was Councillor W Irvine. A nomination was sought from the Council to fill the above vacancy for the remainder of the four-year term.

RECOMMENDED that Council nominate a Member as a Trustee on Northern Community Leisure Trust for the remainder of the term.

(Councillor Kendall re-entered the Chamber at this stage – 8.32pm)

Councillor Irwin proposed, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that Councillor McCracken be nominated as a Trustee on the Northern Community Leisure Trust.

Alderman McIlveen proposed, seconded by Alderman Adair, that Councillor Thompson be nominated as a Trustee on the Northern Community Leisure Trust.

The Chief Executive suggested that the Council could write to the Northern Community Leisure Trust seeking permission to appoint a further two members for the remainder of the term.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor Moore, that Council write to the Northern Community Leisure Trust seeking permission to appoint a further two members as Trustees for the remainder of the term (this being three members in total).**

## **18. SEALING DOCUMENTS**

**RESOLVED: - On the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the Seal of the Council be affixed to the following documents:-**

- (a) Grant of Rights of Burials: D40526-D40569
- (b) Contract for Funding in respect of Whitespots Country Park
- (c) Wayleave relating to Portaferry Public Realm scheme - Mr Colum O'Neill, 30-31 The Square, Portaferry
- (d) Contract Award for Ards to Green Road Greenway Works.
- (e) Lease ANDBC to Officer bearers of Bangor and North Down Camera Club of premises at 100 Ward Avenue, Bangor.
- (f) Ards and North Down Off-Street Parking (Public Car Parks) Order 2024

## **19. TRANSFER OF RIGHTS OF BURIAL**

Transfers received as detailed below:

**Transfer:** Sarah Davidson to William Gabbey  
Comber Section 25 plot 106

**Transfer:** Rosemary Boal to Helen Boal  
Movilla Section 14 plot 29

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Kerr, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the transfers be approved.**

## **20. NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS REPORT**

(Appendix VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Interim Chief Executive attaching Notice of Motion Status Report.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

**AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business.**

## **21. TENDERS FOR THE PROVISION OF EXTERNAL CLEANING AND TANKERAGE SERVICES – FILE 77001**

**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON**

A report on a contract for the Provision of External Cleaning and Tankerage Services was considered.

It was agreed that the existing contract with AM Powerwashing be extended for a further 12 months in line with the terms set out in the original tender.

The recommendation was agreed.

## **22. LAND PURCHASE AT WHITESPOTS – FILE PCU27**

(Appendix VIII)

**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE - 4. Exemption: consultations or negotiations**

It is recommended that Council agree to acquire the Land at the increased valuation as recommended by LPS.

The recommendation was agreed.

### **23. WARD PARK BANGOR JUNE 2025 – LICENCE AGREEMENT**

(Appendix IX)

**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

Exemption 5: a claim to legal professional privilege

Council have been asked to agree to the use of a portion of Ward Park, Bangor along with the Valentine playing fields, Bangor by MCD who are proposing to host a major event on Saturday 7th June 2025.

The recommendation was agreed.

### **24. RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANT SCHEME 2024/25 FILE RDP19**

**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE  
FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON  
(INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

#### **SUMMARY**

The report provides Council with the background, objectives, and timeframe that Regeneration aims to assist in the delivery of the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme in the Borough. The scheme will be funded as part of the Department of Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs (DAERA) as part of the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI) and will support the sustainability and growth of rural micro businesses. Pre application workshops and call in is anticipated to begin in September 2024 and the completion of the scheme is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

The recommendation was agreed.

## **25. DFC FUNDING APPLICATION – URBAN REGENERATION PROGRAMME 2024-25 – FILE RDP43**

**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

### **SUMMARY**

The report details an application submitted to Department of Communities (DfC) by Regeneration on behalf of Council to potentially secure capital funding to complete a suite of Urban Regeneration Programmes aimed at achieving continual growth, development, and revitalisation within the 4 towns and city. An ambitious Action Plan is included in the application which details 3 distinct strands of works aligned to Masterplans and the aspiration of improving the aesthetic and economic outlook across the Borough. Officers have projects and processes in place so that if the application is successful works can commence in a timely manner to meet the deadline of 31 March 2025.

The recommendation was agreed.

## **26. GREENWAY – ACQUISITION OF DFI LAND** (Appendix X)

**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

Exemption 3: relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person

Council was asked to agree to acquiring land required for the development of the Greenway from the Floodgates to Green Road via its own vesting procedure.

The recommendation was agreed.

## **27. GREENWAY – FLOODGATES TO GREEN ROAD UPDATE FILE CW30**(Appendix XI)

**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – EXEMPTION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS IF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON.**

A report was presented to Council detailing an update on the Greenways project.

The report recommended that Council signs the contract with the appointed tenderer, approves the updated OBC and signs the letter of offer for funding

The recommendation was agreed and a request for a letter to the Minister for Infrastructure was approved.

**28. BANGOR WATERFRONT (PICKIE FUN PARK) – APPOINTMENT OF INTEGRATED CONSULTANCY TEAM -FILE PCU 43**

**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

**SUMMARY**

Report in respect of the Appointment of the Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) Services for Pickie Fun Park as part of the Bangor Waterfront Redevelopment.

The recommendation was agreed.

**29. KINNEGAR LOGISTICS BASE UPDATE**

**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

**SUMMARY**

Report detailing Council's recently completed Strategic Outline Case for the potential purchase and regeneration of the former Kinnegar Military Logistics Base at Holywood. The report also provides a copy of the completed D1 Questionnaire and relevant financial information from the MOD.

The recommendation was agreed.

**RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

In relation to the items detailed as in confidence, the Mayor reminded members that the information contained without those reports should not be shared.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.**

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 9.02 pm.

**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A meeting of the Planning Committee was held in the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Tuesday 6 August 2024 at 7.00 pm.

**PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Alderman McIlveen

**Aldermen:** Graham  
McDowell  
Smith

**Councillors:** Cathcart      McCollum  
Creighton      McKee  
Harbinson      McLaren  
Kendall      Rossiter

**Officers:** Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Head of Planning (G Kerr), Senior Professional and Technical Officers (A Todd and C Rodgers), and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Councillor Kerr, Councillor Morgan and Councillor Wray.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Rossiter declared an interest in Item 4.2 - LA06/2024/0261/F

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF 02 JULY 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above.

NOTED.

**4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**4.1 LA06/2023/2501/F – SINGLE STOREY REAR GARDEN ANNEX FOR ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION 26 RHANBUOY PARK, HOLYWOOD**

(Appendices I - II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer’s report.



**DEA:** Hollywood and Clandeboye

**Committee Interest:** Called in by Alderman Graham

**Proposal:** Single storey rear garden annex for ancillary accommodation

**Site Location:** 26 Rhanbuoy Park, Hollywood

Outlining the case officer's report, Senior Planner (A Todd) explained that Item 4.1 was an application seeking full planning permission for the erection of a single storey rear garden annex for ancillary accommodation at 26 Rhanbuoy Park, Hollywood.

The application had been brought before Planning Committee following a call-in request from Alderman Graham who was concerned that there was a likelihood that the detached nature of the annex would cause noise nuisance to neighbouring residents.

Alderman Graham had referred to Para 2.9 of the Addendum to PPS7 which stated that to be considered ancillary, accommodation should be subordinate to the main dwelling and normally accessible from it. He had also referred to para A49 of the Addendum which stated that accommodation should be designed to demonstrate dependency on the main residence. Alderman Graham was of the view that the proposed annex did not provide limited accommodation and shared facilities as it had a living room, double bedroom, ensuite bathroom and kitchen area.

Referring to images of the site location, the officer explained that it was located in a built-up residential area of detached dwellings within the development limit of Hollywood.

The existing dwelling had a split-level design and there was an enclosed private garden area to the rear consisting of a lawn and patio area.

The rear boundaries were defined by fencing, shrubs and hedgerows. One of the slides presented showed the boundary treatment with the objector's adjacent property at No. 28 comprising shrubs and trees as well as a close boarded fence.

Explaining the proposed location of the annex and its internal floor plan - the accommodation would be detached from the main dwelling but it would be positioned immediately to the rear of the dwelling's existing return which had a door and steps down to the garden and would allow easy access between the dwelling and annex. Adequate space would be retained between the annex and the party boundaries with approx. 1.2m to the boundary with No. 24 and approx. 7.1m to the boundary with No. 28. An adequate area of private amenity space to serve the dwelling would still be retained to the front of the proposed annex. The annex would provide 38sqm of accommodation to include a small living/kitchen area, bedroom and ensuite.

A further slide showed the proposed elevations of the annex. A flat roof design with a height of just over 3m was proposed and the finished floor level of the annex would also sit slightly below that of the host dwelling. These design features would help to ensure that the overall visual impact of the building on neighbouring properties would be kept to a minimum. Given the single storey design, lower finished floor level and existing boundary treatments, the Planning Department was satisfied that there would be no unacceptable adverse impact on either of the adjacent properties at No. 24 or No.28 by way of loss of light, dominance or loss of privacy.

The Planning Department was satisfied that the proposed development complied with all of the main criteria (a) – (d) of Policy EXT1. However, the objector to the application who resided in No. 28 to the immediate north of the site had raised specific concerns in relation to potential noise and disturbance as a result of the development. In particular, the objector was concerned that as their bedroom was located close to the boundary with the application site, there would be the potential for disruption to sleep. Regard must be had to criterion (b) of the policy in this respect, which required that a proposal must not *unduly* affect the privacy or amenity of neighbouring residents. Paragraph A38 of the Justification & Amplification to Policy EXT1 addressed the matter of noise and general disturbance however this focused on features such as balconies, roof terraces or high-level decking which were often used as outdoor spaces for entertaining and could lead to noise and disturbance due to gatherings of larger numbers of people at an elevated height.

The current proposal was for internal living accommodation for two elderly relatives. This was not comparable to raised roof terraces or balconies often used for outdoor entertaining.

The officer showed photos taken from the rear of No. 28 and the position of the objector's bedroom window near the party boundary with No. 26. While it is acknowledged that there would be regular movement of the occupants between the proposed annex and the main house, the Planning Department did not consider that this would in itself create any unacceptable impact by way of noise or disturbance. Many residential properties have garages or outbuildings located within rear gardens which are accessed on a regular basis for a variety of reasons and it is not considered that the annex would result in any significantly greater impact. While there is the potential for people to access the annex along the side path adjacent to No. 28, again, it is not considered that this in itself would result in any unacceptable degree of noise or disturbance to No. 28 beyond that which would be expected within any built-up urban area.

In determining proposals for planning permission, another material consideration for the decision maker must be to have regard to what development could be erected under permitted development rights. In this case, under Class D of The Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, a detached building could be erected under permitted development rights within the rear garden of the application site and used for a variety of different purposes including for example as a garden room for outdoor entertaining, as a home office, for various hobbies or for the keeping of animals. The Planning Department did not consider that the proposed use of the building as ancillary residential accommodation for two elderly relatives would create any greater noise or disturbance than the level of noise that could potentially be associated with other uses for a building incidental to the dwelling which could be allowed under permitted development.

Alongside the main policy considerations of EXT1, the Justification and Amplification (J&A) contains specific advice relevant to ancillary accommodation. Para 2.8 acknowledges that there may be occasions when people wish to provide ancillary accommodation for elderly relatives or to meet a variety of other personal or domestic circumstances.

The J&A went on to explain that to be ancillary, the accommodation must be subordinate to the main dwelling. It is advised that the accommodation should *normally* be attached to the main dwelling however this is not essential.

Para 2.10 requires the accommodation provided to be modest in scale to ensure the use of the building as part of the main dwelling. The policy also stated that the construction of a separate building as self-contained accommodation would not be acceptable, unless a separate dwelling would be granted permission in its own right.

The Planning Department did not consider that the proposed accommodation could be described as self-contained or capable of being used as a separate stand-alone residence. The annex would be positioned in extremely close proximity to the main dwelling (within just 1m) and with shared amenity space, access and parking, the annex would not be suitable as a separate stand-alone residential unit and could not operate practically and viably on its own. Furthermore, due to the split-level design of the existing dwelling, an extension instead of the proposed detached annex would have a significantly greater impact on adjoining properties. It could be seen from the photo on slide 10, an extension would either have to be built from the basement level which would be much closer to the objectors at No. 28 or from the upper level of the rear return which would necessitate a much taller structure, resulting in a significantly greater impact on both adjacent properties at Nos. 24 and 28.

In addition to the objections received from No. 28, four letters of support had been received from the applicant's mother-in-law who would be residing in the annex, two care workers and the occupants of No. 24. These confirmed that the applicant's elderly parents already lived in the family home and had done so since 2022 but space was extremely limited. As the applicants wished to be able to continue to care for their parents at home, the additional accommodation in the form of the annex was sought.

As per the policy advice, approval had been recommended subject to planning conditions stipulating that the development should not be used at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as 26 Rhanbuoy Park, Hollywood, and that the development could not be separated, sold off or leased from the property.

In considering proposals, the decision maker also had a duty to have regard to any pertinent planning decisions made by the appellate body, the Planning Appeals Commission. In assessing applications for ancillary accommodation in recent years, the Planning Department had regard to planning appeal decision 2015/E0053. This was an appeal against an alleged breach of planning control for an unauthorised dwelling at 13 Newton Road, Newry which was subsequently allowed by the PAC. An image of the building which was the subject of this appeal was shown to the Committee. In this case, the PAC acknowledged that while the appeal building was self-contained, there was no physical boundary between it and the main dwelling and as such, there was freedom of movement between both. Furthermore, the garden area was shared between the two buildings as was the parking space. Accordingly, it was considered that there had been no sub-division of the planning unit to create an independent dwelling. Rather, the evidence indicated that the structure functioned as ancillary accommodation.

This building was significantly larger and provided a much greater scale of accommodation than that currently proposed at 26 Rhanbuoy Park.

Other appeals for similar ancillary accommodation had also since been allowed by the PAC in more recent years therefore the PAC continue to apply this interpretation of the policy, considering detached accommodation of this scale to be acceptable subject to conditions restricting their use.

It was also of note that Planning Committee had previously approved similar proposals for detached ancillary accommodation at 5b Killinchy Road, Comber, and at 7 West Hill, Groomsport. Both of these applications proposed a similar level of accommodation to that currently proposed for the application site and these were approved by Planning Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 respectively subject to planning conditions.

In summary, the proposal was considered to be acceptable taking account of the relevant policy requirements of the Addendum to PPS7 alongside recent decisions made by the Planning Appeals Commission. The accommodation was required for the applicant's elderly parents to enable them to continue to care for them at home but to provide more space and a degree of independence. The level of accommodation was considered to be modest and given its extremely close proximity to the main dwelling and shared garden, access and parking, it could not practically or viably as a separate stand-alone residential unit. While it was acknowledged that the neighbouring residents had concerns about potential noise and disturbance, particularly at nighttime, it was not considered that the levels of noise created as a result of the movement of people to and from the annex would be unacceptable or beyond that to be expected from a variety of incidental domestic uses within the curtilage of dwellings in any built-up residential area. Therefore on this basis it was recommended that full planning permission should be granted subject to the stated planning conditions.

The Chair invited questions for clarification to the officer.

Returning to the officer's comments around PPS7, Alderman Graham noted that the accommodation should be subordinate and should normally be attached to the main building though he also accepted there were exceptions pointing to the topography challenges. He further noted that the building should be designed to demonstrate dependency on the existing residential property. Aside from utilities such as water, electricity and sewage, he asked what the living dependency of the proposed annex would have on the existing house and the officer referred to policy interpretations by the PAC, and that the Planning Department had adopted that approach, considering this to be a single planning unit, highlighting the location, proximity, the shared amenity space such as parking, access and lack of any physical boundary features that would separate the two buildings.

Pointing to the proposed living arrangements, Alderman Graham noted that the annex would have its own kitchen, ensuite bathroom and living area and he queried what the difference was between that and a self-contained apartment. The officer advised that the proposal was for a shared kitchen and living area and there was a small bedroom. While it allowed a degree of independency it was located in the back garden with shared access. Officers had deemed it to be acceptable based on those shared elements.

There were no further questions to the officer so the Chair invited Mrs Gawne, speaking in opposition to the application, forward to make her address to the Committee.

She argued the following points:

- The scale was not consistent with para 49 of the relevant policy and exceeded the size and did not include shared facilities. There was no reason given to justify the non-compliance with the policy for ancillary accommodation.
- It was a separate building that could only be accessed externally. It was in too close proximity to Mrs Gawne's ground floor bedrooms.
- The property (number 26) would be three separate areas with no internal links between them. There would be three doors to the rear garden which was not normal and dysfunctional and always conducive to noise at night.
- There were two external routes with use of the steps which were three metres high to link the two levels. Those would be situated directly opposite the corner windows of Mrs Gawne's kitchen extension.
- Use of the side path was too close to Mrs Gawne's bedroom wall which was only 4ft from the boundary fence and the path at the other side. There could be noise at night with people using that route. Mrs Gawne argued that Criterion A had not been met.
- There would be an impact on privacy with regard to use of the steps facing Mrs Gawne's window resulting in a direct view inside the room.
- There would be noise from carers who would require external access through the garden. Mrs Gawne expressed particular concern at noise during the night with carers using the side path. She claimed that the impact of that happening during the night would be insurvivable and argued that the policy did provide protection to neighbours, referring to relevant sections (a.38) of the policy which covered noise and disturbance.
- Mrs Gawne felt that her concerns around noise at night had been played down, trivialised and dismissed on the basis of opinion only and evidence she had provided on existing noise and disturbance had not been considered to be relevant or important.
- Personal information she had provided had not been considered and noise was deemed to be outside the remit of the Planning Service. That however conflicted with A38 of the Policy and was contrary to all of the policy above.
- Par. 1.3 referred to extensions needed to be balanced with consideration for the impact on residential amenity. She claimed that there had been no

balance of this in the report and prediction of residential amenity had been disregarded.

- Sleep disturbance on a regular basis long term was a serious health risk and impacted on wellbeing and quality of life. Unexpected noise could be a shock and frightening when so close to your home during the night.
- It would result in a negative impact both now and in the future. The side path was the main route and would be extensively used and the impact on neighbours would be permanent and irreversible. Mrs Gawne argued that Criterion B had therefore not been met.
- There was a clear definition of ancillary accommodation in par. A.49. She argued that the annex did not apply and was opposite of the policy guidance. The policy explained that there should be compliance unless there was a strong case for exception. She argued that the full details of the appeal decision referred to were not provided and only featured selected phrases which were out of context. She felt, having read the full document, that that particular application was not relevant to this annex and had been an unusual situation and not a precedent.
- There were no grounds to verify that this application was an exception to the policy.
- Mrs Gawne referred to the conditions placed on the recommendation for approval and felt that they did not provide adequate protection in terms of noise at nighttime, both for current and future use of the annex which could become a party room and she understood there was nothing stopping the owner from applying for leasing of the annex in future.

The Chair thanked Mrs Gawne and invited questions from Members.

The Mayor, Councillor Cathcart, asked the speaker to clarify why she felt there would be significantly more noise from the annex than what was experienced currently and Mrs Gawne said that the annex doors would be closer to her property and the movements of carers throughout the night would disturb her sleep. She added that it was a very quiet area and she would already hear any noise during the night.

The Chair asked if the current noise level was more than what could be reasonably expected and Mrs Gawne felt that normally people did not expect to hear noise from their back gardens at nighttime but she felt that the proposed annex would lead to the constant criss-crossing of paths as people moved between the three separate areas that would be created as a result of this development.

The Chair asked for clarity on Mrs Gawne's concerns with regard to nighttime carers and she explained that there were no carers currently but the previous occupants had required night-time carers but they could not be heard because they only entered the address through the front door. However in this case, she believed that nighttime carers would require access using the side path of the rear garden she had

referred to. The Chair asked what type of surface the path had and Mrs Gawne believed it was tarmac.

Councillor McLaren had difficulty agreeing that carers visiting at nighttime could be exceptionally loud and asked Mrs Gawne if she was more sensitive to noise than the average person. Mrs Gawne rejected the suggestion, explaining that her concerns regarding noise were due to the proximity of her ground floor bedroom and the proposed annex. She recalled experience of noise from nighttime carers at her mother's house and that it had been at a high enough level to attract remarks from a neighbour. She recalled that carers could be heard as soon as they got out of the car, joking and laughing and then raising their voices when opening the front door of the house to announce their arrival.

In a final question to the speaker, Councillor McLaren asked Mrs Gawne if she would ever consider moving her bedroom to another room in the house and she responded that the other bedroom was on the same level and it would make no difference.

Mrs Gawne returned to the public gallery and the Chair invited Mrs Carol Dalton, speaking in support of the application, to come forward.

Mrs Dalton's five-minute address to the Planning Committee was summarised as follows:

- Mrs Dalton thanked the Planning Committee and explained there was a desperate need for the annex to be built in what was her daughter's garden.
- Mrs Dalton believed that all the criteria for planning approval had been met.
- The architect had referred to issues raised under 'Addendum to Planning Policy Statement 7 - Residential Extensions and Alterations and Justification and Amplification - 2.7 People With Disabilities - The specific needs of a person with a disability were however an important material consideration and exceptionally the policy criteria could be relaxed to meet those needs. A49 Extensions and Alterations to Provide Ancillary uses.
- Mrs Dalton thought they would only have to live in the main house temporarily as she could not cope alone with her husband's worsening dementia. Her daughter's house was a raised bungalow and only had three small bedrooms and a bathroom that were situated along a short, narrow passage. They currently had just a tiny box room 2.5m sq.
- There was no privacy for any of the occupants. When her daughter's husband came home from working abroad and their son returned on leave there were six people wanting to use the bathroom. They were using their grandson's room and he had to sleep on the sofa. It was very overcrowded and the situation had become unbearable. Mrs Dalton's husband was very distressed and it was putting a great deal of strain on all of the family. She admitted to sometimes thinking of just running away from it all.

- Mrs Dalton explained that her husband was very unhappy as he only had a couple of his own possessions around him and it was heartbreaking to see him cling to a vase the couple had when first married. He said it was his and he wouldn't let anyone touch it. He also wrapped up a small wooden figure which he said was his dad's but Mrs Dalton had bought it years ago.
- She added that her husband would hide his clothes as he thought others would take them from him. The couple had given most of their possessions away as there wouldn't be room in a small annex and her husband missed having familiar things around.
- She explained the upset and confusion that the existing living arrangements caused her husband when the family had to explain this was now his home. She went on to explain her husband's personal care needs and the dependence they had on their daughter and granddaughter who both worked in a care home looking after people with dementia. They relied on them heavily for lifts to appointments and shops due to residing in Seahill where there were none in walking distance.
- The extra space of the annex would make all the difference to the family and her husband would feel happier having his own things around him and not feel vulnerable and out of place.
- She added that it would bring peace of mind knowing that her daughter was on hand to help out if needed but she could concentrate on her husband to enable him to have a sense of value and dignity about himself that he seemed to have lost.
- The build would always be a part of the family home and its use only for family members. There were conditions recommended for future use that she was happy to comply with.
- Mrs Dalton added that she had informed each of the neighbours about the plans before applying for the build and they had all been very supportive. No 28 had approached her a few weeks later to ask how the plans were going; he had not mentioned anything about noise so she had not anticipated any problems with the planning application.
- The speaker sympathised with No 28's sleeping problems but had not known why they thought people would use her own side of the path that ran between both houses to get to the annex. She considered that to be very rude to go into someone's back garden through the garden gate. Visitors would knock on the front door to enter and leave the same way as normal.
- In closing, Mrs Dalton said her family was always respectful to all their neighbours and would not dream of upsetting them by being loud at night. Her daughter and granddaughter's bedroom were along that path, although higher up, and they certainly would not appreciate their sleep being disturbed either.



The Chair invited questions from Members. Councillor Creighton expressed sympathy with Mrs Dalton and her family's predicament and sought clarity on the proposed access arrangements. Mrs Dalton explained that all access would be through the front door of the main house. She added that the rear entry to the property was rarely used and there was no intention of using it to access the annex via the path at the side of the objector's boundary. She explained that her husband's condition had developed suddenly and anyone, including their objecting neighbours, could find themselves requiring home carers.

Councillor McCollum followed up with a similar query and Mrs Dalton explained that any carers would come in and leave through the main house and in the event of her husband becoming very ill, he would likely move into the main house.

There were no further questions and Mrs Dalton returned to the public gallery.

The Chair invited questions for clarification to the officer and the Mayor queried if there would be additional steps that would be facing towards number 28 and asked if consideration had been given to any potential overlooking. The officer explained that this would not have an impact on privacy as the stairs were there already and nobody would be lingering at the top so it was not considered to be a privacy issue.

Councillor McCollum queried the lighting arrangements and if floodlighting was excluded from the planning conditions or if there was a level of mitigation that could be included while ensuring health and safety. The officer explained that planning permission was not required for lighting in a residential area but it was not thought that floodlights would be necessary.

Alderman Smith understood that the distance of the new build from the boundary to number 28 was seven metres and it was confirmed that it would be eight metres between the annex and the neighbour's bedroom window. It was also clarified that there was a 1.8metre fence between the two sites and the officer had no reason to believe it would be removed.

Alderman Smith asked if a door to the rear of the house from the basement would be retained and the officer believed that it would be. She confirmed, in response to a further query, that it was possible to access the proposed property from two paths so there would be potential alternative access to the pathway that ran alongside the boundary of number 28.

There were not further questions so the Chair sought a proposal.

Proposed by Councillor McLaren, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the recommendation be adopted to grant planning approval.

Speaking to her proposal, Councillor McLaren felt that the application complied with all relevant sections of Policy EXT1 and the main objections of noise and light were in her opinion, unreasonable. She could not imagine carers purposefully keeping people awake at night. She also understood that the lighting issue was not a matter for consideration by the Planning Committee and could not agree with the objector

that the noise would be ‘unsurvivable’. It was her view that the applicant had made a very reasonable application to meet the needs of their family.

Alderman Graham appreciated the difficulties and tensions in this particular application and he felt it was commendable when people tried to help their relatives. Whilst he felt it would have been better for a connected extension, he appreciated the difficulties of achieving that given the landscape. He felt that regardless of the PAC findings, there was a contravention of the dependency attitude and he felt this needed to be looked at. He was therefore unable to support the proposal and recommendation to approve planning permission.

Whilst sympathising with anyone who had concerns over noise and loss of privacy, Alderman Smith was happy to support the proposal, referring to the planning case and the precedent within the PAC ruling. He felt reassured from the discussion that there would be multiple access points and that was enough of a case to support approval.

On being put to the meeting with 11 voting FOR, 1 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 3 ABSENT, the proposal was declared CARRIED. The voting was as follows:

<b>FOR (11)</b>	<b>AGAINST (1)</b>	<b>ABSTAINED (0)</b>	<b>ABSENT (3)</b>
<b>Alderman</b>	<b>Alderman</b>		<b>Councillors</b>
McDowell	Graham		Kerr
McIlveen			Morgan
Smith			Wray
<b>Councillor</b>			
Cathcart			
Creighton			
Harbinson			
Kendall			
McCollum			
McKee			
McLaren			
Rossiter			

\*There was one vacancy on the Planning Committee resulting from Peter Martin’s resignation. Therefore 15 members were eligible to vote.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McLaren, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the recommendation be adopted, and that planning permission be granted.**

(Councillor Rossiter left the meeting having declared an interest in Item 4.2)

#### **4.2 LA06/2024/0261/F - ANCILLARY STORAGE SHED (INCLUDES REMOVAL OF EXISTING CONTAINERS) HOLYWOOD CRICKET CLUB, SEAPARK PAVILION, SEAPARK, HOLYWOOD**

(Appendices III)

**DEA:** Hollywood & Clandeboye

**Committee Interest:** Land in which the Council has an interest

**Proposal:** Ancillary Storage Shed (includes removal of existing containers)

**Site Location:** Hollywood Cricket Club, Seapark Pavilion, Seapark  
Hollywood

**Recommendation:** Grant Planning Permission

The Senior Professional and Technical Officer (C Rodgers) explained that item 4.3 was an application by Hollywood Cricket Club for an Ancillary Storage Shed (including the removal of existing containers) at Seapark Pavilion in Hollywood. The application was before Planning Committee for determination as it was on Council land.

The site was within an area zoned as existing open space, and within the proposed Marino and Cultra Area of Townscape Character, and a Local Landscape Policy area.

The site consisted of a section of Council owned playing fields and formed part of a larger park containing a bowling green, tennis courts, as well as a cricket and football field.

Residential dwellings were located to the east along Seapark Road, and to the west along Ballymenoch Road. A further area of public open space was located to the north of the Park adjacent to Belfast Lough.

The officer referred to an image of the site outlined in red which marked the location of cricket practice nets and 4.5m high security fencing approved by the Council's Planning Committee at its meeting in December 2022.

It was originally proposed to site the storage building to the southwest side of the practice nets - close to existing dwellings along the Seapark Road. Following objections, the original application was withdrawn, and a new application was submitted proposing an alternative more sensitive location - tucked along the northeastern side of the recently constructed cricket enclosure.

Further slides showed images of the practice nets and the original site immediately adjacent to Seapark Road and an image of views towards the site from the Seapark Road.

Another slide showed an image from the entrance to the Pavilion building north of the site (the storage building would be set behind the landscaping to the right).

Members were also shown an image of a view towards the site from a pedestrian entrance serving Ballymenoch Park to the south-east.

The application proposed the removal of an older existing storage container which was in a poor state of disrepair and occupied a prominent roadside location to the north of the site adjacent to the existing area of open space associated with Belfast Lough. A smaller second structure had already been removed by the club.

The proposed ancillary building had a low-pitched roof (measuring 3m to the eaves and 3.5m overall) which was well below the approved 4.5m high security fence. The proposed building was 8 by 12 metres and would be finished in PVC coated steel.

76 letters of support and 12 letters of objection had been received. A number of the issues raised, including loss of a view and impact on property values, were not material planning considerations that could be afforded weight in the determination of this application. Other concerns included the impact on the character of the area and residential amenity.

An alternative site had been suggested. However, members would be aware that the Council could only consider the application before it.

The storage building would be viewed in the context of adjacent built development and was set well back from the road. It would cause no harm to the overall character and appearance of the area.

PPS8 operated a presumption against the loss of open space. However, it was recognised that ancillary structures, in existing areas of open space, could often be required to facilitate increased participation in a sport and to support enhanced use of existing outdoor recreation facilities.

The supporting statement indicated that the cricket club had been very successful in recent years in expanding its membership from approximately 30 members in 2005 to its current membership of 220.

The building was required to facilitate secure storage for the wide range of equipment including high value items such as a roller, mowers and bowling machines. Other items included bats, balls, benches, stakes and tarpaulins. The proposal was considered to be a necessary ancillary structure to support the ongoing development of Holywood Cricket Club.

The ancillary building would be located a considerable distance from any residential dwelling. (Approximately. 65m from the closest dwelling at No.3 Seapark Road).

Given the nature of the storage structure it was not likely to cause harm to the amenity of nearby properties. Environmental Health had been consulted and provided no objection to the proposal.

The storage shed would not obstruct access to pedestrian paths or facilities within the wider recreational grounds.

A condition was recommended to ensure that the shed could only be used for the storage of equipment for the Cricket Club and for no other purpose.

Having considered all material planning considerations it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

The Chair invited questions to the officer and Alderman Graham asked if there would be any implications on wildlife. The officer clarified that there would be no impact on wildlife with no loss of trees in order to facilitate the proposed storage shed.

The Chair invited Mr Tim Robson forward who was in attendance to speak against the application.

Before commencing, Mr Robson sought clarity over the circulation of his speaking notes given that this application had been rescheduled from July. The Head of Planning confirmed that his speaking notes had been re-issued to Members with the agenda for this meeting.

Mr Robson's address was outlined as follows:

- Mr Robson's interest in the application was relating to the way we read and value our open public space.
- He brought no challenge to the cricket club's need for storage accommodation and he was pleased that the club was doing well.
- The Seapark Recreation Grounds made an important contribution to our public open space, serving the local community and visitors to the area.
- The Report highlighted its designation as 'Existing Recreation and Open Space' and a Local Landscape Policy Area, and that it was within the proposed Marino, Cultra and Craigavad Area of Townscape Character.
- Seapark provided a significant public open space, comprising several key elements.
- It was important to carefully analyse and identify the various factors that defined and contributed to the legibility, quality and experience of this important public open space.
- He referred to the diagram on page 4 of his pre-submitted speaking notes and a red line and rectangle that represented the Council owned pavilion. This was a charming, low-slung public building making a significant contribution to the way the public space read.
- There was an arrival sequence to Seapark travelling down Seapark Road the space opened dramatically across the playing fields and historically the pavilion frontage had defined that first element of that public open space.
- The bridge, with its angled relationship to the road and glimpse of Belfast Lough, provided a compression point before a dramatic emergence into the open green space of the playing fields.

- The tennis courts also contributed and the practice nets for the club had been allowed to be erected on the playing fields and that did to some extent begin to erode the definition of that frontage he had described, but those were 'visually open'.
- He referred to another public space further along Seapark Road which contained another public open space which was on the other side of the pavilion which fronted in two directions.
- The pavilion was the key public building within the valuable public open space of Seapark.
- The proposed siting placed an ancillary storage shed in a dominant, prominent position within the public open space of the playing fields and would erode the character of that public open space and dominate the little public building.
- The position of the public building currently provided it with a key role and it fronted on the to public space of the playing fields and the new shed would obstruct that.
- The point had been that the application could only be assessed on the grounds of what was presented but that in itself should not have been the cause to accept what was proposed when there were alternative opportunities within this site that would not have a detrimental affect on this valuable open space.

The Chair invited questions to the speaker.

Alderman Graham asked if the objection was against the loss of public space to the footprint of the shed or if it was the visual appearance of the shed and Mr Robinson explained that his concern related to a combination of those two elements. The shed in itself was not offensive but the pavilion was a charming little building, low slung and it was an issue of dominance. The shed would have a dominant form in terms of both size and height compared to the pavilion and it would sit in front of it. He believed that there were less-imposing locations within the site where the shed could be situated. He suggested it could be sited adjacent to the public toilets as an example which would create an appropriate hierarchy allowing the ancillary building to adopt a secondary ancillary site. Just because this was the application it did not mean that it should be approved.

Councillor McLaren asked Mr Robinson how he felt about the condition of the existing storage unit which she felt was old, insecure and unsightly. She wondered how the objector would feel about that remaining if this application was not approved.

Agreeing with Councillor McLaren's view on the existing storage unit, Mr Robinson argued that it was appropriately located however, behind a hedge and underneath trees. It was also smaller than what was being proposed, which was six times larger in floor area. He was not opposed to a storage building in anyway and agreed it was

important for the club to meet its needs. He believed that his objection to this application did not mean that the existing storage container would remain though as the club needed to replace it anyway and he believed rejecting the application would see the club make an alternative application for a more appropriate siting.

Mr Robinson returned to the public gallery and the Chair invited Mr Ken Nixon, Chairman of Holywood Cricket Club, speaking in support of the application, to make his address.

- Mr Nixon thanked the Council for its assistance in all areas including planning matters and grant aid for the club.
- The installation of a new artificial wicket which would enable further growth of youth cricket as it allowed continued activity even when other matches or practice sessions were being held.
- In 2003, he had met with the Council's former Chief Executive, Stephen Reid, then Director of Leisure, at the railings and looked across at a piece of ground that was unkempt. He had discussed funding opportunities to develop that land which would require two to three years of bedding in.
- In 2025 cricket would have been played at Sea Park for 20 years.
- There had been an outstanding growth in the membership and the club had up to 220 junior players and up to 40% female.
- Holywood had competed in the NCU Challenge Women's Cup at the weekend, with largely a teenage team and one player was selected for Ireland Under -15s team and another for the Under-17s.
- He explained the high price of cricket equipment and that many people could not afford to come fully equipped. The club was able to provide equipment for any child regardless of their socio-economic background.
- Opportunity and diversity were high on priorities.
- The new storage unit would be essential to the club and would be paid for by the club.
- It showed the commitment of Holywood Cricket Club to continue the delivery of cricket.

The Chair invited questions from Members.

Welcoming the club's growth in membership, Councillor Harbinson asked if the dimensions of the shed took account for future growth of the club's membership and future storage needs. Mr Nixon said he felt that the proposed dimensions would meet existing and future needs.

Referring to the objector's concerns about the location, the Mayor asked why the club had chosen to locate the new shed at that particular site and Mr Nixon explained that it was close to the cricket nets and youth area where most of the equipment was required. He added that, in his view, it was neatly tucked away behind the hedge where the bowling club was.

Alderman Graham queried the choice of colour for the storage unit and if the green was chosen in order for the unit to blend in with the surroundings. Mr Nixon explained that he believed so, adding that it also represented the club's colours.

There were no further questions and Mr Nixon returned to the public gallery.

The Chair invited further questions for clarification to the officer and the Mayor queried a previous application that had been changed. The officer explained that the amendment to the earlier plans had been made voluntarily by the club. She explained though that Council could only consider an application as presented and in this case the proposed siting had been considered to be acceptable and would not cause any unacceptable harm to any visual or residential amenity.

There were no further questions so the Chair sought a proposal.

Proposed by Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor McLaren, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning approval is granted.

The proposer Alderman Graham believed that the storage unit would tidy up the area considerably and see the removal of the existing storage facilities from the site. He had been impressed by Mr Robinson's enthusiasm for public open spaces and appreciated that he had considered his arguments very carefully. On balance however, Alderman Graham felt that it would provide safe storage for the club. He recalled situations where marquees had been utilised in adverse weather conditions, so he felt that this provided the correct balance.

The seconder, Councillor McLaren was supportive of the club's proposal for the new shed, adding that the existing facility was insecure, an eyesore and completely inadequate. As a former cricketer she appreciated the level of equipment required for the sport. She also recognised that the club had changed the previous planned location to make it more amenable and it now met all of the relevant planning requirements.



On being put to the meeting and with 11 voting FOR, 0 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 3 ABSENT, the proposal was CARRIED.  
The voting was as follows:

<b>FOR (11)</b>	<b>AGAINST (0)</b>	<b>ABSTAINED (0)</b>	<b>ABSENT (4)</b>
<b>Alderman</b>			<b>Councillors</b>
Graham			Kerr
McDowell			Morgan
McIlveen			Rossiter
Smith			Wray
<b>Councillor</b>			
Cathcart			
Creighton			
Harbinson			
Kendall			
McCollum			
McKee			
McLaren			

\*There was one vacancy on the Planning Committee resulting from Peter Martin’s resignation. Therefore 15 members were eligible to vote.

**RESOLVED on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that planning permission be granted.**

(Councillor Rossiter returned to the meeting)

**4.3 LA06/2022/1309/F - REPLACEMENT PROTECTIVE FENCE (RETROSPECTIVE) HOLYWOOD GOLF CLUB, NUN’S WALK, HOLYWOOD**  
(Appendix IV)

**DEA:** Hollywood & Clandeboye

**Committee Interest:** A local development application attracting six or more separate individual objections which are contrary to the officer’s recommendation.

**Proposal:** Replacement protective fence (retrospective)

**Site Location:** Hollywood Golf Club, Nuns Walk, Hollywood

**Recommendation:** Approval

Outlining the case officer’s report, the Head of Planning explained that Item 4.3 was for retrospective permission for a replacement protective fence at Hollywood Golf Club, Nuns Walk, Hollywood.

The application was before members due to the number of objections which stood at nine from nine separate addresses.

The recommendation was to approve planning permission.

The application was submitted as a result of enforcement case LA06/2022/0348/CA which was investigating 'Alleged unauthorised works including the erection of fencing netting' at the application site.

The application site was located inside Holywood Settlement Limit within a designated Existing Recreation and Open Space and a Local Landscape Policy Area: Redburn, Holywood - HD 19.

The application site was adjacent to the northwestern boundary of the golf club and comprised a strip of land approximately 90m abutting Demesne Road with residential properties located on the opposite side of the road.

The following slide showed the area of the application site. Several mature trees were located on the grass verge immediately adjacent to the protective fencing as well as a paladin fence which defined the boundary of Holywood Golf Club at this side.

The protective fence was 90m long 15m high and consisted of four steel poles with green horizontal wires/netting.

The protective fence prevented stray golf balls from leaving the course and causing harm to property and individuals which had been a persistent health and safety issue for many years resulting in the requirement for the fence with evidence submitted by the Golf Club to demonstrate this.

Concerns raised by third party objectors included adverse visual impact, scale, vegetation not obscuring fence, adverse impact on biodiversity, flooding, health and safety risk and trees that were cut back taking time to grow back. All material considerations had been fully considered in the case officer report.

It was considered that the fence extended along a comparatively small stretch of the overall curtilage of the golf course with a large stretch of the boundary with Demesne Road remaining unaffected. It was also likely that the existing mature trees and vegetation would be retained, which would continue to further aid the integration of the fencing however if it was to be removed the overall visual impact would not be so great to warrant refusal of planning permission.

For those reasons and having regard to the need for the fencing on safety grounds, the compliance with planning policy and consideration of third party representatives the recommendation was to grant planning permission.

The Chair invited questions to the officer and Councillor McCollum queried the number of stray golf ball incidents that had occurred. The officer was unable to provide an exact number but explained there was supporting evidence provided that showed this was an ongoing problem. Other options had been explored such as moving the T and installing netting but this was regarded as the best option in terms of safety and stability.

Councillor McCollum was sympathetic with the objectors, agreeing that the solution was unattractive but she believed the risk of injury and fatality made this necessary.

Alderman Graham expressed a similar view while Councillor Kendall also appreciated the safety aspects but was concerned that the correct planning process including consultation with neighbouring residents had not been followed and that this had arisen from an enforcement case.

The Chair commented that it was unfortunate that this was the system whereby the applicant was given a yellow card and now got an opportunity for this to be dealt with retrospectively.

The officer advised that even under normal process, the Planning Committee would still have been given the same amount of time to consider the application and the design was out of members' control anyway. It was quite likely that the design would have been the same and while there was no way in making the replacement protective fence look pretty, the design was consistent with other golf courses.

Proposed by Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning consent be granted.

On being put to the meeting, with 12 voting FOR, 0 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 3 ABSENT, the proposal was CARRIED.

<p><b>FOR (12)</b>  <b>Alderman</b>  Graham  McDowell  McIlveen  Smith  <b>Councillor</b>  Cathcart  Creighton  Harbinson  Kendall  McCollum  McKee  McLaren  Rossiter</p>	<p><b>AGAINST (0)</b></p>	<p><b>ABSTAINED (0)</b></p>	<p><b>ABSENT (3)</b>  Councillors  Kerr  Morgan  Wray</p>
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\*There was one vacancy on the Planning Committee resulting from Peter Martin's resignation. Therefore 15 members were eligible to vote.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning approval be granted.**

**4.4 LA06/2023/1895/F– 5G TELECOMS INSTALLATION: 15M HIGH STREET POLE TELECOMS MAST AND CABINETS WITH ANCILLARY WORKS APPROX. 14M NORTH OF 122, AND OPPOSITE 121-123 BALLYCROCHAN ROAD, BANGOR**

(Appendices V & VI)

**DEA:** Bangor East & Donaghadee

**Committee Interest:** A local development application attracting six or more separate individual objections which are contrary to the officer's recommendation.

**Proposal:** 5G telecoms installation: 15m high street pole telecoms mast and cabinets with ancillary works

**Site Location:** Approx. 14m north of 122 and opposite 121-123 Ballycrochan Road, Bangor

**Recommendation:** Approval

Outlining the case officer report, the Head of Planning explained that Item 4.4 was for a 5G telecoms installation consisting of a 15m high street pole, telecoms mast and cabinets with ancillary works at Approx. 14m north of 122 and opposite 121-123 Ballycrochan Road, Bangor.

The application was before members due to the number of objections which stood at 44 from 37 addresses. The recommendation was to approve planning permission. Members were advised of a typo where it referred to the **rear** garden of number 122 when it should have read the front garden of no.122.

The application site was located within Bangor Settlement Limit in an urban area on the western side of Ballycrochan Road, immediately east of the front garden of No. 122 and approximately 27m from the Ballycrochan Road/Albany Road junction. There were no local development plan designations affecting the application site. The application site comprised part of the public footpath and was in close proximity to a streetlight and equipment cabinet. The wider surrounding area was predominantly residential with dwellings located east and west of the application site.

For context, the following slides showed the area of the application site.

Referring to planning policy in relation to telecommunications, the officer added that the aim of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Planning Policy Statement 10 in relation to Telecommunications was to facilitate the development of such infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum.

This required planning authorities to take account of the potential effects of new telecommunications development, and any necessary enabling works, on visual amenity and environmentally sensitive features and locations. Developers were required to demonstrate that proposals for telecommunications development, having regard to technical and operational constraints, had been sited and designed to minimise visual and environmental impact.

New masts should only be considered where site sharing was not feasible or offered an improved environmental solution. The policy went on to explain that applications for the development of telecommunications equipment should be accompanied by a statement declaring that when operational the development would meet the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure to electromagnetic fields.

The applicant had complied with this requirement - by way of summary the supporting information submitted with the planning application states that *The proposed solution for improving coverage and capacity for 5G services involves erecting a new 15m high Street Pole installation and 3no additional equipment cabinets upon an area of footpath. It is recognised that the very nature of installing new 5G communications infrastructure within a dense urban setting requires a well-measured balance between the need to extend practical coverage with the risk of increasing visual intrusion*.

The Justification Statement continued to explain that *'the very nature of 5G and the network services it provides, means the equipment and antennas are quite different to the previous, and existing, service requirements. In particular, the design of the antennas, and the separation required from other items of associated equipment, certain structures cannot be used that provide a means of support for another operator, most notably in a street works or highways environment*'.

The proposed installation was an H3G Monopole which would facilitate educational benefits, providing access to vital services, improving communications with the associated commercial benefits for local businesses, enabling e-commerce and working from home, as well as access to social, media and gaming for leisure time activities.

The applicant had recognised that where an existing site could be shared or upgraded this would always be adhered to before a new proposal was put forward for consideration.

For this proposal it was explained that *'this was an extremely constrained cell search area and options within the area were very limited.*'

In selecting the application site, consideration was given to the fact that *'existing base stations were not capable of supporting additional equipment to extend coverage across the target area and prospective 'in-fill' mast sites are extremely limited.*'

The target/search area was centred over a residential area in Ashbury, Bangor. The 100m Desired Search Area (DSA) could be seen on the slide. It was further explained that due to the operational parameters of 5G, moving the search area or seeking locations a long way from the target/search area was not operationally feasible. The cell search areas for 5G were extremely constrained with a typical cell radius of approximately 50m. In general, it would not be feasible to site the installation too far from the target locale.

In compliance with PPS 10 of Policy TEL 1, the Justification Statement demonstrated that other sites were considered and discounted using a sequential approach which first considered 'Mast and Site Sharing' then, 'Existing Building Structures' and lastly, 'Ground Bases Installations'. Consideration of alternative sites discounted seven alternative sites in the target area as shown in the slide.

The application site was considered the best available compromise between extending 5G service across the target 'coverage hole' with the selected street works pole height and associated antenna and ground-based cabinets restricted to the absolute minimum but could still provide the required essential coverage. The siting on the adopted public highway, would not impede pedestrian flow or the safety of passing motorists. The equipment cabinets would be situated at the base of the pole. As was the policy requirement, the applicant submitted a ICNIRP Declaration explaining that when operational the development would meet the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure to electromagnetic fields.

The Joint Radio Company and Police Service Northern Ireland were also consulted on the proposal and offered no objection on the basis that it was unlikely the proposal would result in interference.

It was acknowledged that there would be a localised visual increase through the installation of additional apparatus - at 15m high the monopole is significantly higher than the two-storey dwellings within the surrounding area and adjacent streetlights and trees.

The pole would be highly visible travelling along both sides of the Ballycrochan Road by virtue of its height and form. The proposal would be sited close to an existing 8.9m high streetlight with the backdrop of the front garden area of No. 122.

Further slides showed the critical views of the proposed site on approach from both directions along the Ballycrochan Road with it indicated approximately where the 15m high pole would be located. The pole would be visible from the roundabout at the end of Ballycrochan Road approximately 116m from the position of the pole. From approach on the north side of Ballycrochan Road, it was estimated there would be views of the pole over 200m away until the road curves.

Ballycrochan Road was a relatively wide road in comparison to the surrounding area and within this setting the slim design of the pole would not appear dominant to the extent that it would be unacceptable.

The equipment cabinets were up to 1.75m high and extended across a width of 3.3m. As these would be sited to the rear of the footpath, they were not considered to be prominent within the streetscape. The design and appearance of the proposal were considered typical of such development and were acceptable for an urban area. It should also be noted that the application site was not located in an environmentally sensitive area or sited beside an environmentally sensitive feature. Common to the assessment of a planning proposal was the balancing and weighing of material considerations which members would have to consider. In this case, the harm arising from the visual impact of the telecommunications monopole and cabinets needed to be weighed against the need for the installation and the benefits

of network coverage in the area. Taking into consideration the comments within the Regional Development Strategy and SPPS, which sought to improve the standard of telecommunication infrastructure, on balance it was considered that the visual impact on the surrounding area was off set by the benefits the mast which would be of public benefit to everyday living and economic endeavours through the provision of improved telecommunications.

The Planning Appeals Commission had also considered and commented on proposals for similar proposals.

It must be noted that in several appeals for similar development, the Commissioner always recognised the need to weigh up the visual impact in balance with the need for improved connectivity and services. For example, in appeal 2020/A0015 the Commissioner stated the following:

*'Modern telecommunications also offer a number of valuable social and educational benefits such as promoting social inclusion, enhancing personal safety and facilitating education services. PPS 10 and the supporting DCAN 14 recognises that the economic and social benefits of advanced telecommunications can only be achieved if the necessary infrastructure is developed however, it emphasises that attention must be devoted to the siting and design of equipment.'*

In addition, in appeal ref 2018/A0200 the Commissioner stated the following: *'Paragraph 6.238 of the SPPS states that the aim of the document in relation to telecommunications and other utilities is to facilitate the development of such infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. The latter wording recognises that some impact on the environment may be acceptable.'*

In Appeal ref. 2018/A0200 the Commissioner was assessing a replacement 20m high telecommunications mast and stated the following:

*'...it has to be recognised that the site is also within an urban area where modern features such as streetlights, traffic lights, telegraph and electricity poles, and telecommunications masts/poles are commonplace features.'*

In recognition of above cases there was no reason to conclude that a telecommunications mast of the type proposed inappropriate in a residential area. With regard to residential amenity - the proposal was approx. 13.4m from No. 122 Ballycrochan Road which was the closest dwelling and over 20m from the properties on the other side of the road (121, 123, 125). The pole would appear visually significant in the streetscape due to its height however, it would not be dominant in the sense that it would adversely impinge on the immediate aspect or outlook from any surrounding residential dwellings or cause overshadowing.

The base station when operational would meet the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure to electromagnetic fields. The proposals therefore complied with point (3) of Policy TEL 1 of PPS 10. Therefore, there were no grounds to refuse permission on the basis of impact on actual health. Environmental Health was consulted on the proposal and offered no objection. It was therefore not considered that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on residential amenity.

Concerns raised by third party objectors included design of the proposal, residential amenity, health and safety, consideration of other sites, car safety and access, carbon footprint, impact on an Area of Townscape Character (for clarification the site was not within an ATC.), devaluation of properties, possibility of precedent, impact on biodiversity and wildlife, and queries regarding neighbour notification.

All representations made had been fully considered in the case officer report.

In summary although it could not be denied that the proposal would be highly visible in a localised area, the proposal was not at odds with a setting within an urban area. The planning system operated in the interests of the wider public and given the wider benefits of upgrading the mobile network this was considered to outweigh the visual impact. The applicant had submitted supporting information in line with policy requirements and had carried out an assessment of other possible sites as required by requirements set out on PPS 10. Environment Health had been consulted and had no objections to the proposal.

In light of the above information the recommendation was to grant planning permission.

The Chair invited questions to the officer and the Mayor queried the current site selection process which allowed the applicant to conduct its own site surveys and determine what it deemed as the most suitable location. He asked how, under that process, the Planning Committee could be content that this was the best site for the mast. He also referred to an appeal decision that rejected a proposed mast at a site at Ardoyne Road in Belfast in relation to the same process.

The Head of Planning clarified that the issue with the planning appeal referred to was that the applicant had not shown consideration for enough alternative sites so had not fulfilled requirements of the policy. In this case the applicant had provided several rounds of information in determining the site. That had included consideration of existing sites where equipment was already located and then further consideration for new sites. The applicant had been able to clarify why each site was not suitable. She explained that with every application there was a declaration that needed to be signed to confirm that all information was true and correct. That was taken in good faith, and in this case the applicant had fulfilled all requirements of the policy at each stage. In terms of the design, the officer felt it could be argued that there was a change of design with the masts in order to reduce the impact and taken in the context of an urban development, it was not viewed that impact would be so bad. She highlighted a very similar mast near Bangor Grammar School on Gransha Road as an example.

Councillor McCollum felt that every member of the Committee understood the need for connectivity and future-proofing it, but the siting of the mast was obviously the cause of the unhappiness. Going back to the argument made by the Mayor, she agreed that the Council was reliant on the integrity of the applicant in terms of its consideration for suitable sites. There were seven sites identified by the applicant, but she argued who was to know that there were not 27 possible sites. It should not have been down to the objector, or the Planning Committee, to identify those



alternatives. She asked the officer if there were more comprehensive reasons given for discounting the alternative sites, believing that some of the reasons reported offered limited information.

The Head of Planning advised that this type of 5G network required a small area and it had meant that it had to be located within a specific location. The case officer had gone through each of the sites and she appreciated that the majority were not on main roads and only had narrow pavements and not suitable for those locations. She felt it was clear that Ballycrochan Road was the most suitable from all of the sites available. The applicant had complied with planning policy throughout what was a thorough process.

Alderman Smith recognised this was a built-up area and if he was a resident there, he too would be unhappy about a 15metre high pole being installed outside of his house. He asked how usual it was to have a structure of that size so close to houses, noting that 13 metres was reported as the closest point.

The officer explained that applications for 5G structures were becoming more common and referred to one she was familiar with at Gransha Road next to Bangor Grammar School. This was on the opposite side of a wide road to the houses, but she explained that the purpose of the mast was to provide coverage in a specific urban area and therefore had to be located in that type of environment.

Alderman Smith appreciated that everyone used the network and that it was required for everyday life. He queried the distribution density of the antenna range as he felt that the small circumference of the coverage reported suggested that an antenna would be required on every street corner in order to provide adequate coverage.

The officer pointed out that the level of need suggested by Alderman Smith was not reflected in the number of applications for 5G masts.

Alderman Smith referred to page 10 of the report, where he had noted that this would have a visual impact. He asked how visual impact was assessed versus the benefit of the antenna and the officer advised that PAC decisions were material considerations and this was an attractive residential area but there were no designations. She highlighted a decision to permit a mast at Malone Road in Belfast which was a designated conservation area. This was the highest type of protection for an urban area yet it had still been considered acceptable. Ultimately, she felt that there would not be enough grounds for the Planning Service to sustain a refusal for the proposal.

Councillor Kendall understood the concerns regarding the threshold in terms of number of people benefiting versus the number of people impacted. She appreciated that was the difficulty, accepting that this would be a like a monolith outside someone's front garden. She asked if applicants for this were required to give substantial evidence to show the need for the mast and the officer referred to the extremely high expense of installing these structures and how that could only be driven by genuine need. The applicant was also required to provide a thorough supporting statement to justify that need. That requirement had been fulfilled and met within terms of Planning Policy.

(The meeting went into recess at 8.55pm and resumed at 9.09pm)

The Chair invited Mr Mark Lilburn forward, who was speaking in opposition to the application. His address was summarised as follows:

- Mr Lilburn was speaking on behalf of more than 40 objectors to the application.
- He praised the residents who took pride in their properties and made it one of the nicest places to live in Northern Ireland.
- He was glad that an error had been clarified by the officer, explaining that these properties had gardens at the front and not the rear.
- When residents went out into their garden then, to let their dogs out for example, they would be faced with what he described as a monster. This would also be the case when residents looked out of their living rooms and bedrooms.
- Currently the plans were for the structure to be sited 13 metres from the nearest houses but there were plans for an extension that would take it to within 10 metres of their bedroom. This was not satisfactory for anyone.
- He disputed information provided that the masts were restrained to a 50m radius, arguing if that was the case then one would be required every 100 metres for them to work properly.
- He further argued that Ballycrochan was outside of the target area on the map provided.
- He felt that it was better to place an antenna at the highest possible point but Ballycrochan Road was the lowest point of that area. Ashbury Avenue, Linnear Park or the Primary School were better suited in his opinion.
- He had made a site visit to Ardoyne Road, Belfast, where an application for a 15m high mast had been rejected. He believed there was no difference between that site and the proposed site at Ballycrochan Road.
- That proposal was contrary to TEL1 of PPS10, SPPS and relevant guidance in DCAN 14 that the proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on the character and visual amenity of the area by way of its height, location and prominence, and the very same arguments were made in those objections.
- Other places had been discounted because of proximity to residents' houses, but he asked how this was any different, given that the proposed structure would be right outside his front door.
- There were nine other houses directly in front of where the structure would be.

- He believed that Bangor was one of the most connected parts of the UK and questioned the need for 5G when all households in the area had access to Fibre Optic broadband connectivity.
- There was no benefit to any houses and 5G would any benefit anyone walking down the street or driving their car.
- The applicant even agreed this was a prominent structure with three cabinets which would be 6ft tall and 12ft wide.
- Existing cabinets on the street were covered in illegally placed posters and graffiti. He expected the same would happen to the proposed cabinets creating an eyesore.
- It would lower the worth of the street and properties.
- Ericsson was the manufacturer of the machine that would be placed on top of the pole. The company stated on its website that the compliance boundaries for general public exposure was 20 metres. In this case it would be 10 metres from the residents' bedrooms where they would spend eight hours per day sleeping.

The Chair invited questions from Members to the speaker and Councillor McCollum agreed with Mr Lilburn's concerns over the visual impact and the proximity to his property. She highlighted some road safety concerns in the area over speeding and Mr Lilburn confirmed it was an ongoing issue recalling that a car nearly crashed into his house two weeks ago. He felt that the 15 metre high structure would be a visual distraction to motorists and clarified to Councillor McCollum that the near miss to his property was where the pole was to be located on a curve in the road.

Councillor McCollum asked a further question around the visual impact this would have on his neighbours and Mr Lilburn explained there were nine other homes facing the application site directly with their distances ranging up to 25 metres away.

Mr Lilburn returned to the public gallery and the Chair invited further questions for clarification to the officer.

Councillor McLaren had noted the absence of telecommunications expertise and felt that an engineer could have clarified some of the questions around the range of the antenna for example. She wondered if given this lack of clarification, if there would be appetite for the Committee to defer the application in order to put some of the questions to an engineer.

The Chair invited Councillor McLaren to make a proposal.

Proposed by Councillor McLaren, seconded by Councillor Kendall, to defer the application until such a time when the Planning Committee can question the applicant, further examine appeal decisions for similar applications and seek further advice from Environmental Health.

While she did not wish to cause unnecessary delay, Councillor McLaren felt it would be wrong to make a judgement on the application without seeking that information.

Councillor McLaren had noted the objector's concerns regarding potential for further masts to achieve the coverage required given the stated range of the signal. She also wanted further information about other areas that the applicant had discounted.

The Director confirmed that under the protocol there was an option to defer the application to allow for further information to be provided. In this case it would be for the applicant to attend for further questions.

The seconder, Councillor Kendall, was happy to support that, on the basis that the Planning Committee was required to weigh up the decision in terms of impact to one area of the community versus the wider gain. Matters of interest were the network coverage area, alternative sites considered along with addressing some of the further points that the objector had made.

Alderman Graham was concerned that the objection was not based on engineering but largely on appearance and visual impact. Referring to some of the policy information provided in terms of the consideration of whether there was a wider need or wider benefit, he argued that those were different things and he wondered if there needed to be further consultation in the area to determine whether people actually wanted 5G. He was therefore supportive of refusal of planning permission but was not unsupportive of the proposal to defer for further information at this stage.

Councillor Harbinson wondered if the ICNIRP set out guidance around the distance between an antenna and residential accommodation and the Head of Planning advised that a declaration was required to be signed to confirm that it complied with safety standards set out within that guidance. The officer confirmed that Environmental Health had been consulted and had no concerns. Members were also advised of a planning appeal where the issue of public health was raised and it was of the view that the Planning System was not the place for determining health safeguards and that was for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to decide what public health measures were necessary. She added that the Planning Service had consulted with Environmental Health and it had no objections to the application.

Having heard the objections, Alderman McDowell felt there was a lot of unanswered questions that he felt the Committee required further information on. He also wondered if the Council was able to get any independent expertise in order to satisfy itself as opposed to taking something at face value. He felt it was always a balancing act to determine wider need whilst protecting the residents that could be impacted. He wondered if the masts could be disguised in some way, understanding that had been done in Ward Park. He also felt the objector had made a good point in that the area was already well connected and questioned the need for 5G in a residential area.

The Chair was aware that Council could speak to Environmental Health in terms of the health and safety aspects but he was unaware of the telecommunications expertise being available and asked the officers for some guidance on this.

The Director of Prosperity clarified that the declaration was there to provide that protection that the demonstrated need and supporting information was factually correct. If that was not the case the applicant would be subject to enforcement action. She pointed out that this was the same for all planning applications, pointing out that like a traffic assessment, it was up to a third party to provide evidence against it. That was the challenge that the Committee was faced with.

The Mayor noted the key question was arising from PPS10 and referred to 'technical and operational constraints' and understood it would be a consideration of whether the developer could move to another location. He agreed with Alderman Graham that it was the visual impact that was the main objection, but he was cautious that the developer could go to the PAC and he was cautious of successful appeals. He therefore felt that it was important to also look at the appeal cases during the deferral.

Alderman Smith agreed a refusal at this stage would only weaken the argument if the applicant took the application to appeal. He felt it was important to question the applicant, particularly in relation to the alternative sites, in order to obtain further details. He felt that if there was really just a 100m radius from the mast then the whole country would be covered with these masts on every street corner, and he just could not see that as being the reality. He was also concerned about the visual amenity impacts but was conscious that just rejecting on that basis would leave this open to successful appeal and he believed the company involved would have the capability of taking it through that process. He also wondered if Environmental Health could provide more detail, particularly regarding the health implications for those living in close proximity.

The Director added that a representative from Environmental Health could attend a future meeting but warned that they would only be referring to the current guidance that was set out and in that guidance, there were no health implications. The Head of Planning added that any objection that was made to this application involved the case officer reconsulting with Environmental Health on each point. Environmental Health was asked to review those objections and she directed the Committee to page 16 of the case officer report where that was documented. She also confirmed that there was a signed statement of compliance required as part of that public health guidance. The officer was unsure how much more advice Environmental Health could provide.

The Chair wondered if further clarification would be beneficial with regard to the objector's own planning application and the reduction in distance to the mast if that was fulfilled. That would mean that the building would be significantly closer to the mast and he wondered if Environmental Health would have a different view in that scenario but the officer clarified that it could only assess what was on the ground currently.

Summing up, Councillor McLaren clarified her proposal, adding that it was important to get as much information as possible. It was important that the Committee did not set a precedent that it could not go back from. If it approved this, it would be very difficult to refuse any future application. While she was keen to see connectivity advance across the Borough, Councillor McLaren, having heard the objections, felt it was important to seek further clarity before making any decision.

On being put to the meeting, with 12 voting FOR, 0 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 3 ABSENT, the proposal was CARRIED.

<b>FOR (12)</b>	<b>AGAINST (0)</b>	<b>ABSTAINED (0)</b>	<b>ABSENT (3)</b>
<b>Alderman</b>			Councillors
Graham			Kerr
McDowell			Morgan
McIlveen			Wray
Smith			
<b>Councillor</b>			
Cathcart			
Creighton			
Harbinson			
Kendall			
McCollum			
McKee			
McLaren			
Rossiter			

\*There was one vacancy on the Planning Committee resulting from Peter Martin’s resignation. Therefore 15 members were eligible to vote.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McLaren, seconded by Councillor Kendall, to defer the application until such a time when the Planning Committee can question the applicant, further examine appeal decisions for similar applications and seek further advice from Environmental Health.**

**5. UPDATE ON PLANNING APPEALS**  
(Appendix VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Prosperity attaching information about the Appeal decisions.

**Appeal Decisions**

- 1. The following appeal was dismissed on 17 June 2024.

PAC Ref	2022/A0192
Council Ref	LA06/2022/0346/O
Appellant	Mr Richard Topping
Subject of Appeal	Refusal of outline planning permission for an infill site for 2 No. dwellings with domestic garages.

Location	Lands between 32 and 34 Castle Espie Road, Comber.
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The application above was called into the Planning Committee meeting of December 2022. The Council refused the above application on 7 December 2022 for the following reasons:

- I. The proposal was contrary to The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY1 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that there are no overriding reasons why this development was essential in this rural location and could not be located within a settlement.
- II. The proposal was contrary to The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY 8 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that the proposal did not constitute a small gap sufficient only to accommodate up to a maximum of two houses within an otherwise substantial and continuously built-up frontage, and represented a visual break and would, if permitted, result in the creation of ribbon development along the Castle Espie Road
- III. The proposal was contrary to The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY 8 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that the proposal fails to respect the existing development pattern along the frontage in terms of size, scale, siting and plot size and other planning and environmental requirements along this section of Castle Espie Road.
- IV. The proposal was contrary to Policy CTY13 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that:
  - the proposed buildings would be a prominent feature in the landscape;
  - the proposed buildings would fail to blend with the landform, existing trees, buildings, slopes and other natural features which provide a backdrop; and therefore would not integrate into this area of the countryside.
  - the ancillary works would not integrate with their surroundings.
- V. The proposal was contrary to Policy CTY14 of, Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that the buildings would, if permitted,
  - be unduly prominent in the landscape
  - result in a suburban style build-up of development when viewed with existing and approved buildings;
  - not respect the traditional pattern of settlement exhibited in that area;
  - Creates a ribbon of development
  - the impact of ancillary works (with the exception of necessary visibility splays) would damage rural character.
- VI. The proposal was contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy NH6 of Planning Policy Statement 2 Natural

Heritage in that the scale of the proposal was unsympathetic to the special character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in general and of the particular locality and does not respect the local development pattern.

In terms of this appeal the application was assessed against Policy CTY 8 of PPS 21 'Ribbon Development'. This stated that a building would be refused where it created or added to a ribbon of development however, a policy exception was the development of a small gap site capable of accommodating a maximum of two dwellings within an otherwise substantial continuously built-up frontage. Commissioner Taylor concluded in her report that there was a substantial and continuously built-up frontage consisting of No.32 and its garage, No.34 and its outbuilding and No.36 Castle Espie Road. The Council had considered the outbuilding to be temporary in nature and did not include it in its assessment. The Commissioner was not persuaded by this and found the outbuilding/shed to be a modest size, of permanent construction and has, for the purposes of the policy, a frontage to the laneway.

The second test was whether the gap was small enough to only accommodate a maximum of two dwellings. The Commissioner found the separation between buildings (despite the appellant's protestations that only the site should be considered – not from building to building) to be 100m. Both the appellant and the Council agreed that the average plot width along the substantial and continuously built-up frontage was 36.4m. The Commissioner concluded that the gap between buildings would therefore allow for more than two dwellings. As such the proposal failed to meet the requirement of the exception.

The PAC also found that the development would lead to the creation of a ribbon of development and would result in the loss of an important visual break. Furthermore, the development would involve the creation of an extended laneway access running to the rear of No's 30 and 30A which would be a feature out of keeping with character in the area and incongruous at this countryside location, and along with the appeal buildings would cause a suburban-style build-up of development and a detrimental change to the surrounding rural character failing to meet the requirements of Policy CTY 14.

In terms of NH6 of PPS 2, as the site was considered to be an important visual break, it would be as a whole unsympathetic to the surrounding AONB, would not respect the character of the land or the traditional pattern of development. As such Policy NH6 was not complied with.

The appellant put forward several different planning application sites as they were considered comparable with the appeal site. However, the PAC did not agree and they were not found to be relevant.

Finally, the appellant could not demonstrate why the appeal development was essential and could not be located in a settlement and failed to comply with the requirements of Policy CTY 1 of PPS 21.

The Commissioner's detailed report was found under Item 5A.



**New Appeals Lodged**

- 2. The following appeal was lodged against an Enforcement Notice on 16 July 2024.

PAC Ref	2024/E0021
Council Ref	LA06/2022/0092/CA
Appellant	Marcus Green
Subject of Appeal	Alleged unauthorised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Material change of use of land for use as a coffee shop and associated seating area;</li> <li>• Extension of an area of hardstanding;</li> <li>• Siting of two no. wooden buildings used in association with the coffee shop;</li> <li>• Intensification of domestic access approved under X/2005/0292/RM, being used in association with the unauthorised coffee shop use</li> </ul>
Location	Land adjacent to 18 Kircubbin Road, Ballywalter

Details of appeal decisions, new appeals and scheduled hearings could be viewed at [www.pacni.gov.uk](http://www.pacni.gov.uk).

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report and attachment.

The Head of Planning spoke to the report, advising that it was a monthly update on planning appeals. There was one appeal on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024 which was dismissed. It related to outline planning permission for an infill site for 2 No. dwellings with domestic garages at lands between 32 and 34 Castle Espie Road, Comber. This had previously been called in for hearing at the Planning Committee. There was some clarification provided around the gap site and it was considered to be a separation between buildings and not the site that should be considered.

Since the last meeting there had been an appeal lodged against an enforcement notice.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Alderman Smith, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**6. UPDATE ON INVESTMENT RELATED MATTERS DFI & NIW FUNDING**  
(Appendices VIII – IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Prosperity detailing that Members should be aware of the report brought to April’s Planning Committee (Item

6, April 2024) which set out issues related to infrastructure investment and the impacts of withdrawal of funding to Living with Water programme, on the Borough as a whole in terms of enabling investment, impact on economy and tourism industry and meeting environmental regulations. The report highlighted the impact such withdrawal of funding would have on the Borough as a whole in terms of enabling investment, impact on economy and tourism industry and meeting environmental regulations.

It was agreed that the Chief Executive would write to the Minister for Infrastructure highlighting the impact such withdrawal of funding will have on our Borough as a whole in terms of enabling investment, impact on our economy and tourism industry and meeting environmental regulations.

A letter issued to the Department for Infrastructure Minister (attached at Item 6a) and a subsequent response was received (attached at Item 6b).

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council notes the content of this report, and the attached correspondence.

The Head of Planning outlined the report to the Committee along with the attached letter and response from the Department for Infrastructure Minister.

The officer explained the Minister had advised in his response, that he had provided NI Water with an indicative budget for 2024/25 amounting to £500m of public money which represented just under 40% of the non-ringfenced budget for Infrastructure.

The response further advised that the Minister continued to work with Northern Ireland Executive colleagues to secure a funding package, but despite the funding pressures he believed that there was still a lot to be done in terms of achieving the Council's ambitions and he encourage the Council to work with NI Water in order to achieve innovative solutions.

The Chair commented that it was ironic that the Minister was not looking at innovative solutions to the issue by not giving Planning Authorities the power to get money from developers or indeed look in to reforming the structure of Northern Ireland Water to allow it to seek funding elsewhere.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that the recommendation be adopted.**

### **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 9.48pm.

Dear Stakeholder

### **Review of The Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (PACE NI) Codes of Practice A to H and new PACE Code I**

The Department of Justice (DoJ) has launched a public consultation on the revised PACE Codes of Practice A to H and a new Code I. The consultation will run for a period of 12 weeks and the DoJ is seeking your views.

The PACE NI Order provides the statutory framework for police powers in Northern Ireland. Articles 60, 60A and 65 of the Order impose a duty on the DoJ to issue Codes of Practice which regulate the exercise by police officers of these powers in the investigation of crime and set down safeguards and protections for members of the public. Together they provide a clear statement of the rights of the individual and the powers of the police.

The review is needed as police powers in Northern Ireland have been revised by various pieces of Westminster legislation such as the Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 (CTBSA), the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (PCSC Act) and the National Security Act 2023 (NSA).

The draft Codes along with the consultation document are available to view or download from the consultation link on the DoJ's website:

[Consultation on Codes of Practice issued under the Police and Criminal Evidence Northern Ireland Order 1989 | Department of Justice \(justice-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

We would request that the consultation is completed using the Citizen Space platform at the following link:

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/doj/revision-of-pace-ni-codes-of-practice>

Responses must be received no later than 16 October 2024. We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

**PACE Consultation | Policing Policy and Legislation | Department of Justice**

[PACEConsultation@justice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:PACEConsultation@justice-ni.gov.uk)

Knockview Buildings| Stormont Estate | Belfast | BT4 3SG

**Working in partnership to create a fair, just and safe community where we respect the law and each other**

**From:** DoH Safe Staffing PolicyTeam <[SafeStaffing.PolicyTeam@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:SafeStaffing.PolicyTeam@health-ni.gov.uk)>

**Sent:** Monday, July 22, 2024 12:07 PM

**Subject:** Safe and Effective Staffing Consultation Launch

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Stakeholder,

Following a commitment as part of the January 2020 Framework Agreement that led to the suspension of the Agenda for Change industrial action, the Department of Health is now undertaking a consultation on the Introduction of Safe and Effective Staffing legislation for Northern Ireland.

The consultation is launching today and will run for 12 weeks, closing at 5pm on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

The consultation can be accessed on the Departmental website at [Consultations | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#) or using a direct link to the online version [Citizen Space - Safe and Effective Staffing Consultation](#).

We would encourage you to share this consultation with anyone you feel would have an interest in the proposals.

Kind regards,

**Safe and Effective Staffing Bill Team**  
**Department of Health**

Unclassified

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**ITEM 8.3****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	20 August 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Consultation on EqIA of DfC Budget 2024-2025
Attachments	Appendix 1 - EqIA easy read version Appendix 2 - EqIA Appendix 3 - Draft Response

The Executive considered and set the NI Budget 2024-25 on 25 April 2024.

The attached Equality Impact Assessment details the Minister for Communities' initial Budget 2024-25 decisions and how they will impact on the Department's ability to deliver public services.

The process of setting budgets can in some cases have an unintentionally greater impact on some specific Section 75 groups than others, for example, on males, females, young people or pensioners. In allocating budgets, the Department aims to identify any adverse impacts (via an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)) and, where possible, action will be taken to avoid or mitigate against specific adverse impacts.

The consultation closes on 03 September 2024. Responses to the consultation will be used to consider further mitigation measures, to inform in-year budget

## Not Applicable

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reallocation processes, and to direct any additional funding (or further reductions) that emerge over the course of the financial year.

A draft response to consultation on the Spending Plans for 2024/25 is attached for Members' consideration and approval. It should be noted that the draft response is based on the implications of how less monies given to Council will affect us.

**Detail**

Areas of responsibility include:

- delivery of the social security system including child maintenance and pensions
- providing advice and support for those seeking employment and for those who are unable to work
- ensuring the availability of good quality and affordable housing
- encouraging diversity and participation in society and promoting social inclusion
- promoting sports and leisure within our communities
- supporting local government to deliver services
- supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector
- delivering Neighbourhood Renewal and tackling disadvantage in the most deprived areas
- identifying and preserving records of historical, social and cultural importance to ensure they are available to the public and for future generations
- realising the value of our built heritage
- supporting creative industries, and promoting the arts, language and cultural sectors
- providing free access to books, information, IT and community programmes through our libraries
- maintaining museums
- revitalising town and city centres
- delivery of an Appeals Service

Members will read within the document that overall, the Department's 2024-25 Resource and Capital allocations present a very constrained and exceptionally challenging budget position. In managing its allocations, the Minister has firstly considered internal reductions and cuts on its own functions to protect others, prior to the need to consider reductions on its Arm's Length Bodies and 3rd party funded organisations, including the Voluntary and Community sector. However, given the scale of cumulative Budget reductions in recent years and actions already taken, delivering further reductions will directly impact services.

This position is further exacerbated by high inflation and increased demand for public services in recent years.

Given over 85% of the Department's total Resource requirement in 2024- 25 relates to areas of contractual, inescapable, and statutory spend, only the remaining 15% of the resource budget can be classified as discretionary with potential for reduction. However, a proportion of the discretionary funding requirement relates to other statutory and contractual obligations related to Councils, Arm's Length Bodies, and

Not Applicable

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voluntary bodies. Therefore, even with a continued focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of existing spending, there is limited scope to reduce funding over the budget period to help mitigate any adverse impacts on Section 75 categories.

### **Labour Market Partnerships**

Employment is seen as the best route out of poverty and the Minister places significant value on the collaborative and partnership working arrangements in place with Councils to provide employment interventions at a local level.

Subject to business case approvals, the Minister commits to continuing Labour Market Partnership funding with Councils. This will positively impact across S75 groups, helping those seeking work and provide critical support to help people with a disability or health condition to remain in work.

### **Affordable Warmth Scheme**

The Affordable Warmth Scheme addresses the effects of fuel poverty and energy inefficiency and is directed at low-income households. Overall, the 2024-25 allocation will reflect only 50% of the total budget allocated in 2023-24.

### **Urban Regeneration**

The Urban Regeneration programme contributes to the previous Executive's commitment to create town and city centres in which people want to live, shop, work, or visit. At the core of the Department's investment in public realm, and other regeneration projects, is the desire to create public spaces that are accessible to all. Stopping this investment would have an adverse impact on people with disabilities and older people, and across all Section 75 groups.

Urban regeneration contributes to the Department's housing outcomes and creates economic growth. In particular, the retail and hospitality sectors are often predominant in town and city centres and employ a younger workforce. Stopping investment in these projects could therefore have a disproportionate impact on younger people.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes the Equality Impact Assessment on the Department for Communities' Spending Plans for 2024/2025 and approves the attached response.



**Easy  
Read**



Department for

**Communities**

An Roinn

**Pobal**

Department for

**Commonities**

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

# Being fair when we spend our money

## What do you think?



**This is an Easy Read version  
of the Budget 2024 to 2025  
Equality Impact Assessment**



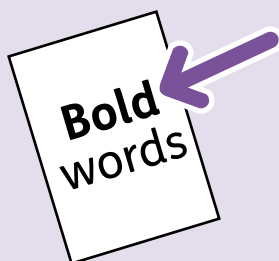
# Easy Read



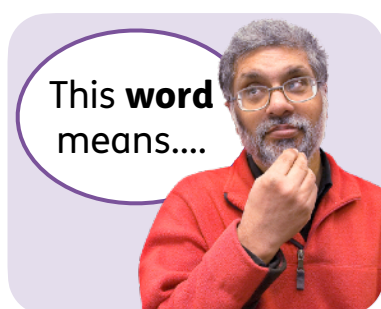
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

# What is in this booklet

About this booklet .....4

Being fair.....5

Our budget .....8

Being fair to people.....13

What do you think? .....23

# About this booklet



The Department for Communities is a part of the government of Northern Ireland.



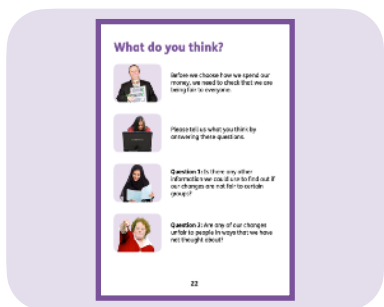
Every year we plan how we will spend our money. This is called our **budget**.



When we plan how we spend our money, we check that we are being fair to everyone. This is called an **Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**.



We want to know if you think we are being fair in the way we spend our money.



Please tell us what you think by answering the questions on page 22 and 23.

# Being fair

The law says that we have to be fair to:



- People from different religions.



- People from different races or backgrounds.



- People of different ages.



- People who are married or not married.

The law also says that we have to be fair to:



- People with different **sexual orientations** - this means who you are attracted to. You might be gay, straight or something else.



- Both men and women.



- People with or without a disability.



- People who are parents or carers.



- People who vote for different parties at elections.

We must also:



- Help everyone to have a good attitude towards disabled people.



- Help disabled people to take part.



We have to check that we are being fair in these ways when we choose how to spend our money.

# Our budget

We spend most of our money on:



- Delivering **benefit payments**, pensions, supporting children and help with housing.

**Benefit payments** help people pay for the things they need to live. This money comes from the UK Government.



- Improving towns and cities.



- Supporting people who are homeless.





We also spend money on supporting groups, like arts, sports, **heritage**, community groups and **voluntary** groups.

**Voluntary groups** offer to help others without being paid for it.



**Heritage** is important things that have been passed down by people from the past.



We do not have enough money to do everything we would like to do.



So we have to spend less on some things, to make sure we can run the services we provide.



We have less staff than we used to have.





We will give more money to voluntary and community groups, so that they can help more people.



We will spend the same on:

- Supporting people who are homeless.



- Helping people to get jobs.



We will give less money to local councils.



We have less money to help build new **social housing**. These are homes that we provide for people who need them.



We will not be able to spend money on some extra projects.

We do not have enough money. But we will use the money we have to:



- Help people to get a home that they can afford.



- Help people to stay warm in their homes.



- Improve towns and cities.



- Support the arts, culture, heritage and sport.



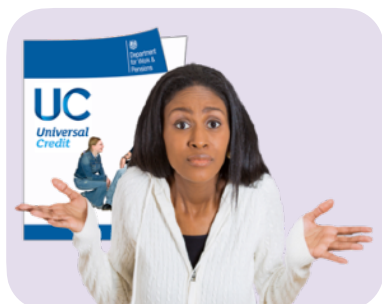
We will also look for other ways to save money.

# Being fair to people



We have looked at where things might not be fair to certain groups of people. This is what we found.

## Pensions and benefits



We do not have enough staff to make sure that everyone gets the pensions and benefits they should get on time.



We will be closely checking how we are working, because we do not have enough staff.

## Discretionary Support Grants



**Discretionary Support Grants** are money that we give to people who have very little money.



We know these grants are very important, so we will spend more money on this.



If we did not spend enough on grants, it could affect families with not much money, older people, disabled people and women.



We will keep checking how different groups are affected by changes we make to these grants.

# Helping people with jobs



We work with local councils and businesses to help people find jobs.



We work with people to help them start working and get better jobs.



We will keep spending money on this.



This will help young people and disabled people to find jobs and stay in work.



But we are stopping another scheme to help young people find jobs, called **JobStart**. The UK Government only paid for this scheme for 2 years.





We think that stopping this project will be bad for young people and people with disabilities who are looking for work.

## Living independently



We provide support to help 19,500 people to live independently each year.



We provide support to help people who are homeless, young people, older people and disabled people.



We will spend more money on this.



We do not think this will make things worse for any group.

# Homelessness



We help people who are homeless.



This is not just people who sleep on the street.



This also includes people who might be hurt at home, or who have been told to leave their home.



We will keep spending money on this.



We do not think this will make things worse for anyone.



# Organisations we work with



We work with organisations, called **arms-length bodies**, that run different services for us.



They help with things like housing, arts, libraries, museums and sports.



We will spend the same amount of money on these organisations.



We do not think this will be unfair to any groups.



Some organisations might need more money. We will check if the money we give them affects their services.

# Voluntary and community groups



Voluntary and community groups help make things better for everyone.



Many of these groups do not have much money.



We will give them more money this year.



We do not think this will make things worse for anyone.

## Giving money to councils



We give money to councils each year to support them.



We are going to give them less money this year than last year.



We have checked that this is fair.



We will also check how the councils use the money we give them.

# New social housing and other projects



**Social housing** is homes that we provide for people who need them.



We want to provide more social housing, but we cannot afford to build as many homes as we wanted.



Some people wait a long time for social housing.



We provide homes to people who need them most.



People from some of the groups we have to be fair to might have to wait longer to get social housing.



We also have important projects, like making homes warmer and improving towns and cities.



Spending less on these projects could be bad for disabled people, older people and younger people.



We will also spend less on projects to do with arts, sports and the **environment**.



The **environment** is the world around us. It includes land, water, air and everything that lives on it.



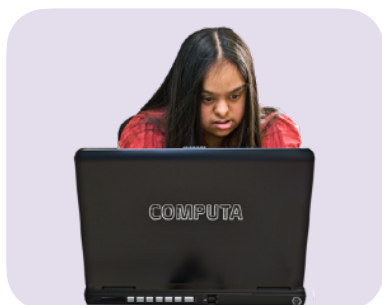
We do not have enough information about how this will affect people.



# What do you think?



Before we choose how we spend our money, we need to check that we are being fair to everyone.



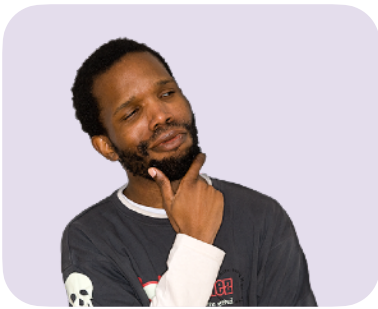
Please tell us what you think by answering these questions.



**Question 1:** Is there any other information we could use to find out if our changes are not fair to certain groups?



**Question 2:** Are any of our changes unfair to people in ways that we have not thought about?



**Question 3:** What do you think we could do to stop our changes being unfair to people?



**Question 4:** Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Please send us your answers by either:



- Email: [dfcbudgeteqia@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:dfcbudgeteqia@communities-ni.gov.uk)



- Filling in a survey on our website: <https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfc/eqia-on-dfc-budget-for-2024-25>



Please send us your answers by 3 September 2024.

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# Budget 2024-25 Equality Impact Assessment

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# 1. Introduction

1.1. The Department for Communities (DfC) Budget 2024-25 consultation is published in a situation where Northern Ireland (NI) Executive departments are facing an extremely challenging Budget position. This has meant difficult decisions for the Executive; providing additional funding for one area means less funding for another. Furthermore, the continuation of single-year budgeting, after seven successive single-year Budgets, does not support the much-needed strategic planning, investment, and public sector reform, required to ensure our public services are inclusive, sustainable and effective in delivering outcomes.

## Executive's Budget 2024-25

- 1.2. Following the restoration of the Executive on 3 February 2024, the Department of Finance (DoF) commissioned the Executive's Budget 2024-25 Exercise on 18 February 2024. Returns were requested from departments by 29 February, including Executive Earmarked requirements, Non-Ring-Fenced Resource Bids, and Capital requirements
- 1.3. Despite the additional funding provided by the financial package

which accompanied the restoration of the Executive, funding requests from all departments far outweighed the funding available for allocation, three times more for day-to-day funding (Resource DEL) and one and a half times more for Capital DEL.

- 1.4. The Executive considered and set the NI Budget 2024-25 on 25 April 2024, and as outlined by the Finance Minister, no department received the level of funding it bid for. In terms of the challenge faced in 2024-25, after Executive Earmarked requirements were met, the NI Block grant pressure on Resource DEL totalled £2.2 billion and £1 billion on Capital, when compared against Departmental requirements.
- 1.5. In this context, the Department for Communities and its funded Arm's Length Bodies face significant funding challenges in order to deliver a balanced budget in 2024-25. This is compounded by cumulative cuts of £277m on the Department's Resource Baseline Budget over the last 12 years, recent high levels of inflation which has added to the cost of delivering public services, and increased demand for public services.

## Executive's Budget 2024-25

- 1.6. The Executive's NI Budget 2024-25 provided the Department for Communities (hereinafter referred to as 'the Department') with an allocation of £856.0m Resource DEL funding, £133.4m Net Capital DEL and £29.8m Financial Transactions Capital for 2024-25.
- 1.7. The Department's £856.0m Resource DEL allocation includes £175.0m of Executive Earmarked and £681.0m of Non-Ring-Fenced Resource funding. This position reflects all Executive Earmarked Resource requirements being met in full.
- 1.8. With regards Non-Ring-Fenced Resource, the Department submitted £128.8m of bids and was provided with a General Allocation of £13.0m, resulting in a £115.8m (-17%) Non-Ring-Fenced Resource shortfall.
- 1.9. Regarding Capital, the Department received a net allocation of £133.4m, which included £18.0m of Earmarked allocations and a general allocation of £115.4m. The Department's Net Capital DEL allocation of £133.4m results in a £167.3m (-48.5%) shortfall on the Department's Capital DEL bids submitted for 2024-25.
- 1.10. Similar to 2023-24, managing Resource and Capital shortfalls of this magnitude will undoubtedly have a continued significant and adverse impact on the Department's ability to deliver public services in 2024-25.
- 1.11. The purpose of this Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is to present the initial decisions taken by the Minister for Communities to live within the 2024-25 Budget allocation and the potential impact to people in Section 75 categories of those decisions on the services and supports the Department provides.
- 1.12. It should be noted that the Department's Budget process including policy setting, monitoring of the Budget and the impact of allocations is a continuous and reflective cyclical process. Each financial year, the Department undertakes regular monitoring of its Budget policy decisions. As part of the Budget 2024-25 cycle, monitoring data from previous Budget cycles has informed bids submitted to the Department of Finance for consideration by the Executive, to mitigate adverse or disproportionate impacts identified on people in Section 75 categories.

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1.13. Your comment and feedback on the initial decisions taken and impacts of those decisions is sought through this consultation. The consultation activities will inform decision-making, and every response received by the deadline will be considered.

## 2. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

- 2.1. Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 requires the Department, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between -
- people with different religious beliefs
  - people from different racial groups
  - people of different ages
  - people with different marital status
  - people with different sexual orientations
  - men and women generally
  - people with or without a disability
  - people with or without dependants
  - people with different political opinions
- 2.2. In addition, but without prejudice to the duty above, the Department should also have due regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between people with different religious beliefs, different political opinions or from different racial groups.
- 2.3. The Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 January 2007, introduced new duties requiring all public authorities in carrying out their functions having due regard to the need to:
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
  - encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- 2.4. Equality scheme commitments require public authorities to determine if there are any impacts on equality of opportunity and if there are opportunities to better promote

equality of opportunity between people within the Section 75 equality categories. Where screening would not be an adequate means of gathering the information that is needed to assess the relevant equality impacts or opportunities, the public authority should proceed to do an EQIA. In response to this, the Department has determined that the Departmental allocation, as outlined in the Budget 2024-25, requires an EQIA.

2.5. This document is therefore the prepared draft EQIA. The purpose of this document is to record the findings of the EQIA and invite comments.

2.6. To request an alternative format please contact:

**Financial Management Directorate**

**Department for Communities**

**Level 5, Causeway Exchange**

**1-7 Bedford Street**

**BELFAST**

**BT2 7EG**

**Telephone: 028 90512 625**

**Email: [dfcbudgeteqia@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:dfcbudgeteqia@communities-ni.gov.uk)**

## 3. Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1. The process of setting Budgets can in some cases have an unintentionally greater impact on some specific Section 75 groups than others, for example, on males, females, young people or pensioners, etc. In allocating Budgets, the Department aims to avoid any adverse impacts and where possible, action will be taken to mitigate against specific adverse impacts and consider alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.
- 3.2. To comply with its Section 75 obligations, the Department has carried out a draft EQIA on the Budget 2024-25 allocation to the Department.
- 3.3. The primary function of an EQIA is to assess whether policy proposals would have a differential impact and in particular, an adverse differential impact on the categories of persons listed in Section 75, and any sub-groups within those categories.
- 3.4. When conducting an EQIA, the Department acts in accordance with the guidance published by the Equality Commission in February 2005<sup>1</sup> which recommends that there should be seven steps in the EQIA process:

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**1** Practical guidance on equality impact assessment - <https://www.equalityni.org/Publications/Employers-Service-Providers/Public-Authorities/Practical-guidance-on-equality-impact-assessment?ID=1117>

<b>Step 1</b>	Defining the aims of the policy.
<b>Step 2</b>	Consideration of available data and research.
<b>Step 3</b>	Assessment of impacts.
<b>Step 4</b>	Consideration of measures which may mitigate any adverse impact and alternative policies which may better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.
<b>Step 5</b>	Formal consultation.
<b>Step 6</b>	Decision and publication of the EQIA results.
<b>Step 7</b>	Monitoring for adverse impact.

3.5. In response to this, the Department has examined a number of potential scenarios for its 2024-25 Budget allocation and given potential for adverse impacts across Section 75 groups has prepared a draft EQIA and consultation, in order to collate views from interested stakeholders.

This document is the draft of the EQIA prior to incorporating the outcomes of a public consultation.

3.6. This document includes information on how the publication of the results of the EQIA will be handled.



## 4. Policy Aim

### Budget 2024-25

- 4.1. To inform the Executive's setting of Budget 2024-25, in addition to funding requirements, equality information was provided by all departments on the potential equality impacts of living within Resource DEL Baselines, and the impact of Resource and Capital DEL bids not being met. The Executive considered these assessments before agreeing Budget 2024-25.
- 4.2. The Executive's Budget 2024-25 for Northern Ireland was agreed by the Executive and announced by the Finance Minister on 25 April 2024<sup>2</sup>. The Budget provides the Resource DEL and Capital funding allocations to departments for the 2024-25 financial year.
- 4.3. The Budget 2024-25 allocations are presented at an overall departmental outcome level and departments are then required to consider their funding allocations in line with Equality Commission guidance and should an EQIA be required, this is to be published to support the consultation process.
- Once completed, the Executive will consider if any in-year adjustments are needed to departmental allocations.
- 4.4. The purpose of this paper is to set out the Department's initial assessment of the equality impacts of the Budget on spending proposals for the 2024-25 financial year.
- 4.5. It is important to note that the Department's Budget 2024-25 allocations will provide funding for the Department's programmes, Arm's Length Bodies, administrative costs, and capital investment, but do not cover social security benefit and pension payments to customers which are funded directly by Treasury or by HMRC National Insurance Contributions.

### Department for Communities

- 4.6. The Department provides support to meet the needs of some of the most disadvantaged people, families and communities across Northern Ireland.

2 <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/written-ministerial-statement-public-expenditure-budget-2024-25>

4.7. The Department delivers a diverse range of functions that impact on the lives of everyone in our society. The Department's common purpose is to make this a great place to live for everybody by supporting people, building communities, shaping places. Areas of responsibility include:

- delivery of the social security system including child maintenance and pensions
- providing advice and support for those seeking employment and for those who are unable to work
- ensuring the availability of good quality and affordable housing
- encouraging diversity and participation in society and promoting social inclusion
- promoting sports and leisure within our communities
- supporting local government to deliver services
- supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector
- delivering Neighbourhood Renewal and tackling disadvantage in the most deprived areas

- identifying and preserving records of historical, social and cultural importance to ensure they are available to the public and for future generations
- realising the value of our built heritage
- supporting creative industries, and promoting the arts, language and cultural sectors
- providing free access to books, information, IT and community programmes through our libraries
- maintaining museums
- revitalising town and city centres
- delivery of an Appeals Service

4.8. The funding allocated to the Department includes funding to support the Department's Arm's Length Bodies (ALB). These include:

- Armagh Observatory and Planetarium
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland
- Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland
- Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

- 
- Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC)
  - National Museums Northern Ireland
  - Northern Ireland Library Authority (known as Libraries Northern Ireland)
  - Northern Ireland Museums Council
  - Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC)
  - Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
  - Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)
  - Sport NI
  - Ulster Supported Employment Limited
  - North South Language Bodies
  - Foras na Gaeilge
  - Ulster-Scots Agency

## 5. Budget 2024-25 Outcome

### Executive's Budget 2024-25

- 5.1. Following the restoration of the Executive on 3 February 2024, the Department of Finance commissioned the Executive's Budget 2024-25 Exercise on 18 February 2024. Returns were requested from departments by 29 February 2024, including Executive Earmarked requirements, Non-Ring-Fenced Resource Bids, and Capital requirements.
- 5.2. Despite the additional funding provided by the financial package which accompanied the restoration of the Executive, funding requests from all departments far outweighed the funding available for allocation, three times more for day-to-day funding (Resource DEL) and one and a half times more for Capital DEL.
- 5.3. When the Executive agreed Budget 2024-25, the Resource DEL funding available for allocation totalled £15,247.0m for 2024-25. Resource spending covers the day-to-day costs of public services and administration, plus debt interest. It is largely financed by the UK Block Grant (which comprises a core element determined by the Barnett formula plus 'non-Barnett additions' that include financing for political agreements), with a much smaller contribution from the Regional Rates.
- 5.4. Similarly, for Capital the funding available for Executive allocation totalled £2,149.6m for 2024-25, made up of £2,087.4m of Conventional Capital and £62.2m Financial Transactions Capital. Capital spending covers investment in infrastructure, plant, and machinery. It is largely financed from the Block Grant, plus capital borrowing under the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative (RRI), which is limited in amount by legislation and agreement with HM Treasury.
- 5.5. The Executive considered and set the NI Budget 2024-25 on 25 April 2024 and as outlined by the Finance Minister, no department received the level of funding they bid for. In terms of the challenge faced in 2024-25, after Executive Earmarked requirements were met, the NI Block grant pressure on Resource DEL totalled £2.2 billion and £1 billion on Capital, when compared against Departmental requirements.
- 5.6. The context of setting Budget 2024-25 has been very difficult, with significant challenges now faced by all departments to manage the forecasted level of pressures in 2024-25.

## Interim Fiscal Framework

5.7. It is positive that a level of additional funding is now expected during 2024-25 and moving forwards, for Executive allocation to departments. The announcement by the Finance Minister on 21 May 2024, following negotiations with Treasury on a new Interim Fiscal Framework, will see a new needs-based funding formula applied. This will mean that Northern Ireland will get an uplift in the Barnett formula if its funding falls short of its relative need per head.

5.8. Treasury has agreed to a 124% needs-based adjustment factor being applied from the date of restoration of the Executive on 3 February 2024. This means some £24m from the Spring Budget Barnett consequentials will now be available for allocation as part of the upcoming June 2024 Monitoring Round. Any future Barnett allocations in 2024-25 will be at this

increased level meaning additional funding for public services.

5.9. The Treasury has also agreed to consider a review of the Executive's relative need if multiple independent and credible sources provide evidence that relative need is different to 124%. The publication of the Interim Fiscal Framework includes the scope and structure of the Sustainability Plan which will be published by August 2024.

## Department for Communities Budget 2024-25 Allocation

5.10. The Executive's Budget 2024-25 settlement provides the Department with £856.0m Resource DEL, £133.4m Capital DEL and £29.8m Financial Transactions Capital (FTC). Table 1 details the Department's Budget 2024-25 allocations against Budget 2023-24 opening allocations.

**Table 1 – DfC Budget 2024-25 allocations against 2023-24 allocations**

DfC Budget Position (£m)	2023-24 Allocation	2024-25 Allocation	Change
Resource DEL – Non-Ring Fenced	702.1	681.0	-3.0%
Resource DEL – Earmarked	159.5	175.0	9.7%
<b>TOTAL RESOURCE</b>	<b>861.6</b>	<b>856.0</b>	<b>-0.6%</b>
Capital DEL	216.1	133.4	-38.3%
Financial Transaction Capital	25.6	29.8	16.4%

5.11. The Department's 2024-25 Non-Ring-Fenced Resource Budget allocation reflects a £21.1m (3.0%) reduction on 2023-24 Resource DEL. This change can mostly be explained by the removal of De-Rating Grant funding (£33.7m) which the Executive have now categorised as Earmarked and a General Allocation of £13.0m for 2024-25.

5.12. Within the Resource DEL position, Earmarked funding of £175.0m has been provided in full for Welfare Mitigations, Housing Benefit Rates, De-Rating Grant, Office for Building Safety and PEACE PLUS funding. It is positive that these Executive Earmarked allocations have been provided in full, which will enable these provisions to continue in 2024-25 without cut and any adverse impact. It should be noted that Earmarked

allocations are provided by the Executive, for purposes determined by the Executive and as such the departments have no ability to reduce and reallocate Earmarked allocations to offset pressures in other areas.

5.13. The Department submitted £128.8m of Non-Ring-Fenced Resource DEL bids as part of the Budget 2024-25 Information Gathering Exercise. Against these requirements, only the £13.0m General Allocation noted above was provided. This results in a £115.8m (-17%) shortfall in the level of Resource DEL funding required by the Department in 2024-25. Similar to 2023-24, when the Department faced a Non-Ring-Fenced Resource funding gap of £111.2m, managing a Resource shortfall of this scale will undoubtedly have a

continued significant and adverse impact on the Department's ability to deliver public services in 2024-25.

high inflation and increased demand for public services in recent years.

5.14. The Department's Capital allocation totals £133.4m Net Capital in 2024-25. This is a £82.7m (38.3%) decrease in Net Capital when compared to the Department's 2023-24 Net Capital allocation of £216.1m. Furthermore, given the greatest proportion of the Department's budget provides for new build Social Housing, the Department's Capital allocation is now £167.3m (48.5%) short of the £345.1m required for 2024-25. Of the £133.4m net allocation, £18.0m is for Earmarked areas, with a general allocation of £115.4m.

5.15. Overall, the Department's 2024-25 Resource and Capital allocations present a very constrained and exceptionally challenging budget position. In managing its allocations, the Minister has firstly considered internal reductions and cuts on its own functions to protect others, prior to the need to consider reductions on its Arm's Length Bodies and 3rd party funded organisations, including the Voluntary and Community sector. However, given the scale of cumulative Budget reductions in recent years and actions already taken, delivering further reductions will directly impact services. This position is further exacerbated by

5.16. To add further context, very difficult and proactive actions have been taken over the last three years in order to live within budget, including:

- Reduction of the Rates Support Grant by £7.0m
- Departmental staffing reductions equivalent to over 370 FTE posts (£14.8m)
- 2.5% cut (c.50 FTE staff or £2m) applied to all legacy benefit and pensions operational delivery staffing complements
- Redeployment of staff and robust vacancy control, not filling 600 vacancies so as to not increase the Department's overall headcount, this is despite resource pressures, increasing workloads and critical vacancies
- Curtailing discretionary and stopping all overtime spend apart from essential and out of hours requirements

- Following policy change, reduced by 30% forecast Discretionary Support Grant expenditure, which supports people in financial crisis/hardship, despite significant increased demand due to the cost-of-living crisis
- 20% reduction in the Labour Market Partnership Programme with Councils, despite high levels of economic inactivity and the largest disability employment gap in the UK
- 5% reduction applied to the Department's Arm's Length Bodies
- Exiting four office sites in the Belfast area which will generate recurrent cost reductions for the Department, and savings for the Department of Finance in future years
- Hybrid adaptations in offices to support New Ways of Working curtailed and only essential expenditure on accommodation and Digital Transformation has been progressed

5.17. Further detail on the Department's Resource, Capital and Financial Transaction Capital requirements, and the actions required to live within

the Budget 2024-25 Resource and Capital allocations is provided below.

### Resource Budget 2024-25

- 5.18. The Department's 2024-25 Resource funding is intended to cover the administration of Social Security benefits, Pensions and Child Maintenance Service delivery, support social and affordable Housing, Urban Regeneration and Local Government, and provide support for the Voluntary and Community Sector, the sports, arts, language and cultural sectors, our Arm's Length Bodies, the Public Record Office of NI and our built heritage. The Department's Resource budget also includes ring fenced funding for Housing Benefit Rates (£84.2m) administered by the NI Housing Executive on behalf of tenants, and for continuing of existing Welfare Mitigations (£45.0m) which includes Social Sector Size Criteria (known as Bedroom Tax) and Benefit Cap mitigation.
- 5.19. Given over 85% of the Department's total Resource requirement in 2024-25 relates to areas of contractual, inescapable, and statutory spend, only the remaining 15% of the resource budget can be classified as discretionary with potential for reduction. However, a proportion of the discretionary funding requirement relates to other statutory



and contractual obligations related to Councils, Arm's Length Bodies, and voluntary bodies. Therefore, even with a continued focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of existing spending, there is limited scope to reduce funding over the budget period to help mitigate any adverse impacts on Section 75 categories.

5.20. In light of the extremely challenging Resource position and a £115.8m shortfall against 2024-25 requirements, to protect core public service delivery, the Department's Resource allocations will reflect the following decisions –

- a) Continued Departmental vacancy control with 600 fte (full time equivalent) posts unaffordable in 2023-24 will remain vacant in 2024-25. Funding for staff will reduce by a further 95 fte posts in 2024-25. This reduction will be delivered through 65 fte posts already vacant and 30 fte related to attrition. Overall, this equates to 695 fte critical vacancies, predominantly related to social security benefit and pensions delivery, not being filled. This position reflects a 16% increase on the 600 critical vacancies not filled in 2023-24.
- b) The Minister values the vital role provided by the Voluntary

and Community Sector. Given pressures on the sector, Voluntary and Community Sector funding will increase by £1.45m on the Department's 2023-24 Final EQIA Budget position funding level.

- c) The Minister acknowledges the hugely important role the NI Housing Executive delivers in addressing Homelessness and delivering the Supporting People Programme in NI. The Minister will commit to holding Homelessness funding at the 2023-24 Final EQIA Budget position and provide a £4.8m (6.4%) increase in funding for the Supporting People Programme above the 2023-24 Final EQIA Budget position, to help ensure continued viability of the programme. Whilst a priority, the Minister acknowledges and deeply regrets that this position is far from ideal, given the challenges of both increasing demand and costs. However, given the Department's heavily constrained financial position no additional funding for Homelessness can be provided at this time. This position will continue to be closely monitored throughout 2024-25.
- d) The Department's funded Arm's Length Bodies carry out a range of important functions and

deliver on the Department's strategic objectives. Despite the heavily constrained financial position facing the Department in 2024-25, Arm's Length Bodies Resource funding will be held at the Department's 2023-24 Final EQIA Budget position funding level. The Minister acknowledges this position is not ideal and will require cost constraint by Arm's Length Bodies to live within their Budget 2024-25 allocations.

The Department will continue to work closely with Arm's Length Bodies on monitoring the service impacts arising from Budget 2024-25 allocations.

- e) Given the current Cost of Living crisis, the ending of the UK Government's Cost-of-Living Payments, recent high levels of inflation and many people facing financial hardship, the Department's Discretionary Support Grant Budget will be topped up to £22.0m for 2024-25. This reflects a 10% increase on 2023-24 Final EQIA Budget position of £20.0m, or a 60% increase on the Department's historic Discretionary Support Grant Baseline of £13.72m.
- f) Employment is seen as the best route out of poverty and the

Minister places significant value on the collaborative and partnership working arrangements in place with Councils to provide employment interventions at a local level. Subject to business case approvals, the Minister commitments to continuing Labour Market Partnership funding with Councils. The Department's annual funding will be aligned with Business Case approvals.

- g) Given the scale of financial challenge faced, the 2024-25 Rates Support Grant provided to Councils will be set at £3.1m, a £1.8m reduction on the grant provided in 2023-24.

5.21. Furthermore, in the absence of the Department's Resource bids being met for parity delivery of social security, similar to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in GB, work in the following areas will be unable to progress –

- h) An extension of the Department's very successful JobStart Scheme (16-24), and other parity employment support interventions. Furthermore, given the absence of parity funding and continued year-on-year squeeze on Budgets, the Department will be undertaking further review of its existing suite

of employment programmes and their longer term viability.

- i) Similar to the Department for Work & Pensions, plans were developed to increase investment in tackle rising levels of welfare fraud and error, which has the potential to generate a significant Return on Investment and Annual Managed Expenditure (AME) savings. However, in the absence of additional funding and heavily constrained Budgets, progressing this additional investment is not affordable at this time.

- Continually review Resource expenditure, and other options to make cuts to live within the Budget 2024-25 allocations. However, no material savings are anticipated given the scale of cuts in recent years
- Submitting bids for in-year Monitoring Rounds and for any other available funding available, such as Transformation funding
- Considering any further opportunities as they arise to live within budget

5.22. Following these decisions (outlined at a) to i) above) the Department has been left with a funding gap of £11.0m to manage in-year, which is the equivalent of the funding required for 300 fte staff. Given this difficult funding position, further additional actions will progress in-year, including;

- Continuing as far as possible to minimise all discretionary departmental expenditure
- Continuing the further rationalisation and maximisation of the Department's office estate
- Redeploying staff where necessary to protect core service delivery

5.23. Throughout 2024-25, the Minister will strive to deliver the best possible outcomes for people and the communities within the Department's available Resource funding envelope. However, the extremely challenging Budget position poses a significant risk to service delivery and, without careful oversight, risk of overspend in the 2024-25 financial year.

### Capital 2024-25

5.24. The Department's Net Capital allocation is £133.4m. This is a £82.7m or 38.3% decrease in Net Capital when compared to the Department's 2023-24 Net Capital allocation of £216.1m. Whilst this allocation will allow the Department to broadly meet its statutory

obligations (such as Discretionary Support Loans, Funeral Loans and Health and Safety requirements) and inescapable Capital commitments (such as contractual commitment and tails on New Build Social Housing), the Department is facing a significant shortfall in funding available for other high priority Capital projects.

5.25. Considering the extremely challenging Capital position, after inescapable requirements are met, taking proactive measures to manage the position, in tandem with managing a £10.0m overplanning position, only £21.975m of funding is available for Other High Priority Capital Projects. To maximise use of the available Budget, the Department's Capital allocations will reflect the following decisions –

a) £15.0m allocation to **New Building Social Homes** – This allocation, together with capital funding for Shared Housing, that the Department is hopeful of receiving in year, would allow for up to 400 New Build Social Home starts in 2024-25. This is a significant reduction on the 1,508 starts in 2023-24 but is a direct result of the significant reduction in the Capital funding allocated to the Department for 2024-25.

- b) £2.0m allocation to **Affordable Warmth** – This would allow approximately 360 additional approvals to be made in 2024-25.
- c) £3.3m allocation to a range of **urban regeneration** projects to create town and city centres in which people want to live, shop, work, or visit.
- d) £1.7m across a wide range of **cultural, heritage and active community** projects to help promote health and wellbeing across all S75 groups.

### Financial Transaction Capital 2024-25

5.26. The Department's Financial Transaction Capital allocation is £29.8m in 2024-25, which is in line with the forecasted need. This will support loans to, or equity investment in, capital projects delivered by the private sector and allow continuation of Co-Ownership affordable housing and the 'Loan to Acquire Move on Accommodation' (LAMA) homelessness scheme in 2024-25. In addition, it will provide funding for the Social Capital Loan Scheme for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector.

## 6. Consideration of Available Data and Research

- 6.1. In assessing the impact of the Budget 2024-25 policy against obligations under Section 75 of the 1998 Act, the Department concludes that there is evidence of significant and adverse impact in respect of some Section 75 categories. Impacts have been considered against the backdrop of available data and the stated policy intent to determine whether differential impacts identified are adverse. Where this is the case, consideration will be given to potential mitigating factors.
- 6.2. In compiling the Department Budget 2024-25 Draft EQIA and understanding the adverse impacts on Section 75 Groups, the data considered was derived from, but not limited to, a variety of sources. These include –
- the Labour Force Surveys (NISRA)
  - Northern Ireland Census 202
  - Family Resources Survey
  - the Department for Communities Professional Services Unit
  - the Department for Communities Integrated Compliment System (ICS) and staffing levels required to delivery welfare benefit and pensions, including the Move to Universal Credit
  - Department for Work and Pensions
  - the Chancellor’s Spending Review’s and Budget announcements
  - Office of Budget Responsibility publications
  - University of Ulster Economic Policy Centre Research Data
  - Jobseeker’s Allowance Summary of Statistics
  - Poverty Bulletin: Northern Ireland, Households Below Average Income Northern Ireland
  - Database for Income Modelling and Estimation (DIME) dataset
  - Department’s Audit of Inequalities 2021-22<sup>3</sup>

**3** Audit of Inequalities - <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/communities/dfc-audit-of-inequalities-2012-2022.pdf>

- 
- The Department's Annual Fraud and Error results
  - The Department's Resource and Capital DEL expenditure and outcomes delivered in prior years
  - The Department's Annual Managed Expenditure (AME) expenditure in prior years and groups supported
  - Departmental Business Cases documentation
  - Extensive work carried out by the Department on evidence-based budgeting and prioritisation of funding
  - Responses to the Department's Budget 2023-24 EQIA
  - Response to the Department Discretionary Support EQIA
- Section 75 Monitoring data collated on the Department's Budget 2023-24 policy decisions, including returns provided by the Department's funded Arm's Length Bodies
  - Forecasting of the impact of the 2024-25 Budget on the Department, its Arm's Length Bodies, funded programmes, sectors and organisations, and the potential availability of funding during 2024-25
- 6.3. The Department continues to work with its Arm's Length Bodies to understand the impact of the Budget 2024-25 outcome on service delivery, the potential impacts of the policy on the various Section 75 groups and how any impacts could be mitigated.

## 7. Assessment of Impacts

- 7.1. The Minister is committed to ensuring that the Department fulfils its duties under Section 75 (1) and (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in relation to having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and to have regard to desirability of promoting good relations.
- 7.2. It has determined an EQIA is necessary given the decisions required to live within its 2024-25 Budget allocation will adversely impact on the services and supports the Department provides.
- 7.3. This section provides an assessment using the most recent evidence available to help:
- Identify those who are likely to be most affected
  - Assess the likely impact on Section 75 equality groups, examining whether they are likely to have any direct or indirect differential impact on any of these groups
  - Assess the extent to which the specific needs of section 75 equality groups will be addressed
- 7.4. In so doing the intention is to ensure that in identifying and taking forward Budget proposals, due regard has been given to the needs and concerns of all Section 75 groups and that the subsequent actions put forward in support of the Budget proposals effectively target the needs of those most vulnerable and at risk.
- 7.5. The proposed policy has been considered and the following assessments made as to whether or not there will be an adverse impact on any of the nine Section 75 categories:
- 7.6. In managing the constrained financial position, the Minister has firstly considered options for internal efficiencies, prior to considering the need to reduce or stop service delivery or the funding provided to its Arm's Length Bodies and 3rd party funded organisations. However, given the scale of the Department's Resource and Capital funding gap, cuts to services and supports the Department provides is inevitable. The functions and bodies identified as impacted by the 2024-25 Budget include –

- i Social Security Benefit and Pensions Delivery, including Child Maintenance**
- ii Discretionary Support Grants**
- iii Employment Support**
- iv Supporting People (SP) Programme**
- v Homelessness**
- vi Arm's Length Bodies**
- vii Voluntary & Community Sector**
- viii Rates Support Grant (RSG)**
- ix New Build Social Housing and Other High Priority Capital**

### Potential Impact of Proposals

- i. Social Security Benefit and Pension Delivery, and Child Maintenance**  
Similar to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Department's Universal Credit (UC) caseload doubled during the pandemic and continues to remain high. There have also been increases in the Department's pensions and disability benefit caseloads. DWP has recruited significant numbers of additional staff to administer their increased caseloads and in the 2021 Autumn Budget and Spending Review were allocated £900.0m each year (until 31 March 2025) to meet recruitment costs. Given the budget shortfalls DfC faced in 2023-24, and again for 2024-25, the Department continues to curtail

recruitment to avoid creating a further Departmental pressure. This has left the Department operating with insufficient staffing levels which are presently impacting on operational delivery areas. Longer term continued failure to secure the funding necessary to appropriately resource benefit delivery including child maintenance and discretionary support services will lead to delays in benefit payments, impact on telephony and service delivery performance, and place working age customers in financial hardship. The need to prioritise new benefit claims to deliver statutory obligations will lead to slippage in lower priority areas, such as debt referrals and increase the overall debt stock and put at risk the Department's ability to safeguard public funds.

There is an immediate risk to service delivery given the additional staff required to deliver on the UK Government led Move to Universal Credit Programme, whereby all individuals on working age legacy benefits will be migrated to Universal Credit. The Move to Universal Credit in NI commenced in October 2023, and is necessary to maintain parity in statutory benefit delivery. There is a significant risk that if working age legacy customers here are not moved on to UC, the Department could become liable for the full IT costs associated with the maintenance and running of



HMRC’s National Tax Credit system and DWP legacy benefit systems. As part of closing tax credits activity, DWP and DfC have recently introduced legislation to provide for all payments of tax credits to cease. This will take effect from 5 April 2025. If the remaining circa 24,000 tax credits claimants in NI have not been migrated by this date, they will lose their access to welfare support. To mitigate the risk to NI tax credit claimants losing their access to welfare support and to maintain parity of social security the Department is aiming to deliver the Move to UC for tax credit claimants only within its existing staff complement.

This position is not without significant risk and is greatly exacerbating the pressure already being felt in operational benefit delivery areas, is impacting on service delivery and places further risks to the well-being of staff.

The Department’s assessment of the likely impact of Budget 2024-25 on Social Security Benefit and Pension (including child maintenance) delivery upon those within Section 75 categories, identified the following potential adverse impacts:

Group	Impact
Religious Belief	<p>The Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the overall budget and not filling staff vacancies on this group. The 2021 Census breakdown of religious belief in NI showed that 44% of the population are Protestant, 46% Catholic, 1% other religions and 9% no religion.</p> <p>The Department’s services benefit all eligible citizens across NI within this S75 group. However, in the absence of data, it is difficult to determine the impact(s) on this group of the Department’s 2024-25 budget allocation. It is however probable that the policy would likely disproportionately impact on people identifying as Roman Catholic, as they are over-represented in deprived areas.</p>

Group	Impact
Political Opinion	<p>The Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the overall budget and not filling staff vacancies on this group. In Census 2021, 814,600 people (42.8%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as ‘British’. This is down from 876,600 people (48.4%) in 2011. The Census also found, 634,600 people (33.3%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as ‘Irish’. This is up from 513,400 people (28.4%) in 2011. Finally, the Census 2021, identified 598,800 people (31.5%) living here as solely or along with other national identities ‘Northern Irish’. This is up from 533,100 people (29.4%) in 2011.</p> <p>The Department’s services benefit all eligible citizens across NI within this S75 group. However, in the absence of data, it is difficult to determine the impact(s) on this group of the Department’s 2024-25 budget allocation.</p>
Race	<p>The Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the overall budget and not filling staff vacancies on this group. The 2021 Census recorded that 3.5% (66,600) people were from ethnic minority groups. The intersectionality of gendered poverty compounds its impact on women with other marginalised identities. Black women, for instance, face higher odds of being single parents and working low-wage jobs. Additionally, households belonging to Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are more likely to have dependent children and larger families, making them more susceptible to reductions in Universal Credit. <sup>4</sup></p> <p>The Department’s services benefit all eligible citizens across NI within this S75 group. In the absence of specific data on the impact of vacancies not being filled, it is difficult to determine the impact(s) on this group of the Department’s 2024-25 budget allocation.</p>

<sup>4</sup> <https://policyinpractice.co.uk/we-can-do-better-women-welfare-and-the-gender-benefits-gap/>

Group	Impact
Age	<p>The 2021 census indicated that 17% of the 1.9m people resident in Northern Ireland are 65 and over, 19% are aged 0-14, 12% age 15-25, and 52% age 25 – 64.</p> <p>The Department’s Audit of Inequalities identifies young people (18-24 year olds) as having the lowest working age employment rates and the highest rates of unemployment and economic inactivity. Young people and in particular those aged 18 to 24, faced a particular disadvantage in the labour market and therefore could be adversely impacted by budget policy. This has been highlighted in researched reports from the Centre for Labour and Social Studies<sup>5</sup>, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development<sup>6</sup>, European Economic and Social Committee<sup>7</sup>, City and Guilds<sup>8</sup> and the TUC<sup>9</sup>.</p> <p>The Budget policy is also likely to adversely impact on people of working age, given the greatest proportion of the Department’s vacancies relate to Universal Credit delivery.</p> <p>The Department’s services benefit all eligible citizens of all ages across NI. In the absence of data on the impact of not filling vacancies, it is difficult to determine the impact(s) on this group of the Department’s 2024-25 budget allocation. However, degradation in services is likely and will directly impact upon working age and older people particularly those on low incomes.</p>

5 [Labour Market Realities: Barriers Facing Young People | Blog | CLASS \(classonline.org.uk\)](#)

6 [Recruiting young people facing disadvantage: an evidence review \(cipd.co.uk\)](#)

7 [Young people are worse off than older generations in today’s labour market | European Economic and Social Committee \(europa.eu\)](#)

8 [Youth Misspent: Uncovering the harsh realities for Britain’s young people in today’s job market - News \(cityandguilds.com\)](#)

9 <https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/young-workers-three-times-more-likely-be-employed-sectors-where-jobs-are-most-risk-tuc>

Group	Impact
Marital Status	<p>The Department’s services benefit all eligible citizens across NI within this S75 group. Whilst the Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the resource budget on this group, in 2021 there were 7,921 marriages in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Women experience higher rates of poverty than men for two main interconnected reasons: women typically earn lower wages per hour and work fewer paid hours over their lifetimes, while also facing income loss due to caregiving responsibilities. Although this wage gap may be offset by the earnings of male partners in dual income (and mixed sex) households, it leaves single women, pensioners, and especially single parents in precarious financial situations, susceptible to poverty-level incomes.</p> <p>Women, particularly unmarried/single mothers, rely more heavily on benefits as part of their income, rendering them vulnerable to cuts in benefits. Moreover, as we see in benefit take-up rates, women are more likely to qualify for means tested benefits, exacerbating their struggle to escape poverty.<sup>10</sup></p>

10 <https://policyinpractice.co.uk/we-can-do-better-women-welfare-and-the-gender-benefits-gap/>

Group	Impact
Sexual Orientation	<p>The Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the overall budget and not filling staff vacancies on this group. In terms of total population data, the 2021 NI Census data indicates that 2.1% of the household population in Northern Ireland identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. The Continuous Household Survey 2022 records 0.7% of participants as gay/lesbian, 0.6% bisexual, 0.3% Other, 1% undetermined and 97.3% heterosexual.</p> <p>In the absence of data, it is difficult to determine the impact(s) on this group of the Department’s 2024-25 budget allocation. However, some available research would suggest that bisexual women, are more likely to claim disability-related benefits than their heterosexual counterparts, and gay and bisexual men are more likely to claim work-related benefits than their heterosexual counterparts <sup>11</sup>. There is therefore potential for adverse impact on this S75 group.</p>

**11** <https://lgbtqwelfare.stir.ac.uk/2022/12/08/lgb-access-to-welfare-benefits/>

Group	Impact
Gender	<p>NISRA population statistics indicate that men and women make up roughly equal parts of NI's 1.9m population. However, on the whole, women make up the majority of benefit claimants. At face value, this could be for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women, especially low-income women, are more likely to manage their household finances and therefore are more likely to make and manage claims, and more likely to lead on household bills and budgets.</li> <li>• However, women are also more likely to suffer financial vulnerability, earn less on average, and have less to retire on than men. Recent analysis by the Pensions Policy Institute found that women need to work an additional 19 years to keep up with men's pensions.</li> <li>• Women earn less than men and therefore could be entitled to more benefits, and higher benefit rates as a result when they do claim. Lower earnings, career breaks for family care, and providing more unpaid care than men leave women in a financially poorer position<sup>12</sup>.</li> </ul> <p>It therefore stands to reason that females could be more adversely impacted as a result of the Department's 2024-25 budget allocation and inability to fill critical benefit delivery related vacancies and put in place child maintenance payment arrangements.</p>

12 <https://policyinpractice.co.uk/we-can-do-better-women-welfare-and-the-gender-benefits-gap/>

Group	Impact
Disability	<p>The 2021 Census indicates that nearly 45% of households in Northern Ireland with one or more people in the household with a disability (40% for 2011).</p> <p>NISRA statistics show that 21% of adults in Northern Ireland are classed as having a disability. Disabled people face a higher risk of poverty. The poverty rate for disabled people has remained broadly constant at around a third since 2013/14.<sup>13</sup> The difference is particularly stark for working-age adults: those who are disabled are more than twice as likely to live in poverty than those who are not (38% and 17% respectively).</p> <p>The Department’s Audit of Inequalities identifies that people with a disability and/or health conditions may experience barriers of economic participation, social isolation and poverty. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation – Poverty in Northern Ireland (2022) report outlines that disabled people in Northern Ireland have faced a higher poverty risk for at least the last 20 years. This is driven partly by the additional costs associated with disability and ill-health, and partly by many disabled people facing barriers to accessing work. Those barriers mean that many disabled people and/or families where someone is disabled rely on benefits as a source of income.</p> <p>Any inability by the Department to process and pay disability benefit will undoubtedly disproportionately impact on individuals with a disability as these are key users of the Disability benefit services.</p>

13 JRF UK Poverty 2023 - [https://files.localgov.co.uk/jrf\\_638103267396801742.pdf](https://files.localgov.co.uk/jrf_638103267396801742.pdf)

Group	Impact
<p>Dependents</p>	<p>The 2021 NI Census indicated that 29% per cent of households in Northern Ireland contained dependent children and 45% contained at least one person with a long-term health problem or disability.</p> <p>The poverty rate among carers continues to be above those who are not carers. Almost 1 in 3 children in the UK are living in poverty (31%). Nearly half of children in lone-parent families live in poverty, compared with 1 in 4 of those in couple families. Of the working-age adults, lone parents are by far the most likely of any family type to be struggling with poverty. The child poverty rate for children in families with three or more children is almost twice as high as the rate for children in one- or two-child families (47% compared with 24%). This means around 1 in 4 children in one- or two-children families are in poverty, compared with almost 1 in 2 children in families with three or more children. <sup>14</sup></p> <p>High levels of poverty are more likely to be experienced by people with dependents, including dependent adults. Any inability by the Department to process and pay benefits to people with dependents and put in place child maintenance payment arrangements will undoubtedly disproportionately impact on people within this S75 group and their dependents.</p>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/council/equality-diversity-and-the-disability-duties/screening-outcome-reports/screening-reports-2023/screening-reports-april-to-june-2023/hardship-fund-scheme-equality-screening>



## Discretionary Support (DS) Grants

- ii. **Discretionary Support (DS) Grants** (equivalent to GB Household Support Fund) provide support to people facing financial hardship. Grant demand has risen to unprecedented levels, almost a fourfold increase, during the cost-of-living crisis and £40.3m of grant awards were issued in 2022-23. The Department's historic Baseline budget for Discretionary Support Grants totalled £13.7m; which given the constrained budget position in 2023-24 was not sufficient to meet grant demand forecast at similar to 2022-23. Given the pressures faced in 2023-24, the Department progressed policy changes to scale back DS Grants awards to live within budget available for 2023-24. This policy change was subject to full EQIA and took effect from 3 July 2023. The Department has monitored the policy and found no greater adverse impact on any particular Section 75 group.

The Department recognises the vital support DS provides. Despite the

Department's constrained budget position in 2024-25, to avoid impacting the current support available to any vulnerable individual or household facing financial hardship, particularly during this continued cost-of-living crisis, the Department will top up the DS Grant Baseline from £13.7m to £22.0m for 2024-25. Furthermore, Capital funded hardship loans will continue. With rising poverty levels, failure to sustain Discretionary Support will impact most on those already disproportionately impacted by the Cost-of-Living crisis, including low-income families, disabled people, older people, and women. The monitoring data, compiled following the policy changes introduced in July 2023, showed no greater negative impact on lone parents and females compared to claims from all Section 75 groups.

The Department's assessment of the likely impact of its Budget 2024-25 decisions on Discretionary Support provision upon those within Section 75 categories, identified the following potential positive impacts:

Group	Impact
Religious Belief	<p>The Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the overall budget and not filling staff vacancies on this group. The 2021 Census breakdown of religious belief in NI showed that 44% of the population are Protestant, 46% Catholic, 1% other religions and 9% no religion.</p> <p>The Department's services benefit all eligible citizens across NI within this S75 group. In the Department's report covering Section 75 statistics for Discretionary Support claims from August 2021 to March 2023, almost half (48%) of the applicants identified as Roman Catholic. Based on the available data, the Department's policy and not filling staff vacancies may disproportionately impact on this S75 group<sup>15</sup>.</p>
Political Opinion	<p>The Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the overall budget and not filling staff vacancies on this group. In Census 2021, 814,600 people (42.8%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as 'British'. This is down from 876,600 people (48.4%) in 2011. The Census also found, 634,600 people (33.3%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as 'Irish'. This is up from 513,400 people (28.4%) in 2011. Finally, the Census 2021, identified 598,800 people (31.5%) living here as solely or along with other national identities 'Northern Irish'. This is up from 533,100 people (29.4%) in 2011.</p> <p>The Department's services benefit all eligible citizens across NI within this S75 group. In the Department's report covering Section 75 statistics for Discretionary Support claims from August 2021 to March 2023, 34% of the applicants identified as Irish. Based on the available data, the Department's policy and not filling staff vacancies may disproportionately impact on this S75 group<sup>16</sup>.</p>

<sup>15</sup> [Northern Ireland Welfare Supplementary Payment and Discretionary Support Schemes \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Northern Ireland Welfare Supplementary Payment and Discretionary Support Schemes \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Group	Impact
Race	<p>The Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the overall budget and not filling staff vacancies on this group. The 2021 Census recorded that 3.5% (66,600) people were from ethnic minority groups.</p> <p>The intersectionality of gendered poverty compounds its impact on women with other marginalised identities. Black women, for instance, face higher odds of being single parents and working low-wage jobs. Additionally, households belonging to Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are more likely to have dependent children and larger families, making them more susceptible to reductions in Universal Credit<sup>17</sup>.</p> <p>The Department’s services benefit all eligible citizens across NI within this S75 group. In the Department’s report covering Section 75 statistics for Discretionary Support claims from August 2021 to March 2023, 96% of the applicants identified as white. Based on the available data, the Department’s policy and not filling staff vacancies may disproportionately impact on this S75 group<sup>18</sup>.</p>

<sup>17</sup> <https://policyinpractice.co.uk/we-can-do-better-women-welfare-and-the-gender-benefits-gap/>

<sup>18</sup> [Northern Ireland Welfare Supplementary Payment and Discretionary Support Schemes \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](https://communities-ni.gov.uk/northern-ireland-welfare-supplementary-payment-and-discretionary-support-schemes)

Group	Impact
Age	<p>The 2021 census indicated that 17% of the 1.9m people resident in Northern Ireland are 65 and over, 19% are aged 0 -14, 12% age 15 - 25, and 52% age 25 – 64.</p> <p>The Department’s Audit of Inequalities identifies young people (18 - 24 year olds) as having the lowest working age employment rates and the highest rates of unemployment and economic inactivity. Young people and in particular those aged 18 - 24, faced a particular disadvantage in the labour market and therefore could be adversely impacted by budget policy. This has been highlighted in researched reports from the Centre for Labour and Social Studies<sup>19</sup>, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development<sup>20</sup>, European Economic and Social Committee<sup>21</sup>, City and Guilds<sup>22</sup> and the TUC<sup>23</sup>.</p> <p>The Department’s services benefit all eligible citizens of all ages across NI. In the Department’s report covering Section 75 statistics for Discretionary Support claims from August 2021 to March 2023, 51% of the applicants were recorded as being aged between 16 - 34. Based on the available data, the Department’s policy and the impact of staff vacancies may disproportionately impact on this S75 group<sup>24</sup>.</p>

19 [Labour Market Realities: Barriers Facing Young People | Blog | CLASS \(classonline.org.uk\)](#)

20 [Recruiting young people facing disadvantage: an evidence review \(cipd.co.uk\)](#)

21 [Young people are worse off than older generations in today’s labour market | European Economic and Social Committee \(europa.eu\)](#)

22 [Youth Misspent: Uncovering the harsh realities for Britain’s young people in today’s job market - News \(cityandguilds.com\)](#)

23 <https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/young-workers-three-times-more-likely-be-employed-sectors-where-jobs-are-most-risk-tuc>

24 [Northern Ireland Welfare Supplementary Payment and Discretionary Support Schemes \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Group	Impact
Marital Status	<p>The Department's services benefit all eligible citizens across NI within this S75 group. Whilst the Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the resource budget on this group, in 2021 there were 7,921 marriages in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Women experience higher rates of poverty than men for two main interconnected reasons: women typically earn lower wages per hour and work fewer paid hours over their lifetimes, while also facing income loss due to caregiving responsibilities. Although this wage gap may be offset by the earnings of male partners in dual income (and mixed sex) households, it leaves single women, pensioners, and especially single parents in precarious financial situations, susceptible to poverty-level incomes.</p> <p>Women, particularly unmarried/single mothers, rely more heavily on benefits as part of their income, rendering them vulnerable to cuts in benefits. Moreover, as we see in benefit take-up rates, women are more likely to qualify for means tested benefits, exacerbating their struggle to escape poverty<sup>25</sup>.</p> <p>The monitoring data indicated that the Discretionary Support policy changes of July 2023 did not negatively impact single mothers more than any other Section 75 group.</p> <p>In the Department's report covering Section 75 statistics for Discretionary Support claims from August 2021 to March 2023, 71% of the applicants identified as single. Based on the available data, the Department's policy and the impact of staff vacancies may disproportionately impact on this S75 group<sup>26</sup>.</p>

<sup>25</sup> <https://policyinpractice.co.uk/we-can-do-better-women-welfare-and-the-gender-benefits-gap/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/communities/dfc-welfare-supplementary-payment-schemes-section-75-statistics-november-2017-to-march-2023.pdf>

Group	Impact
Sexual Orientation	<p>The Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the overall budget and not filling staff vacancies on this group. In terms of total population data, the 2021 NI Census data indicates that 2.1% of the household population in Northern Ireland identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. The Continuous Household Survey 2022 records 0.7% of participants as gay/lesbian, 0.6% bisexual, 0.3% Other, 1% undetermined and 97.3% heterosexual.</p> <p>In the Department’s report covering Section 75 statistics for Discretionary Support claims from August 2021 to March 2023, 11% of the applicants identified as Gay/lesbian/bisexual/ other. Based on the available data in the report and census, the Department’s policy and the impact of staff vacancies may disproportionately impact on this S75 group<sup>27</sup>.</p>

<sup>27</sup> [Northern Ireland Welfare Supplementary Payment and Discretionary Support Schemes \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/northern-ireland-welfare-supplementary-payment-and-discretionary-support-schemes)

Group	Impact
Gender	<p>NISRA population statistics indicate that men and women make up roughly equal parts of NI's 1.9m population.</p> <p>However, on the whole, women make up the majority of benefit claimants. At face value, this could be for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women, especially low-income women, are more likely to manage their household finances and therefore are more likely to make and manage claims, and more likely to lead on household bills and budgets.</li> <li>• However, women are also more likely to suffer financial vulnerability, earn less on average, and have less to retire on than men. Recent analysis by the Pensions Policy Institute found that women need to work an additional 19 years to keep up with men's pensions.</li> <li>• Women earn less than men and therefore could be entitled to more benefits, and higher benefit rates as a result when they do claim. Lower earnings, career breaks for family care, and providing more unpaid care than men leave women in a financially poorer position<sup>28</sup>.</li> </ul> <p>It therefore stands to reason that females could be more adversely impacted as a result of the Department's 2024-25 budget allocation and inability to fill critical benefit delivery related vacancies.</p> <p>The monitoring data indicated that the Discretionary Support policy changes of July 2023 did not negatively impact women more than men.</p>

28 <https://policyinpractice.co.uk/we-can-do-better-women-welfare-and-the-gender-benefits-gap/>

Group	Impact
Disability	<p>The 2021 Census indicates that nearly 45% of households in Northern Ireland had one or more people in the household with a disability (40% for 2011).</p> <p>NISRA statistics show that 21% of adults in Northern Ireland are classed as having a disability. Disabled people face a higher risk of poverty. The poverty rate for disabled people has remained broadly constant at around a third since 2013-14.<sup>29</sup>The difference is particularly stark for working-age adults: those who are disabled are more than twice as likely to live in poverty than those who are not (38% and 17% respectively).</p> <p>In the Department’s report covering Section 75 statistics for Discretionary Support claims from August 2021 to March 2023, 54% of the applicants considered themselves to have a physical or mental health condition. Based on the available data, the Department’s policy and the impact of staff vacancies may disproportionately impact on this S75 group<sup>30</sup>.</p>

<sup>29</sup> JRF UK Poverty 2023 - [https://files.localgov.co.uk/jrf\\_638103267396801742.pdf](https://files.localgov.co.uk/jrf_638103267396801742.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Northern Ireland Welfare Supplementary Payment and Discretionary Support Schemes ([communities-ni.gov.uk](https://communities-ni.gov.uk))



Group	Impact
Dependents	<p>The 2021 NI Census indicated that 29% per cent of households in Northern Ireland contained dependent children and 45% contained at least one person with a long-term health problem or disability.</p> <p>The poverty rate among carers continues to be above those who are not carers. Almost 1 in 3 children in the UK are living in poverty (31%). Nearly half of children in lone-parent families live in poverty, compared with 1 in 4 of those in couple families. Of the working-age adults, lone parents are by far the most likely of any family type to be struggling with poverty. The child poverty rate for children in families with three or more children is almost twice as high as the rate for children in one- or two-child families (47% compared with 24%). This means around 1 in 4 children in one- or two-children families are in poverty, compared with almost 1 in 2 children in families with three or more children<sup>31</sup>.</p> <p>High levels of poverty are more likely to be experienced by people with dependents, including dependent adults. Any inability by the Department to process and pay benefits to people with dependents will undoubtedly disproportionately impact on people within this S75 group and their dependents.</p> <p>The monitoring data indicated that the Discretionary Support policy changes of July 2023 did not negatively impact lone parents more than any other Section 75 group.</p>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/council/equality-diversity-and-the-disability-duties/screening-outcome-reports/screening-reports-2023/screening-reports-april-to-june-2023/hardship-fund-scheme-equality-screening>

### iii. Employment Support Interventions

- **Labour Market Partnerships (LMP)**
  - LMPs, which are delivered through local councils, provide a suite of employability provision to support people to find and retain employment. LMP aims to improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions by working through a multi-agency partnership approach at local and regional level, with regional objectives whilst being flexible to meet the needs presented by localised conditions, such as economically inactive, long-term unemployment, youth unemployment, disability, skilled labour supply and economic shock. Despite the Department's constrained Budget position in 2024-25, subject to and aligned with business case approvals, funding will continue for LMPs in 2024-25. This will positively impact across 575 groups, helping those seeking work and provide critical support to help people with a disability or health condition to remain in work.
- **JobStart (Youth 16-24 year olds) and other parity employment interventions**
  - The Department's NI JobStart Scheme is aimed at young people aged 16 to 24 who are at risk of falling into long-term unemployment by providing job opportunities offering 25 hours of paid employment per week at the appropriate National Minimum Wage

for six months. This can be extended to nine months for young people on one of the Scheme's Specialist Pathway Groups that includes young people with a disability, those who are Care Experienced, those with a Youth Justice background or at risk of paramilitarism or coercive control and those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). JobStart opportunities improve participants employability and occupational skills, in order to help them sustain employment.

In the absence of the Department's bids being met for parity delivery, similar to the Department of Work and Pensions in GB extension of Restart, the Department will be unable to progress an extension of its very successful JobStart Scheme and take forward other parity employment support interventions in 2024-25. Furthermore, given the absence of parity funding and continued year-on-year squeeze on Budgets, the Department will be undertaking further review of its existing suite of employment programmes and their longer term viability.

The Department's assessment of the likely impact of Budget 2024-25 on Employment Support interventions upon those within Section 75 categories, identified the following potential adverse impacts:

Group	Impact
<p>Religious Belief</p>	<p>The 2021 Census breakdown of religious belief in NI showed that 44% of the population are Protestant, 46% Catholic, 1% other religions and 9% no religion. An Equality Commission study for 2021<sup>32</sup>, external showed that 43.5% of the workforce was Protestant, 43.4%, was Catholic and 13.1% were “non-determined”.</p> <p>The Department’s services benefit all eligible citizens across NI within this S75 group. However, in the absence of specific data, it is difficult to determine the impact(s) on this group of the Department’s 2024-25 budget allocation.</p>

32 <https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/FETO%20Monitoring%20Reports/No32/MonReport32.pdf>

Group	Impact
<p>Political Opinion</p>	<p>In Census 2021, 814,600 people (42.8%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as 'British'. This is down from 876,600 people (48.4%) in 2011. The Census also found, 634,600 people (33.3%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as 'Irish'. This is up from 513,400 people (28.4%) in 2011. Finally, the Census 2021, identified 598,800 people (31.5%) living here as solely or along with other national identities 'Northern Irish'. This is up from 533,100 people (29.4%) in 2011.</p> <p>The Department's services benefit all eligible citizens across NI within this S75 group. However, in the absence of data, it is difficult to determine the impact(s) on this group of the Department's 2024-25 budget allocation.</p>

Group	Impact
Race	<p>The Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the overall budget and not filling staff vacancies on this group. The 2021 Census recorded that 3.5% (66,600) people were from ethnic minority groups.</p> <p>The intersectionality of gendered poverty compounds its impact on women with other marginalised identities. Black women, for instance, face higher odds of being single parents and working low-wage jobs. Additionally, households belonging to Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are more likely to have dependent children and larger families, making them more susceptible to reductions in Universal Credit.<sup>33</sup></p> <p>The Department’s services benefit all eligible citizens across NI within this S75 group. Reduced and sub-parity Employment Support provision is likely to adversely and disproportionately impact on this group, as a result of the Department’s 2024-25 budget allocation. The closure of any of the Department’s Employment Support interventions would be subject to separate EQIA.</p>

33 <https://policyinpractice.co.uk/we-can-do-better-women-welfare-and-the-gender-benefits-gap/>

Group	Impact
Age	<p>The 2021 census indicated that 17% of the 1.9m people resident in Northern Ireland are 65 and over, 19% are aged 0-14, 12% age 15-25, and 52% age 25 – 64.</p> <p>The Department’s Audit of Inequalities identifies young people (18-24 year olds) as having the lowest working age employment rates and the highest rates of unemployment and economic inactivity. Young people and in particular those aged 18 to 24, faced a particular disadvantage in the labour market and therefore could be adversely impacted by budget policy. This has been highlighted in researched reports from the Centre for Labour and Social Studies<sup>34</sup>, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development<sup>35</sup>, European Economic and Social Committee<sup>36</sup>, City and Guilds<sup>37</sup> and the TUC<sup>38</sup>.</p> <p>The high success rates on the Department’s NI JobStart scheme have supported significant numbers of young people move into sustained employment. The Budget policy and the Department’s lack of funding to extend the JobStart scheme will undoubtedly adversely impact on people of working age, particularly young people.</p>

34 [Labour Market Realities: Barriers Facing Young People | Blog | CLASS \(classonline.org.uk\)](#)

35 [Recruiting young people facing disadvantage: an evidence review \(cipd.co.uk\)](#)

36 [Young people are worse off than older generations in today’s labour market | European Economic and Social Committee \(europa.eu\)](#)

37 [Youth Misspent: Uncovering the harsh realities for Britain’s young people in today’s job market - News \(cityandguilds.com\)](#)

38 <https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/young-workers-three-times-more-likely-be-employed-sectors-where-jobs-are-most-risk-tuc>

Group	Impact
Marital Status	<p>The Department’s services benefit all eligible citizens across NI within this S75 group. Whilst the Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the resource budget on this group, in 2021 there were 7,921 marriages in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Women experience higher rates of poverty than men for two main interconnected reasons: women typically earn lower wages per hour and work fewer paid hours over their lifetimes, while also facing income loss due to caregiving responsibilities. Although this wage gap may be offset by the earnings of male partners in dual income (and mixed sex) households, it leaves single women, pensioners, and especially single parents in precarious financial situations, susceptible to poverty-level incomes.</p> <p>Women, particularly unmarried/single mothers, rely more heavily on benefits as part of their income, rendering them vulnerable to cuts in benefits. Moreover, as we see in benefit take-up rates, women are more likely to qualify for means tested benefits, exacerbating their struggle to escape poverty.<sup>39</sup></p> <p>Employment is the best route out of poverty. The Department’s Budget policy with lack of funding to extend the JobStart scheme or take forward other parity employment interventions and risk of financial viability on existing schemes will undoubtedly adversely impact on single people of working age, particularly women.</p>

39 <https://policyinpractice.co.uk/we-can-do-better-women-welfare-and-the-gender-benefits-gap/>

Group	Impact
Sexual Orientation	<p>In terms of total population data, the 2021 NI Census data indicates that 2.1% of the household population in Northern Ireland identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. The Continuous Household Survey 2022 records 0.7% of participants as gay/lesbian, 0.6% bisexual, 0.3% Other, 1% undetermined and 97.3% heterosexual.</p> <p>In the absence of data, it is difficult to determine the impact(s) on this group of the Department’s 2024-25 budget allocation. However, some available research would suggest that bisexual women, are more likely to claim disability-related benefits than their heterosexual counterparts, and gay and bisexual men are more likely to claim work-related benefits than their heterosexual counterparts<sup>40</sup>. There is therefore potential for adverse impact on this S75 group, as this group is likely to be further from the labour market.</p>

40 <https://lgbtqwelfare.stir.ac.uk/2022/12/08/lgb-access-to-welfare-benefits/>



Group	Impact
Gender	<p>NISRA population statistics indicate that men and women make up roughly equal parts of NI’s 1.9m population.</p> <p>However, on the whole, women make up the majority of benefit claimants. At face value, this could be for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women, especially low-income women, are more likely to manage their household finances and therefore are more likely to make and manage claims, and more likely to lead on household bills and budgets.</li> <li>• However, women are also more likely to suffer financial vulnerability, earn less on average, and have less to retire on than men. Recent analysis by the Pensions Policy Institute found that women need to work an additional 19 years to keep up with men’s pensions.</li> <li>• Women earn less than men and therefore could be entitled to more benefits, and higher benefit rates as a result when they do claim. Lower earnings, career breaks for family care, and providing more unpaid care than men leave women in a financially poorer position<sup>41</sup>.</li> </ul> <p>The Department’s Budget policy with lack of funding to extend the JobStart scheme or take forward other parity employment interventions and risk of financial viability on existing schemes will undoubtedly adversely impact on people of working age, particularly women.</p>

41 <https://policyinpractice.co.uk/we-can-do-better-women-welfare-and-the-gender-benefits-gap/>

Group	Impact
Disability	<p>The 2021 Census indicates that nearly 45% of households in Northern Ireland with one or more people in the household with a disability (40% for 2011).</p> <p>NISRA statistics show that 21% of adults in Northern Ireland are classed as having a disability. Disabled people face a higher risk of poverty. The poverty rate for disabled people has remained broadly constant at around a third since 2013-14. <sup>42</sup>The difference is particularly stark for working-age adults: those who are disabled are more than twice as likely to live in poverty than those who are not (38% and 17% respectively).</p> <p>Employment is the best route out of poverty. The Department’s Budget policy with lack of funding to extend the JobStart scheme which provided specific support through the Scheme’s Specialist Pathway for young people with a disability or take forward other parity employment interventions and risk of financial viability on existing schemes will undoubtedly adversely impact on people with a disability. This is particularly concerning for the Department, as Northern Ireland has the highest levels of economic inactivity and the largest disability employment gap in the UK.</p>

<sup>42</sup> JRF UK Poverty 2023 - [https://files.localgov.co.uk/jrf\\_638103267396801742.pdf](https://files.localgov.co.uk/jrf_638103267396801742.pdf)

Group	Impact
<p>Dependents</p>	<p>The 2021 NI Census indicated that 29% per cent of households in Northern Ireland contained dependent children and 45% contained at least one person with a long-term health problem or disability.</p> <p>Work is recognised as the best way out of poverty and is an important step to wellbeing and mental health recovery, improving self-esteem and confidence and reducing psychological distress, and is likely to provide improved income for those people with dependents. Employment interventions also lead to better health, improved work ability and reduced costs related to production loss at work and sickness absence, including reduced costs for the already under pressure Health Service.</p> <p>Any inability by the Department to provide meaningful employment interventions to support people move onto or stay in employment, could disproportionately impact on people within this S75 group and their dependents.</p>

#### iv. Supporting People Programme

- **The Supporting People** programme is the policy and funding framework for housing support services. The Programme assists 19,500 vulnerable people each year to live independently and is focused on four thematic areas; working with people who are experiencing homelessness, young people, older people and people with a disability including mental health and learning disabilities.

Supporting People provides housing support services to assist vulnerable people in to live independently: providing support services that reduce hospitalisation, institutional care or homelessness, assisting transitions to independent living from institutionalised environments; and maintaining tenancies. The Programme helps service users to access welfare benefits, gain or sustain employment, live independently, better manage their physical and

mental health, contribute to society and social networks and access crisis accommodation and healthcare.

Given increasing cost pressures and demand for services, for 2024-25 the Department will provide a £4.8m (6.4%) increase in funding for the Supporting People Programme above the 2023-24 Final EQIA Budget position. This will help with continued viability of the programme. This will provide positive benefit for people across a number of S75 groups, including older people and people with a disability including mental health and learning disabilities who would otherwise be disproportionately impacted by a flat Budget allocation to the programme in 2024-25.

The Department's assessment of the likely impact of the Budget 2024-25 Supporting People allocation upon those within Section 75 categories, has not identified any potential adverse or differential impacts:

Groups	Impact
<p>All Groups –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Religious Belief</li> <li>- Political Opinion</li> <li>- Race</li> <li>- Age</li> <li>- Marital Status</li> <li>- Sexual Orientation</li> <li>- Gender</li> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Dependents</li> </ul>	<p>The Department’s Budget decisions including a £4.8m (6.4%) increase in funding for the Supporting People Programme above the 2023-24 Final EQIA Budget position will help ensure continued viability of the programme. This will provide positive benefit for people across a number of S75 groups, including older people and people with a disability including mental health and learning disabilities who would otherwise be disproportionately impacted by flat funding in 2024-25.</p> <p>Potentially all citizens across NI in S75 groups could benefit from the programme, if eligible.</p> <p>A report in 2020 identified significant shortfalls in supply of housing support particularly for the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people with housing support needs (service shortfall of 9% or c. 920 units).</li> <li>• Women who are at risk of domestic violence (service shortfall of 49% or c.650 units).</li> <li>• People with learning disability or mental health issues (service shortfall of 15-21% or c.540 units).</li> <li>• Homeless people experiencing alcohol or drug issues, homeless families, offenders and other homeless people (service shortfall of 12-24% or c. 540 units).</li> </ul> <p>The additional funding will help sustain the programme and help meet increasing costs, thereby ensure continued access to vulnerable people, including those in Section 75 groups.</p> <p>The Department will continue to work closely with NI Housing Executive on monitoring the service impacts arising the Budget 2024-25 allocations.</p>

## v. Homelessness

The most visible form of homelessness involves people who are seen living on the streets, but the issue of homelessness is much broader than that, including for example, people living in temporary accommodation, people living in poor conditions that are damaging to their health, people who are at risk of violence if they stay at their current accommodation, people staying with family or friends (often referred to as sofa surfing), people living in very overcrowded conditions and people living in a house that is unsuitable for their physical needs.

Anyone can become homeless, but issues such as unemployment, poor physical and mental health, alcohol and substance misuse, relationship breakdown, and combinations of all these, will increase the risk of losing a home and being unable to quickly find another. Crisis<sup>43</sup> have noted that ‘People become and stay homeless for a whole range of complex and overlapping reasons which are a combination of structural factors in society and individual support needs, decisions, and actions. Solving homelessness therefore is about much more than putting a

roof over people’s heads. As well as the impact on the individuals, there are also recognised costs to the economy.

While the Department’s 2023-24 Homelessness Budget allocation was £31.4m, a £44.5m requirement on Homelessness is forecast for 2024-25. The Homelessness budget includes around £7.2m for basic prevention and non-accommodation vital services for voluntary and community sector partners such as the Welcome Centre Street outreach, Simon Community, East Belfast Mission, Salvation Army, Extern and De Paul. The remainder is used for Temporary Accommodation.

The Department has been working with the NI Housing Executive to control spend on Temporary Accommodation. While use of Temporary Accommodation has increased significantly since 2020, there are now also an increasing number of households, many large and complex, entering the Homelessness system after being granted asylum. There is a statutory duty to provide accommodation for a household that meets the four tests for Full Duty Assistance (FDA), and the NIHE then has to pay for accommodation

**43** Crisis Policy Briefing: Introduction to Homelessness & Housing, Crisis  
<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/introduction-to-homelessness-and-housing>

if required. The nature of this Duty means that the NIHE will prioritise funding for it, and focus saving on the third sector/ voluntary and community sector groups, in particular longer term preventative work.

There is a significant risk if sufficient temporary accommodation is not available. This would inevitably lead to a rise in rough sleeping. Vulnerable people will be more at risk of exploitation and harm as they make compromises to find somewhere to

live. There will be a disproportionate impact on health and justice services by people who are genuinely roofless and desperate. The cost on the public purse is therefore likely to be far more than the amount saved.

The Department's assessment of the likely impact of the Budget 2024-25 allocation and inability to increase the Homelessness funding allocation in 2024-25 is likely to adversely impact on people within all Section 75 categories:

Groups	Impact
<p>All Groups –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Religious Belief</li> <li>- Political Opinion</li> <li>- Race</li> <li>- Age</li> <li>- Marital Status</li> <li>- Sexual Orientation</li> <li>- Gender</li> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Dependents</li> </ul>	<p>New homeless presentations remained largely steady over 5-year period, whilst total numbers of full duty applicants on waiting list was increasing year on year.</p> <p>Top reasons for homelessness remained consistent (accommodation not reasonable, sharing breakdown and loss of rented accommodation)</p> <p>Proportion of homeless acceptances was increasing reflecting the increasing complexity of client needs. Demand for emergency accommodation was outstripping supply (reflected in the increasing use of hotel/B&amp;B accommodation). Around 70% of those leaving temporary accommodation move on to permanent social housing. The time spent in Temporary Accommodation is getting longer, the average time is now 8 months. For single lets the average time is now close to 2 years.</p> <p>There is a mismatch in temporary accommodation supply and demand both in terms of locations and client support needs; there were clients in supported accommodation who no longer needed support, whilst others with support needs were in unsupported accommodation, with the most complex often in hotels/B&amp;Bs due to a shortage of accommodation for this cohort. Move on accommodation was identified as a significant blockage within the system.</p> <p>There are increasingly complex support needs associated with homelessness presentations with mental health and addictions the most prevalent. Total numbers of repeat homelessness presentations increasing marginally year on year, including a prevalence of single person homeless amongst repeat presentations.<sup>44</sup></p>

<sup>44</sup> The Way Home Homelessness response to COVID-19, Housing Executive (2020) [https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Homelessness/homelessness-reset-plan-the-way-home.aspx?ext=.](https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Homelessness/homelessness-reset-plan-the-way-home.aspx?ext=)



Groups	Impact
	<p>People in all S75 group groups can be impacted by Homelessness, with potential for greater adverse impact on -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Younger people significantly as risk of homelessness</li> <li>• LGBTQI+ people</li> <li>• Women and men fleeing domestic violence</li> <li>• Single people and families</li> <li>• The disabled and those with complex housing requirements due to their health needs</li> </ul> <p>The inability of the Department to increase the Homelessness funding allocation in 2024-25, is likely to adversely impact on people within all Section 75 categories.</p>

## vi. Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs)

- The Department's 11 ALBs provide services and support to a range of sectors including Housing, Arts, Libraries, Museums and Sports. Despite the heavily constrained financial position facing the Department in 2024-25, Arm's Length Bodies Resource funding will be held at the Department's 2023-24 Final EQIA Budget position funding level. EQIA Monitoring returns, following the Department's Budget 2023-24 Final Budget decisions and allocations to ALBs, identified no significant adverse impacts on Section 75 groups resulting from 2023-24 Budget decisions.

The Minister acknowledges that a flat budget allocation is not ideal and will require cost constraint by Arm's Length Bodies to live within their Budget 2024-25 allocations. However, given the heavily constrained financial position

facing the Department in 2024-25, providing increased allocations to ALBs is not affordable at this time. The Department will continue to work closely with Arm's Length Bodies on monitoring the service impacts arising from their Budget 2024-25 allocations.

Amongst the ALBs are two that are rights based and the Minister recognises the potential impact on rights-based work related to children and young people and older people in NICCY and COPNI. The Department will work with these organisations to support them to limit the impact on direct rights-based work.

The Department's assessment of the likely impact of Budget 2024-25 ALB allocation upon those within Section 75 categories has not identified any potential adverse or differential impacts:

Groups	Impact
<p>All Groups –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Religious Belief</li> <li>- Political Opinion</li> <li>- Race</li> <li>- Age</li> <li>- Marital Status</li> <li>- Sexual Orientation</li> <li>- Gender</li> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Dependents</li> </ul>	<p>Department’s Budget allocations to its funding Arm’s Length Bodies benefit all citizens across NI within these S75 groups.</p> <p>Whilst the Department faces a heavily constrained financial position in 2024-25 and overall reduction in its Resource Budget, Arm’s Length Bodies Resource funding will be held at the Department’s 2023-24 Final EQIA Budget position funding level.</p> <p>Flat Budget allocations are not an ideal situation and will require cost constrained by Arm’s Length Bodies. However, EQIA Monitoring returns following the Department’s Budget 2023-24 Final Budget decisions and allocations to ALBs, identified no significant adverse impacts on Section 75 groups resulting from 2023-24 Budget decisions.</p> <p>The Department will continue to work closely with Arm’s Length Bodies on monitoring the service impacts arising their Budget 2024-25 allocations.</p>

## vii. Voluntary & Community Sector

- The Minister recognises the vital contribution of the Voluntary and Community sector in representing the interests and values of people and communities and in promoting societal wellbeing and resilience. Across government we rely on the sector to directly support communities, to advocate for the most vulnerable in society and to contribute to the co-design and co-production of public services.

There is no single database of Voluntary and Community sector (VCS) organisations. Details on the makeup and conditions of the sector comes from the formal register of charities, from surveys of large membership organisations like the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) [www.nicva.org](http://www.nicva.org), the Rural Community Network (RCN) [www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org](http://www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org) and CO3 (the Chief Executive Officers of

the Third Sector [www.co3.org.uk](http://www.co3.org.uk)) and from qualitative feedback from formal and informal engagement with sector leaders, workers and volunteers.

The Department supports the Sector through a range of programmes & initiatives and is the single biggest government funder of the work of the sector. NICVA estimates that over 53,000 people work in the Voluntary and Community Sector in NI and the sector accounts for a bigger share of the active workforce in NI than at a UK level (7% in NI compared to 3% at a UK level<sup>2</sup>). Women account for a greater share of the VCS workforce than the overall NI workforce – a feature also found in other parts of the UK and in Ireland.

A large proportion of organisations in this sector operate with very lean budgets. Charity commission data shows that 29% of organisations have an annual income under £10,000 and only 21% have incomes above £100,000. 40% of respondents to the

45 <https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/FETO%20Monitoring%20Reports/No32/MonReport32.pdf>

Department’s recent survey of sector organisations reported annual income of under £50,000. NICVA estimates the annual income of the sector at £819.0m, 56% of which comes from government departments and agencies, 22% from public donations and 13% from earned income.

Given pressures on the sector, the Department will increase Voluntary

and Community Sector funding by £1.45m on the Department’s 2023-24 Final EQIA Budget position funding level. The Department’s assessment of the likely impact of the Budget 2024-25 Voluntary and Community Sector allocation upon those within Section 75 categories has not identified any potential adverse or differential impacts:

Group	Impact
Religious Belief	<p>The 2021 Census breakdown of religious belief in NI showed that 44% of the population are Protestant, 46% Catholic, 1% other religions and 9% no religion. An Equality Commission study for 2021<sup>45</sup>, external showed that 43.5% of the workforce was Protestant, 43.4%, was Catholic and 13.1% were “non-determined”.</p> <p>The local charitable sector provides specific services to meet the needs of this group: e.g. The advancement of religion is a stated charitable purpose for 1,922 charities – The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity is a stated charitable purpose for 489 charities.</p> <p>No likely adverse or differential impact on this S75 group has been identified from the Department’s increased allocation to the voluntary and community sector.</p>

Group	Impact
<p>Political Opinion</p>	<p>In Census 2021, 814,600 people (42.8%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as 'British'. This is down from 876,600 people (48.4%) in 2011. The Census also found, 634,600 people (33.3%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as 'Irish'. This is up from 513,400 people (28.4%) in 2011. Finally, the Census 2021, identified 598,800 people (31.5%) living here as solely or along with other national identities 'Northern Irish'. This is up from 533,100 people (29.4%) in 2011.</p> <p>The local charitable sector provides specific services to meet the needs of this group: e.g. The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity is a stated charitable purpose for 489 charities. The advancement of citizenship or community development is a stated charitable purpose for 3042 charities.</p> <p>No likely adverse or differential impact on this S75 group has been identified from the Department's increased allocation to the voluntary and community sector.</p>

Group	Impact
Race	<p>The local charitable sector provides specific services to meet the needs of this group: e.g. – The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity is a stated charitable purpose for 489 charities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 9% of charities provide services in support of ethnic minorities.</li> <li>- 7% of charities provide services in support of community safety/crime prevention.</li> <li>- 3% of charities provide services in support of Travellers – 3% of charities provide services in support of Asylum seekers/refugees.</li> <li>- 3% of charities provide victim support services.</li> </ul> <p>No likely adverse or differential impact on this S75 group has been identified from the Department’s increased allocation to the voluntary and community sector.</p>

Group	Impact
Age	<p>The local charitable sector provides specific services to meet the needs of different age groups: e.g. - 26% of charities provide services in support of older people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8% of charities provide services in support of carers. - 48% of charities provide services in support of children (5- 13)</li> <li>- 44% of charities provide services in support of young people (14-25)</li> <li>- 20% of charities provide services in support of preschool children (0-5)</li> </ul> <p>No likely adverse or differential impact on this S75 group has been identified from the Department's increased allocation to the voluntary and community sector.</p>
Marital Status	<p>There were 693,000 adults who were married or in a civil partnership in Census 2021. This made up 46% of our population aged 16 and over. In contrast 577,000 adults (38%) were single (never married/civil partnered).</p> <p>No likely adverse or differential impact on this S75 group has been identified from the Department's increased allocation to the voluntary and community sector.</p>



Group	Impact
Sexual Orientation	<p>The local charitable sector provides specific services to meet the needs of this group: e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity is a stated charitable purpose for 489 charities – 2% of charities provide services in relation to sexual orientation.</li> </ul> <p>Census 2021 – In total 31,600 people aged 16 and over (or 2.1%) identified as LGB+ ('lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientation'), 1.364 million people (90.0%) identified as 'straight or heterosexual' and 119,000 people (7.9%) either did not answer the question or ticked 'prefer not to say'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.1% of adults (1 in 25) in Belfast identified as LGB+, while 1.1% of adults in Mid Ulster identified as LGB+.</li> <li>• 4.6% of people aged 16 to 24 identified as LGB+, this falls to 0.3% of people aged 65 and over.</li> <li>• Across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland (2.1%) has the lowest percentage of people who identify as (LGB+), thereafter comes Wales with 3.0% of people who identify as LGB+ and then England with 3.2%</li> </ul> <p>No likely adverse or differential impact on this S75 group has been identified from the Department's increased allocation to the voluntary and community sector.</p>

Group	Impact
Gender	<p>The local charitable sector provides specific services to meet the needs of this group: e.g. – 31% of charities provide services in support of women – 20% of charities provide services in support of men</p> <p>Census 2021 – The census day population comprised of 967,000 females and 936,100 males. This means that for every 100 females in Northern Ireland there were 96.8 males. Only in Mid Ulster are there more males than females (300 more males). Belfast has the lowest proportion of males to females with 94.8 males to every 100 females. The pattern of sex ratios is consistent with more rural Local Government Districts having a sex ratio closer to parity and more urban Local Government Districts having markedly more females than males.</p> <p>No likely adverse or differential impact on this S75 group has been identified from the Department’s increased allocation to the voluntary and community sector.</p>

Group	Impact
Disability	<p>The local charitable sector provides specific services to meet the needs of this group: e.g. The advancement of health or the saving of lives is a stated charitable purpose for 1277 charities – 14% of charities provide services in support of mental health – 11% of charities provide services in support of physical disability – 10% of charities provide services in support of learning disability – 6% of charities provide addiction support services – 6% of charities provide services in support of sensory disability.</p> <p>Census 2021 – In total 1.497 million people, or just under four persons in every five (78.7%), indicated they had ‘Good or very good’ general health. • The standard of general health falls with age. While less than 1% of people aged under 15 had ‘Bad or very bad’ general health, this rises to 17% of people aged 65 or more. In contrast nearly 97% of people aged under 15 had ‘Good or very good’ general health, this falls to half of people aged 65 or more • One person in four (24.3% or 463,000 people) had a limiting long-term health problem or disability, 40% of which were aged 65 or more (185,300 people).</p> <p>No likely adverse or differential impact on this S75 group has been identified from the Department’s increased allocation to the voluntary and community sector.</p>

Group	Impact
<p>Dependents</p>	<p>The 2021 NI Census indicated that 29% per cent of households in Northern Ireland contained dependent children and 45% contained at least one person with a long-term health problem or disability.</p> <p>The local charitable sector provides specific services to meet the needs of this group: e.g. – 21% of charities provide services in support of parents – 8% of charities provide services in support of carers.</p> <p>No likely adverse or differential impact on this S75 group has been identified from the Department’s increased allocation to the voluntary and community sector.</p>

### viii. Rates Support Grant

- **The Rates Support Grant** provides financial support, on an annual basis, to those councils whose needs exceed their wealth relative to other councils in NI. The Rates Support Grant is a statutory grant; however, the level of funding is not set in legislation. The Rates Support Grant was reduced by £4.0m in 2023-24, and a further reduction of £1.8m is proposed for 2024-25. The decision to implement in 2024-25 has been screened out for Section 75 Equality purposes as minor impacts have been identified. The Department is also currently independently reviewing the Rates Support Grant, and it is hoped that this will assist the Department to understand how this grant funding is used / and or considered by Councils within their overall funding.

### ix. New Build Social Housing and Other High Priority Capital

- The provision of New Build **Social Housing** is a priority for the Minister, but the 2024-25 net capital allocations will have a significant detrimental effect on the numbers of new social homes that can be built through the Social Housing Development Programme in 2024-25. This Programme is the means to counter increasing housing waiting lists, which are currently at record levels. The

target for 2024-25 was 2,000 unit new starts, however Budget allocations will currently only support up to 400 unit new starts in 2024-25. This compares to 1,508 unit new starts in 2023-24.

- The **Affordable Warmth Scheme** addresses the effects of fuel poverty and energy inefficiency and is directed at low-income households. The proposal to allocate £2.0m (plus honouring grant offers already made of £5.2m in 2024-25) would allow approximately 360 additional approvals to be made in 2024-25. Overall, the 2024-25 allocation will reflect only 50% of the total budget allocated in 2023-24.
- The **Urban Regeneration programme** contributes to the previous Executive's commitment to create town and city centres in which people want to live, shop, work, or visit. At the core of the Department's investment in public realm, and other regeneration projects, is the desire to create public spaces that are accessible to all. Stopping this investment would have an adverse impact on people with disabilities and older people, and across all Section 75 groups.

Urban regeneration contributes to the Department's housing outcomes and creates economic growth. In particular, the retail and hospitality sectors are often predominant in

town and city centres and employ a younger workforce. Stopping investment in these projects could therefore have a disproportionate impact on younger people.

- Capital projects in **Culture, Arts and Heritage, Sports and Green growth** will either be significantly curtailed or stopped completely in 2024-25. The previous Executive had agreed to prioritise Green Growth and Social Housing with any surplus Capital DEL

which emerges. Without additional funding this is likely to have a negative impact across Section 75 Groups.

Given the significant £167.3m (-48.5%) shortfall on the Department's Capital DEL 2024-25 requirements, the Department's assessment of the likely impact of its Budget 2024-25 Capital allocations upon those within Section 75 categories identified the following potential adverse impacts:

Group	Impact
Religious Belief	<p>The 2021 Census breakdown of religious belief in NI showed that 44% of the population are Protestant, 46% Catholic, 1% other religions and 9% no religion. An Equality Commission study for 2021<sup>46</sup>, external showed that 43.5% of the workforce was Protestant, 43.4%, was Catholic and 13.1% were “non-determined”.</p> <p>With the exception of housing, therefore is very little available evidence to indicate that the constrained Capital allocations would result in a negative or positive differential in relation to religious belief.</p> <p>Shifting demographics, spatial segregation in residential communities, not least in neighbourhoods dominated by social housing, and difficulties in delivering new housing supply make for significant inefficiencies in the local housing system. The complexity of these issues demands more comprehensive analysis in respect of demand for social housing and the barriers and enablers of meeting social housing needs at different spatial scales over time. Understanding the circumstances and perspectives of people from other, or indeed unknown, religions is also important as the changing composition of Northern Ireland, particularly in some locations, warrants further examination. With limited descriptive data, this analysis observed the following community differentials:</p>

46 <https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/FETO%20Monitoring%20Reports/No32/MonReport32.pdf>

Group	Impact
	<p>examination. With limited descriptive data, this analysis observed the following community differentials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using Northern Ireland data, Catholic households wait longer than Protestant households to be allocated social housing and are allocated proportionately fewer homes, despite comprising a greater proportion of the waiting list and a greater proportion of applicants in housing stress.</li> <li>- Community differentials in terms of proportionate allocations may have narrowed over time for a variety of reasons, reflecting population shifts and changes in self-identification, but lengthening waiting times for social housing have been uneven, disproportionately affecting applicants from other religions and Catholics.</li> <li>- These patterns are complicated by the fact that dual housing markets exist with different pressures on housing demand and supply in different locations. In areas with the greatest shortages of new social housing supply, Catholic applicants wait the longest prior to being allocated a home; except in North Belfast, where people from other or unknown religions wait the longest.</li> </ul>



Group	Impact
	<p>- In terms of housing conditions, people from other religions or no religion have the smallest homes in terms of square metres and experience the most overcrowding, despite the fact that the average Catholic household is slightly larger (in terms of family size) than households from other religions. However, Catholics comprise the largest proportion of people in overcrowded homes.</p> <p>- People from other religions, mixed religions or no religions are the most likely to live in non-decent homes, and Catholic households the least likely.</p> <p>The Department’s constrained Capital allocation and resulting Budget policy are likely disproportionately impact on people identifying as Roman Catholic, as well as people from other religions.</p>
Political Opinion	<p>In Census 2021, 814,600 people (42.8%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as ‘British’. This is down from 876,600 people (48.4%) in 2011. The Census also found, 634,600 people (33.3%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as ‘Irish’. This is up from 513,400 people (28.4%) in 2011. Finally, the Census 2021, identified 598,800 people (31.5%) living here as solely or along with other national identities ‘Northern Irish’. This is up from 533,100 people (29.4%) in 2011.</p> <p>There is insufficient data or existing evidence to draw any conclusions about the relationship between housing and other priority Capital requirements and people with different political opinions</p>

Group	Impact
Race	<p>The 2021 Census recorded that 3.5% (66,600) people were from ethnic minority groups.</p> <p>With the exception of housing, therefore is very little available evidence to indicate that the constrained Capital allocations would result in a negative or positive differential in relation to racial groups.</p> <p>Data limitations constrain the precise understanding of how similar or divergent different ethnic groups' circumstances may be, but the data and literature review highlighted certain differentials as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower proportions of Black residents and those from the EU Accession countries are in homeownership and among minority ethnic and migrant groups there is a higher prevalence of private renting.</li> <li>• Access to social housing varies between different minority ethnic groups, with some minorities (African and households of mixed ethnicity) waiting longer than the White population, and some groups (Chinese, Irish Travellers and households of other ethnicity) a shorter length of time than White applicants before being allocated a home. It is uncertain whether these are persistent or newly emerging patterns as data is limited.</li> </ul>

Group	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to quality transit and settled sites for Irish Travellers is limited and although they do not wait a long time for social housing, this is not always their first choice of home. Irish Travellers experience a serious lack of basic amenities on some sites, identified as a persistent theme.</li> <li>• People from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly Black people and Irish Travellers, experience significantly more overcrowding than other White people, especially in housing association and private rented sector properties.</li> <li>• Racial attacks on people from minority ethnic communities' homes is a critical concern, with implications for the safety of the home.</li> </ul> <p>The Department's constrained Capital allocation for Housing, resulting Budget policy are likely disproportionately impact on people from different race groups.</p>

Group	Impact
Age	<p>The local charitable sector provides specific services to meet the needs of different age groups: e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 26% of charities provide services in support of older people.</li> <li>- 8% of charities provide services in support of carers. – 48% of charities provide services in support of children (5- 13)</li> </ul> <p>Indicators of inequalities for different age groups were found as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor physical housing conditions in Northern Ireland’s stock have declined but older people remain more likely to have inadequate non-decent housing conditions than younger age groups</li> <li>• Homeownership contains the largest pool of older people in poor housing conditions. Previous reports have highlighted this differential suggesting it is a persistent problem</li> <li>• Outright ownership is associated with a reduction in the incidence of relative poverty once housing costs are taken into account for older homeowners</li> <li>• Homeownership’s poverty reducing qualities in old age are well documented, a function of the front loading of housing costs in this tenure</li> <li>• Private renting is associated with a significant increase in poverty after housing costs for people aged 16 to 24 years old</li> <li>• Young people are also more likely to suffer from underfunding of the arts and sports sector</li> </ul> <p>The Department’s constrained Capital allocation for Housing, Affordable Warmth, Regeneration and Culture, Arts and Heritage, Sports and Green growth, and the resulting Budget policy are likely disproportionately and adversely impact on people of different ages.</p>

Group	Impact
Marital Status	<p>There were 693,000 adults who were married or in a civil partnership in Census 2021. This made up 46% of our population aged 16 and over. In contrast 577,000 adults (38%) were single (never married/civil partnered).</p> <p>With the exception of housing, therefore is very little available evidence to indicate that the constrained Capital allocations would result in a negative or positive differential in relation to marital status.</p> <p>Marital status is rarely a focus of housing studies but data resources do allow some examination of different people’s housing outcomes. Marital status does not, however, neatly align with people’s living arrangements, which can be more influential than status alone. Some trends were apparent that placed some households, those likely to include more single income households, at a potential disadvantage in the housing market. The following differentials were observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single, divorced and separated people experienced poorer housing conditions than married people, especially in the private rented sector, with divorced and separated people having the highest incidence of non-decent homes.</li> <li>• Single people (and couples without children) had the highest incidence of negative equity, following the housing market downturn, with resulting constraints on mobility and remortgaging. But married and divorced or separated people are likely to experience greater sums of negative equity.</li> <li>• Age and cohort effects may influence some of these outcomes but the impact of relationship breakdown on housing outcomes is underexplored.</li> </ul> <p>The Department’s constrained Capital allocation and the resulting Budget policy are likely disproportionately and adversely impact on people of different marital status.</p>

Group	Impact
Sexual Orientation	<p>In the 2021 Census 2021, in total 31,600 people aged 16 and over (or 2.1%) identified as LGB+ ('lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientation'), 1.364 million people (90.0%) identified as 'straight or heterosexual' and 119,000 people (7.9%) either did not answer the question or ticked 'prefer not to say'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.1% of adults (1 in 25) in Belfast identified as LGB+, while 1.1% of adults in Mid Ulster identified as LGB+.</li> <li>• 4.6% of people aged 16 to 24 identified as LGB+, this falls to 0.3% of people aged 65 and over.</li> <li>• Across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland (2.1%) has the lowest percentage of people who identify as (LGB+), thereafter comes Wales with 3.0% of people who identify as LGB+ and then England with 3.2%</li> </ul> <p>Generally, attitudes towards lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) people have softened considerably in Northern Ireland over the last decade (as reported in the Equality Awareness Survey, 2011) and stakeholders noted parallel improvements in agencies' approaches to meeting the needs of LGB people.</p> <p>There is insufficient data or existing evidence to draw any conclusions about the relationship between housing and other priority Capital requirements and people with different sexual orientations.</p>

Group	Impact
Gender	<p>In the 2021 Census, the census day population comprised of 967,000 females and 936,100 males. This means that for every 100 females in Northern Ireland there were 96.8 males.</p> <p>Arts Council NI data shows that the majority of artists within the sector who responded identified as female (including transgender women) at 2414 (52%) in 2020-21 and 2913 (53%) in 2021-22. Males working in the sector represent the second largest group at 2193 (47%) in 2020-21 and 2547 (46%) in 2021-22. The workforce in the arts is typically characterised as having a slightly greater proportion of females to males working in the sector. Interestingly, there were slightly more applications from males than females across the emergency funding programmes.</p> <p>Differentials in the housing outcomes of people of different gender were apparent in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, households with female household reference persons have smaller homes and are more frequently in rented accommodation than households with male household reference persons. Single women that live alone, however, obtain larger homes and are more frequently in owner-occupation than single men living alone, suggesting that intersections with dependants, marital status or living arrangements and income is important to housing outcomes.</li> <li>• Other households of female household reference persons are more frequently found in social housing than those of male household reference persons. Lone parents were overwhelmingly female and predominantly in either the private or social renting sector.</li> </ul>

Group	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older women more frequently experience poor housing conditions than older men in rural areas, while in urban areas the situation is reversed and older men experience poorer housing conditions than older women.</li> <li>• Rates of relative poverty in the private rented sector increase once housing costs are taken into account more for women rather than men; but rates of relative poverty are reduced for women more than men, when the minimal housing costs in outright homeownership are considered.</li> </ul> <p>The Department’s constrained Capital allocation for Housing, Affordable Warmth, Regeneration and Culture, Arts and Heritage, Sports and Green growth, and the resulting Budget policy are likely disproportionately and adversely impact on people of different genders.</p>



Group	Impact
Disability	<p>In the 2021 Census, in total 1.497 million people, or just under four persons in every five (78.7%), indicated they had ‘Good or very good’ general health. The standard of general health falls with age. While less than 1% of people aged under 15 had ‘Bad or very bad’ general health, this rises to 17% of people aged 65 or more. In contrast nearly 97% of people aged under 15 had ‘Good or very good’ general health, this falls to half of people aged 65 or more. One person in four (24.3% or 463,000 people) had a limiting long-term health problem or disability, 40% of which were aged 65 or more (185,300 people).</p> <p>Northern Ireland has a slightly higher proportion of people with disability or life limiting conditions than in Great Britain. There is a large interaction between disability and older age and shared concerns about access to housing adaptations for older infirm people, but this should not mask inequalities experienced by smaller populations of people with learning disabilities and younger disabled people whose desires to live independently are not always achieved.</p> <p>Key indicators of inequalities between disabled and non-disabled people were found in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability of people with learning disabilities to live independently away from parents and/or congregated institution-like settings is a persistent inequality not experienced by non-disabled people. The Government’s project to resettle all patients with learning disabilities away from hospitals to supported or independent living nears completion in 2016.</li> <li>• There is a strong association between older people and disability; disabled people are also more likely to live in poor housing conditions than households with no disabled members.</li> </ul>

Group	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disabled people of all ages face delays in securing occupational therapists and funding to ensure their homes are adapted to meet their needs, especially in the private market.</li> </ul> <p>The Department’s constrained Capital allocation for Housing, Affordable Warmth, Regeneration and Culture, Arts and Heritage, Sports and Green growth, and the resulting Budget policy are likely disproportionately and adversely impact on people with disabilities.</p>

Group	Impact
<p>Dependants</p>	<p>The 2021 NI Census indicated that 29% per cent of households in Northern Ireland contained dependent children and 45% contained at least one person with a long-term health problem or disability.</p> <p>With the exception of housing, therefore is very little available evidence to indicate that the constrained Capital allocations would result in a negative or positive differential in relation to people with dependants.</p> <p>Some differentials found were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-income families are increasingly found in private renting, where they lack security of tenure, rather than social housing.</li> <li>• Housing costs of private renting increases the rate of relative poverty among households with dependants by 27 percentage points compared to five percentage points for households without dependants.</li> <li>• The proportion of non-decent homes for families in the private and social rented sectors was the same in 2009, but households without dependants in the private rented sector experienced poor conditions, with the highest rate of non-decent homes.</li> <li>• Households with dependants are more likely to live in overcrowded social housing homes, especially lone parents and multi-adult households that may include dependent children, with the potential for adverse impacts on household members.</li> <li>• Interactions with religion and ethnicity are likely here as Catholic and Black residents also experienced higher rates of crowding in social housing.</li> </ul> <p>The Department’s constrained Capital allocation and the resulting Budget policy are likely disproportionately and adversely impact on people with and without dependants.</p>

## 8. Consideration of Mitigation / Alternative Policies

- 8.1. The impact of the Budget 2024-25 on the Department has been extremely challenging, with the Department facing a very constrained financial position in 2024-25. In the context of delivering public services with constrained allocations and other inescapable pressures, the Minister has invested considerable time and effort to consider options to live within its 2024-25 allocation whilst continuing to maintain public service delivery. Work is also ongoing, as far as is possible, to drive out further efficiencies to help support the Department in both the current and future financial years.
- 8.2. Sustaining an accessible social security and financial support system, supporting people into employment and providing Social Housing are core priorities for the Minister, as well as the sectors the Department supports. The Department's budget will continue to be deployed in support of this objective. The promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations is also an important part of ongoing policy development, legislative activities, and operational programmes. In managing within the Resource and Capital Budget allocations, the Minister will make every effort to protect front line service delivery and the sectors the Department supports.
- 8.3. The Minister will seek to ensure that its budget allocations are applied as far as possible in a manner that does not disproportionately or adversely affect one Section 75 category, over another and has identified the following potential areas for mitigation:
- a. Baseline staffing within Universal Credit will be used to support the Move to Universal Credit, to ensure tax credit claimants transition to Universal Credit and do not lose access to welfare support. However, it should be noted this will increase pressures on staff delivering Universal Credit.
  - b. Budget allocations will be revisited during the financial year, particularly during the Monitoring Round process. Funding may be reallocated to other priority areas depending on relative spend levels in each Departmental business area. Responses from this consultation will be used to inform such reallocations.

- 
- c. The Department will seek to ensure that any available Capital funding during the year is allocated to Social Housing.
- 8.4. It will however be difficult to mitigate the potential adverse impacts anticipated, given the scale of additional funding required in 2024-25. Where options for efficiencies are identified, these will be subject to separate screening. Where necessary, full EQIAs will be undertaken as options to live within the Department's 2024-25 budget allocations are further developed and implemented.
- 8.5. The Department would welcome comments on any potential equality implications arising from the 2024-25 Budget and will consider the need for any further mitigating actions in light of responses received during the consultation. Promotion of equality of opportunity and the protection of services to vulnerable groups will be a key consideration in the Minister's final Budget decisions.

## 9. Consultation, Publication and Decision

- 9.1. The Department is committed to seeking the views of those who are affected by the decisions required to live within its 2024-25 Resource and Capital Budget allocations. We are keen to hear from individuals and organisations about their views on the equality implications of the decisions being made and about any mitigations that the Department could put in place to address what will undoubtedly be the adverse impacts of a reduction of this size.
- 9.2. Any further mitigating actions received during the consultation will be carefully considered. Promotion of equality of opportunity and the protection of services to vulnerable groups will be a key consideration in final Budget decisions.
- 9.3. The Department will consult over a twelve-week period. Views received during this time will be used to inform the Minister's final allocation of funds to its business areas and ALBs, including any necessary mitigations. Responses will also be used to consider further in-year mitigation measures, inform in-year budget reallocation processes, and direct any additional funding (or further reductions) that emerge over the course of the financial year.
- 9.4. The purpose of this consultation paper is to set out the Department for Communities initial assessment of the impact of the Budget on spending proposals for the 2024-25 financial year. The Minister will consider the responses to this consultation before making any final decisions on its Budget 2024-25 allocations. The outcomes of the Department's EQIA will be posted on the Department's website.
- 9.5. The Department welcomes comment on any aspects of this document. Interested parties are encouraged to make responses by 3 September 2024, which will be used to inform the Department's allocation of 2024-25 funds and any mitigations required.
- 9.6. Further consultations and equality screening will be considered, as appropriate, as plans to live within Budget 2024-25 allocation are considered.

## 10. Monitoring

- 10.1. The Department's Budget process including policy setting, monitoring of the Budget and the impact of allocations. This is a continuous and reflective cyclical process.
- 10.2. Throughout each financial year, the Department undertakes regular monitoring of Budget policy decisions. As part of the budget cycle, this monitoring data is used to inform in-year Monitoring bids to the Department of Finance and the Executive, and/or to mitigate any adverse or disproportionate impacts identified on Section 75 equality categories arising from budget allocations.
- 10.3. For Budget exercises, such as Budget 2024-25, monitoring data from previous budget policies implemented informed the Department's Budget 2024-25 funding requirements submitted to the Department of Finance. As part of the Budget 2024-25 exercise, informed by this monitoring data, the Department provided the Department of Finance with the high-level Section 75 equality impacts of the Department's funding requirements not being met in full. This information was provided to the Department of Finance for collation at Executive department level, to help support the Executive as decision makers in the setting of the Budget 2024-25 for Northern Ireland. This information also provided the Department's Budget 2024-25 Draft EQIA.

# 11. CONFIDENTIALITY

11.1. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public the right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided in response to this consultation, including information about identity, should be made public or treated as confidential.

11.2. This means that information provided in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that -

- the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature; and
  - acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.
- 11.3. For further information regarding confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office at -

**Information Commissioner's Office  
– Northern Ireland**

**3rd Floor  
14 Cromac Place,  
Belfast  
BT7 2JB**

**Telephone:**

**028 9027 8757 / 0303 123 1114**

**Email: [ni@ico.org.uk](mailto:ni@ico.org.uk)**

**Website: <http://www.ico.org.uk>**



## 12. Consultation Questions

- 12.1. As set out in this document, the Department is facing a constrained financial position in 2024-25.
- 12.2. In consulting on the Department's 2024-25 Budget allocations views are welcomed on the following:
1. Are there any data, needs or issues in relation to any of the Section 75 equality categories that have not been identified in Section 6 of the EQIA consultation document? If so, what are they and can you provide details?
  2. Are there any adverse impacts in relation to any of the Section 75 equality groups that have not been identified in section 7 of the EQIA Consultation document? If so, what are they?
  3. Please state what action you think could be taken to reduce or eliminate any adverse impacts in allocation of the Department's budget.
  4. Are there any other comments you would like to make in regard to this pro forma or the consultation process generally?
- 12.3. Comments are sought by online survey (<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfc/eqia-on-dfc-budget-for-2024-25>), email ([dfcbudgeteqia@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:dfcbudgeteqia@communities-ni.gov.uk)) or postal response.
- 12.4. The Department welcomes comment on any aspects of this document. Interested parties are encouraged to make responses as soon as possible. The information provided will help inform the allocation of 2024-25 funds, any mitigations required and may support further in-year bids.
- 12.5. The final deadline for responses is 3 September 2024.

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## **ANDBC Response to EqIA on DfC Budget for 2024-2025**

### **Question 1**

Are there any data, needs or issues in relation to any of the Section 75 equality categories that have not been identified in Section 6 of the EQIA consultation document?

#### **Response – Yes**

The EQIA document fails to provide data relating to section 75 at local and council area level. The data provided in the document is of a general nature and covers Northern Ireland as a geographical area. It does not drill down into data which have been gathered at local level. The data, needs and Issues identified in the Document are not representative of the Ards and North Down area.

The groups most affected in Ards and North Down will be (as per Section 75 groups):

- People of different ages (16-24)
- Men and women generally (lack of funding to break barriers to unemployment and economic inactivity)
- People with or without a disability (barriers facing people with disability when wanting to access work or training)
- People with or without dependants (Parents and Single parents seeking employment or training)

### **Question 2**

Are there any adverse impacts in relation to any of the Section 75 equality groups that have not been identified in section 7 of the EQIA Consultation document?

#### **Response - NO**

### **Question 3**

Please state what action you think could be taken to reduce or eliminate any adverse impacts in allocation of the Department's budget.

#### **Response - N/A**

### **Question 4**

Are there any other comments you would like to make in regard to this pro forma or the consultation process generally?

#### **Response –**

- The Council welcomes the Minister's commitments to continuing Labour Market Partnership funding with Councils.
- This Council is extremely concerned regarding the cuts in funding to the Affordable Warmth Programme, with only 50% of last year's budget being committed to. This Council expresses concern especially in the context that the Executive has yet to make a decision on whether or not to continue to fund the

winter fuel allowance. This reduction in budget will have a significant impact on the older generation within our borough and those on low incomes.

- In respect of the Department's reduced budget in respect of its Capital Programme for Social Housing, this Council continues to be extremely concerned at the rate of house building in this section across this Borough. As directed by legislation and regional planning policy, Councils are responsible for producing a Local Development Plan with requirements to include policies for social and affordable housing to meet the extensive needs of society. There is concern that people in housing need within this borough will not be provided for, having extreme adverse implications on many of the section 75 groups.
- Affordable Housing Policies set out in Councils' Local Development Plans (LDP) offer greater opportunity to provide a mechanism for delivery of affordable housing units (social and intermediate). However, social housing starts are set to ANDBC Response to EQiA on DfC Budget for 2023-24 18 reduce under the 2023-2024 budget. It is uncertain how cuts to the DfC budget will impact upon the funding available to developers to develop social housing. Legislative changes to allow Registered Housing Associations to develop and rent Intermediate Rented homes may assist in increasing the affordable housing stock without requiring the same degree of capital spend from the Department.
- In relation to the proposed £3.3m allocation to a range of urban regeneration projects to create town and city centres in which people want to live, shop, work, or visit, the Council is gravely concerned with the limited fund proposed, which represents a continued reduction in allocation from the previous year. Whilst supportive of any available capital funding being reallocated to Social Housing during the year, in light of the continued lack of transfer of regeneration powers to local councils, the Council is critical of the lack of monies being attributed to urban regeneration – which can have a positive impacts on a number of sections of our local communities, and foster a sense of stewardship.
- There is grave concern in relation to regional civil contingencies funding. A business case (2024-27) submitted to the department in February 2024 outlined the quantum required to ensure the capacity of the regional function is sufficient to maintain service delivery. The work carried out by the regional resilience team plays a vital role in safeguarding the safety, security and well-being of communities in times of crisis and emergency and their work is essential in ensuring a co-ordinated and effective response to any emergency situation. By example, in this Borough, this was evident in the recent multi agency co-ordination of the response to an unexploded WW2 ordnance in Newtownards. The regional resilience team was pivotal in the management of the wider response and provided continual competent support to the multi-agency partnership throughout the response and recovery phases. Whilst there is ongoing discussion between SOLACE and the department, it is emphasised the consequences of inadequate funding will undermine preparedness to respond to

future emergencies. Furthermore, Module 1 report of the UK Covid Inquiry, highlights the adverse impact of emergencies on vulnerable people. Adequate funding will ensure communities are better prepared, more resilient and more capable of responding to any future emergency situation that undoubtedly will arise as indicated by the NI Civil Contingencies Risk Register.



**GUILDHALL**  
— Derry~Londonderry~Doire —



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Mayor / Méara  
Councillor/ An Comhairleoir  
Lilian Seenoí Barr  
SDLP

Our Ref: TJ/C387/24

7 August 2024

Dear Chief Executive

At a Meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 24 July 2024, the following Proposal was passed:

**That this Council will work with local hospitality venues to ensure they have a QR code of their menu available at the door or upon entry, welcoming all our residents who are blind or partially-sighted.**

**The Council recognises the expertise of the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), their vision for a world where blind and partially sighted people participate equally, and their goal of breaking down the barriers for blind and partially sighted people.**

**The Council also recognises the expertise of Angel Eyes NI, a charity that supports children and young people with vision impairment and their families. Their mission is that, through engagement with children and young people, their families, and relevant stakeholders, they will help overcome barriers for children who are blind or partially sighted.**

**This Council will work with RNIB and Angel Eyes NI to ensure the project's success and that all menus and menu formats are accessible, in line with visual impairment best practice guidelines.**

**This Council will write to the other councils within NI to encourage them to become visually aware districts and promote a similar project.**



Derry City & Strabane  
District Council  
Comhairle  
Chathair Dhoire &  
Cheantar an tSrátha Báin  
Derry Cittie & Stràbane  
Destríck Cooncil

**Mayor's Parlour**  
Guildhall, Derry BT48 6DQ

**Parlús an Mhéara**  
Halla na Cathrach, Doire, BT48 6DQ

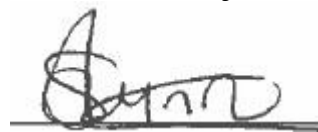
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**www.derrystrabane.com**

**f** mayordcsdc  
**X** @mayordcsdc

I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter and would be grateful for a response at your earliest opportunity.

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**Yours Sincerely**



**Councillor Lillian Seenoi Barr**

**Mayor**

**Derry City and Strabane District Council**



Derry City & Strabane  
District Council  
Comhairle  
Chathair Dhoire &  
Cheantar an tSratha Báin  
Derry Cittie & Strabane  
Districk Council

**Mayor's Parlour**

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Unclassified

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**ITEM 10****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Environment
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regulatory Services
Date of Report	27 June 2024
File Reference	FP/2024/1558/MAST / 91200
Legislation	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Street naming - The Firs, Holywood
Attachments	None

A development comprising of 29 dwellings, being 16 houses and 13 apartments, is currently under construction on lands at 160 High Street, Holywood.

The developer has requested the name 'The Firs' for the new development. On historical maps circa 1900, the main house and surrounding estate was historically known as 'The Firs'. The Convent School was established in an old family residence called 'The Firs' which was built in 1889. The developer wishes to maintain the historical link for the development and the name is also in keeping with the general neighbourhood.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the street name of The Firs be adopted for this development.

That the Council accepts the general name and delegates acceptance of suffixes to the Building Control department.



Unclassified

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**ITEM 11****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	13 August 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Nomination to Outside Bodies
Attachments	

Place on working groups are filled through nomination at the Council's Annual Meeting and are thus held by individual Members rather than Parties. When a position becomes vacant, it reverts back to Council to nominate a Member(s) to fill the place rather than Party Nominating Officers.

Following the resignation of Peter Martin from Council, a place has become available on each of the following groups:

- Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership – 1 Place + 1 Substitute (1 Year Appointment)
- North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 15 Places (1 Year Appointment)

Not Applicable

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The below tables reflects the current membership of the above working groups:

### Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership

	2022/2023	2024/25
1	Councillor Gilmour	Councillor Gilmour
Sub	Councillor Martin	Now Vacant

### North Down Coastal Path working Group

	2023/24	2024/25
1	Alderman Graham	Alderman Graham
2	Councillor Cochrane	Councillor Cochrane
3	Councillor Creighton	Councillor Creighton
4	Councillor Harbinson	Councillor Harbinson
5	Councillor Hollywood	Councillor Hollywood
6	Councillor Irwin	Councillor Irwin
7	Councillor Martin	Now Vacant
8	Councillor W Irvine	Councillor W Irvine
9	Councillor McCracken	Councillor McCracken
10	Councillor McCollum	Councillor McCollum
11	Councillor McKee	Councillor McKee
12	Councillor McKimm (Chair)	Councillor McKimm
13	Councillor McLarnon	Councillor McLaren
14	Councillor McRandal	Alderman McRandal
15	Councillor Rossiter	Councillor Rossiter

Nominations are sought from Council to fill each of the above places for the remainder of the term as necessary.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council nominate a Member to the following groups:

1. Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership – 1 Substitute (1 Year Appointment)
2. North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 1 Place (1 Year Appointment)

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**ITEM 12****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	09 July 2024
File Reference	CX210
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Changes to conducting Committee and Council meetings and changes to the Standing Orders
Attachments	Appendix 1 Letter from Department for Communities 27 June 2024

**Background**

On 27 June 2024 the Chief Executive received a letter from the Department for Communities advising that the Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 had been approved, becoming operational from 25 June 2024. In order to allow remote meetings to take place, the Council must now update Standing Orders to govern remote attendance at Council and Committee meetings.

**Changes to Standing Orders**

It is proposed to insert the following as Standing Order 29:

**29 Remote Attendance****29.1 Definition of remote attendance**

In line with the Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024, any reference in these Standing Orders to a Council or Committee meeting is

Not Applicable

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not limited to a meeting of persons all of whom, or any of whom, are present in the same place and any reference to a “place” where a meeting is held, or to be held, includes reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations and web addresses.

### 29.2 Elected Member remote attendance

An Elected Member in remote attendance attends the meeting at any time provided they are able:

- (a) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard, and where practicable be seen by, the other Members in attendance;
- (b) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public in attendance in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and
- (c) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public in attendance.

### 29.3 Press and public remote attendance

Any reference in these Standing Orders to a member of the public or press being present at a meeting includes such persons attending by remote access, and the reference in Standing Order 8 [1] to every meeting being “open to the public and press” includes through enabling remote access. This also applies to deputations as per Standing Order 12[3].

### 29.4 Voting when attending remotely

Any vote that would otherwise be taken by a show of hands in line with Standing Order 21.4 will, if any of the Elected Members entitled to vote are in remote attendance, be taken by way of a virtual show of hands from each Member as to whether they are for or against the motion.

### 29.5 Miscellaneous remote attendance provisions

References in Standing Orders 10 and 28 to excluding the public and press from the Council Chamber or removing them from the meeting room, shall be read as removing their remote access where their attendance is, or would be but for their exclusion, remote attendance.

There is no requirement for an Elected Member in remote attendance to stand when addressing the Presiding Chairperson in line with Standing Order 20.6.

A Presiding Chairperson in remote attendance shall call a meeting to order, rather than rise to do so, in line with Standing Order 20.19.

### 29.6 Remote meeting etiquette

An Elected Member in remote attendance must adhere to the following meeting protocols:

- Members should situate themselves in an environment which is free from distraction, and similar to the conditions in the Chamber;
- Members should be situated in a location befitting the meeting i.e. a private room with a closed door;
- Members should be alone, with the exception of any other Elected Member who is entitled to attend that meeting.

## Not Applicable

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- It is essential that Members attending Council and Committee meetings prevent others from hearing the business of the meeting, especially that which is “in confidence”;
- Members must notify the Chair of the meeting if they are leaving the meeting and again on their return to the meeting;
- Members should conduct themselves in a manner as if they were in attendance in the Chamber;
- Members should attend from a location with a strong internet connection and should endeavour to test the connection and audiovisual prior to the meeting;
- Members must turn their camera on and it must remain on for the duration of the meeting;
- Members must remain on mute unless given the opportunity to speak by the Chair or when exercising their speaking rights in line with the Standing Orders.

The following additional amendments are required to Standing Orders Version 11 April 2024 to facilitate this:

- Renumber Standing order 29 as 30
- Renumber Standing Order 30 as 31
- Renumber Standing Order 31 as 32
- Change Standing Order 17.2 (m) reference to Standing Order 29 to Standing order 30.
- Amend the Glossary of Terms definition of “Remote access” to *“Remote access” means the ability to attend or participate in a meeting by electronic means, including by video conference, live webcasts, and live interactive streaming.*

It is proposed to insert the following at Annex 1:

### Remote meetings

#### Committee Members taking part virtually in a Planning Committee Meeting

92. Members of the Planning Committee can participate via remote access in line with Standing Order 29

#### Members of the Public taking part virtually in a Planning Committee Meeting

93. Members of the public are welcome to speak about specific applications at Planning Committee meetings virtually in line with the “Public Speaking” section of this Annex. Registered speakers will be required to make their representations to the Committee using the Council’s selected virtual meeting platform.

94. Comments can only be made verbally; however, at the Chairman’s discretion you may be able to highlight something on the presentation by the planning officer if you wish to point out something of importance or clarify an issue.

Not Applicable

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95. If you think you may not be able to participate in the meeting but would like to submit representations, you can do this – it will be covered in the troubleshooting section of this document

96. When taking part virtually:

- Ensure you have the appropriate application installed on your device – you may be able to access via your web browser, but we recommend you download the app if you are able, using the store/site relevant to your device;
- Please ensure your Account Name is set up to reflect your full name, in order that the Host can identify you in the attendee list, and Members will be aware of who is speaking;
- Disconnect any non-essential devices from the internet, disable any applications you are not using on your computer / iPad / mobile device and turn off any streaming services;
- Ensure that your device is fully charged and that you have easy access to a charger to ensure you do not run out of battery;
- Choose a location in your home where you may take part in the meeting without being disturbed
- It is good practice to join 10-15 minutes prior to the meeting commencing, however you will only be able to see proceedings once the meeting has started to be broadcast
- Registered speakers must not activate their camera or microphone unless instructed by the Chair

In addition to the above changes to the Standing Orders to facilitate the Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024, the following addition to the Glossary of Terms is required to provide clarity:

Standing Orders Version 11 states:

“Working days” excludes Public or Bank holidays, a Saturday or a Sunday

The deadline in respect of call-in is 5.00 pm

The deadline for Notice of Motions is 11.59 pm

This shall be changed to read:

“Working days” excludes Public or Bank holidays, a Saturday or a Sunday

The deadline is 5.00pm except for in respect of Notice of Motions where the deadline is 11.59 pm

Amendment to Standing Order 17.1 [1] (additional text in red):

Notice of every motion, other than a motion which under Standing Order 17.2 may be moved without notice, shall be given in writing, signed by at least two Members of the Council giving the notice, to the Chief Executive not later than at least five working days before the next meeting of the Council. Each motion must have a proposer and seconder. The motion must be clear in meaning otherwise it shall be rejected until such time as it is resubmitted in clear language. Prior to lodging a notice of motion, Members should take the opportunity to engage with the relevant

Not Applicable

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Director on current action being taken and options available to have the subject matter addressed **including any budgetary implications**. This may assist members in formulating the terms of notice of motion. The motion must be submitted no later than five working days before the meeting.

### **Making Changes to the Standing Orders**

Members should be aware when making these decisions, that under Standing Order 29.2 of Version 11, Any motion to, add to, vary or revoke these Standing Orders will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned and be referred without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council and any resultant amendment will be ratified at an ordinary meeting of the Council.

Therefore these Standing Orders were stood down at the Council meeting on 31 July, for discussion at the meeting on 28 August 2024.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council agrees to amend the Standing Orders as set out in this report.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 13****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	14 August 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Request for local Government representatives to the Area of Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs)
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Letter to Council Chief Executives Appendix 2 - Information Pack

**Background**

Further to an email that was circulated to all Members by the Chief Executive on 30 July from the Department of Health, informing Councils that the Department intends to set up a number of Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs) and are now requesting nominations of elected Members to the Boards.

**Appointment Process and Role of Local Government Representatives**

The appointment process is outlined in Section 6 of the Information Pack and the full list of responsibilities can be located in Section 4. Applicants must be serving on a local Council within the area of the AIPB as of July 2024 and must not be employed by the Department of Health, a health and social care body or a health service body.



Not Applicable

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Applicants must ensure they demonstrate that they have met the criteria. This needs to be clearly detailed otherwise they will not be considered for the role:

- Broad understanding of current health and social care structures and services and appreciation of key issues affecting population health and social wellbeing,
- Experience in working effectively with a broad range of stakeholders from across the statutory and voluntary/community sectors, as well as with local communities, to achieve agreed objectives in a challenging and changing environment, and
- Demonstration of effective listening and communication skills – including negotiation and influencing skills, and interpersonal communication.

Applicants will be required to complete an online application form which will be considered by a panel. The process may be further extended to include an interview, depending on the number of applications received.

The submission deadline is 5pm on 6 September 2024. It is anticipated that the role will undertake a term of four years. It should also be noted that this is not a remunerated position.

Members are asked to consider whether they wish to individually submit an application.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council note the report.



NI Council Chief Executives  
*via e-mail*

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[martina.moore@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:martina.moore@health-ni.gov.uk)

30 July 2024

Dear Chief Executive

### **ICS NI – Request for local Government representatives to be members of Area Integrated Partnership Boards**

You will be aware of the work underway on the development and implementation of the Integrated Care System for Northern Ireland (ICS NI).

As outlined in our correspondence of 28 June, it has been agreed that council representation on AIPBs will be undertaken by local councillors. I am therefore writing to advise that the Department of Health is now seeking to secure one local government representative from each relevant council within each shadow AIPB area. This process is being undertaken to identify local councillors for all five shadow AIPB areas, regardless of the phased timing of their establishment.

The Department is seeking a single councillor nomination from each relevant Council in the AIPB area, as shown below:

**Belfast AIPB** – Belfast City Council; Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

**Northern AIPB** – Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Causeway Coast and Glens District Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council.

**South Eastern AIPB** – Ards and North Down Borough Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Newry Mourne and Down District Council.

**Southern AIPB** – Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Newry Mourne and Down District Council.

**Western AIPB** – Causeway Coast and Glens District Council, Derry City and Strabane District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.


The attached **information pack** provides further detail for prospective applicants on the expression of interest process, and applications can be completed online via the following link: [ICS NI - Area Integrated Partnership Boards - Local Government representative - Expression of Interest - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#). Hard copies of the **application form** and **equality monitoring form** can be provided on request by contacting [aipb@hscni.net](mailto:aipb@hscni.net).

Applications must be submitted by **5pm** on **6 September 2024** and will be considered by a panel consisting of representation from the Department, NILGA, and an independent lay person.

I would be grateful if you could arrange for the attached information to be circulated amongst your Council members.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter and if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



**Martina Moore**

**Director, ICS NI Programme**

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## Integrated Care System NI

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### Area Integrated Partnership Board Local Government Representative Information Pack

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**July 2024**

## SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1. The Department of Health is inviting interest for members for each of its **shadow Area Integrated Partnership Boards** that are to be established as part of the **Integrated Care System for Northern Ireland (ICS NI)**.
- 1.2. ICS NI is the new [framework](#) for planning health and social care services in Northern Ireland. It is a single planning system that will help us to improve the health and wellbeing of our population and address demand by:
  - placing a focus on people keeping well in the first instance, providing timely, co-ordinated care when they are not, and supporting people to self-care when appropriate; and
  - ensuring we are maximising the resource we have available to deliver the best outcomes for our population, optimising our effectiveness and efficiency and reducing duplication.

The objective is to **improve health and wellbeing outcomes** and **reduce health inequalities** through collaboration and partnership working.

- 1.3. It recognises that the solutions to the many challenges and issues facing our system cannot be found in traditional ways of working but require a more agile and innovative approach, and they cannot be found by working in isolation. It provides the mechanism to bring together the constituent parts of the HSC system and those wider partners involved in improving the health and wellbeing of our population to work together to find solutions.
- 1.4. The ICS NI model is outcomes-based and underpinned by a population health approach, that is; looking at the entire life course from prevention, through to early intervention, treatment, aftercare and eventually end of life care.
- 1.5. ICS NI is a new way of working in terms of planning care and services in Northern Ireland. Within the model there are 3 core aspects:
  - working locally in partnership with others to identify local needs, agree priorities, and identify what collective action should be taken to effect change with a focus on prevention, early intervention and community health and well-being. To support this, we will establish five **Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs)**,
  - working regionally in partnership with others to support the work of AIPBs, identify areas for regional collaboration where this would bring the greatest benefit to the whole NI population, and support shared learning. A **Regional ICS Partnership Forum** will be established to lead this approach, and
  - applying this integrated approach in practice, with the **Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG)** and **Public Health Agency (PHA)** planning care and services across the system, informed by local and regional collaboration.
- 1.6. In undertaking their responsibilities for service planning, SPPG and PHA will adopt an evidence-based and outcomes-focused decision-making approach, inclusive of the input from across the system, networks, communities, and service users, in line with the underlying principle of integration.

- 1.7. Work is currently underway to stand up ICS NI in shadow form from Autumn 2024 to allow for a period of learning and refinement. This will involve a phased approach, with work progressing on the establishment of the Regional ICS Partnership Forum as well as shadow Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs) in the following areas:
- Southern (transitioning from Test status);
  - South-Eastern; and
  - Western.
- The Belfast and Northern shadow AIPBs will be stood up in due course.
- 1.8. Further information about ICS NI can be accessed here: [Integrated Care System NI](#).

## SECTION 2 – ROLE OF THE SHADOW AIPB

- 2.1 The shadow AIPB is one component of the overall model and provides a way to bring together a wide range of partners with a responsibility and/or interest in the health and wellbeing of the local population.
- 2.2 The shadow AIPB enables all partners to work together to tackle the challenges being faced in their local area, drawing together their collective skills, resources and capabilities to develop plans that will deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes, support sustainability, and ultimately reduce health inequalities. The shadow AIPB will be expected to undertake a population health approach with a focus on **prevention, early intervention and community health and wellbeing**.
- 2.3 There will be five shadow AIPBs established across NI which will be geographically coterminous with each of the Health and Social Care Trusts and intersect with boundaries of the 11 Councils.
- 2.4 Each shadow AIPB is a **planning body** for its geographical area with responsibility for:
  - identifying the health and social care needs of their local population supported by a population needs assessment and an ongoing relationship with local communities and networks;
  - agreeing on the priorities from the identified need, aligned under a Strategic Outcomes Framework;
  - developing a plan to meet those needs; and
  - taking action within the resources available to support delivery of the plan.
- 2.5 Shadow AIPB priorities will be determined in line with the identified needs of their local population, and they must operate in line with the overarching strategic direction set by the Minister and the Department. To further support this, the Regional ICS Partnership Forum (RICSPF) will provide shadow AIPBs with guiding planning assumptions to support their work and clarify key strategic priority areas that they should reflect in their local planning approaches.
- 2.6 It is critically important that AIPBs are able to draw on the knowledge, experience and expertise of a broad range of clinicians, professionals, networks, organisations and other bodies when undertaking their work. AIPBs will engage and include these individuals and groups as required. Importantly, AIPBs will work with existing partnerships and networks to support alignment and remove duplication.
- 2.7 AIPBs will not commission services and their remit does not extend to making decisions about changing clinical and acute services. Such decisions remain the remit of health and social care bodies, in line with any relevant Departmental and Ministerial direction, as well as with the engagement and involvement of key stakeholders.

- 2.8 AIPBs do not hold specified budgets, rather they focus on how the available resources that their respective sectors and organisations are being used in terms of wider public health, prevention, and early intervention, working collectively to ensure that they are being utilised in the best possible way to achieve the best outcomes for their population.
- 2.9 In time, AIPBs will be established in statute in line with the duty set out at Section 15B of the [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act 2009](#). Until such time as the regulations are brought before the Assembly, AIPBs are to be established in shadow form. This means that shadow AIPBs will be established in line with the proposed procedures for the statutory AIPBs and will accordingly undertake their intended role. This will allow the regulations to be informed by any relevant learning from the shadow period. Roll-out of shadow AIPBs commenced from April 2024 with the selection and induction of members, with the shadow AIPBs being established on a phased basis from September 2024 onwards.

### **Shadow AIPB Membership**

- 2.10 The membership of each shadow AIPB will include representation from across organisations and sectors who have a role and/or interest in the health and social wellbeing of the population of Northern Ireland. It includes representation from across the HSC Trusts, Primary Care – GPs and Pharmacists, as well as local councils, the voluntary and community sectors, and service users, and carers.
- 2.11 Each shadow AIPB will also have Strategic Partners: one Public Health Agency (PHA) representative and one Strategic Planning & Performance Group (SPPG) representative. The Strategic Partners' role is to co-ordinate the administrative and analytical support and ensure AIPBs make the necessary connections with the wider system to support partnerships undertaking their work.
- 2.12 The SPPG Strategic Partner will also undertake responsibility to ensure alignment and linkages are made to the relevant Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) in the AIPB area. The role of the CPP and its processes and structures is recognised as the over-arching mechanism to address the wider determinants of health, with AIPBs supporting this work through creating the space and opportunity for more in-depth exploration of health needs and challenges, focusing on more health-related opportunities and solutions. Consequently, the SPPG Strategic Partner to the AIPB will sit on both and make the appropriate linkages.



## SECTION 3 – ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

- 3.1 Evidence shows that health and wellbeing, and health inequalities, are shaped by many factors, including age, family, community, workplace, beliefs and traditions, economics, and physical and social environments.
- 3.2 It suggests that, while health and clinical services contribute 20% to improving health outcomes, the population's health is to a much larger extent affected by the economic and social factors (40%) and environmental factors (10%) in which people live and related lifestyle and health behaviours (30%).
- 3.3 There is also a robust and compelling evidence base to support Community Development as an effective approach in tackling health inequalities<sup>1</sup>. *Making Life Better* and *Delivering Together* acknowledge this and identify it as a key approach within health and social care to reduce health inequalities.
- 3.4 Local Government representatives are responsible for making decisions on behalf of the local community and Councils undertake a range of roles and responsibilities on behalf of their local population and communities. They provide services and programmes which look to improve the quality of life of their citizens – from improving wellbeing, supporting sustainable economic development to improving the lived environment and neighbourhoods and to facilitate and lead on Community Planning.
- 3.5 As such their responsibilities extend across areas that contribute directly to the improved health and wellbeing of their communities. From sports, leisure services and recreational facilities, to parks, open spaces, playgrounds and community centres, economic development, and neighbourhood renewal.
- 3.6 Councils sit at the heart of their communities. They provide access to a wealth of data, information and expertise on the needs of those communities, the challenges, opportunities, and what is currently being done, or is being planned, to meet those needs across the wider determinants of health.
- 3.7 Connecting the work of Councils, and the impacts they can have on the wider determinants of health, with that of shadow AIPBs will help to support improved health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals and communities.
- 3.8 In turn, representation on shadow AIPBs will help to ensure that the scope of Council's responsibilities is fully considered and taken account of where relevant to shadow AIPB discussions and proposals.
- 3.9 Representatives will help enable synergy between the work of the shadow AIPB and that of the Council, helping to identify where there is potential for alignment and complimentary actions and to achieve better coordination of activity.

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<sup>1</sup> CDHN Fact sheet on Health Inequalities: [Layout 1 \(cdhn.org\)](#)

- 3.10 At all times, the work of the shadow AIPB will take cognisance of the statutory remit and responsibilities of Councils, including the priorities and actions detailed in Council corporate plans or statements. Shadow AIPBs will also ensure any relevant need for Councils to secure wider input, or approvals in line with their existing statutory and organisational governance arrangements, is taken into account and accommodated.

## SECTION 4 – KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 Represent and act on behalf of the local community in the Council area with a commitment to link with relevant Council employees, networks, partnerships, or other groups where relevant to support the work of the shadow AIPB.
- 4.2 To contribute to the creation of a compelling vision for the future health and wellbeing of the local population, with a particular focus on identifying opportunities for synergy with Council plans and activities.
- 4.3 To communicate this vision within their organisation.

### **Understanding Need**

- 4.4 To contribute to the development of a collective understanding of the health and wellbeing needs of the local population utilising available population health data and local intelligence from all relevant partner organisations.
- 4.5 To provide and share intelligence and information relevant to the work of the shadow AIPB that has been specifically gathered, collated, or shared by the Council.
- 4.6 Help inform avenues for community engagement and support the shadow AIPB with wider engagement.
- 4.7 To support the collection of local intelligence and sharing of examples of good practice that complement the shadow AIPBs understanding of local need in their identification of priorities.

### **Agreeing Priorities**

- 4.8 Through analysis of the needs assessment, and in conjunction with the Strategic Outcomes Framework and guidance from the Regional ICS Partnership Forum, agree the priority areas on which the shadow AIPB will focus.
- 4.9 Identify key linkages with relevant Council plans and opportunities for alignment.

### **Planning**

- 4.10 Contribute to the development of local Area Plans to address the identified priorities based on a shared understanding of the local population and how people live their lives.
- 4.11 Consideration of all available financial and performance information, and pertinent issues and challenges, to make informed plans and recommendations – members are responsible for contributing such information from the Council perspective where relevant and/or appropriate.
- 4.12 Work closely with the Strategic Partners to support co-ordination of the Council contribution to plans, identifying where they are best positioned to lead on delivery against agreed objectives and working to remove any duplication.

- 4.13 To explore the use and contribution of resources, if appropriate, from the Council to advance shared goals and outcomes in Area plans.
- 4.14 Support co-production and co-design of shadow AIPB plans.
- 4.15 Contribute to Task & Finish groups where required to develop local plans.

### **Connecting with Communities**

- 4.16 To actively contribute to and support direct engagement with local communities, building on existing infrastructure and local arrangements – identifying opportunities for a joined-up approach to community engagement. This will evolve and develop over time.
- 4.17 To foster and enable communication, engagement, and active participation of local communities with the planning of actions to improve health and social wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.

### **Effective Leadership**

- 4.18 To be a source of leadership and expertise representing the local community and the Council within the shadow AIPB.
- 4.19 To engage with and communicate the views of the local community and Council effectively and efficiently as possible to the shadow AIPB.
- 4.20 Support the building of relationships and trust between shadow AIPB leaders and the Council, encouraging shared responsibility and accountability for collective gains and risks.

### **Collaborative Working**

- 4.21 To adhere to the principles of parity and inclusion between partners acknowledging the skills, experience and value that each partner can bring.
- 4.22 To agree clear and transparent ways of working together, having a mutual understanding of each other's existing governance arrangements and structures, ensuring shadow AIPB members are kept informed of relevant changes and pressures across the organisation.
- 4.23 To work collectively to identify, remove or avoid duplication, ensuring the most efficient use of available resources.
- 4.24 Identify and promote best practice and learning between partners, encouraging flexibility, agility and innovation to collectively meet and address challenges.

### **Commitment to Meetings**

- 4.25 To demonstrate commitment to the shadow AIPB structure, through regular attendance at Board meetings and be fully engaged in two-way communication with own sector and the shadow AIPB to facilitate the development of a comprehensive plan.
- 4.26 To support, lead and participate in shared learning events and keep up to date with issues relevant to the work of the shadow AIPB.

4.27 To ensure adherence to the confidential nature of information shared for the purpose of the shadow AIPB members role.

4.28 To promote the shadow AIPB's role in the community it serves.

## SECTION 5 – ROLE PROFILE

### **Training**

5.1 Appropriate induction training will be provided on commencement of the appointment to the shadow AIPB. Further refresher training will be delivered where required. This requirement will be an expected commitment additional to the commitment detailed at paragraph 5.3.

### **Period of Appointment**

5.2 It is expected that a shadow AIPB member will undertake a term of four years pending regulations approval.<sup>2</sup>

### **Time Commitment**

5.3 The implementation of ICS NI is an evolving and maturing process. Shadow AIPB members will typically be required to commit one day per month to attendance at shadow AIPB meetings. There may be a requirement for further work outside of meetings for reading of papers, preview of presentations, or involvement in workshops for the development of plans.

### **Expense Claims**

5.4 This is **not** a remunerated position. Payments are covered under the Departmental circular [HSC \(F\) 14 2024](#) which lays out what can be claimed and the appropriate rates.

5.1 The member Claim Form will be provided electronically on appointment to the AIPB. For further information relating to allowances, please contact [aipb@hscni.net](mailto:aipb@hscni.net).

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<sup>2</sup> Members should note that AIPBs will ultimately be subject to statutory regulations, which will provide further detail upon legislative provision. Prior to this, any membership is based solely on shadow arrangements until formal legislation is enacted.

## SECTION 6 – SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

### Selection Process

- 6.1 Applications are required to be submitted for the position which will be considered by a panel consisting of representation from the Department, NILGA, and an independent lay person. The selection process may be extended to include an interview, by the same panel, depending on the number of applications received. If required, it is anticipated that interviews will be conducted week commencing 9 September 2024. Successful applicants will be notified by the Department.
- 6.2 The Panel reserves the right to revert to Councils, if required, to support diversity and representation in terms of shadow AIPB membership with regards to e.g. geographical representation, demographics, political representation etc.
- 6.3 Applications can be completed online. If required, hard copies of the application form and equality monitoring form can be provided on request by contacting [aipb@hscni.net](mailto:aipb@hscni.net).
- 6.4 Applications must be submitted by **5pm on 6 September 2024**.

### Eligibility Criteria

- 6.5 Councillors must be serving on a local Council within the area of the AIPB as of July 2024.
- 6.6 Applicants must not be employed by the Department of Health, a health and social care body or a health service body.

### Essential Criteria

- 6.7 Applicants must ensure they demonstrate that they have met the criteria. This needs to be clearly detailed otherwise they will not be considered for the role.
- Broad understanding of current health and social care structures and services and appreciation of key issues affecting population health and social wellbeing,
  - Experience in working effectively with a broad range of stakeholders from across the statutory and voluntary/community sectors, as well as with local communities, to achieve agreed objectives in a challenging and changing environment, and
  - Demonstration of effective listening and communication skills – including negotiation and influencing skills, and interpersonal communication.

### AIPB and Council Area

- 6.8 A small number of electoral areas within the 11 Councils straddle the geographic areas of two AIPBs. Prospective applicants are asked to consider the information below (illustrated in **Appendix 1**, Local Government Districts and Health and Social Care Trusts). The Department is seeking a **single** Councillor nomination from **each** relevant Council in the AIPB area.

**Belfast AIPB** – Belfast City Council; Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

**Northern AIPB** – Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Causeway Coast and Glens District Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council.

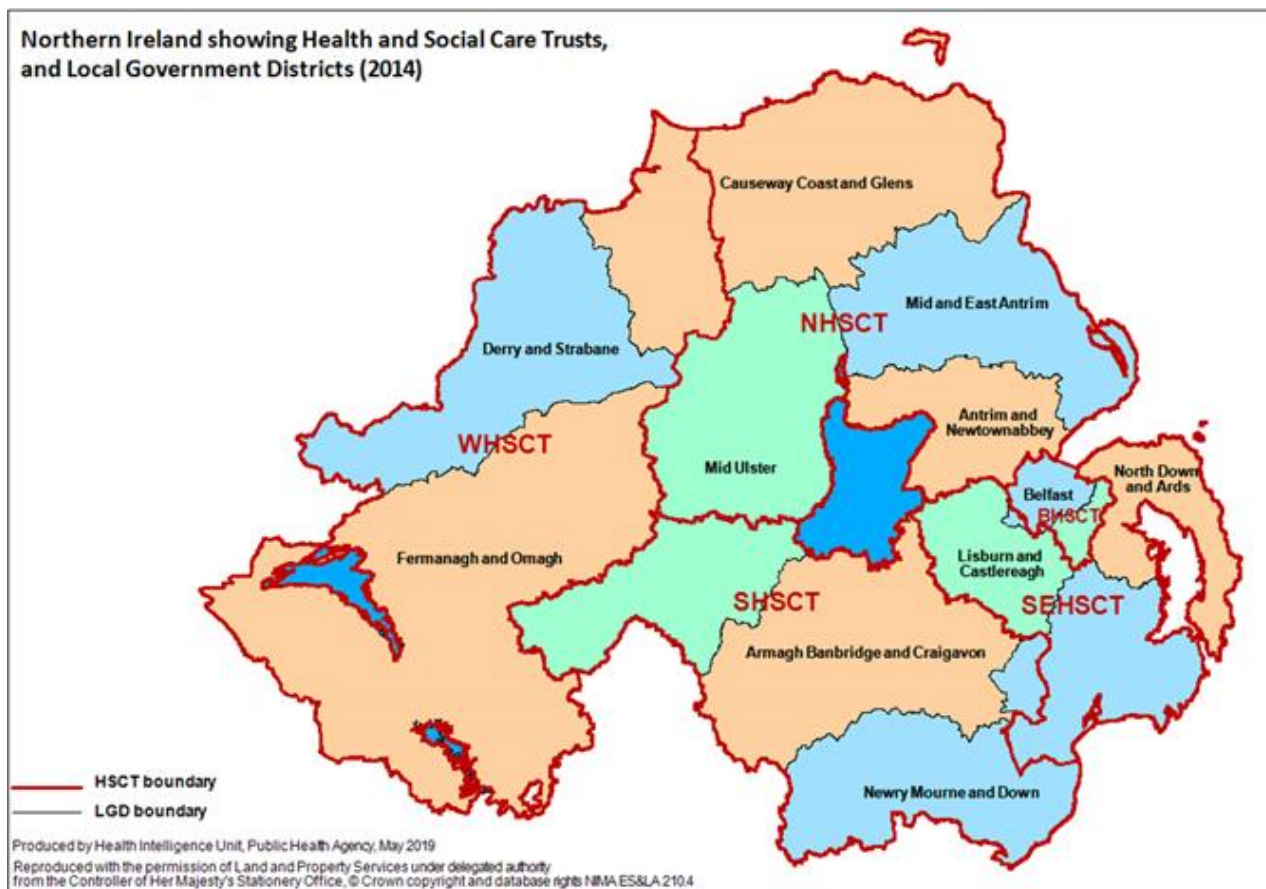
**South Eastern AIPB** – Ards and North Down Borough Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Newry Mourne and Down District Council.

**Southern AIPB** – Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Newry Mourne and Down District Council

**Western AIPB** – Causeway Coast and Glens District Council, Derry City and Strabane District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.



Appendix 1



Unclassified

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**ITEM 14****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	08 August 2024
File Reference	SD151
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Services Order (1986)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG July 2024)
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Successful Anniversary Report for Approval Appendix 2 - Successful Equipment Report for Approval Appendix 3 - Successful Event Report for Approval Appendix 4 - Successful Goldcard Report for Noting Appendix 5 - Successful Individual Travel & Accommodation Report for Noting Appendix 6 - Successful Club Travel & Accommodation Report for Noting Appendix 7 - Unsuccessful Report

Not Applicable

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Members will be aware that on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2015 Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £45,000 had been allocated within the 2024/2025 revenue budget for this purpose.

The Council further authorised the Forum under delegated powers to award grants of up to £250. Grants above £250 still require Council approval. In addition, the Council requested that regular updates are reported to members.

During June 2024, the Forum received a total of 38 applications: 1 Anniversary, 6 Equipment, 3 Event, 13 Goldcard, 13 Individual Travel/Accommodation Grants and 2 Club Travel/Accommodation. A summary of the **35** successful applications are detailed in the attached Successful Anniversary, Successful Equipment, Successful Event, Successful Goldcard, Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation and Successful Club Travel/Accommodation Appendices.

<b>2024/25 Budget £45,000</b>	Annual Budget	Proposed Funding Awarded June 2024	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	*£750	<b>-£1,499.90</b>
Coach Education	£3,000	£0	<b>£1,638.75</b>
Equipment	£14,000	*£5,815	<b>£5,718.13</b>
Events	£6,000	*£1,000	<b>£1,637.89</b>
Seeding	£500	£0	<b>£500</b>
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£2,420	<b>-£39.57</b>
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	<b>£1,000</b>
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	<b>£5,000</b>
<b>13 Goldcards Awarded in June (18 Goldcards in total during 2024/25)</b>			

\*The proposed remaining budget for Anniversary of **-£1,499.90** is based on a proposed award this month of **£750**.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **£5,718.13** is based on a proposed award this month of **£5,815**.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Events of **£1,637.89** is based on a proposed award this month of **£1,000**.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **-£39.57** is based on a proposed award this month of **£2,420**, a withdrawn amount of **£200** and a reclaimed amount of **£80.89**.

The proposed remaining budget for 2024/25 is **£13,955.30** (69% of the 2024/25 budget spent).

Not Applicable

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council approves the attached applications for financial assistance for sporting purposes valued at above £250, and that the applications approved by the Forum (valued at below £250) are noted.

## APPENDIX 1 - SUCCESSFUL ANNIVERSARY REPORT FOR APPROVAL

NAME	SPORT	EVENT	EVENT OUTLINE	DATES	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Bryansburn Rangers FC	Football	50th Anniversary Gala. The event will foster a sense of pride among members, past and present, strengthening the community bonds that are vital to the club's ethos. It will also provide a platform to honour and recognise the contributions of key individuals who have shaped the club's history.	It will provide an excellent networking opportunity, potentially attracting sponsorships and partnerships that can offer long-term benefits. Showcasing the club's achievements and vision, the event can enhance its profile and attract new members and supporters. The event will also generate positive publicity, increasing the club's visibility and reputation within the broader community.	21 September 2024	Dinner (x17 special guests) £765 + Live entertainment £1300 + Club History Brochure £1,000 + Decoration, Pins, tickets £650 = £3,715	£750.00	<b>All documentation provided. Funding of £750 recommended towards the dinner for special guests.</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>						<b>£750.00</b>	

## APPENDIX 2 - SUCCESSFUL EQUIPMENT REPORT FOR APPROVAL

NAME	TYPE	EQUIPMENT NEED	BENEFIT	COSTS	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Bangor Hockey Club	High performance equipment	Our club is an attractive club due to performances across all levels and age groups. This will enhance the existing coaching programme, sharing knowledge and enabling immediate correction in the moment.	This would allow our teams to record their games and training on an ongoing basis which would enable the ability to relay moments.	Vevo video camera = £999	£999.00	£999.00	<b>All documentation provided, recommend funding of £999.</b>

<p>North Down Softball Club</p>	<p>Training Equipment</p>	<p>Recruitment &amp; retention rely on well organised clubs providing the necessary equipment for players to train. Players want more batting practice but space &amp; available pitchers are a limiting factor. With this equipment we will be able to provide these opportunities to members, maintaining current membership &amp; growing Softball in the local area.</p>	<p>The pitching machines will support more batting practice for the 55+ members while reducing pressure on human pitchers. The batting cage will facilitate additional batting practice without fielders. New Softball stock will ensure players are consistently using match grade ball ensuring more accurate throwing &amp; more consistent batting.</p>	<p>Fundamen tal Worth ASA 12" Softballs x24 £150 + Worth ASA 11" Softballs x24 £150 = £300 + Non fundamen tal Louisville Slugger Black £350 + Fortress Pop up batting cage 40ft £350 = £700. Total = £1,000</p>	<p>£1,000.00</p>	<p>£1,000.00</p>	<p><b>All documentation provided, recommend funding of £1,000.</b></p>
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<p>Donaghadee Sailing Club</p>	<p>Support the development of new sections</p>	<p>DSC volunteers run the Friday bright nights sailing every year as part of the RYA OnBoard national scheme, with approx. 100 children registering and participating on the water from June till Sept. We get additional junior and family memberships transferring from this scheme as siblings and or parents take an interest in the sport, start learning / training, participate in club and regional events &amp; volunteer to keep club running etc.</p>	<p>We've acquired additional sailing dinghies without trollies to help accommodate introduction to sailing on our oversubscribed Friday Brights Nights Sailing Programme for U15 children open to the general public. We need trollies to get the boats from storage into and back out of the water as boats weigh 60kgs - avoid damage etc to equipment or injury to participants. We can also use for our summer trailing scheme to RYA national standards.</p>	<p>X Pico launching Trollies £1,008</p>	<p>£1,000.00</p>	<p>£1,000.00</p>	<p><b>All documentation provided. Recommend funding of £1,000.</b></p>
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<p>North Down Trampoline Academy</p>	<p>Training Equipment</p>	<p>The addition of the Eurotramp Ultimate FIG certified trampoline to our clubs equipment inventory will play a significant role in sustaining participation and potentially increasing memberships within the club.</p>	<p>The acquisition of the Eurotramp Ultimate FIG certified trampoline will bring immense benefits to our club and its members. This state-of-the-art equipment will serve as a pivotal asset in enhancing the training experience for our FIG gymnasts who represent Northern Ireland in various competitions. By providing them with access to a trampoline that is not only recognised locally but also nationally for its quality and standards, we are equipping our athletes with the necessary tools to excel on a competitive level.</p>	<p>Eurotramp Ultimate FIG certified trampoline £10,570</p>	<p>£1,000.00</p>	<p>£1,000.00</p>	<p><b>Recommend funding of £1,000, "subject to" the return of a copy of North Down Trampoline Club's Constitution, a copy of the Club's Public Liability Insurance and two signatures on Section 6: Declaration (Application Form).</b></p>
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North Down Cricket Club	High performance equipment	The equipment will better training and player development opportunities for our Academy girls/boys and adults. Ultimately better players will benefit competitive results for all teams junior and senior and lead to player development for provincial and national recognition at all age groups.	The balls will be utilised for performance levels throughout the club - senior academy (men's and ladies). They will benefit over 100 cricketers and enhance match / training performances. The specialist coaching kit will support coaching sessions / with teams and form a key element of player development at NDCC.	Specialist Coaching Equipment £700 (mitts £320 + training bats £320 + ramps £60) + Specialist cricket balls (mixed) £300 = £1000	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	<b>All documentation provided. Recommend funding of £1,000.</b>
Bangor Amateur Football Club	Training Equipment	We hope to attract new members and numbers attending training.	It will replace the old equipment which is damaged. It will increase professionalism amongst the club members.	Training balls £300 + 3 Baxzoka Nets £300 + 40 Coloured bibs £120 + 2 foot pumps £36 + 3 ball carriers £60 = £816	£816.00	£816.00	<b>All documentation provided. Recommend funding of £816.</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>£5,815.00</b>	

**APPENDIX 3 - SUCCESSFUL EVENT REPORT FOR APPROVAL**

NAME	EVENT	DETAILS	BENEFIT	COSTS	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
North Down Athletic Club	Bangor 10k (including NI & Ulster Championship 10k 2024), Saturday 28th September 2024.	This is a road running event, expecting to attract 1000 to 1200 people to the City of Bangor. The route starts in Castle Park and works it's way through Bangor Main Street and Seacliff Road, then through Groomsport and back to Bangor along the Ballyholme promenade, finishing in Ward Park.	The event gives local participants the opportunity to run in their home City and surrounding area. The event helps to sustain and increase the interest in running. It is an ideal stepping stone for those running couch to 5k events, or local Parkrun, to progress to a bigger race event. It will also undoubtedly have an effect of encouraging onlookers to think about trying the sport and even join a local club. Once people get into the sport and realise the physical and mental well-being effects, it is highly likely they will continue and develop.	Total Project Costs £9,565. Club is requesting £200 Chip Timing + £200 First Aid + £200 Road Closure Orders + £200 Traffic Management + £200 PSNI Event Support.	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	<b>Recommend funding of £1,000 "subject to" the return of an Equity Policy.</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>£1,000.00</b>	

## APPENDIX 4 - SUCCESSFUL GOLDCARD REPORT FOR NOTING

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	REPRESENTING	GOLDCARD	DATES	PROPOSED	NOTES
Felix English	Water Polo	U16 Boys Inter-Regional Water Polo Championships	Ulster U15, Ireland U16 and Ireland U17	Bangor Aurora Gym & Pool	29-30 June 2024	Yes	<b>Felix has been selected to join the Irish National 2009 Water Polo Team travelling to the ASA tournament taking place in Liverpool, United Kingdom on 29 and 30 June. Goldcard recommended for 6 months, until 8 January 2025.</b>
Grace Davison	Swimming	2024 European Aquatics Junior Championships	Ireland	ABM & BA Pool, Gym, Health Suite	01 July 2024	Yes	<b>Letter from Swim Ireland confirms Grace has secured her place on the Swim Ireland National Performance Programme for the 2024-2025 Season. Grace will represent Ireland at the 2024 European Aquatics Junior Championships in Belgrade in July. Goldcard recommended for 6 months, until 8 January 2025.</b>
Iseult Speirs	Sailing	British Nationals	Northern Ireland	ABM, Bangor Sportsplex, Queen's & LP Gym, Pool, Health Suite, Cryospa and Track	11-16 August	Yes	<b>Letter from RYA advises Iseult is a member of the Youth Performance Programme and has been selected to attend the National Championships, August 24, and the RYANI Youth Championships, September 24. Goldcard recommended for 6 months, until 8 January 2025.</b>

Alex Cree	Archery	Archery GB Youth Festival	Northern Ireland	ABM Gym, Health Suite and Pool	27-31 July 2024	Yes	<b>An email from Archery GB confirms Alex is a member of the Archery GB Compound Development Squad and will be competing in the Home Nations Event at this years Archery GB Youth Festival held at the National Sports Centre Lilleshall, 27-31 July. Goldcard recommended for 6 months, until 8 January 2025.</b>
Matthew Flannigan	Powerlifting	IPF Commonwealth Championships	Northern Ireland	ABM Gym, Health Suite and Pool	4-13 October 2024	Yes	<b>Matthew has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at sub junior level. This has been confirmed by email from British Powerlifting. He will be competing at Sun City in South Africa at the IPF Commonwealth Championships between 4-13 October 2024. Goldcard recommended for 6 months until 8 January 2025.</b>

Daniel Flannigan	Powerlifting	IPF Commonwealth Championships	Northern Ireland	ABM Gym, Health Suite and Pool	4-13 October 2024	Yes	<b>Daniel has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at under 23 level. This has been confirmed by email from British Powerlifting. He will be competing at Sun City in South Africa at the IPF Commonwealth Championships between 4-13 October 2024. Goldcard recommended for 6 months until 8 January 2025.</b>
Matthew McGinty	Rugby	Development Squad	Ulster U18	Bangor Aurora Gym & Pool	Not Advised	Yes	<b>A letter from the IRFU, Ulster Branch, confirms Matthew has been selected for the Under 18 development squad and represents Ulster at Age Grade Rugby. Goldcard recommended for 6 months until 8 January 2025.</b>
Olivia McCloskey	Netball	Paradise Cup	Senior Netball Northern Ireland Squad	Comber LC and ABM Gym and Pool	01 August 2024	Yes	<b>Olivia has been selected to represent the Senior Netball Squad for Northern Ireland. She will be competing at the Oceanic Cup in Barbados which is due to take place in August 2024. Goldcard recommended for 6 months until 8 January 2025.</b>

Rosa McCloskey	Netball	Paradise Cup	Senior Netball Northern Ireland Squad	Comber LC and ABM Gym and Pool	01 August 2024	Yes	<b>Rosa has been selected to represent the Senior Netball Squad for Northern Ireland. She will be competing at the Oceanic Cup in Barbados which is due to take place in August 2024. Rosa will also be competing at the World Youth Qualifiers in Cardiff. which will take place in October 2024. Goldcard recommended for 6 months until 8 January 2025.</b>
Adam Johnson	Powerlifting	IPF Commonwealth Championships	Northern Ireland	AMB and LDPK Gym, health suite and cyro spa	4-13 October 2024	Yes	<b>Adam has been selected to represent Northern Ireland for the senior under 83kg squad . This has been confirmed by British Powerlifting. He will be competing at Sun City in South Africa at the IPF Commonwealth Championships between 4-13 October 2024. Goldcard recommended for 6 months until 8 January 2025.</b>

Rachel McCann	Athletics	Irish Senior Championships / Olympic Games Manchester International	Northern Ireland - Senior/Ireland - Senior/Ulster - Senior	Bangor Aurora & Bangor Sportsplex - Gym, Health Suite, Pool and Track	29-30 June 2024 / 26 July - 11 August 2024 / 24 August 2024	Yes	Rachel is competing at Senior International Level for Northern Ireland. Rachel is part of the Athletics NI Commonwealth Potential Programme and has pre selection to represent NI for the Manchester International Medley relay taking place in August 2024. Goldcard recommended for 6 months until 8 January 2025.
Jim Rossborough	Powerlifting	Commonwealth Powerlifting Championships	Northern Ireland	ABM, BA and LDPK - Gym, Health Suite, Pool and Cryo Spa	4-13 October 2024	Yes	Jim has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the IPF Commonwealth Championships from 4-11 October 2024 in Sun City, South Africa. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from British Powerlifting. Goldcard recommended for 6 months until 8 January 2025.
Sarah McMillan	Roller Derby	World Cup	Ireland	Bangor Aurora. LDPK Gym, Health Suite, Pool, Cryo Spa	01/07/2024	Yes	Sarah has been selected as part of the All Ireland team to compete in the World Cup in Innsbruck in July 2025. Funding recommended as Sarah has now provided a selection letter from the British Roller Sports Federation. Goldcard recommended for 6 months until 8 January 2024.
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>13</b>	



## APPENDIX 5 - SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATION REPORT FOR NOTING

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	DATES	LOCATION	REPRESENTING2	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Amy Benson	Indoor Hockey	Series v USA Senior women	7-9 June 2024	USA	Ireland	£200	£200	Amy has been selected to represent Ireland in a hockey series v USA in Pennsylvania from 7-9 June. Recommend funding of £200.
Katie Kimber	Indoor Hockey	USA Series	6-9/06/2024	Philadelphia, USA	Ireland Senior Women's Indoor Hockey Squad	£200	£200	Katie has been selected to represent Ireland in a hockey series v USA in Philadelphia from 6-9 June. Recommend funding of £200.
Ellen Robinson	Indoor Hockey	USA Series	6-9/06/2024	Philadelphia, USA	Ireland Senior Women's Indoor Hockey Squad	£200	£200	Ellen has been selected to represent Ireland in a hockey series v USA in Philadelphia from 6-9 June. Recommend funding of £200.
Soul be Courtney	Taekwondo	WITC World Championships 2024	23/06/2024	Edinburgh, Scotland	Northern Ireland	£150	£150	Soul-be has been selected to represent Northern Ireland as part of the Northern Ireland National Taekwon-Do Team at the WITC World Championships, Edinburgh, on 23 June 2024. Recommend funding of £150.

Cullen Courtney	Taekwondo	WITC World Championships 2024	23/06/2024	Edinburgh, Scotland	Northern Ireland	£150	£150	Cullen has been selected to represent Northern Ireland as part of the Northern Ireland National Taekwon-Do Team at the WITC World Championships, Edinburgh, on 23 June 2024. Recommend funding of £150.
Adam Johnson	Powerlifting	IPF Commonwealth Championships	4th-13th October 2024	Sun City, South Africa	Northern Ireland	£200	£200	John has been selected to represent Northern Ireland for the senior under 83kg squad. This has been confirmed by British Powerlifting. He will be competing at Sun City in South Africa at the IPF Commonwealth Championships between 4-13 October 2024.
Julie Fisher	Hockey	Ladies Masters O55 Home Nations	14-16 June 2024	Nottingham Hockey Centre	Ireland	£150	£150	A letter from Hockey Ireland confirms Julie has been selected for the Masters Home Nations Tournament from 14-16 June, in Nottingham. Recommend funding of £150.
Molly Lynas	Trampolinin g	Trampoline Inter-Regional Challenge Cup Final	6-7 July 2024	Birmingham (Utilita Arena)	Northern Ireland	£150	£150	A letter from Gymnastics Northern Ireland confirms that Molly has been selected to compete in Trampolining from 6-7 July 2024 in Birmingham (Utilita Arena) Recommend funding £150.

John Craig	Running	World Masters Championships - 5000m track and 10K road	17th-18th August 2024	Slottsskogsvall Stadium, Gothenburg, Sweden	Great Britain & Northern Ireland	£170	£170	John has been selected to represent Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the World Masters Championships in the 5000m track and 10k road. The events will take place between 17-18 August 2024 in Sweden at the Slottsskogsvall Stadium. Recommend funding £170.
Matthew Topping	Powerlifting	IPF Commonwealth Championships	4-11 October 2024	Sun City, South Africa	Northern Ireland	£200	£200	A letter from British Powerlifting Federation advises Matthew has been selected to represent The Northern Ireland Powerlifting Federation that will be competing at the IPF Commonwealth Championships from 4 to 13 October 2024 in Sun City, South Africa. Recommend funding of £200.
Jim Rossborough	Powerlifting	IPF Commonwealth Championships	4-11 October 2024	Sun City, South Africa	Northern Ireland	£200	£200	Jim has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the IPF Commonwealth Championships from 4-11 October 2024 in Sun City, South Africa. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from British Powerlifting. Recommend funding £200.

Ruby Sterrett	Trampolinin g	Trampoline Inter-Regional Challenge Cup Final	5-7 July 2024	Birmingham (Utilita Arena)	Northern Ireland	£150	£150	<b>A letter from Gymnastics Northern Ireland confirms that Ruby has been selected to compete in Trampolining from 5-7 July 2024 in Birmingham (Utilita Arena). Recommend funding £150.</b>
Jessica Dadley- Young	Sailing	Feva Fest	6-7 July 2024 (2 day event)	Lough Derg Yacht Club, Ireland	Northern Ireland / Ulster	£100	£100	<b>A letter from the RYA confirms Jessica will be representing Northern Ireland at Feva Fest, at Lough Derg Yacht Club, from 6-7 July 2024. Recommend funding of £100.</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>							<b>£2,220.00</b>	

**APPENDIX 6 - SUCCESSFUL CLUB TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATION REPORT FOR NOTING 23-24**

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	REPRESENTATIVE	LOCATION	DATES	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Bangor Chiefs Inline Hockey Club	Inline Hockey	Inline Hockey Ireland Playoffs	Through this fund we will bring a team of 20 players to the Inline Hockey Ireland Elite and League 1 playoffs at the SETU Arena in Waterford. This will give our team the chance to progress to the next stage of the competition and continue their success in the current season of inline	SETU Arena, Waterford	21-23 June 2024	£200.00	£200.00	<b>Our guidelines state that Clubs can apply on behalf of Teams for travel assistance towards a specific club competition or event, for example, where there is progression to a higher level in a competition or event which involves travel beyond normal limits. Recommend funding of £200.</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>							<b>£200.00</b>	

## APPENDIX 7 - UNSUCCESSFUL REPORT

APPLICANT	APPLICATION	REQUEST	EVIDENCE REQUIRED	EXPLANATION
Scrabo Striders	EVENT	Ards 5 Mile. Requested £1,000 towards Traffic Management.	Our Event Application Guidance states, "the application must be submitted three months prior to the event".	<b>Funding not recommended as grant received on 14 June 2024 for their 5 mile road race on 6 September 2024. Our guidelines state, "the application must be submitted 3 months prior to the event".</b>
Elite Taekwondo NI	EVENT	Elite Summer Camp. Requested £1,000 towards External Coaching Costs.	Our Event Application Guidance states, "the application must be submitted three months prior to the event".	<b>Funding not recommended as grant received on 24 June 2024 for their Elite Summer camp starting on 1 July 2024. Our guidelines state, "the application must be submitted 3 months prior to the event".</b>
Elite Taekwondo NI	CLUB TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATION	ITA Interclub Competition. Requested £135 towards mileage.	Our Club Travel/Accommodation Guidelines state Clubs can apply on behalf of individuals who reside or who are active members of an affiliated sports club within the Borough and represent the club at province/country level competition (i.e. Ulster, Northern Ireland, Ireland or Great Britain).	<b>Funding not recommended as the participants are participating in a beginner level competition and are not representing the club at province/country (i.e. Ulster, Northern Ireland, Ireland or Great Britain) level Competition.</b>

Unclassified

# ITEM 15

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	13 August 2024
File Reference	GREL424
Legislation	The Northern Ireland Act 1998
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Good Relations Funding
Attachments	Appendix 1 Letter dated 4 <sup>th</sup> July 2024 from Chris Gardner, TEO Appendix 2 Letter dated 11 <sup>th</sup> July 2024 from Susie McCullough, Chief Executive

At the Council meeting held in June 2024 it was agreed that: -

*this Council writes to the Executive Office to highlight our disappointment at their failure to provide their share of funding for Cultural Expression events and festivals. Furthermore, that this Council asks The Executive Office to commit to providing their full share of funding for the Good Relations programme in 25/26.*

Letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024 (Appendix 1) was received from Chris Gardner, Director Good Relations and T:BUS, The Executive Office prior to call in being agreed. In his letter he thanked the Good Relations Team for its work and confirmed that a 12% increase on last year’s budget would be provided in 2024/2025. This equates to 65% of the budget requested from Council to deliver the Good Relations Action Plan.

Not Applicable

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He also stated that it was hoped further funding would be made available after monitoring rounds had taken place.

Also attached the Chief Executive's letter to Mr Gardner, as requested by Council at its meeting in June 2024.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council note the report.



Unclassified

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**ITEM 16****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	01 August 2024
File Reference	CD 35C
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Community Development Christmas Festival Fund
Attachments	none

Council operates a Christmas Festival Programme for towns and villages in the Borough who receive Christmas Trees from the Council. The purpose of the programme is to enable communities to run local festivals to celebrate the festive period and MUST include switching on of Christmas Lights.

The following towns and villages are eligible to apply for funding:

**Villages** – Ballygowan, Ballyhalbert, Ballywalter, Carrowdore, Cloughey, Conlig, Greyabbey, Groomsport, Helens Bay, Killinchy, Kircubbin, Millisle, Portaferry and Portavogie

**Towns** – Donaghadee, Comber and Holywood

The programme enables one application per town or village. The programme for 2024/2025 closed on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and 17 applications were received from 14 villages and three towns with applications totalling £22,396.00. The maximum amount of funding for each of the village is £1,000 and £3,000 per town.

Not Applicable

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Applications from villages amounted to £13,396.00 and applications from towns amounted to £9,000.00.

Applications were scored by a panel consisting of the Grants & Funding Co-Ordinator, Community Safety Officer and Community & Culture Assistant using the following criteria:

<b><u>Grant Criteria</u></b>	<b><u>Points</u></b>
Open and accessible	5
Community Participation	5
Volunteer Involvement & training	5
Collaboration and partnership	5
Welfare and safety of attendees/participants	5
Strong sense of Community	5
Value for money	5
Evaluation of Festival	5
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>40</u></b>

The assessment panel agreed a pass mark of 45%. The marks were totalled and calculated as a percentage.

All applications submitted were successful in attaining the pass mark and all recommended to receive the full amount of grant requested.

**Table 1 (Villages)**

	<b>Name of Group</b>	<b>Date &amp; time of Festival</b>	<b>Amount applied for</b>	<b>Score out of 40</b>	<b>Score as %</b>	<b>Awarded amount</b>
	<b>VILLAGES</b>					
1	Ballygowan & District Community Association	07/12/24 @ 4 - 6pm	£810.00	32/40	80.00%	£810.00
2	Ballyhalbert Community Association	06/12/2024 @ 7 - 9pm	£1,000.00	34/40	85.00%	£1,000.00
3	Ballywalter Community Action Group	05/12/2024 @ 7pm	£1,000.00	32/40	80.00%	£1,000.00
4	Carrowdore & District Community Association	30/12/24 @ 6.30 - 8.30pm	£1,000.00	31/40	77.50%	£1,000.00
5	Cloughey & District Community Association	04/12/24 @ 6.30 - 9.30pm	£586.00	29/40	72.50%	£586.00
6	Conlig Community Regeneration Group	07/12/24 @ 3.30 - 5.30pm	£1,000.00	39/40	97.50%	£1,000.00

Not Applicable

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7	Greyabbey & District Community Association	13/12/24 @ 1 - 9.30pm	£1,000.00	33/40	82.50%	£1,000.00
8	Groomsport Village Association	06/12/24 @ 5 - 8pm	£1,000.00	20/40	50.00%	£1,000.00
9	Helens Bay & Crawfordsburn Residents Association	06/12/24 @ 7 - 9pm	£1,000.00	26/40	65.00%	£1,000.00
10	Killinchy & District Community Development Association	09/12/24 @ 6 - 10pm	£1,000.00	27/40	67.50%	£1,000.00
11	Kircubbin & District Community Association	03/12/2024 @ 7 - 9pm	£1,000.00	33/40	82.50%	£1,000.00
12	Millisle & District Community Association	07/12/24 @ 6.15 - 9pm	£1,000.00	34/40	85.00%	£1,000.00
13	Portaferry Gala Fest	29/11/2024 @ 6.30 - 8.30pm	£1,000.00	36/40	90.00%	£1,000.00
14	Portavogie Regeneration Forum	06/12/24 @ 7 - 9pm	£1,000.00	26/40	65.00%	£1,000.00
	<b>VILLAGE TOTAL</b>		<b>£13,396.00</b>			<b>£13,396.00</b>

Table 2 (Towns)

	Name of Group	Date & time of Festival	Amount applied for	Score out of 40	Score as %	Awarded amount
	<b>TOWNS</b>					
1	Comber Regeneration Community Partnership	28/11/2024 @ 4 - 8pm	£3,000.00	31/40	77.50%	£3,000.00
2	Donaghadee Community Development Association	08/12/2024 28/11/2024 @ 7.30pm	£3,000.00	24/40	60.00%	£3,000.00
3	Hollywood & District Community Council	30/11/24 @ 10am-5pm	£3,000.00	32/40	80.00%	£3,000.00
	<b>TOWNS TOTAL</b>		<b>£9,000.00</b>			<b>£9,000.00</b>
	<b>OVERALL FUND TOTAL</b>		<b>£22,396.00</b>			<b>£22,396.00</b>

Two applications were received from groups in Groomsport. Officers engaged with each of the groups as two applications per village is outside the scope of the funding. It was agreed that the groups would submit applications on alternative years. Groomsport Village Associations application was scored for 2024 and it was agreed

Not Applicable

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between the groups that Discover Groomsport will apply next year (2025), and this sequence will continue going forward. Both groups have agreed to support each other during the festivals.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council approves the assessment panel's recommendations detailed in the tables above and funds Christmas Festivals 2024 at a cost of £22,396.00 and notes the arrangements with the two groups in Groomsport Village.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 17****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	05 August 2024
File Reference	CW159
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Winter Hardship Fund 2024-2025
Attachments	none

Members will be aware that funding to facilitate a Hardship Fund was provided by the Department for Communities in 2023-2024, totalling £344,027.

The purpose of the fund was to address hardship, due to the current cost of living crisis, particularly the increase in energy and food costs. The Hardship Funding Programme was developed in recognition of the difficult financial circumstances which exist for the community. The Programme welcomed applications for grants between £10,000 to £30,000. Twenty-three applications were approved for funding totalling £330,186.61. In June 2024, the Community Development Manager was informed that two of the applications would not be claiming the funding awarded totalling £40,000. A further £7,000 was unclaimed across the remaining twenty-one applications leaving a total underspend of £47,000.

Approval has been granted from DfC to use this funding during 2024-2025 to facilitate a Winter Hardship Fund as no Hardship Funding has been provided for this financial year.

Not Applicable

250

It is proposed to go to open call in September 2024 for grants up to £3,000 with recommendations brought to Community & Wellbeing Committee in October 2024.

### **Aim of 2024-2025 Hardship Funding Programme**

The aim of the fund is to support people who are experiencing food, fuel, and financial hardship. Hardship funding is non-recurrent funding.

The Fund would be open to the following eligible organisations/groups operating within Ards and North Down -

- Strategic Community Planning Partners (if not delivering statutory functions)
- Community & Voluntary Sector Organisations (application must show additionality)
- Registered charities (application should bring additionality to a charitable purpose).

Types of initiatives the fund can consider include:

- Initiatives that identify and work with individuals and their families at times of crisis.
- Projects that provide spaces with a food offering alongside activities and heat (but food should be the primary purpose).
- Programmes that increase the capacity and integration with existing hardship support services (e.g. Social Supermarkets and food banks)
- School/education-based food projects e.g. breakfast clubs and holiday hunger initiatives.

### **What we can fund**

Types of areas **we can fund include** (but are not restricted to)

- Projects that identify communities and individuals who are financially vulnerable and have an innovative solution based on food, fuel, and financial hardship
- Energy costs (e.g. heating and lighting) e.g. voucher schemes (food, fuel, oil stamp scheme, electricity)
- Costs associated with the provision of food to provide those facing hardship with sustenance e.g., including Social supermarkets, Food Banks, Fareshare, Community Fridges, holiday hunger initiatives, meal projects, school-based food projects, such as breakfast clubs and other meal-based projects.

Not Applicable

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**What we cannot fund**

- Individual people
- Private and/or commercial businesses
- General building or maintenance costs
- Projects/services operating outside of Ards and North Down area.
- Funding cannot be used for subsidy schemes (summer schemes and leisure activities), appliances, small grants to community organisations for community-based projects, advice services (including debt), community training (including health and wellbeing, resilience, financial inclusion), uniform schemes, and community transport initiatives.
- Funding cannot be used for Projects already being funded by the Department unless it is being used to enhance or expand provision on a food related project.
- Salaries.
- Capital and expenditure items.
- Advice services including debt.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council approves the launch of the Winter Hardship fund as outlined above.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 18****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Environment
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regulatory Services
Date of Report	15 August 2024
File Reference	90101
Legislation	The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1985
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Grant of an Entertainments Licence
Attachments	None

Applications have been received for the Grant of an Entertainments Licence as follows:

**1. Duffy's Circus - Site on Comber Road, Newtownards, BT23 4QP**

**Applicant:** Mark McFerran, Unit 140 Moat House, 54 Bloomfield Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5AD

**Days and Hours:** Monday-Friday 4pm to 10pm, Saturday and Sunday 1pm to 7pm

**Type of entertainment:** A Circus.

There are no objections received from NIFRS, Environmental Health or the PSNI.



Not Applicable

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**2. Bryansburn Bar & Grill - 149-151 Bryansburn Road, Bangor, BT20 3RQ**

**Applicant:** Mr John Parke, 48 Beverly Gardens, Bangor, BT20 4NQ

**Days and Hours:** Monday-Sunday, 11am to 11pm (Licensed premises)

**Type of entertainment:** Dancing, Singing or Music or any other entertainment of a like kind.

There are no objections received from NIFRS, Environmental Health or the PSNI.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council grants an Entertainments Licence to Duffy's Circus, Newtownards and Bryansburn Bar & Grill, Bangor, subject to satisfactory final inspection by Licensing and Regulatory Services.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 19****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	19 August 2024
File Reference	Proposal for a Change to Death & Still-Birth Legislation
Legislation	'-
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Proposal for a Change to Death & Still-Birth Legislation
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Letter from GRO Appendix 2 - Response to Proposal

Council have been approached by the General Registrar Office (GRO) for Northern Ireland who are seeking the views of its stakeholders about putting forward legislation that would make the remote registration process of deaths and still-births permanent. Attached is a document detailing the proposed responses by Ards and North Down Borough Council.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council approves the responses attached in the appendix to this report.



**GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE**  
Colby House  
Stranmillis Court  
Belfast,  
BT9 5RR  
Telephone: 0300 200 7890

Email: [GRO\\_nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:GRO_nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk)

Website: [www.nidirect.gov.uk/gro](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/gro)

Council Chief Executive

**Date**

12 August 2024

via email

Dear Chief Executive,

### **Views on Death and Still-Birth Registration Process**

The General Register Office seeks your views on the retention of the remote death and still-birth registration processes introduced through the Coronavirus Act 2020. The Coronavirus Act 2020 made amendments to registration legislation which enable the documentation required for a death or still-birth registration to be transmitted electronically between stakeholders and enables a death or still-birth registration to be carried out by telephone without the signature of an informant. The powers are currently being maintained through a number of six-monthly extension orders to the Coronavirus Act 2020 with the current extension order being the Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of deaths and still-births) (Extension) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

In order to solidify the current death and still-birth registration processes GRO are working on taking forward primary legislation to make the provisions in the Coronavirus Act permanent and would appreciate your views on the remote process. Further information on the Pre-COVID-19 and remote death and still-birth registration processes are outlined below, including questions on which we would appreciate your thoughts.

### **Pre-Covid19 registration process**

When a person dies, a medical practitioner will verify the cause of death and complete and sign a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) which they give to the informant. The informant then takes the MCCD to the registrar in the local district council to register the death. The registrar records the details provided by the informant and the informant signs the registration entry. Once the registration is complete, the registrar issues the informant with a certificate of disposal form which the informant takes to the funeral director to enable the burial/cremation to proceed. Similar procedures are followed in relation to the registration of a still-birth.

## Remote registration process through Coronavirus Act provisions

The medical practitioner completes and signs the MCCD and emails it to the GRO mailbox. GRO forward the MCCD to the registrar for the district in which the person died. On receipt of the MCCD the registrar contacts the informant, by telephone, to obtain details for inclusion in the registration. On completion of the registration the registrar issues the certificate of disposal electronically to the funeral director to enable the burial/funeral to proceed.

- Do you feel that the death and still-birth registration process introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic is working well?
- If not, please state the reason/s why.
- If yes, please provide details of what you feel works well.
- Do you carry out in-person death and still-birth registrations?
- If so, can you estimate how many in-person death and still-birth registrations you complete per week?
- What issues have you encountered with the remote death and still-birth registration process?
- Do you have any examples of customer feedback on the benefits/issues with the process?
- Would you want to return to pre-COVID-19 registration processes with all informants attending at the registration office to register the death or still-birth?

GRO are also interested in the views of a selection of informants, if they are willing to provide them. After a death registration has been completed and, if the registrar feels it is appropriate, can they ask the informant the following questions and provide a summary of their responses to GRO:

- Do you feel that providing the information by telephone as opposed to attending at the registration office has assisted in making the registration of the death easier?
- Would you have any other comments regarding the registration of the death?

Due to the tight timescale to take the primary legislation forward we would appreciate your responses by Friday 30 August. We realise that this is a very quick turnaround time but any input you can provide would be greatly appreciated. Responses should be sent to [gro\\_nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:gro_nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk) (please note underscore between gro and nisra).

Yours sincerely,



Becci Riley

**Assistant Registrar General**

Cc: Registrars' Line Management  
Registrars



## Proposal for a Change to Legislation in the Process of Registering Deaths and Still-Births

The General Registrar Office (GRO) for Northern Ireland is seeking the views of its stakeholders in putting forward legislation that would make the remote registration process of deaths and still-births permanent.

Until 2020 all deaths and still-births could only be registered on a face-to-face basis. The process began with the hospital or GP issuing a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) which was then collected by a family member. This family member would then make an appointment with the Registrar. At that appointment they would complete the necessary information form and those details would all be entered on to the system by the Registrar. Once the informant has checked and confirmed everything is correct, the Registrar can issue the official Death Certificates. Following the legal registration, the Registrar issues the relevant documentation which enables the burial/cremation to proceed. This is given to the informant who physically takes it to the Funeral Director. It is a very similar process to register a still-birth.

When the pandemic struck, temporary legislation was introduced through the Coronavirus Act 2020 which allowed for this process to be done completely remotely. The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) is emailed directly to GRO who forward it to the Registrar for the district in which the person died. If there are no issues with the MCCD, the Registrar contacts the informant by phone. The nominated Funeral Director usually emails the Registrar with details of what funerals they are organising and who the next of kin is in any given case. The payment of the certificates is taken by card over the phone and the certificates are either posted out or collected from the office, depending on the family's preference. The document allowing for the funeral to proceed is emailed directly to the Funeral Director.

Continuous extensions have been made under the coronavirus Act 2020 allowing the remote registration of deaths and still-births to remain in place. The following questions have been posed by GRO following as they consider a permanent change to legislation:

- Do you feel that the death and still-birth registration process introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic is working well?

After a difficult start, when no-one really understood the process, it now works very well. It is dependent on a strong working relationship between the

Funeral Directors and the local Registrar's Office, which is now in place. The processes to make everything as seamless as possible is, by trial and error, very much established.

- If not, please state the reasons why.

The issues that hold the whole process up are errors on the MCCDs. It is challenging trying to contact doctors to get them sorted out. It can literally hold the entire process up by days thus impacting on families trying to organise funerals. However, this would be exactly the same whether the MCCDs were given directly to the family or emailed.

- If yes, please state the details of what you feel works well.

A huge benefit is that we only contact the family once everything is correct and ready. Previously if a family came in with a MCCD that we were unable to accept, they had to take it back themselves and try to get it sorted out. This added a lot more stress to an already difficult time and also meant they had to make at least two appointments with us. Now, the family has just one 10/15-minute phone call with us, and the process is complete.

It is also very helpful that the Funeral Director gives us the details of the next-of-kin who is best able to take the phone call and prepared for it. This means that we can avoid contact with people who might be particularly upset and grief-stricken

- Do you carry out in-person death and still-birth registrations?

No, not unless the family request it which has only happened on a handful of occasions since 2020.

- If so, can you estimate how many in-person death and still-birth registrations you complete per week.

As above.

- What issues have you encountered with the remote death and still-birth registration process?

The main issue (beyond the issues with MCCDs as previously stated) is that there are more errors resulting in more Death Certificates requiring corrections. It is not uncommon for a family to ring back after a day or two to say that they have remembered a middle name or wanted to change the occupation of the deceased. This was less common when there were face-to-face appointments as a family usually arrived together with the information

form completed, following a group discussion. As local Registrar's Offices cannot make corrections beyond the day of the registration, it has to be referred to GRO which has undoubtedly meant extra work at this level. However, this could be mitigated by updating the system to allow local Registrar's Offices to make corrections for a week following the registration.

- Do you have any examples of customer feedback on the benefits/issues with the process?

It is very common for customers to say how surprisingly easy the process is. They like the fact it is a phone call rather than having to make a face-to-face appointment during a time that is already very busy and stressful.

- Would you want to return to pre-COVID-19 registration processes with all informants attending at the registration office to registrar the death or still-birth?

While the process is more time-consuming for the Registrar's Office, as there is a lot more background work before the actual registration process can take place, customer feedback has shown it to be THEIR preferred option – which is of paramount importance. Therefore, it would be to the detriment of customer service to return to pre-COVID practices.

However, for the occasional customer, a face-to-face appointment will be requested, so the ability to do both, as required, would be the best approach.

## OTHER INFORMATION

Ards and North Down recommends that permanent legislation is put in place allowing for the remote registration of births and deaths to continue. However, there should still be the facility to complete the process face-to-face if the family prefer.



Unclassified

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**ITEM 20****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Environment
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	20 August 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	NoM Report Painting of Decorative Lamposts in Greyabbey
Attachments	

**Background**

In December 2023 the Council agreed a Notice of Motion stating:

*That Council welcomes the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter located on Main Street, Greyabbey and tasks officers to ensure it is maintained to a high standard going forward.*

*Furthermore, Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to ask for the decorative lamp posts on Main Street, Greyabbey, to be repainted to ensure they are maintained as a feature of this historic village; and writes to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to seek funding to deliver a mini public realm or streetscape project in Greyabbey.*

Assets and Property Services took forward the action regarding writing to the Department for Infrastructure whereas the letter to DAERA was referred to Regeneration for follow up.

Not Applicable

262

A response from the Department for Infrastructure had been received which stated:

*“The Department does not carry out painting due to the limited resources available. All budgets and resources are directed at the maintenance and replacement of the existing network.”*

*However, if the council wish to paint the columns as part of a regeneration project, I would have no objections. Similar schemes have taken place in other council areas with heritage style columns.”*

An update report was brought back to Environment Committee In April 2024 where it was agreed that:

*“...on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Edmund that the Council works with Greyabbey Community Association in relation to repainting the decorative lamp posts. Further to this Council brings a report to this committee on the feasibility and costings of completing this work in partnership with the community.”*

### **Proposal**

Officers had subsequent conversations with the Community Association representatives on potential ways to help and would propose the following option:

1. Council painting contractors have provided a price to the community group for painting the lamp posts. Should this be acceptable to the group, all costs will be borne solely by the Community Association.
2. Council permits the contractors to use its access equipment (cherry picker) already working in the area, helping reduce contractor costs. Since existing Council contractors are being utilised for the work, appropriate training and insurances are already in place.
3. Provided the Community Association are in favour of this proposal, it will be subject to agreement of the method statement with DfI, Council officers can assist with this also.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council considers whether it wishes to assist Greyabbey Community Association as outlined above.

Unclassified

263

**ITEM 21****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Communications and Marketing
Date of Report	20 August 2024
File Reference	CJ/2024/Events
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Ards and North Down Olympic Homecoming Event
Attachments	

On Friday 16 August 2024, Ards and North Down Borough Council hosted homecoming celebrations for the Borough's 10 Olympians.

Four of these Olympians, Rhys McClenaghan, Jack McMillan, Rachel McCann and Michael Young, attended the event, which featured two main components: a reception for invited guests and VIPs, including friends and family of the Olympians in Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex, and a public celebratory event in Conway Square, Newtownards, running from 4pm to 9pm.

The homecoming celebrations also recognised the medal achievements of the Borough's Special Olympian, Haleigh Miskimmin at the 2023 Berlin games and Paralympian, Barry McClements who is taking part in the Paris 2024 Paralympics.

Unclassified

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## Benefits

The delivery of an Olympic homecoming event brings numerous benefits to the Borough:

1. **Civic Pride:** Celebrating the local Olympian's achievements fosters a sense of pride and unity within the community. It brings people together to celebrate a shared success, enhancing community spirit.
2. **Inspiration and Motivation:** This event has inspired young people and aspiring athletes. In turn, this brings footfall to the Borough's leisure provision.
3. **Economic Boost:** Local businesses in Newtownards such as restaurants, and shops, will benefit from the economic boost to the area that an event of this scale brings. Extensive collaboration with Newtownards Chamber and associated businesses was carried out in the short period before the event.
4. **Media Attention:** Hosting this high-profile event attracted significant media coverage, putting the Borough in the spotlight. This will raise the profile of the area and potentially attract future events and investments.
5. **Cultural and Social Benefits:** This event included sporting performances, music, and entertainment, providing a fun and engaging experience for residents. It also offered opportunities for social interaction and community bonding.
6. **Recognition and Support for Athletes:** Recognising and celebrating the hard work and dedication of local athletes, may encourage more investment in local sports programmes throughout the Borough in the future.

## Budget

Given the nature of the event and the speed at which it was coordinated, no budget had previously been allocated to the activity.

Officers allocated £5,000 from existing budgets and also benefited from grant funding of £5,000 from the Department for Communities (DfC) for town centre animation in Newtownards.

In addition to this budget, Officers require a total of £19,400. This will be managed at an organisational level as underspends materialise throughout the rest of the financial year.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approve the expenditure associated the Olympic homecoming event.

Unclassified

265

**ITEM 24****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 August 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	20 August 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Notice of Motion Status Report
Attachments	Notice of Motion tracker

Please find attached a Status Report in respect of Notices of Motion.

This is a standing item on the Council agenda each month and its aim is to keep Members updated on the outcome of motions. It should be noted that as each motion is dealt with it will be removed from the report.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council notes the report.

NoM Ref:	Responsible Committee	Date Received	Submitted by	Notice (Original and any amendment)	Council & Committee Meetings (Date & Item)	Status (Most recent status update at the top followed by detail of what has been accomplished to date)	Final Outcome
11	Community & Wellbeing	31.05.15	Councillor Muir	Rory McIlroy Recognition	Council June 2015 Corporate Services Committee October 2015	Officers are considering and a report will be brought back to Committee	
330	Environment	21.01.19	Councillor Brooks & Councillor Smith	This Council brings back a report on providing a shelter or sheltered area near the slipway in Donaghadee which would provide cover for the growing numbers of open water swimmers that use the area on a daily basis.	Council January 2019 Environment Committee 06.02.19 Item 16.3	Report to be brought back to Committee	
419	Community & Wellbeing	20.10.20	Councillor Brooks	“I would like to task officers to produce a report to consider what could be a more environmentally friendly and benefit the wellbeing of the community for the use of the disused putting green on the Commons and play park at Hunts park in Donaghadee . Following the success of the Dog park in Bangor and the demand for a Dementia garden, both should be considered as options in the report. The process should involve consultation with the local community.”	Council October 2020 Community & Wellbeing Committee December 2020	Work progressing in Hunts Park. Donaghadee Masterplan approved by Council. Report to C&W Committee expected in March 2025 Report to follow after consideration of Masterplan and application of play strategy with local consultation when it takes place in Donaghadee	
514	Community & Wellbeing	19.05.22	Councillor Cummings & Councillor Johnson	Business case for redesign of the parallel sports pitches and facilities at Park Way, Comber	Council June 2022 Community & Wellbeing Committee September 2022 and deferred to October 2022	Council agreed Comber 3G pitch is ranked 21st in project prioritisation. Stakeholder engagement to commence at the appropriate time	

516	Corporate Services	20.06.24	Councillor Greer & Councillor McKee	Report exploring the possibility of introducing a policy that shows commitment to supporting the wellbeing of our workforce by ensuring appropriate support is available to anyone undergoing IVF.	Council June 2022 Corporate Services Committee October 2022	Further report to follow during 2024	
519	Community & Wellbeing	20.06.22	Councillor Kendal, Councillor McRandal & Councillor McClean	Engagement with relevant community stakeholders to ascertain community need and desires in respect of the Queen's Leisure Complex	Council June 2022 Community & Wellbeing Committee September 2022 and deferred to October 2022	Community Engagement to take place on 24th September 2024 and report to follow	
522	Corporate Services	05.07.22	Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery  Amendment received from Councillor Cathcart	That this Council changes the name of Queen's Parade to Queen's Platinum Jubilee Parade in honour and recognition of the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne.  *** Amendment - That this Council, in recognition of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and her conferment of City Status upon Bangor, agrees to name an appropriate place or building within Bangor in her honour and that future Council Bangor entrance signs make reference to Bangor being a Platinum Jubilee City.	Council July 2022 Environment Committee September 2022 Corporate Services January 2024	April 2023 - Letter requesting permission to use the Royal Name sent to the Cabinet Office and awaiting response January 2024 - Report brought to Corporate Committee Amendment Agreed and advice sought from Cabinet Office July 2024 - Advice still outstanding	

525	Community & Wellbeing	24.08.22	Councillor Cooper, Councillor T Smith & Councillor Irvine	That this council withdraws all funding to any sporting organisations with any political objectives or named references to terrorism in their constitution, club names, stadiums or competitions, and tasks officers to bring back a report outlining the specific relevant council policy.	Council August 2022  Corporate Committee October 2022	Officers considering report to be brought back to future C&W Committee	
529	Environment	22.08.22	Councillor Dunlop & Councillor Douglas	<p>That this Council agrees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All pedestrians should feel safe on our pavements, yet street clutter can make walking and wheeling unsafe, forcing people onto the road which is dangerous;</li> <li>• Street furniture should be clean, have a purpose and be consistent; and</li> <li>• Street clutter should be removed.</li> </ul> <p>Therefore, Council tasks officers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out an audit of street infrastructure including street signage, project information; posts, etc:</li> <li>• Remove historic street clutter which has no current purpose or future benefit;</li> <li>• Ensure relevant signage is cleaned and fit for purpose;</li> <li>• Ensure signs have the appropriately-named Council on it, where this applies;</li> <li>• Identify a nominated officer within the Council to lead on the audit to ensure items are listed and removed; and</li> <li>• Write to the Department for Infrastructure to request they complete a similar de-clutter across the Borough.</li> </ul>	Council September 2022 Environment Committee October 2022	Report to be brought back to Committee	



545	Community & Wellbeing	16.11.22	Alderman McIlveen & Councillor Cummings	That Council officers open discussions with Historic Environment Division regarding the return of the 13th century 'Movilla Stones' to the Borough and the provision of a suitable site for these to be located. Officers are also tasked with promoting these extremely important archaeological artefacts in the local community and local schools when the stones have been returned.	Council November 2022  Community & Wellbeing December 2022 and March 2023 and June 2023	Officers have asked HED to confirm return arrangements and will report to future C&WC when final arrangements for return of the stones is confirmed	
549	Community & Wellbeing	09.12.22	Councillor Douglas & Councillor Walker	That this Council adopts the White Ribbon Pledge to ' <i>Never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls</i> ', agrees to sign the Pledge, and tasks Officers to bring back a report outlining how we can amalgamate existing relevant policies, undertake the Listen, Learn, Lead programme within the Council, and identify effective routes to encourage other agencies and organisations in our Borough to engage with the White Ribbon Project.	Council December 2022  Corporate Services Committee January 2023  Community & Wellbeing Committee January 2024	Officers considering further reports. Action plan being developed by PCSP and brought back to C&W Committee. Womens Night Charter reported to January C&W Committee ratified at Council.	

550	Environment	13.12.22	Councillor Cathcart & Councillor MacArthur	<p>That this Council expresses concern with the number of residential and commercial bins left on public footways in the Borough long after the bin collection date. Bins left on public footways are not only unsightly, they can lead to hygiene and contamination issues, as well as safety concerns, forcing pedestrians onto the road due to the blocking of a footway. This Council notes its own lack of enforcement powers to tackle this issue and expresses concern at the Department for Infrastructure's reluctance to use its own enforcement powers. Accordingly, this Council agrees to write to the Department for Infrastructure asking the Department to engage with Councils with the aim of creating appropriate enforcement powers to tackle this issue. Council Officers, will in the meantime, bring back a report to the appropriate committee detailing action that the Council can take under current powers to try address the issue of bins left on public footways.</p>	<p>Council 21.12.22 Item 16.4  Environment Committee January 2023 May 2024</p>	<p>12.12.23 Letter sent to DAERA by CEX 08.11.23 Response received from DFI 13.10.23 - Acknowledgement received from PSNI 12.10.23 - letters sent to DFI &amp; PSNI by Cex</p>	
555	Community & Wellbeing	08.12.22	Alderman Wilson & Councillor Douglas	<p>This Council acknowledges the environmental and health benefits associated with the recent increase in cycling and declares Ards &amp; North Down a cycling friendly borough. The Council also recognises that people who cycle are among the most vulnerable road users, and tasks officers with producing a report detailing ways in which we can help improve safety. The report should include possible sources of funding, potential partnerships, and ways in which we can promote good relations between users of different forms of transport</p>	<p>Council January 2023  Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee February 2023 and June 2023</p>	<p>Officers working on business case and elements for cycle to work and infrastructure planning. Budget not secured for 2024/25. Further report to future C&amp;WC if budget made available in 2025/2026 including the report to recommend declaration</p>	

562	Environment	18.01.23	Councillor Morgan & Councillor McRandal	<p>The prolonged cold weather spells just before Christmas and last week resulted in icy, slippery, and dangerous footpaths and car parks in the Borough's City and town centres. It is not acceptable that in such circumstances the Council does not have a plan or the resources or facilities to grit these areas to enable residents to walk safely to and from the main shopping areas or fall when they step out of their cars onto ice. It is proposed that officers bring back a report with costs to outline what steps can be taken to ensure that Council car parks and footpaths in the City and town centres are gritted when the weather is forecast to have heavy snowfall or prolonged freezing weather conditions.</p>	<p>Council January 2023 Environment Committee February 2023 October 2023</p>	Supplementary report requested - TBC	
564	Community & Wellbeing	08.02.23	Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery	<p>That this Council tasks officers to begin discussions with the Education Authority with regards to the Future of Bloomfield playing fields, Bangor. This is to include the lease and the exploring of the possibility of bringing the facility up to intermediate level for football. A report to be brought back to Council following said discussions.</p>	<p>Council February 2023 Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee March 2023</p>	Officers awaiting response from EA in order for report to be brought back to future C&W Committee.	

<p>567</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>	<p>14.02.23</p>	<p>Councillor Adair &amp; Councillor Edmund</p>	<p>This Council rename the square at Portavogie War Memorial Queen Elizabeth Square in memory of our late Sovereign Queen Elizabeth II.</p>	<p>Council February 2023 Corporate Services Committee March 2023</p>	<p>A response has been received from the Cabinet Office and a report went back to Committee 30/5/24 - follow up letter sent to Cabinet Office for update. Letters sent to the Cabinet Office requesting use of the Royal Name July 2024 - Advice now recieved - Report due at September 2024.</p>	
<p>568</p>	<p>Place &amp; Prosperity</p>	<p>06.02.23</p>	<p>Councillor Smart &amp; Councillor Irvine</p>	<p>Officers are tasked with reviewing current powers and how council could best effect positive change.  As part of this review officers would investigate using part or all of Newtownards town centre as a pilot scheme to tackle dereliction, which could then be broadened across the Borough if successful. The review may form a working group which would consider what incentives could be provided through, DFC whom hold regeneration powers, the Planning system, Building Control, or by other means, to encourage the re-use or redevelopment of local derelict buildings to provide new business opportunities or homes. Consideration would also be given to what limitations can be placed on public and private property owners who are not willing to work in partnership for regeneration and the public good.</p>	<p>Council March 2023 Place &amp; Prosperity Committee June 2023 13 June 2024</p>	<p>Further report to be brought back to Committee</p>	

575	Community & Wellbeing	31.07.23	Councillor Creighton & Councillor Moore	<p>That this council notes that the number of households with homelessness status on the social housing waiting list across NI has increased from 12,431 to 26,310 households between 31 March 2013 and 31 March 2023, an increase of 111.7%; notes the enormous strain the homelessness system is under with the number of households in temporary accommodation at unprecedented levels; agrees that this council has a role to play in preventing homelessness in this borough alongside other organisations and bodies in the Public, Statutory and Voluntary sectors; calls on this Council to assess how it contributes to homelessness prevention through carrying out an audit of its services; and requests that Officers bring back a report detailing the homelessness prevention work currently supported as well as how the Council's community planning function can further support homelessness prevention work in the local area</p>	<p>Council August 2023 Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee September 2023</p>	<p>Officers considering report to be brought back to September 2024 C&amp;W Committee</p>	
	Environment		Alderman Adair, Councillor Edmund & Councillor Kerr	<p>That Council task officers to bring back a report on the costing to install signage identifying the townlands of Ballyblack and Kirkistown and that officers are tasked to bring forward proposals to incorporate townland signage across our Borough.</p>	<p>Council August 2023 Environment Committee September 2023</p>		

585	Community & Wellbeing		Alderman Adair, Councillor Edmund & Councillor Kerr	That Council recognise the value of our Beaches and coastal environment to our residents and tourists alike note the new DEARA regulations for the cleaning and maintenance of our beaches and task officers to bring forward a report on cleaning and maintaining our beaches on a proactive basis in line with the new DEARA regulations to ensure our beaches continue to be a clean, safe, attractive and well-managed coastal environments.	Council October 2023 Environment Committee November 2023 Community & Wellbeing Committee January 2024	Officers working on report to C&W Committee in January 2025. Further report requested being considered by officers with a report to future C&W Committee	
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588	Environment		Councillor Wray & Alderman Smith	<p>That this council asks officers to include the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter (owned by Council), located in Main Street, Greyabbey in the 2024/25 maintenance budget.</p> <p>Furthermore Council seeks an officer's report on the feasibility of Council painting the decorative Greyabbey lamp posts (in the ownership of DFI). This is a feature of the historic village, and we understand the current shabby condition impacts not only residents of the village, but the wider tourism and regeneration potential of this scenic conservation area.</p> <p>Amendment: That Council welcomes the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter located on Main Street, Greyabbey and tasks officers to ensure it is maintained to a high standard going forward.</p> <p>Furthermore, Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to ask for the decorative lamp posts on Main Street, Greyabbey, to be repainted to ensure they are maintained as a feature of this historic village; and writes to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to seek funding to deliver a mini public realm or streetscape project in</p>	<p>Council October 2023 Environment Committee November 2023</p>	<p>Amendment Agreed at Environment Committee. That Council welcomes the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter located on Main Street, Greyabbey and tasks officers to ensure it is maintained to a high standard going forward.</p> <p>Furthermore, Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to ask for the decorative lamp posts on Main Street, Greyabbey, to be repainted to ensure they are maintained as a feature of this historic village; and writes to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to seek funding to deliver a mini public realm or streetscape project in Greyabbey.</p>	
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586	Corporate Services	16.10.23	Councillor Cathcart & Councillor Martin	That this Council, further to recent positive discussions with landowners, agrees to reexamine the April 2014 decision of North Down Borough Council to accept a gift of open space at Ambleside, Bangor, which was never completed and tasks Council Officers to bring back a report looking at (i) acquiring the land and (ii) options around future uses for the land.	Council October 2023 Corporate Services Committee November 2023	Report to CSC. Agreed to proceed to acquisition subject to terms & discussions with vendor. July 2024 - Letter now sent to vendor. Further report to follow in September.	
595	Community & Wellbeing	16.11.23	Councillor McCracken & Councillor Blaney	This Council recognises the importance of Bangor's early Christian heritage in the story of our city, and its role in local tourism strategies. This Council requests that officers bring back a report which evaluates how the physical link between two main sites, Bangor Abbey and the North Down Museum, could be improved, to include the renovation and potential remodelling of Bell's Walk, with consideration for improved wayfinding and lighting. The	Council 29.11.2023	Officers considering report to be brought back to future C&W Committee	
598	Community & Wellbeing	20.11.23	Alderman Adair & Councillor Edmund	That this Council continues discussions with the Education Authority concerning the redevelopment of the play area fronting Victoria Primary School, Ballyhalbert (which is a shared facility between the school and public) and tasks officers to source external funding streams to enhance recreation & sports facilities for the village and surrounding area. Further, Council notes the poor condition of Ballyhalbert children's play park and tasks	Council 29.11.23 Community & Wellbeing January 2024	Officers considering report to be brought back to future C&W Committee	



599	Community & Wellbeing	21.11.23	Councillor Cathcart & Councillor Gilmour	<p>That this Council recognises the invaluable work undertaken by community/voluntary groups and organisations in this Borough in identifying and tackling the needs of communities and residents. The Council therefore, commits to undertaking a root and branch review of community development funding, arts and heritage, sports development and all other funding streams to ensure that it provides the most efficient, effective and responsive service to our</p>	<p>Council 20.12.23  Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee January 2024 and April 2024 and June 2024</p>	<p>Further updates report to follow. First working group was on 10th May 2024.  Grants transformation project already underway.</p>	
607	Corporate Services	13.01.24	Councillor Wray & Alderman Smith	<p>That this Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to once again express our deep concern at the poor state of roads across Ards and North Down.  Council further requests that DfI changes their policy in relation to the depth of potholes that are required to be repaired back to 20ml from the current 50ml in order to improve the quality and safety of our roads network.</p>	<p>Council 31.01.24  Corporate Services Committee June 2024</p>	<p>Update report to Corporate Services Committee in June 2024. Letter to DfI re 'weighted indicators' used to allocate funds. Further update to Corporate Committee September.</p>	
610	Community & Wellbeing	19.02.24	Alderman Adair & Councillor Edmund	<p>That Council note the increasing growing population in the village of Ballyhalbert and the current lack of public open spaces in the village and task officers to bring forward a report on options to provide a public green open space to promote health and wellbeing of the local community and further tasks officers to engage with developer to ensure the new play park planned for Saint Andrews is delivered in line with our Council play strategy.</p>	<p>Council 26.03.24  Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee March 2024</p>	<p>Officers considering report to be brought back to future C&amp;W Committee</p>	

613	Community & Wellbeing	04.03.24	Councillors Wray, Kerr, Boyle, Edmund, Aldermen Adair and McAlpine	Rescinding Notice of Motion - Playpark, Parsonage Road, Kircubbin	Council March 2024	Officers considering report to be brought back to future C&W Committee which will be combined with play strategy future recommendations following Council decision in June 2024.	
616	Environment	19.03.24	Councillor McCollum & Councillor Irwin	<p>That this Council recognises the significant opportunities which the redevelopment of Donaghadee Harbour could bring to the local economy in terms of leisure sailing and tourism and thus instructs officers to work with local groups to scope potential operational facilities which could enhance the offering in the Harbour and further brings back a feasibility report on the various options, including costings and possible funding streams.</p> <p>Further, that this Council recognises the issues associated with high winds and coastal change and reviews the original 2020 Harbour Study conducted by RPS including the necessity for an offshore breakwater and agrees to bring back a report in time to be presented to Council in September 2024, outlining the budget required to undertake this work, any key considerations, next steps and identify which stakeholders would need to be involved.</p>	<p>Council 26.03.24</p> <p>Environment Committee 03.04.24 Item xxxx</p>	April 2024 - Agreed, officers to bring back a report to Committee.	

619	Community & Wellbeing	30.04.24	Councillor Cochrane and Councillor Thompson	<p>That this Council notes with concern the temporary closure of Groomsport Tennis Courts due to issues around the safety of the playing surface. Further to this Council tasks officers to bring back a report on Tennis Court maintenance throughout the Borough and will commit to ensuring all our Tennis Court facilities are properly maintained and are fully accessible to all. Council will also promote the use of Tennis facilities in the Borough as we approach the spring/summer season.</p>	<p>Council 29.05.24 Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee June 2024</p>	<p>Officers considering report to be brought back to future C&amp;W Committee.</p>	
620	Community & Wellbeing	05.03.24	Councillor Ashe & Councillor Morgan	<p>That this council recognises the importance of ensuring that our parks and open spaces are inclusive and accessible to those with speech, language, and communication needs and that it recognises the positive role of communication boards in achieving this. That it commits to working with relevant organisations to bring back a report regarding communication boards considering, but not limited to, the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How communication boards would integrate with the required existing signage;</li> <li>• Identifying possible locations for the communication boards, such as a specific Tier of park; and</li> <li>• An indicative budget.</li> </ul>	<p>Council 29.05.24 Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee June 2024</p>	<p>Officers considering report to be brought back to future C&amp;W Committee</p>	

623	Corporate Services	14.5.24	Councillor Gilmour & Councillor Martin	8th May 2025 will be 80 years since VE Day- the official end of the Second World War in Europe. This council recognises the significance of this occasion and tasks officers to bring forward a report outlining potential ways this historic anniversary can be commemorated. Including any national plans for beacon lighting and with the council working with local people and local community groups to look at holding fitting events to mark this occasion so that a budget can be included in the next rate setting process.	Council 29.05.24 Corporate Services Committee 18.06.24 Item 17.2	June 2024 - Agreed, officers to bring back a report to Committee. Report will be at September CSC.	
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<p>624</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>	<p>20.05.24</p>	<p>Councillor Kendal, Councillor McRandal and Alderman Graham</p>	<p>This Council notes that, subsequent to submission of a Notice of Motion in 2017, Council agreed to provide funding to assist in the building of a new war memorial in Conlig village; and to liaise with, and assist, the Conlig War Memorial Project Group in their efforts to build a monument to the seventeen men who are known to have lost their lives in World War I.</p> <p>This Council also notes that a proposal and draft design is to be submitted by The Conlig War Memorial Group, and that the group have raised funds via donations and fundraising events, to the value of £8,000 towards this project.</p> <p>This Council therefore reiterates its commitment to financial and practical support for the Conlig war memorial project, tasking Officers to bring back a report exploring costs of planning permission, site ownership transfer, and any associated legal fees, that will be required to enable the memorial to be completed and installed.</p> <p>Furthermore, Council agrees to add the Conlig Memorial to the existing list of war memorials across the Borough that are maintained by Ards and North Down Borough Council.</p>	<p>Council 29.05.24 Corporate Services Committee 18.06.24 Item 17.1</p>	<p>June 2024 - Agreed, officers to bring back a report to Committee. Report at August Council.</p>	
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625	Environment	21.05.24	Alderman Adair and Councillor Edmund	That Council tasks Officers to bring forward urgent proposals for ground maintenance to address the poor and unkept condition of Millisle Beach Park in order to ensure the area is clean tidy and well kept to welcome visitors to the Kite Festival to be hosted in Millisle by the Ards Peninsula village partnership on August 26th. Further Council bring forward in report on actioning repairs to disability access to Millisle and Portavogie Beaches following recent storm damage.	Council 26.06.24 Item 15.1 Council 31.07.24 Item 15	Amended and agreed at July Council that Council proceed with the above-mentioned works at a cost of approximately £13,000 and further Council write to NIEA to request a site meeting to discuss the need to repair access to beaches at Cloughey, Millisle and Portavogie. Heard and Agreed to adopt Notice of Motion at Council meeting 26.06.24	
626	Corporate Services	13.06.24	Alderman Brooks and Councillor Chambers	That the Council, following the 80th anniversary of D-Day, recognises the service of US regiment(s) stationed in Donaghadee and our Borough prior to D-Day and tasks officers to bring a report back looking at ways in which our Borough could provide a lasting memory to them.	Council 26.06.24 Item 15.2	Referred to Corporate Services Committee for hearing at September 2024 committee.	

**From:** TEO CGB Requests <[corporategovernancebranch@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:corporategovernancebranch@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 15, 2024 4:31 PM  
**To:** TEO CGB Requests <[corporategovernancebranch@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:corporategovernancebranch@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** TEO Equality and Human Rights <[EqualityandHumanRights@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:EqualityandHumanRights@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Consultation on The Executive Office Budget Allocation for 2024-2025 - Equality Impact Assessment, Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Children's Rights Impact Assessment

Good Afternoon

We are contacting you as a TEO consultee in respect of Equality matters.

The Executive Office (TEO) has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment, Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Children's Rights Impact Assessment on the Department's budget allocation for 2024-2025.

The Department is committed to seeking the views of those who are affected by the decisions of its budget outcomes. We are keen to hear from individuals and organisations about their views on the equality and good relations implications of the decisions being made and about any mitigations that the Department could put in place. We are also keen to hear comments on the Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Children's Rights Impact Assessment. Questions 8 and 9 of the Citizen Space Survey relates to these documents.

To see the documents and to provide your comments please click here: [Consultation on the Executive Office Budget Allocation 2024- 2025 - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#).

The Department will consult for a 12-week period. The Department will particularly encourage responses within the initial four weeks of the consultation period. Views received during this time will be used to inform the Department's internal reallocations of funds to its business areas within TEO and its ALBs, as well as bids and allocations.

Responses received between Week 5 and Week 12 of the consultation will be used to consider further mitigation measures, to inform in-year budget reallocation processes, and to direct any additional funding (or further reductions) that emerge over the course of the financial year, such as during later Monitoring rounds.

To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where there is a need and it is reasonably practicable to do so. Where the exact request cannot be met, we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided. Please contact: [corporategovernancebranch@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:corporategovernancebranch@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk) if you require assistance.

Best Regards

The Executive Office