

August 30th, 2024

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Thursday, 5th September 2024 at 7:00 pm** in **Hybrid - Church Street, Newtownards & via Zoom.**

Agenda

Agenda

[Agenda P&P 5.9.24.pdf](#)

Page 1

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

Reports for Approval

3. Events Grants Review/And Events and Festival Fund Review Report

Report attached

[3.0 AND Events and Festivals Fund Review report \(AMcC further SM amends\).pdf](#)

Page 4

[3. Appendix 1 Tourism Events and Festivals Fund 2526 Guidance notes.pdf](#)

Page 8

[3. Appendix 2 Tourism Events and Festivals application 25.26.pdf](#)

Page 29

4. Attendance at Tourism Trade Shows

Report attached

[4.0 Attendance at Tourism and Travel Expos 2025-28 Report.pdf](#)

Page 43

[4.1 Appendix 1 List of potential Travel Trade and Consumer Shows.pdf](#)

Page 46

5. Ards and Bangor Business Awards 2024-25

Report attached

[5.0 Ards and Bangor Business Awards V2.pdf](#)

Page 48

Reports for Noting

6. Visit Belfast 12 Month Overview 2023/24

Report attached

[6.0 Visit Belfast 12 Month Overview Report 2023_4.pdf](#)

Page 50

7. Completion of Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Scheme

Report attached

[!\[\]\(c507f772dba2b921f86777f01218e570_img.jpg\) *7. Completion of AND Covid Recovery Revitalisation Scheme.pdf*](#) *Page 54*

[!\[\]\(4729e517bc6a7cd81c8025b9646574fb_img.jpg\) *7.1 Post Project Evaluation Covid Recovery Revitalisation Programme.pdf*](#) *Page 62*

8. Update on Village Plan Engagement Process

Report attached

[!\[\]\(cbe2492b119e39e02a1dab2af4a4b296_img.jpg\) *8. Update on Village Plan Engagement Process.pdf*](#) *Page 124*

9. Prosperity Directorate Budgetary Control Report - July 2024

Report attached

[!\[\]\(5361750c22c4e047a52f4eac1ec2d4cc_img.jpg\) *9. Prosperity Directorate Budgetary Control Report - July 2024.pdf*](#) *Page 129*

10. Place Directorate Budgetary Control Report - July 2024

Report attached

[!\[\]\(0d5ec72f61334709c3fc9450209b754f_img.jpg\) *10. Place Directorate Budgetary Control Report - July 2024.pdf*](#) *Page 132*

11. Response to Kircubbin Harbour Deputation

Report attached

[!\[\]\(2bae76de5ebbd5c4d7d47162f1673734_img.jpg\) *11. Response to Kircubbin Harbour Deputation.pdf*](#) *Page 135*

12. Comber Gap Sites

Report attached

[!\[\]\(28f72b996fc97883dfd9d4e8b1b16b4e_img.jpg\) *12. Comber Gap Sites.pdf*](#) *Page 138*

13. Go Succeed Update August 2024

Report attached

[!\[\]\(c15650232aa6660c9deb34f3b82dcb72_img.jpg\) *13.0 Go Succeed Update August 2024 V2.pdf*](#) *Page 140*

14. Notice of Motion

14.1. 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.





15. Any Other Notified Business

***** IN CONFIDENCE *****

Report for Approval

16. Belfast Region City Deal and Bangor Waterfront Update



Report attached

 16. BRCD and Bangor Waterfront Update.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
 16.1 App 1 - BRCD Annual Report 2023-24.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
 16.2 Appendix 2 - BRCD Council Panel Minutes May24.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
 16.3 Appendix 3 - BRCD Key Risks.pdf	<i>Not included</i>

Reports for Noting

17. Bangor Marina Q1 Report April to June 2024

Report attached

 17.0 Bangor Marina Q1 Report Apr - Jun 2024.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
 17.1 Appendix 1 Bangor Marina Quarter 1 Report 2024-2025.pdf	<i>Not included</i>

18. Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Update Report September 2024

Report attached

 18.0 Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Update - September 2024.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
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ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

29 August 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Place and Prosperity Committee of the Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards, on **Thursday 5 September 2024** commencing at **7.00pm**.

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough
Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest

Reports for Approval

3. Events Grants Review/And Events and Festival Fund Review Report (Report attached)
4. Attendance at Tourism Trade Shows (Report attached)
5. Ards and Bangor Business Awards 2024-25 (Report attached)

Reports for Noting

6. Visit Belfast 12 Month Overview 2023/24 (Report attached)
7. Completion of Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Scheme (Report attached)
8. Update on Village Plan Engagement Process (Report attached)
9. Prosperity Directorate Budgetary Control Report - July 2024 (Report attached)
10. Place Directorate Budgetary Control Report - July 2024 (Report attached)
11. Response to Kircubbin Harbour Deputation (Report attached)
12. Comber Gap Sites (Report attached)

13. Go Succeed Update - August 2024 (Report attached)

14. Notice of Motion

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15. Any Other Notified Business

ITEMS 16 - 18 *IN CONFIDENCE*****

Reports for Approval (In Confidence)

16. Belfast Region City Deal and Bangor Waterfront Update (Report attached)

Reports for Noting (In Confidence)

17. Bangor Marina Q1 - April to June 2024 (Report attached)

18. Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Update - September 2024 (Report attached)

MEMBERSHIP OF PLACE AND PROSPERITY COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)

Alderman Adair	Councillor Hollywood
Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Councillor Kennedy
Alderman McDowell	Councillor McCollum
Councillor Ashe (Vice Chair)	Councillor McCracken
Councillor Blaney	Councillor McKimm
Councillor Creighton	Councillor McLaren
Councillor Edmund	Councillor Smart
Councillor Gilmour (Chair)	Councillor Thompson

Unclassified

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ITEM 3**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	05 September 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity and Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Tourism and Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	19 August 2024
File Reference	TO/EV105
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	AND Events and Festivals Fund Review
Attachments	Appendix 1 - AND Tourism Events and Festivals Fund Guidance Appendix 2 - AND Tourism Events and Festivals Fund Application Form

1 Background

In October 2022, as part of the agreed Council decision to test a single Events and Festivals Grant Scheme following adoption of the Borough Events Strategic Direction (2021-26), the Community and Culture and Tourism Services progressed a shared scheme entitled 'AND Events and Festivals Fund'. The Fund was advertised in January 2023 for events and festivals taking place 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024. A second year of the Fund is currently in 'delivery'.

2 Current position

The application process, delivery and drawing down of the funding by the event and festival organisers is now complete for the full year 2023/24. Outputs for large and medium grants (Tranche 1) were presented to Place and Prosperity Committee in June

Not Applicable

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2024. Outputs for neighbourhood and local grants were reported to Community and Wellbeing Committee, and DfC in line with the required monitoring and evaluation process.

All organisers received officer support via the dissemination of grants against eligibility criteria, an information session pre the Fund release, 1:1 support, as relevant, during the application process, access to the AND Events Toolkit, event delivery support on safety and marketing and post application feedback to successful and unsuccessful applicants.

A mid-point review was conducted by officers in summer 2023 to identify improvements and address difficulties encountered by applicants, followed by a final review conducted in summer 2024 with the scope detailed below:

- Assessment against purpose and objectives of a shared community and tourism Events and Festivals Fund
- The administration process for applicants
- The administration process for officers
- The available budget for the AND Events and Festivals Fund

3 The purpose and objectives of the AND Events and Festivals Fund

The purpose of the scheme was to make the process efficient for organisers and Council, and to develop capacity of the organisers during the process. Objectives included delivering on a range of outputs relating to economic and social return.

4 Findings of Review

There have been many positive outcomes from bringing the Community and Tourism teams together to deliver and test AND Events and Festivals Fund. These include increased shared knowledge, the development of guidance and the application forms, shared expertise available on advice and guidance issued to applicants, shared management of applicant queries and Letters of Offer and shared scoring panels during assessment.

There has, however, been a range of difficulties identified in relation to achieving the objectives:

- Difficulty in assessing economic outputs to the borough beyond the number of attendees attending all events;
- Combined application form posing challenge to complete by some organisations;
- Attempts to 'simplify' required information to assess the medium/large events potentially leading to challenges regarding the assessment of grants of a higher value;
- Applicants for smaller community events/festivals have identified barriers in terms of bureaucracy i.e. form completion;
- It has been concluded that a more detailed application is required for the higher grant funded events and festivals;
- Clashes regarding identification of ideal timeframe for opening of the application process to deal with both tourism and community proposals;

Not Applicable

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- Frustrations and uncertainty associated with DfC budget having a match requirement, leading to challenges for those event organisers that require a longer lead in time in planning or whose events occur early in the season i.e. April onwards (those that need surety on their budget status);
- Significant oversubscription to the fund, then affected by DfC funding, and resultant percentage reductions across all applications.

5 Conclusion and the way forward

Further to review by officers it has been concluded that the Fund is split into two clearly separate elements – one for Tourism and one for Community, but with the ‘AND Events and Festivals Funds’ still being promoted via one process.

Tourism events and festivals that meet economic aims with additional social outcomes, will be managed by Tourism, whilst those Community events and festivals that meet social/cultural aims, will be managed by Community Development.

Each fund will determine its release timeline, but it is anticipated that those events that previously applied with economic aim and tourism outputs will be launched in autumn 2024, and those that previously applied with social aim and community outputs (to include large/medium, neighbourhood and local tiers) will be launched in the new year.

The guidance for each fund will be adapted accordingly, but an attempt to retain similar organisation information requirements will be replicated across both. A similar approach will be taken for the application forms, acknowledging the appropriate level of information required to be gathered to meet each event tier’s funding objectives.

Any applicant would be advised they can only receive funding for **one** event/festival from **either** of the two AND Events and Festivals Funds (Tourism Events and Festivals Fund and Community Events and Festivals Fund). It is also proposed that the tiers of funding remain within the previous same ranges.

Community Development will also release its YouTube video on guidance to support all applicants so that access to the information session is not restricted, making the process fair and equitable to all potential applicants.

A joint information session would be managed by the Community and Tourism officers to advise and guide organisers on the slightly amended process. Additional support would be offered by way of the promotion of the Events Toolkit, the Festival Forum (for those relevant) and bespoke advice as required.

Shared support from both Service Units on management and administration of each fund will continue as required for panel assessment and advisory support.

Subject to Council approval of the draft Grants Policy (detailed below), Tourism Events Service has revised the application form and guidance for the Tourism Events and Festivals Fund, which involves minimal change from a screening perspective and therefore previous screening applies. See Appendix 1 and 2.

Not Applicable

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Subject to Council approval of the Scheme, officers anticipate releasing the Tourism Events and Festivals Fund late autumn as noted in the report, with budgets subject to the normal rates setting process.

6 Budget Details

The Tourism events fund will be funded by Council, subject to the Rates setting process – total £80,000.

Total budget for Community events and festivals will remain dependent upon securing funding from DfC - £95,000 (inclusion of £31,600 DfC funding).

It is anticipated the following budgets, totalling £175,000 would be available subject to the rates setting process and confirmation of DfC funding.

AND Events and Festivals Funds			
Title		Guidance attendee/participant numbers	Support available
Tourism Events and Festivals Fund		Attracts over 500 attendees and participants	Up to £15,000
Community Festivals Fund	Local events	Attracts up to 500 attendees and participants	Up to £1,000
	Neighbourhood	Attracts between 501 and 2,000 attendees and participants	Between £1,000 and £4,000
	Medium and Large events and festivals	Attracts over 1,500 attendees and participants	Between £4,001 and £15,000

7 Updated Grants Policy and Digitalisation of Grants System

Further to work by the Grants Management Working Group a revised Grants Policy will be presented to Corporate Services Committee for approval on 10 September 2024. This represents Phase 1 of a process to review all associated grant processing across Council and to update the policy. Phase 2 is underway in liaison with the Council's Transformation Unit to procure an appropriate digital platform to manage and administer grant applications accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the above report and:

1. Agrees to amend delivery of the shared Events and Festivals Scheme into two separate Funds, namely Community Festivals Fund and Tourism Events and Festivals Fund, subject to the rates setting process, and as detailed; and
2. Approves the Tourism Events and Festivals Fund Scheme as detailed in the report.



**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL
TOURISM EVENTS AND FESTIVALS FUND 2025/26**

GUIDANCE NOTES

**FOR TOURISM EVENTS AND FESTIVALS
taking place from 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026**

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Tourism Events and Festivals Fund 2025-2026

Closing Date **tbc**

PLEASE NOTE LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Background

Ards and North Down Borough Council supports Events and Festivals financially via its Grants programme. Previously, Council tested the amalgamation of the Tourism Events Grants Scheme and Community Festivals Fund into the AND Events and Festivals Fund. It has been determined that to ensure proportionate and relevant information is requested from applicants, the Fund will be available via two AND Events and Festivals Funds.

There are two funds 'the AND Events and Festivals Funds' available for organisations/businesses that deliver events and festivals open to the public – namely the **Tourism Events and Festivals Fund** and the Community Events and Festivals Fund (subject to annual budget from the Rates setting process). The aim of each Fund is specific to relevant Council strategic priorities and outcomes.

Each organisation/group can only receive funding for **one** event/festival from **either** of the two AND Events and Festivals Funds (Tourism Events and Festivals Fund and Community Events and Festivals Fund).

To ensure your organisation is applying to the Fund which is applicable to your specific event/festival, please ensure you review the Grants Assistance page on the Council website [Grants - Ards and North Down Borough Council](#) or seek assistance by emailing tourismgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

The **Tourism Events and Festivals Fund 2025/26** will be delivered by the Tourism Service (Events) of Ards and North Down Borough Council. The Fund has one open call per year, subject to budget.

The mission of the Tourism Service is to facilitate, sustainably grow and promote the tourism offering in the borough to benefit our businesses, communities and visitors, as well as grow the capacity of the sector.

We aim to increase the overall NI visitor market share and economic return to the Borough to meet targets and outcomes set within [Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development](#) and [The Big Plan](#) and Corporate Plan 2024-29 **LINK**. Supporting Tourism events and festivals is integral to grow tourism and assist meet Council priorities and outcomes.

Aim of the Tourism Events and Festivals Fund:

The aim of the Fund is to provide grant aid for tourism events and festivals which can demonstrate a positive economic impact within Ards and North Down by attracting additional visitors and spend, contributing to a positive image of the Borough among visitors and residents.

The Tourism Events and Festivals Fund is not a core funder of events and applicants must be able to demonstrate how they will contribute financially to the delivery of the event/festival. No more than 60% of total costs will be grant aided by Council.

Objectives of the Tourism Events and Festivals Fund:

1. To enhance the visitor experience of the Borough;
2. To support events/festivals that increase local tourism spend by attracting attendees and participants, especially those from outside the Borough;
3. To support events/festivals that have the potential to encourage attendees and participants to stay overnight within the Borough;
4. To support the development and capacity of the local events sectors.

The grant available to successful applicants through the Tourism Events and Festivals Fund is:

AND Tourism Events and Festivals Fund	
Guidance attendee/participant numbers	Support available
Attracts over 500 attendees/participants	Up to £15,000

Eligibility Criteria

Applications will be accepted from

- Appropriately constituted not for profit organisations, including Limited Companies and Charities (a constituted organisation is one that has a simple set of rules to help make it clear to everyone involved what you intend to do and how you intend to operate).

Application must be for an ***event or festival** that meets the necessary criteria below.

- Must be delivered in the Borough of Ards and North Down, between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026.
- Must be able to demonstrate the ability to increase tourism/local spend in Ards and North Down by promoting to, at a minimum, a Northern Ireland wide audience.
- Must be open to the general public, whether for free or paid-for elements.

We require all applicants to enclose the following documents with your application. If not included the application will not be scored.

- Copy of Constitution or Memorandum of Association
- Most recent AGM Minutes / Inaugural minutes

- List of Office Bearers
- Copy of most recent audited Annual Accounts
- Most recent Bank Statement

Should your organisation be recently formed or not been operational for long enough to have a set of accounts, please indicate this within the declaration within the application. In this instance, we require to see a bank statement showing the organisation name or proof of the account being opened.

***An event or festival** is defined as a one-off event or festival, or a series of related events delivered that must take place over a maximum of an 8-week period with no significant breaks and have a distinctive theme. A theme is defined as topic or subject that runs through your entire event/festival such as maritime, art, or music etc.

Organisations/groups can only apply for funding through **one** application, for **one** event/festival from the Tourism Events and Festivals Fund. This is a competitive grants scheme and applications will be determined on the basis of merit and need.

Ineligible Applications

Applications will **not** be accepted from the following:

- Individuals or sole traders;
- Trade or professional conferences/conventions;
- Organisations not legally established in the UK;
- Events and festivals run on the same date as a Council run event that require the use of Council equipment/assets;
- Events/festivals not compliant with the Council's aims and objectives

And for the following activity:

- Ongoing operational costs;
- Retrospective events or activities undertaken, or items purchased outside the specified award period (events/festivals which have already taken place or where expenditure was incurred before a grant award was confirmed);
- Events/festivals or aspects of the event/festival outside the Borough;
- Events or activity which conflicts with any Council run project, event or activity;
- Any event/festival that does not foster Section 75, promote positive attitudes, equality of opportunity and good relations including political opinion, religious belief or racial group
- Events/festivals that are substantially fundraising vehicles, whether for the event organisation itself or to raise funds for transmission to a third party.

General principles which apply to the Tourism Events and Festivals Fund

- Applications to this fund will be open to all events and festivals that can meet the eligibility criteria and aims and objectives of the fund, irrespective of whether they are established or emerging events/festivals.

- Event/Festivals will be required to demonstrate a positive and measurable impact on the local economy.
- Events/Festivals are encouraged to apply to other sources of support or if appropriate, maximise income through ticket sales and sponsorship to add value to the event or festival. They should develop a plan to improve their sustainability and reduce reliance on public funding.
- If an application is successful in receiving funding, the award must be spent on eligible event/festival related costs and within one year.
- Events/Festivals should contribute to the promotion of a positive image of the Borough and organisers must take steps to avert anti-social behaviour.
- Organisations in receipt of public funding must comply with all statutory obligations regarding the safe delivery of and access to their events/festivals
- It is a prime responsibility of Government to ensure the proper and efficient use of and the accountability of public monies. To this end, festivals will be required to provide relevant supporting information when applying for funding.
- All events/festivals successful in receiving funding through the Tourism Events and Festivals Fund must submit an Event management Plan and Risk Assessment before the event/festival using the [Event Management Toolkit](#) template.

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THE APPLICATION PROCESS - GUIDANCE

Ards and North Down Borough Council wish to support quality, unique events and festivals that can demonstrate a positive economic impact.

The following guidance will assist completion of the application form. Please refer to guidance for each question. It is not enough to repeat what is written in the guidance within the answers of your application. It is important to be realistic and open in your responses as, if successful, some conditions within your Letter of Offer will be based on information in your application. You must include all relevant information within the required word limit.

Only information provided in the answers within the application form will be scored, no other information will be taken into consideration. Scores will be attributed as indicated.

SECTION 1A: YOUR EVENT/FESTIVAL - INFORMATION

Please answer this section fully and provide accurate details about your event/festival to include event/festival title, start and end date venue and location (including any specific event dates during the event/ festival period). This section is not scored.

Events and Festivals should endeavour not to run on the same date as a Council delivered event. Check the dates and times of Council run events here by contacting tourismgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk . You are asked to confirm you have checked by ticking the box.

If your event/festival requires use of Council land, this must be booked at least 3 months in advance of your event/festival to enable approval by Council. To apply for permission please contact the Compliance Section, landrequests@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk or telephone 028 91824075.

Road Closures

You should be aware that if a road is to be closed as part of your event/festival, that appropriate permission must be applied for. To seek further advice and apply for Road Closure permission please contact the Licensing and Regulatory Services Section, licensingandregulatoryservicesteam@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk Or telephone 0300 013 3333.

SECTION 1B: YOUR EVENT/FESTIVAL - THE DETAIL

1.1 Please provide a description of your event/festival, including the outline programme (for each day as applicable) (scored 0-4) max. 400 words.

What will an attendee see/experience? What are the timings for the event/festival, e.g. start and finish times or timings of the different elements, Does the event/festival have a Unique Selling Point (USP) e.g. does it use performers from the Borough? Is it unique to the area? Does the event/festival utilise the natural and cultural assets of

the Borough or tell a story about local historical or heritage sites. Can attendees get involved in the event/festival in terms of learning new skills or engaging in arts and crafts or a leisure activity? Does the theme/subject of the event/festival support positive community involvement and promote positive attitudes for those with a disability or mental and physical health? Is there a running theme throughout the duration of the festival/event eg music, maritime, art etc.

1.2 How does your event/festival increase attendee and visitor spend locally? E.g. daily spend on activities, meals, bednights, visiting other attractions (scored 0-4) max. 400 words.

How does the event/festival encourage attendees and generate local economic benefit for the Borough? What opportunities will there be for attendees to spend money? Will the event/festival promote the Borough bringing additional attendees/participants and spend.

1.3 How does running your event/festival contribute to additional spend in the borough? E.g. partnerships with local businesses, transport, use of local suppliers? (scored 0-4) max. 400 words.

This could include using local suppliers for the delivery of the event/festival, encouraging attendees and participants to spend locally, have you engaged with local shops and have partnerships with local businesses, e.g., you show your event/festival ticket to get a discount, are you working with transport providers. You must clearly state how you hope to achieve this and give specific examples and data as available or relevant. Please list all relevant to your event/festival and explain how the event/festival does this.

1.4 Will your event/festival attract participant bednights? Y/N (not scored).

Does your event/festival give potential for participants to stay overnight? If yes, you will be required to provide further information on this in Section 3 of the application.

1.5 Will your event/festival attract attendee bednights? Y/N (not scored).

Does your event/festival give potential for attendees to stay overnight? If yes, you will be required to provide further information on this in Section 3 of the application.

1.6 Outline the measures you have taken for the safety and welfare of attendees and participants at your event/festival. (scored 0-4) max. 400 words.

Please include the facilities at the location, the provision of toilets, seating and standing areas, a selection of food providers, ease and location of car parking and anything else you do at your event/festival to support the safety and welfare of all.

1.7 Outline the measures you have taken to ensure your event/festival is one that is accessible and inclusive. Please refer to additional information on Disability and Inclusion in Annex A of the Guidance Notes. (scored 0-4) max. 400 words.

How have you ensured all section 75 groups are able to attend your event/festival? Are there viewing areas for disabled attendees? Are there wheelchair accessible toilets, disabled parking areas? How do you promote this? If you have any policies in place to ensure your event/festival is accessible and inclusive to all, please indicate these in this answer.

1.8 Please detail how your event/festival can be developed in future years in terms of audience growth and activities for attendees OR If this is a first-time or one-off event/festival, how this event/festival will attract attendees? (scored 0-4) max. 300 words.

How do you intend to attract a new audience. Have you added new elements to your event/festival? Have you extended days, perhaps marketed to further afield to develop your audience?

OR

How will you market your event/festival to your target audience?

1.9 Does your event/festival provide any opportunities for volunteers? If yes, please include the number of volunteers your event/festival will recruit, what roles are available and if there are capacity building and/or training opportunities for these volunteers (scored 0-4) max. 300 words.

What are your volunteer roles and what training will be provided e.g. marshalling, first aid, Welcome Host training? How many volunteers will be recruited and how do you aim to do this?

1.10 Please detail what measures you will take to protect the environment during your event/festival. For example, consider waste, hazardous substances, travel to and from your event/festival. (scored 0-4) max. 300 words.

For example, environmental sustainability, waste, how does your event/festival promote sustainable transport such as bike parks, any partnership with Translink, park and ride services etc, encourage the use of public transport? How are you managing waste disposal/storage and recycling?

SECTION 2: BUDGET ***(scored 0-4, weighted x2)***

The Event/Festival should demonstrate the ability to obtain financial support from other sources. This leverage of other funding will support the long-term sustainability of your event/festival as Ards and North Down Borough Council is not a core funder of events/festivals.

Organisers may apply for a percentage of total event/festival costs. This percentage must be made up of eligible costs.

Applicants may apply for up to 60% of total event/festival costs. The remaining 40% can include in-kind support but at least 20% must be made up from other funders, sponsorship/ticket sales/own funds etc.

In-kind support is a non-cash contribution of a good or service, provided instead of cash, that is necessary to deliver the event/festival.

In-kind contributions can include:

- Staff time: You can calculate this by using the minimum wage and multiplying by the number of hours worked.
- Donated equipment/goods: How much the equipment or goods would cost to purchase or hire
- Services donated from other companies or organisations: How much this service would cost if you were to pay for it
- Use of premises or office space for the event/festival

Table 2.1 - Projected Expenditure

Please detail:

- Itemised Event/Festival Expenditure e.g. Marketing and advertising costs, performers fees, road closure fees etc.
- In kind support must be included in both the expenditure and income tables.
- Please be as accurate as possible

Table 2.2 - Projected Income

Please provide a realistic budget breakdown for your event/festival, to include:

- Where is your Income coming from - Please indicate where you intend to secure your income from e.g. your own funds, sponsorship, other grant (N.B. other Council funding cannot be used in conjunction with this application) income from ticket sales, in kind support etc.

- Please **DO NOT** include the request from the Tourism Events and Festivals Fund at this stage.
- Offered/Awaiting Confirmation – for each source of income please advise if the funding is secured, awarded or if you are awaiting confirmation and if so when do you to expect confirmation.
- In kind support must be in both the expenditure and income tables.
- Please be as accurate as possible.

Table 2.3 – Summary

- Total projected expenditure (Table 2.1).
- Total projected income (Table 2.2).
- Event/Festival expenditure minus event/festival income (Table 2.1 minus Table 2.2).
- The Total Grant sought from Council.

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Completed Example of Table 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.

Table 2.1 – Projected Expenditure

EXPENDITURE	£
Marketing (advertising and banners)	1,500
Band	500
Children's activities	1,500
Traffic Management (Cone hire and signs)	700
Bins/recycling	375
Portaloos	450
Staging and sound	900
Volunteer refreshments	300
In kind - staff hours	1,500
Insurance	300
In kind - kids giveaways	300
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	8,325

Table 2.2 – Projected Income

INCOME	£	Confirmed? Y/N
Cash sponsorship from local café	150	Y
Entry fees	1,100	N
Stall holders	100	N
Own funds	500	Y
In kind – staff hours	1,500	Y
In kind – kid's giveaways	300	Y
TOTAL INCOME	3,650	

Table 2.3 – Summary

Total Projected Expenditure:	£8,325
Total projected income of event: (not including AND Tourism Events and Festivals Grant Request)	£3,650
Expenditure minus income	£4,675
Tourism Events and Festivals Grant Request	£4,675

The table below lists eligible and ineligible costs. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

Eligible Costs	Ineligible Costs
Event/Festival Costs (including entertainment/performer costs, equipment hire, venue hire/ security / Health and Safety/First Aid/ any reasonable adjustment requests under the DDA 1995	Bank Fees/Bank Charges/ Interest Charges/ Bank Commission / Tax and VAT Payments /Accountancy Fees /Corporation Tax
Marketing– Advertising / PR Activities / Advertising Promotional Material/ Media Monitoring / Promoter fee / Market Research/Event Evaluation/ any reasonable adjustment requests under the DDA 1995	Staff salaries / freelance fees / consultancy fees
Judges' Fees/Accommodation/Travel	Hospitality – The cost of alcohol cannot be claimed in any context/circumstance.
Road closures (including licence, stewarding/traffic management costs)	Capital Repayments /Capital Expenditure e.g. equipment such as cameras or computers etc
Bidding Costs (for clarification, please contact the Grants Team)	Hospitality (such as sponsors dinners etc) Alcohol cannot be claimed in any context.
Prize Awards and Trophies (NOT cash prizes)	Cash Payments/Transactions including Petty Cash
Administration Costs (excluding wages)	Legal Fees
Event/Festival Insurance	Membership Fees
Participants and volunteers catering (NO alcohol)	Charitable Donations
	Liquor Licences
	Prize Fund - Cash
	Event Management Fees
	Rates/ Fuel /Electricity/Rent / Phone Bills

SURPLUS

TBC TO BE MANAGED AS PER GRANTS POLICY TO BE APPROVED BY COUNCIL

SECTION 3: ATTENDEES AND PARTICIPANTS

3.1 Projected attendee and participant numbers and days they will attend the event/festival.

Please enter your attendee and participant numbers and the average days you project they will attend the event/festival in table 3.1.

Please provide a clear justification of how you have arrived at your figures above. (scored 0-4) max. 300 words.

For events/festivals that have taken place before, draw on past years to provide the justification/evidence for your estimates, for example:

- have you measured attendance at your event/festival in the past, via ticket sales (don't forget complimentary tickets) competition giveaways or police counts, clickers/drone footage?
- did you conduct surveys at previous events/festivals (please mention sample size, when survey took place etc)?

OR If your event/festival is a first time or one-off event/festival, please indicate how you will attract these totals (scored 0-4) max. 300 words.

If your event/festival is a first time or a one-off event/festival, you could benchmark against similar events/festivals to gauge the potential attendance for your event/festival. Take into consideration the capacity of the event/festival venue/site.

3.2 Participant numbers and roles and a number for each role (not scored).

A participant is someone there to run the event/festival or is part of the event/festival. Participants may include: performers/competitors, marshals, media/journalists, crew, production staff, volunteers

Please provide us with a list of expected participants and the roles they will take in the event/festival.

3.3 If your event/festival projects overnight stays, resulting in bednights, please complete the table below indicating the projected numbers. Please leave blank if no bednights are projected. (scored 0-4) max. 400 words.

If bednights will be achieved, please clarify if these are for attendees/and or participants, the projected number staying over and for how many nights and how these will be achieved e.g. participants attending from beyond Borough, marketing beyond borough and partnerships with local accommodation provider. You should give a **breakdown of numbers and types of bednights** in your response. The below table should assist you calculate the bednights total.

Type of accommodation	No. of visitor bednights	No. of participant bednights	Total
Commercial (hotel, GH, B&B, Self Catering)			
Registered camping/caravanning			
Family/friends			
Other (e.g. motorhomes)			

1 bednight = each attendee or participant who stays overnight in the borough.

If other category is used, you must clearly define the type and bednight calculation.

SECTION 4: MARKETING

(scored 0-4)

In **Section 4**, we ask how you intend to market your event/festival, within and outside of the Borough.

Please consider how your marketing materials will be made accessible to a range of disabled people and those whose first language is not English. **max 300 words**

Support from Ards and North Down Borough Council **must be** acknowledged. Grant recipients are required to:

- Acknowledge the Council's grant support in all press releases and publicity material including social media
- Include the following statement on all printed material "Supported by Ards and North Down Borough Council"

Where grant recipients do not comply with the Council's publicity requirements, 10% of the total grant awarded may be withheld.

Table 4.2

Please complete table 4.1 with details of how you plan to market your event/festival. Examples have been provided in the table and below.

Item/Activity

<p>Print Opportunities, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyers • Brochures • Billboards • Adshels • Telephone box advertising • Bus advertising 	<p>Paid for Advertising Opportunities, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press advertising • Magazine advertising • Television advertising • Radio advertising • Online advertising
<p>PR Opportunities, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases in newspapers • Photo opportunities • Speaking at launch events • Press releases in magazines • Radio interview • Television interview • Television coverage/programmes • Outside broadcasts 	<p>Online Opportunities, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook advertising • Twitter posts • Facebook posts • Blogs • Ezines • Website listing / banners

Quantity/Channel/Publication

If you are providing print materials such as flyers, posters etc, please indicate the quantity you will be printing.

For advertising, please let us know the publication/radio station/TV station etc. For example, press ad in the Chronicle, 20 second radio ad on Q Radio running over 2 weeks, TV ad on UTV over 2 weeks

Reach

This is the amount of people that will see/hear the advertising indicated and where. For example, a press ad in the Chronicle for 1 week, the reach could be 200,000 weekly readers throughout the Borough. Or Facebook posts for 3 weeks leading up to the event/festival, the reach could be 3,000 followers.

Paid for or NOT Paid for

Examples of Paid For marketing could be adverts on the radio/TV, sponsored Facebook posts, press ads.

Examples of Not Paid For marketing could include a press release that is sent to a number of publications, Facebook posts on the event/festival Facebook page, mentions on sponsors websites, adverts in free publications.

Example Table 4.2

Item/ Activity	Quantity/ Channel/ Publication	Reach (Within the Borough, NI, ROI, GB, EUROPE, REST OF WORLD)	Paid for or Not Paid for
Event Facebook page	Six posts on the event	Borough wide, (potential for further with shares) 1,200 likes/followers	Free – not paid
TV Advertising – 1 week of ads	UTV	NI wide	Paid (see expenditure in table 2.1)
Flyers	5000 copies	Will be distributed Borough wide and at Visitor Information Centres	Paid (see expenditure in table 2.1)
Sponsored Facebook ads	From 6 weeks before the event	Worldwide	Paid (see expenditure in table 2.1)

Table 4.3

Please include an estimated budget showing the breakdown of the Marketing costs. We would expect that a minimum of 10% be spent on marketing and PR.

Printed Materials	£300
Advertising Activity	£1,000
Online Activity (paid for)	£200
Overall estimated marketing budget:	£1,500
Budget % as part of overall estimated budget	18%

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**EVALUATION**

Following the closing date, applications will be assessed and scored according to the weighted criteria below.

Evaluation Panel:

Your application will be assessed by an assessment panel that will comprise of at least 3 officers of which one should be from the service delivering the grant. At least 2 other officers that have experience in administering grants will make up the panel.

Evaluation Criteria:

The answers to each of the questions above will be given a score out of 4 using the matrix detailed in the Table below. An economic calculator to calculate return on investment will also be completed using these answers which will also be scored out of 4.

Please note: weighting will be applied to the Finance Section only

Measure	Score
Excellent response that fully answers the question. Indicates an excellent response with detailed supporting evidence and no weaknesses	4
A good response to the question with good supporting evidence.	3
A response with reservations. Lacks convincing detail to demonstrate that the proposed response answers the question	2
An unacceptable response with serious reservations. Very limited detail to demonstrate that the proposed response answers the question.	1
The applicant failed to address the question.	0

A pass mark of **tbc%** has been set for the Tourism Events and Festivals Fund 25/26.

Oversubscription to the Fund

Where the amount of grant funding requested exceeds the available grant budget, all successful grants will be reduced by an equal percentage.

PLEASE NOTE: GRANT AWARDS UP TO £1,000 WILL NOT BE REDUCED.

DEADLINE

The Events and Festivals Fund will close at on **tbc Monday 2 December 2024 at 12noon**. Incomplete applications or those received after this time will NOT be considered.

Return to

Email (preferable) tourismgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

By post to: **Visitor Information Centre, Tower House, 34 Quay Street, Bangor, BT20 5ED.**

You are advised to encrypt emails that contain sensitive data in order to keep you and your personal information safe.

TIMETABLE

Scheme advertised	< insert date >
Scheme open	< insert date >
Scheme close	Tbc December 2024
Date of Assessment	December 2024
Award and regret letters issued	Mid-February 2025
Letter of acceptance received	Advised within timeline contained in Letter of Offer
Completion of grant period	31 March 2026
Claim to be submitted	Advised within timeline contained in Letter of Offer
Monitoring Form to be Submitted	within timeline contained in Letter of Offer

If your application is unsuccessful, you will be notified via email with the reasons clearly stated. You will be sent a copy of Council appeal procedure. Feedback on your application can be provided on written request. However, an appeal can only be made where an applicant can evidence that the process of assessment was not followed in accordance with the criteria detailed in the Guidance Notes.

The aim of the appeals process is to ensure a fair and transparent process for the assessment of grant applications. Grants will be assessed based on the criteria set out in the Guidance Notes.

Conditions

If your Application is successful, we will:

- arrange a meeting with Council officers to discuss and agree the **Letter of Offer** (LoO) conditions and our requirements for the evaluation of your event/festival. Evaluation expectations will be in line with the level of grant.
- send you a LoO confirming the amount of the award and detailing the conditions attached to the award. The Form of Acceptance within the LoO must be signed and returned within 4 weeks of the date printed on the LoO.
- You must provide appropriate insurance, risk assessments and an event management plan (EMP) **at least** 3 months before the start of your event/festival, or as soon as possible after receiving confirmation of a grant. Ards and North Down Borough Council has developed a Toolkit to assist in organising a safe and successful event/festival. The EMP template **MUST** be used if successful in receiving support. The toolkit and other relevant templates can be accessed at [Event Management Toolkit](#)

Monitoring

You should expect a visit from a Council officer during the event/festival who will observe/check that you are compliant with any conditions within your LoO.

When your event/festival is complete, we will provide templates for monitoring. These include:

- Attendee and participant numbers
- Lessons learned
- Marketing
- Budget
- Section 75 monitoring arrangements

Annex A

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SAFEGUARDING

Individuals and organisations working with children, young people and/or adults who may be vulnerable must have an existing policy that ensures good practice guidelines are followed.

You can adopt the Council's Safeguarding policy if your organisation does not have a policy in place by signing and returning the **Confirmation of Safeguarding arrangements** form at Appendix 1 of the Council's Safeguarding Policy.

This is available to download at: www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/about-the-Council/safeguarding.

The signed form should be returned along with your acceptance of the LoO.

DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) aims to ensure that disabled people are not treated less favourably than people who are not disabled. It covers access to goods, services, facilities, education and transport. This means that you have a duty to anticipate that disabled people will want to use your services and you should make changes accordingly to increase accessibility.

The DDA also requires employers not to discriminate against disabled people and to make reasonable adjustments for applications and in the workplace.

We expect all applicants to be familiar with the DDA and have made reasonable adjustments that aim to provide equality of access, dignity and choice.

SECTION 75 CATEGORIES

Section 75 categories are:

Religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, men and women generally, disability and dependents

TOOLKIT

Ards and North Down Borough Council have developed a Toolkit to assist in organising a safe and successful event/festival. The toolkit and other relevant templates can be accessed at [Event Management Toolkit](#)

CONTACTS

Email tourismgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

By post to: **Visitor Information Centre, Tower House, 34 Quay Street, Bangor, BT20 5ED.**

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

TOURISM EVENTS AND FESTIVALS FUND 2025/2026

APPLICATION FORM

**FOR TOURISM EVENTS AND FESTIVALS
taking place from 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026**

INTRODUCTION

Please answer each section fully and provide accurate details about your event/festival. Please read the Guidance Notes for further information on the Tourism Events and Festivals Fund and for specific advice on each question. **Applications must be completed in Arial font and size 12 only.** You must include all relevant information within the required word limit.

YOU AND YOUR ORGANISATION

Name of your Organisation, as it appears on your governing document or set of rules.

Please indicate your organisation type

- Constituted Community Group (Please see Guidelines for a definition)**
- Limited Company**
- Charity**

Please give Company/Charity Registration No.

Main Contact for your Organisation (this should be the person who can answer questions on your event/application form)

Name	
Position in Organisation	
Contact Address for correspondence	
Telephone Number	
E-mail address	
Website address for your organisation	

SECTION 1A: YOUR EVENT/FESTIVAL - INFORMATION

Event/Festival Name and Proposed Dates

What is the name of your event/festival?	
Start date [day/month/year]	
End date [day/month/year]	
Venue and Location of event/festival	

Have you confirmed this event/festival will not coincide with a Council delivered event
 Yes No

Will your event/festival require the use of Council Land? Yes No

If yes, please detail where _____

Please note that a separate booking **must** be completed to hire the Council Land via the Compliance Section of Ards and North Down Borough Council. Please see details in Guidance Notes.

Is the event/festival open to the general public (please tick) Yes No

Is this a new event/festival to Ards and North Down? Yes No

Is your event/festival free, ticketed or has elements of both?
 Free Ticketed Both

SECTION 1B – YOUR EVENT/FESTIVAL – THE DETAIL

1.1 Please provide a description of your event/festival including the outline programme (for each day as applicable) *max 400 words*.

1.2 How does your event/festival increase attendee and visitor spend locally? For example, daily spend on activities, meals, bednights, visiting other attractions *max 400 words*

1.3 How does running your event/festival contribute to additional spend in the borough? For example, partnerships with local businesses, transport, use of local suppliers *max 400 words*

1.4 Will your event/festival attract participant bednights? Y/N

1.5 Will your event attract/festival attendee bednights? Y/N

<p>1.6 Outline the measures you have taken for the safety and welfare of attendees and participants at your event/festival <i>max 400 words.</i></p>
Empty response area for 1.6
<p>1.7 Outline the measures you have taken to ensure your event/festival is one that is accessible and inclusive. Please refer to additional information on Disability and Inclusion in Annex A of the Guidance Notes <i>max 400 words.</i></p>
Empty response area for 1.7
<p>1.8 Please detail how your event/festival can be developed in future years in terms of audience growth and activities for attendees. OR If this is a first-time or one-off event/festival, how this event/festival will attract attendees? <i>max 300 words.</i></p>
Empty response area for 1.8
<p>1.9 Does your event/festival provide any opportunities for volunteers? If yes, please include the number of volunteers your event/festival will recruit, what roles are available and if there are capacity building and/or training opportunities for these volunteers <i>max 300 words.</i></p>
Empty response area for 1.9

--

1.10 Please detail what measures you will take to protect the environment during your event/festival. For example, consider waste, hazardous substances, travel to and from your event/festival *max 300 words.*

--

DRAFT

SECTION 2: BUDGET

The Event/Festival should demonstrate the ability to obtain financial support from other sources. This leverage of other funding will support the long-term sustainability of your event/festival as Ards and North Down Borough Council is not a core funder of events/festivals.

You may apply for up to 60% of your total event/festival costs. This 60% must be made up of eligible costs. The remaining 40% can include in-kind support but at least 20% must be made up from other funders, sponsorship/ticket sales/own funds.

Please refer to the Guidance Notes for information on calculating in-kind support, if applicable.

Event/Festival Budget:

Please detail all projected event/festival expenditure and income in the tables below. Please indicate where the income is coming from (e.g. ANDBC funding through this application, in-kind support, ticket income etc), if the income is confirmed or not, and what you propose the grant award will be used for, if successful.

Please add additional rows if needed.

A basic completed example of the tables below is included in the Guidance Notes.

Table 2.1 – Projected Expenditure

EXPENDITURE	£
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	

Table 2.2 – Projected Income

INCOME	£	Confirmed? Y/N

TOTAL INCOME		

Table 2.3 – Summary

Total projected expenditure:	£
Total projected income: (not including AND Tourism Events and Festivals Grant Request)	£
Expenditure minus income	£
Tourism Events and Festivals Grant Request:	£

DRAFT

SECTION 3: ATTENDEES AND PARTICIPANTS

**3.1 What is the projected number of attendees and participants at your event/festival?
Please enter figures from within and outside of the Borough.**

Table 3.1

	Attendees (spectators to event)	Participants (those who run or are part of the event)	TOTAL
from Within the Borough			
From Outside the Borough			
Number of days attending event			

Please provide clear justification/evidence of how you have arrived at your figures above. For example, by reference to previous years' attendance, similar events, previous tickets sold, clicker/PSNI counts. *max 300 words*

OR If your event is a first time or one-off event/festival, please indicate how you will attract these totals *max 300 words*

3.2 Please provide list of participant roles and a number for each role.

For example, 5 performers/competitors, 8 volunteers, 10 stall holders etc people involved in delivering the event/festival.

3.3 If your event/festival projects overnight stays, resulting in bednights, please complete the table below indicating the projected numbers. Please leave blank if no bednights are projected. (scored 0-4) max 400 words

Type of accommodation	No. of visitor bednights	No. of participant bednights	Total
Commercial (hotel, GH, B&B, Self Catering)			
Registered camping/caravanning			
Family/friends			
Other (e.g. motorhomes)			

DRAFT

SECTION 4: MARKETING

Support from Ards and North Down Borough Council **must be** acknowledged.

Please refer to Guidance Notes for details of the types of proof that are accepted to demonstrate delivery of your marketing.

4.1 How do you intend to market your event/festival, within and outside of the Borough. Please describe how your marketing materials will be made accessible to a range of disabled people and those whose first language is not English. max 300 words

A basic completed example of the tables below is included in the Guidance Notes.

PLEASE ADD ADDITIONAL LINES WHERE NECESSARY.

Table 4.2

Item/ Activity	Quantity/ Channel/ Publication	Reach (Within the Borough, NI, ROI, GB, EUROPE, REST OF WORLD)	Paid for or Not Paid for

Please include an estimated budget, showing a breakdown of all Marketing costs.
Please add more lines if required.

Table 4.3

Printed Materials	£
Advertising Activity	£
Online Activity (paid for)	£
Overall estimated marketing budget:	£
Budget % as part of overall estimated event/festival budget	%

DECLARATION

We require all applicants to enclose the following documents with your application. If not included the application will not progress.

Essential documentation

- Copy of Constitution or Memorandum of Association
- Most recent AGM Minutes / Inaugural minutes
- List of Office Bearers
- Copy of most recent audited Annual Accounts
- Most recent Bank Statement

Please tick to confirm that you have the following insurances/policies and procedures in place. If your application is successful, we will require evidence of these.

- Details of relevant Insurance relating to the event/festival (where appropriate)
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy/ Statement

Fundraising Declaration

As per Ards and North Down Grants Policy, provision of funds to organisations to host fundraising / donation-led events is not permitted. Therefore, if your event/festival would not go ahead without the collection of donations intended for retention by your organisation or distribution to third parties, you should not accept any grant offered.

I confirm the event/festival applied for is not a fundraising event as defined in the guidelines.

Freedom of Information

Ards and North Down Borough Council is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This Act came into operation on 1st January 2005. Applicants should be aware that the information provided in the completed application document could be disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Council will proceed on the basis of disclosure unless an appropriate exemption applies. No information provided by applicants will be accepted “in confidence” and Ards and North Down Borough Council will not accept liability for loss as a result of any information disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

Ards and North Down Borough Council does not have a discretion regarding whether or not to disclose information in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, unless an exemption applies. Decisions in relation to disclosure will be taken by appropriate individuals in Ards and North Down Borough Council having due regard to the exemptions available and the Public Interest. Applicants should be aware that despite the availability of some exemptions, information may still be disclosed if the Public Interest in its disclosure outweighs the Public Interest in maintaining the exemption. Applicants are required to highlight information included in the application documents which they consider to be commercially sensitive or confidential in nature, and should state the precise reasons, why that view is taken. In particular, issues concerning trade secrets and commercial sensitivity should be highlighted. Applicants are advised against recording unnecessary information.

In accordance with the Lord Chancellors Code of Practice on the discharge of public functions, Ards and North Down Borough Council will **not** accept any contractual term that purports to restrict the disclosure of information held by the Council in respect of the contract or grant process save as permitted by the Freedom of Information Act. The decision whether to disclose information rests solely with Ards and North Down Borough Council.

Ards and North Down Borough Council will consult with applicants, where it is considered appropriate, in relation to the release of controversial information.

Data Protection

Ards and North Down Borough Council values your right to personal privacy. We collect this information solely for the purposes of this application and do not share it with anyone. We comply with the DPA (Data Protection Act) 2018 and UK GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), ensuring that information is collected fairly and lawfully, is accurate, adequate, secure, up to date and not held any longer than necessary.

For further information our Privacy Statement can be viewed at <https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/privacy-and-cookies>

Equality of Opportunity, Section 75 and Good Relations.

Ards and North Down Borough Council is required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability or without
- persons with dependants or without.

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, Council is required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Council is committed to fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties across all functions (including service provision, employment and procurement)

Please tick the box to confirm you have read the Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Equality statements above

We declare that this application is made with the authority and consent of the above organisation and that the information provided is true, accurate and complete.

Name (in capitals):
Position held:
Signature (on behalf of the applicant):
Date:

Name (in capitals):
Position held:
Signature (on behalf of the applicant):
Date:

Completed application forms and supporting documentation should be forwarded by no later than tbc **December 2024**. Please submit your application as a PDF document.

Please note: **Late or Incomplete applications will not be considered**

Applications will not be reviewed by the Grants Team until after the closing date and time.

Return to

Email (preferable) tourismgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

By post to: **Visitor Information Centre, Tower House, 34 Quay Street, Bangor, BT20 5ED.**

You are advised to encrypt emails that contain sensitive data in order to keep you and your personal information safe.

Unclassified

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ITEM 4**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	05 September 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Tourism
Date of Report	20 August 2024
File Reference	170871
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: n/a
Subject	Attendance at Travel and Tourism Expos
Attachments	Appendix 1 - List of potential travel trade/consumer shows

Background

In January 2023, Council approved up to two officers to attend a range of tourism trade/consumer shows in NI, ROI, GB and Europe where appropriate from the existing Tourism Development budget for a 3-year period, through to March 2025.

These have been attended both individually as ANDBC/Visit AND, and where appropriate, in conjunction with Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI), Tourism Ireland (TIL) and our industry partner, Visit Belfast (VB).

Attendance at these shows is to create, maintain and develop relationships with Tour Operators and in the case of consumer shows, market the borough to the consumer market. This is in line with the Integrated Tourism Development and Regeneration Strategy 2018-2030 (ITDRS) by promoting the borough, to increase overnights and visitor spend within the local industry.

Not Applicable

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It should be noted that most NI councils regularly attend these shows e.g. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. Destinations Visit Belfast and Visit Derry are also regularly in attendance.

Bookings open for attendance at shows early; therefore, officers are seeking approval to travel where relevant (as per new Council approved Scheme of Delegation) for a further three-year period to March 2028 to include three potential shows in Europe – ITB Travel Show, Berlin, Ireland meets Germany Workshop, Frankfurt and Nordic Workshop, Copenhagen. This is to ensure a place on the stand and best prices for travel and accommodation are secured. Attendance is for up to two staff members, as deemed appropriate for each UK/Ireland event. If attendance is secured at any of the European shows only one officer would attend.

This type of sales platform has returned fully since Covid-19 and officers believe their attendance could be further enhanced by opening the opportunities, where deemed market applicable and on a case-by-case basis, to appropriate trade/tourism business representative/s to attend alongside ANDBC officer/s. These opportunities would be only offered where there is no additional cost to Council. See Appendix 1 for list of potential shows.

The final budget associated with all attendance is dependent upon whether the shows are subsidised by partners, how many shows ANDBC secures as a participant, and travel and accommodation requirements, however, the budget will be within existing tourism development budgets. All opportunities for subsidies, partnerships and the ability to book early are acted upon by officers to achieve best rates.

2023/24 Expos/ Buyer Meeting Attendance

Throughout the year, officers attended 8 events, listed below. One virtual and seven in person events with a total of 157 appointments with tour operators/Agents. The number of meetings at each event was dependent on the variety of formats used by each organiser and its duration.

Event	Location	Month	Appointments
<i>Meet the Industry</i>	<i>Virtual</i>	<i>February</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Coach Tourism Association</i>	<i>Belfast</i>	<i>February</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Meet the Buyer</i>	<i>Belfast</i>	<i>March</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>IAGTO</i>	<i>Derry/Londonderry</i>	<i>October</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>GEM</i>	<i>London</i>	<i>November</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>World Travel Market</i>	<i>London</i>	<i>November</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>ITOA (Irish Tour Operator Association)</i>	<i>Armagh</i>	<i>November</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>BIM</i>	<i>London</i>	<i>January</i>	<i>22</i>
			Total 157

Not Applicable

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Developing and secured opportunities

It can take several years to develop strong relationships with Tour Operators before business is secured. Officers are now able to see this with several familiarisation (Fam) visits having taken place in the Borough in the past 12-18 months, with subsequent bookings for local businesses planned for 2025.

Following GEM, London and Meet the Buyer, Belfast, “Great Days” (based in England), undertook a Fam in the Borough which has resulted in both a private tour for 40 pax. booked for the Walled Garden Helen’s Bay, June 2025, and a tour programmed “Hidden Gems of Northern Ireland” included on their wider schedule for 2025 – this to include visits to both the Walled Garden Helen’s Bay and the Ulster Folk Museum.

After the BIM show, London, “Fox” (based in the Netherlands) undertook a Fam in early 2024 resulting in a high-end private gardens tour group booked for April 2025. If this is successful it is set to become a repeat tour.

A relationship by officers at World Travel Market fostered with Boxwood Tours delivered a Fam in April 2024. They are currently scheduling a tour beginning in 2025 including Bangor Castle Walled Garden and the Walled Garden Helen’s Bay.

Other companies with whom officers continue to meet and develop relationships with include Prestigious Travel who bring small bespoke groups of Americans on tours around Strangford Lough on an annual basis, Rabbie’s Tours who offer tours that take in Mount Stewart, Middleton Tours who visit Strangford Lough including Donaghadee, Mount Stewart and Ballywalter and an Educational Tour Operator who brings small groups to NI using the Strangford Arms for accommodation.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. Approves officer attendance at European shows as outlined in the report, should applications be successful, for a three-year period funded from existing tourism development budgets; and
2. Offer the opportunity to local trade/tourism business representatives to attend shows, where relevant, at no additional cost to Council.

Appendix 1

Potential Travel Trade/Consumer Expos 2025/26 – March 2027/28

Below is a list of shows currently identified as most appropriate (some AND previous attendance) and recommended by other councils, tour operators, industry members and trade organisations including TNI, TI and VB.

Three specific European shows are listed - Frankfurt, Berlin and Copenhagen. These are shows which other council contacts and industry bodies have recommended as most suitable for developing AND presence in these markets.

It should be noted that not all will be attended by ANDBC as many are via an application process which cannot guarantee acceptance.

Ireland meet Germany Workshop, Frankfurt (November)

- Buyers from market-based operators come together with island of Ireland industry representatives for a one-day workshop, followed by a networking evening event. This is an excellent opportunity to meet with existing and new tour operators from Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

ITB Travel Show, Berlin (March)

- ITB Berlin is the leading business platform for global tourism. It is the world's largest travel industry convention – it has established itself as the industry's central knowledge platform. Top-class lectures about global tourism trends enable the convention to show you the way to a successful future and guarantee you valuable cutting-edge knowledge.

Nordic Workshop – Copenhagen (February)

- The Nordic Marketplace brings key suppliers from all sectors across the entire Nordic and Baltic region together with leading buyers. European and global markets are represented by tour operators, agents, wholesalers, OTAs and DMCs, all looking for products in the region.

IAGTO European Golf Convention, May, Location changes annually

- IEC is the most cost-effective and productive golf tourism trade event in Europe and attracted approximately 750 delegates in 2024. IEC is open to IAGTO member suppliers, golf destinations and service providers from across Europe, Africa and the Gulf States. Buyer delegates attend from outbound golf travel markets worldwide, and all sell European golf destinations and are fully accredited IAGTO members.

Flavours of Ireland, London (October)

- Flavours of Ireland brings together industry from the island and global travel trade to showcase the Island of Ireland with a programme of 10-minute 1-2-1 meetings.

Global European Marketplace (GEM), London (October)

- GEM is a full-day workshop for global tour operators and travel buyers that want to meet the best European product in the most influential contracting event of the year. Over 800 attendees from member companies attend the event, with a personalised agenda of pre-scheduled meetings.

Appendix 1

International Golf Travel Market (IGTM) (October) Location changes annually

- IGTM is the community for golf travel professionals who are looking for a highly focused and cost-effective way to grow their business. At its heart, the event is pre-scheduled meetings between golf destinations, resorts, and courses and golf travel agents and tour operators. Through face-to-face meetings, up to 1,300 industry leaders come together to cultivate and shape the outbound golf tourism market.

World Travel Market (WTM), London (November)

- World Travel Market (WTM) is the leading global event for the travel industry to meet industry professionals and conduct business deals. WTM provides a key opportunity to build business relationships and tour operator engagement. With the Council's emphasis on building experiences of packages, this is a key platform. The Council exhibits within the Tourism Ireland stand alongside independent operators, national museums and local councils from across ROI and NI.

Holiday World, Dublin (January)

- Dublin Holiday World is a key consumer platform for attracting visitors from the ROI market. With over 41,000 people visiting the show it provides an ideal opportunity to market the boroughs key product to a captive audience within a close to home market and with attendees that are in the main interested in the short break market. Attendance in recent years as part of the Visit Belfast stand, possible through our partnership agreement, to secure greater footfall as opposed to stand alone presence.

Celtic Connections, Glasgow (January)

- Celtic Connections This event will include a B2B workshop providing an opportunity for approximate 25 Industry partners to engage with 25 GB trade at 10-minute meetings.

Britain and Ireland Marketplace (BIM), London (January)

- BIM (Britain and Ireland Marketplace) is a one full-day B2B workshop for international tour operators and travel buyers that want to meet tourism product from across the UK and Ireland.

Explore GB & NI – (March), Location changes annually

- Explore GB and NI event offers UK and Irish suppliers the opportunity to promote their business or destination to hundreds of international buyers through pre-scheduled one-to-one meetings over two days.

Incoming Tour Operators Association (ITOA), Dublin (date TBC)

- Incoming Tour Operators Association (Dublin and Belfast) Workshop is an opportunity to meet Ireland's largest and long-established Tour Operating/Handling Agents/DMC's. This event offers an opportunity to meet and sell our destination experiences to all members of ITOA.

Unclassified

48

ITEM 5**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	05 September 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Economic Development
Date of Report	16 August 2024
File Reference	160094
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Ards and Bangor Business Awards
Attachments	

Background

Following the success of Bangor Business Awards held on Thursday 12 October 2023, Bangor Chamber of Commerce wishes to host the annual business ceremony 2024 to celebrate the achievements and successes of our local business community.

Ards Business Awards, due to unforeseen circumstances and resources, had been unable to be hosted an awards ceremony since November 2019. The Newtownards Chamber is now in preparations to host an awards ceremony in 2025.

Detail

The Bangor Awards ceremony will take place on Thursday 24 October at Clandeboye Lodge Hotel, Bangor.

Ards Chamber is finalising its plans, but it is anticipated that the event will take place in February 2025, venue to be confirmed.

Not Applicable

49

Members will be aware that Council officers have been working closely with the Chambers of Commerce in the city and each of the towns to engage, develop the business capacity of the chambers, and to support their efforts to revitalise and promote local businesses.

Within the business plans submitted to the Regeneration Unit and Council each year, each Chamber includes within the action plan a Business Awards event to celebrate the work, resilience and successes of local businesses in the area.

The Bangor Business Awards launched on 20 August 2024; details of the Ards Business Awards have yet to be announced. It is anticipated that Newtownards Chamber of Commerce will combine with Comber Chamber of Commerce in joint efforts to encourage businesses in their areas, and to include for the first-time businesses in the peninsula to get involved.

It is proposed that Council support sponsor of the Bangor Business Awards, Business Development category at a cost of £3,000, which is covered within this year's ED budget allocation. As part of the package, five complementary tickets are being made available to Council. The Mayor and the Chief Executive will be invited separately as guests of the Chamber.

A budget of £3000 remains available under the ED budget for the Ards Business Awards event in February 2025. Officers will provide a further update report when details become available from Newtownards Chamber of Commerce.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council nominates a maximum of five Members to attend the Bangor Business Awards on 24 October 2024.

Unclassified

50

ITEM 6**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	05 September 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Tourism
Date of Report	04 July 2024
File Reference	170871
Legislation	n/a
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Visit Belfast 12 Month Overview 2023/24
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Overview Visual Examples of Visit Belfast 2023/24 Service Level Agreement Activity

Background

Ards and North Down BC has a partnership Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place with Visit Belfast (VB).

The purpose of the partnership is twofold:

- to facilitate communication between the partnership councils (Ards and North Down, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Belfast) with regards to tourism development; and
- for VB to create effective marketing communications and visitor servicing platforms that are efficient and represent value for money for each of the council areas.

An annual review report is provided at the end of each financial year with detailed breakdown of activity.

Not Applicable

51

The attached Appendix 1 is an overview of visual examples of the 2023/24 SLA.

Since 2015, Ards and North Down Borough Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council have remained as local authority partners gaining year on year from dedicated promotional focus under the banner Belfast Plus.

The Regional Tourism Partnership (RTP) ensures dedicated promotion for Ards and North Down, promoting key tourism experiences, things to do, itineraries, and events reaching a large and engaged visitor audience. A high level of coverage for AND has been maintained throughout the 2023/24 SLA period, across a wide mix of digital and traditional promotional channels and Visit Belfast continues to be a key strategic partner.

Key benefits of the SLA

The SLA ensures prominent 24/7 year-round promotion, showcasing campaigns and Borough tourism activity, combined with strong visitor servicing support across all the main international visitor arrival points. These include the Visit Belfast Welcome Centre (VBWC) opposite Belfast City Hall and both main NI airports. It enables ANDBC to leverage the reach and visibility of AND to a much wider audience than Council resource alone could achieve.

VB works in collaboration with the ANDBC Marketing and Tourism teams to amplify the promotion of AND as an appealing tourism destination through the strong reach of its robust trade network and large consumer databases, promotional channels, and visitor welcome touch points. It ensures that the Borough is promoted as part of the Belfast region under the Belfast Plus brand (along with Lisburn Castlereagh) which is a key strength for the continued promotion as an appealing visitor destination.

It is worth noting that as one of only two local authority members in this partnership (other than Belfast City Council) AND is at a significant advantage in presenting the Borough to these visitors. It enables ANDBC to leverage VB's strong position with tourism trade and consumer audiences, and to showcase the Borough's key strength of offering appealing short breaks all within an hour of Belfast.

Summary of SLA 2023/24 activity

Digital - Web, Social, Email Marketing

AND capitalised on a significant upscaling of presence across VB's digital channels. Content was featured on [belfastplus.com](https://www.belfastplus.com) dedicated web pages including experiences and What's On information.

[visitbelfast.com](https://www.visitbelfast.com) receives 2.3mn visits per annum and includes 32 Ards and North Down locations. The Borough was also prominently featured in 49 blogs (an increase of 10% on prior year) including staycation guides, day trips, virtual visits, things to do, road trips, walks, and foodie inspiration during the period.

76k Consumer database mail marketing reach

AND is strongly presented with 103 programme features in Visit Belfast's What's On e-zines and trade concierge ezines. This has increased from 41k last year.

Not Applicable

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Leveraging VB's large social audience reach

AND was promoted with over 100 posts to VB's large social media audience (combined following over 431k, 53 million+ impressions/ opportunities to see per year, and 5.6 million+ engagements / actions per year) throughout the SLA period.

VB region promotional literature

AND promotional features were included in The Belfast City and Region Guide – Summer 2023, Autumn/ Winter 2023, Spring 2024, and student editions, Map as well as the Main Visitor Guide published in May 2024 all available digitally and with a combined print run 195k. in addition a total of 27,260 pieces of literature featuring Ards and North Down were distributed via VB sites.

Promotional presence in Visit Belfast Welcome Centre (VBWC) and NI airports

AND was featured on 16-screen video wall and information desks and prominently on self-serve screens. AND tourism campaigns were promoted throughout the year, plus eight weeks of promotion for six campaigns were featured on the VBWC Event Island.

AND was also prominently displayed on a large back-lit screen at the arrivals area in George Best Belfast City Airport, and in welcome areas in both NI airports and the Belfast Cruise Hub.

Industry engagement

- Council officers and AND attraction providers presented the Borough's tourism offering at quarterly industry briefings.
- VB team presented Ards and North Down as an RTP partner at key industry events in the UK, Rol, Denmark and Spain, and Council's Tourism Development team attended The Flavours of Ireland and Holiday World Event in Dublin with the Visit Belfast Team.

Visitor Servicing

The SLA ensures the provision of a daily gateway visitor information and travel advisory services available seven days a week via telephone, email web and social media enquiry, and in person in VBWC. VB handled 17k enquiries about the Borough across welcome centres and visitor entry points during the SLA period. Visitor servicing training webinars such as accessibility awareness were also made available to AND visitor servicing staff and advisory support was given from the VB on merchandising.

Membership cost and other contributions

In September 2023, Council approved the renewal of the Visit Belfast RTP SLA for 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years at £30,000 per annum. This annual RTP cost has been held static since 2015 through to 2025, however it is anticipated that in line with increased delivery costs, the annual cost for the local authority membership will increase in future years i.e. 2026/27 onwards. Meetings are scheduled to take place with VB and LCCC colleagues in this operating year for planning purposes.

In addition to the RTP membership, the Tourism Service secures primary promotional space in the Belfast Welcome Centre at a cost of £6,000 per annum. This is a destination display desk with dedicated racking, headline imagery and a profile of

Not Applicable

53

AND. To purchase the promotional elements included in the SLA and gold package outside of the RTP is almost 50% higher cost – so the RTP delivers excellent value for money for 24/7 and year-round promotion.

Conclusion

Throughout 2023/24 Visit Belfast has continued to prove to be a critical tourism partner for ANDBC, providing year-round enhanced promotional exposure for the Borough's tourism offering and vital visitor servicing support. VB's audience size is growing, the level of promotion for Ards and North Down BC is increasing across digital and traditional channels with new engaging video and blog content further enhancing how AND is presented via always-on digital content.

Through the successful delivery of this SLA, ANDBC capitalises on a full range of benefits to a wider consumer and trade audience which the Council could not achieve on its own. The value of benefit attributed to the current membership is higher than the contribution, presenting good value for money. The strong partnership approach ensures that AND destination campaigns and event programme promotion reach a large international visitor audience, which is critical to continue to keep AND 'front of mind' as international competition for visitors continues to increase.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the report.

Unclassified

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ITEM 7**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	06 September 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	12 August 2024
File Reference	RDP236
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Completion of the Ards and North Down Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Post Project Evaluation

Background

As members will be aware the Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme was welcomed by Councils across Northern Ireland when it was introduced in 2020. The programme provided funding for local authorities to carry out interventions in cities, towns and villages that would introduce measures to create a retail experience that was safe and welcoming while Covid-19 remained a risk.

The programme was delivered through a joined-up approach between the Department for Communities (DfC), Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and local Councils.

Each Council developed a Revitalisation Plan that identified two tranches of interventions. These plans were developed by working with a variety of stakeholders. Urban and Rural Recovery Working Groups were established and met on a regular basis, comprising of elected representatives, department officials, business & community representatives, and Council officers.

Not Applicable

55

The first tranche of funding was assigned to fund measures required immediately to allow businesses to reopen safely following the COVID-19 pandemic, and the second tranche was used to deliver medium- to longer-term business support interventions.

Ards and North Down Borough Council Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme

Ards and North Down was awarded £1.75M through the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme (£1,058,000 DfC | £398,000 DfI | £235,000 DAERA | £60,000 DfC Revenue), which allowed the Council to support a range of projects in our city, towns, and villages across the Borough.

The Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme was delivered under four strands:

1. Business Recovery Support - Financial assistance for businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements to their properties.
2. Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects - Projects to strengthen and reinvigorate our city, towns and villages.
3. Support Local Initiatives to encourage and welcome people back to our city, towns and villages.
4. Sustainable and Active Travel Projects - Initiatives to enable more people to choose active travel.

The following projects were successfully delivered under each of the programme strands:

PROJECT	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COST
STRAND 1 BUSINESS RECOVERY SUPPORT		
Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme – URBAN	Grants of up to £2,500 to businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements to their properties in order to assist them to continue to operate, improve their business and to ensure the health and safety of their employees and their customers in response to the current impact and recovery of Covid-19. 347 urban grants issued to businesses.	£714,705.18

Not Applicable

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Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme – RURAL	Grants of up to £2,500 to businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements to their properties in order to assist them to continue to operate, improve their business and to ensure the health and safety of their employees and their customers in response to the current impact and recovery of Covid-19. 81 grants rural issued to businesses.	£161,339.32
STRAND 2 PHYSICAL INTERVENTION AND STREETScape PROJECTS		
Solar Bins – throughout the towns and city.	14 solar powered bins were installed in a variety of locations across the urban areas. These solar powered bins can store up to 20-times more waste compared to standard bins, with the ability to send electronic messages when they are ready to be emptied. Strategically placed bins promote cleanliness and proper waste disposal, contributing to a more welcoming, safe, and pleasant atmosphere for residents and visitors.	£42,510.00
Additional Solar Bins for Holywood Town Centre	Additional 2 solar bins for Holywood town centre.	£8,882.00
Additional Solar Bins for Bangor and Newtownards.	Additional 2 solar bins (Bangor and Newtownards)	£8,882.00
Donaghadee Copelands Court Environmental Improvement Scheme	The environmental improvement scheme at Copelands Court, Donaghadee, created a safe and welcoming space to accommodate bespoke events with an events mini pillar and performance space. The scheme also included tree planting, improved lighting, and public art reflective of the town's history. The works improved safety and accessibility with resurfacing, drainage solutions and an improved layout.	£120,000.00
Comber Minor Environmental Improvement Scheme - Phase 1	This project created a connection from the town centre to the greenway with access to the new cycling infrastructure. The installation of seating and bins significantly enhanced this public space, transforming it into a more inviting and functional environment. Providing adequate seating allows people to rest, socialise, and enjoy the surroundings, making the town more comfortable and engaging.	£25,449.15
Comber Environmental Improvement Scheme - Phase 2 (Part 1)	The environmental improvement scheme at the car park adjacent to Comber Leisure Centre provides a safe and accessible linkage to the town centre. The project included resurfacing, improved lighting, drainage solutions and enhanced layout – making the car park feel safer, well-lit, and usable for bespoke events. Installing the infrastructure	£143,441.93

Not Applicable

57

	for electrical vehicle charging points was crucial for futureproofing and accommodating the shift towards electric vehicles.	
Hollywood Green Scheme	The Council worked in partnership with Hollywood Residents Association to revamp the existing subway through the use of imagery, literature and nature, creating a vibrant and friendly thoroughfare and enhancing the visitor experience aligned to Regeneration's Connectivity objective.	£2,815.00
Parklets	A total of 7 parklets were installed. Transforming parking spaces into community spaces where residents and visitors can stop, rest, and enjoy our outdoor spaces. The parklets utilise greenery and provide seating to reinvigorate our streets, whilst encouraging active travel and have received positive feedback from Chambers of Commerce. 3 in Bangor 3 in Newtownards 1 in Comber	£171,405.00
Village Gateway Signage – RURAL	High quality, bespoke gateway/welcome signs were installed at entrance points to each of the rural settlements. The signs welcome visitors to our villages and meets Regeneration's Placemaking objective in the local community.	£43,324.80
Village Gateway Signage – RURAL – Part 2	An additional gateway/ welcome sign.	£885.00
Conway Square Seating, Newtownards	The welcomed addition of bespoke curved benches and chess-style tables create a piazza feel and encourage visitors and residents to increase their leisure and social time in this historical, focal point of the town centre.	£65,973.56
Castle Park Lighting Scheme, Bangor	Promoting Connectivity and improving linkages to the retail core of the city centre by upgrading the existing lighting with new, improved LED lighting. Enhancing safety and encouraging active travel for residents and visitors.	£4,994.00
Hollywood Play Park Enhancement	This popular town centre play park was recently renovated with a range of new play equipment, resurfacing and signage. To enhance the renovation, public realm additions were welcomed including 2 picnic tables, 2 benches, 2 litter bins and cycle stands. These additions assist to encourage stay time, encourage active travel, and promote a clean and safe environment within this popular area of the town.	£29,228.75

Not Applicable

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Mobile Urban Orchard, Hollywood	A unique and movable orchard was installed that is educational, functional, and aesthetically pleasing. Trees play a significant role in improving environmental conditions and make an attractive and pleasant place to live as well as responding to environmental issues with close proximity to the busy Bangor to Belfast A2. This and potential future Regeneration projects will be aimed at contributing to the Council's 2024 – 2028 Sustainability aspirations.	£13,115.00
Donaghadee Seating	This popular playpark area in the heart of the town welcomed additional picnic tables for families to rest and dine and double-sided benches where visitors can enjoy views of the town centre and to sea. Providing users of this area additional resting points and facilities to encourage increased dwell time	£9,980.90
STRAND 3 SUPPORT LOCAL INITIATIVES		
Borough wide Town Centre marketing campaign	The 'Support Local' Campaign was launched in 2020 in collaboration with local businesses and Chambers of Commerce across our city and town centres. Aimed at encouraging our residents to change their shopping habits and support their local businesses.	£17,706.50
Marketing Campaign – URBAN	The campaign was launched 2022 across our city and town centres. Aimed at encouraging residents and businesses to participate in the review of their town/city masterplans and help to shape future regeneration/ development.	£5,127.00
Floral Sculptures – each town and city	Unique, bespoke, 'living sculptures' were created with living, growing grasses and plants installed in each of the towns/city. These unique, horticultural creations were individually themed to represent a key aspect of the history or culture of the area. Giving residents and visitors an opportunity to celebrate our local history and culture.	£40,000.00
Bangor Digital Information Screen	An interactive touch screen information point was installed in the train & bus station in Bangor City Centre to provide residents and visitors with the latest information about the city, including events, local businesses, transport links and much more. Using the latest technology to promote the city.	£2,999.00
Christmas Feature, Hollywood	Reducing our carbon footprint with the welcomed addition of a further artificial Christmas Tree within the town centre. Presenting a modern, appealing, and sustainable Christmas feature to welcome visitors and residents during this peak season.	£7,925.00

Not Applicable

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STRAND 4 SUSTAINABLE AND ACTIVE TRAVEL PROJECTS		
Cycling Infrastructure – Urban	High-quality cycle stands, cycle pods, and scooter racks were welcomed in various locations in our city, towns, and villages to support and encourage cycling. The increased demand for green travel will assist to reduce air pollution, enhance health & wellbeing for our residents and visitors, whilst assisting economic recovery	£39,564.38
Cycling Infrastructure – Rural		£33,175.03
Cycling Infrastructure - Pt2	Additional cycle infrastructure for Holywood town centre	£405.00
MISCELLANEOUS		
Professional and Technical Fees	A range of professional and technical services to assist with the various project delivery.	£20,194.00
Post Project Evaluation	Appointment of external consultants to independently conduct the surveys required to inform the Post Project Evaluation.	£16,972.50
TOTAL		£1,751,000.00

Positive Outcomes

1. Business Recovery Support

Grants to the total value of £876,044.50 were distributed to businesses within the urban and rural areas of the Ards and North Down, 34% increase above target. These grants helped businesses to implement necessary safety measures to protect their employees and customers whilst also allowing them to gradually reopen and recover financially. These grants can ultimately contribute to the overall economic recovery and stability of our towns, city, and villages.

2. Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects

A range of physical intervention and streetscape improvement projects were delivered. The projects have played a crucial role in the recovery from the impacts of Covid-19 by creating more pedestrian-friendly spaces, supporting local businesses, and encouraging outdoor activities that allow for physical distancing (when required). The projects have not only enhanced the aesthetic appeal but have assisted to boost community engagement, economic growth, and overall well-being, which are all essential components to post-pandemic recovery.

Not Applicable

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3. Support Local Initiatives

The successful rollout of the 'Support Local' marketing campaign was a mechanism for boosting recovery efforts by promoting local businesses, encouraging community support, and revitalising economic activity. Projects such as the information screen, town centre artificial Christmas tree and floral sculptures assisted to support recovery by playing a pivotal role in revitalising the towns/city, encouraging and attracting visitors, and strengthening resilience during difficult times.

4. Sustainable and Active Travel Projects

Investing in cycle infrastructure can significantly support recovery by promoting active transportation, reducing reliance on cars, and providing a safer and healthier environment. This approach improves air quality, reduces traffic congestion, and enhances overall public health and wellbeing.

Post Project Evaluation

A condition of the funding contract was the requirement for a post project evaluation (PPE) to be conducted following the completion of the programme.

The PPE incorporated both business and user surveys for the project areas, aimed to gather comprehensive feedback on project effectiveness, impact and areas for improvement. This process not only provided quantitative data but also qualitative insights that could guide future initiatives.

A total of 414 business surveys were completed, and 658 user surveys.

The post project evaluation has been submitted to the Department for Communities, and a lessons learnt workshop has been conducted.

A copy of the Post Project Evaluation can be found in Appendix 1, providing a detailed report of the programme, its outcomes, and the findings that emerged from the evaluation process.

Post Project Evaluation - Key Outcomes

- All project specific targets and KPI's achieved.
- A range of non-monetary benefits were achieved.
- The total allocation of £1.75M was spent in accordance with the contract for funding.

PPE Recommendations

Adopting a standardised, joint-up approach for all future funding activities is a strategic recommendation that can promote greater alignment, efficiency, and collaboration among all partners. By consolidating funding, the Council can streamline co-ordination, enhance communication, and leverage collective resource to achieve the shared objectives more effectively.

Implementing future funding under this joint-up approach not only enhances collaboration but can also enhance public perception. Additionally, this approach can

Not Applicable

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enhance public trust, showcase a shared vision for the future, instil public confidence and promote collaboration in tackling regeneration/ placemaking challenges.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the report.



COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme

Post Project Evaluation (PPE) Proforma

This pro forma has been prepared for use in evaluation of expenditure on the COVID Revitalisation Programme by Local Council Areas.

All sections of this form should be completed. However, the effort applied, and detail required in each section should be proportionate to the scale of expenditure and importance of the proposal.

It is important to ensure that the funding streams are defined between the Departments (DfC, DAERA and DfI) and Revenue.

If there is any supplementary evidence such as surveys, please append these to the end of the PPE. **Please attach final version of Council Action Plan.**

Further guidance is available from :

[Supplementary evaluation guidance \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk)

[The Magenta Book - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Programme Title:	COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme		
Council Name:	Ards and North Down Borough Council		
Prepared By:	Carly McMullan	Date:	April 2024
Approved By:	Brian Dorrian	Date:	April 2024

Section 1: Background to the Programme

1.1 Background

The COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme was developed by central Government Departments in 2020 to support and sustain recovery in towns, villages, and city centres in response to the pandemic and lockdowns. As lockdown restrictions had eased and non-essential shops and services, cafes, bars, and restaurants began to reopen for business, the Department for Communities (DfC) was approached by a number of district councils, Chambers of Commerce and other representatives of the retail and hospitality trade to provide assistance that will help restore visitor and worker confidence that the town centres are safe places to work, visit and shop.

The DfC, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and Department for Infrastructure (DfI) developed a programme of funding. An original capital allocation of £12M was approved in July 2020, with a further £5M contribution from DfI and £600K DfC revenue funding bringing total approved programme funding to £17.6M. Subsequently, in response to demand from business in relation to grant funding, a further investment from DfC and DAERA brought the total budget to **£19.3M**.

Funding split between Departments was:

DfC - £11.4M Capital, £600K Revenue

DAERA £2.3M

DfI £5M

DfC was the majority funder and acted as SRO for the programme.

The purpose of this PPE is to evaluate the delivery of Ards and North Down Borough Council COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Action Plan.

Councils developed and refined their Action Plans between June 2020 – October 2020.

The COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme was implemented across the following areas of the Ards and North Down borough:

- Ballygowan Village
- Ballyhalbert Village
- Bangor City
- Carrowdore Village
- Cloughey Village
- Comber Town
- Conlig Village
- Donaghadee Town
- Greyabbey Village
- Groomsport Village
- Helen's Bay & Crawfordsburn Village
- Hollywood Town
- Killinchy Village
- Kircubbin Village

1.1 Background

- Lisbarnett & Lisbane Village
- Millisle Village
- Newtownards Town
- Portaferry Village
- Portavogie Village

Delivery of the Action Plan commenced in July 2020, with all projects completed by March 2024.

The programme allowed the Council to support a range of projects across the project areas. The programme was delivered under four strands of support:

1. Business Recovery Support

Financial assistance for businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements to their properties.

2. Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects

Projects to strengthen and reinvigorate our city, towns, and villages.

3. Support Local

Initiatives to encourage and welcome people back to our city, towns, and villages.

4. Sustainable and Active Travel Projects

Initiatives to enable more people to choose active travel.

Ards and North Down Borough Council received a total funding package of £1,751,000.00.

£1,058,000 DfC | £398,000 DfI | £235,000 DAERA | £60,000 DfC Revenue.

1.2 Programme Level Objectives & Outcomes	
Outcomes Based Accountability Report Card	
<u>How much did we do?</u>	<u>How well did we do it?</u>
Number of COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Plans developed by councils	% of COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Plans developed by councils within agreed timescales
Number of stakeholder engagement forums established or engaged with (if already existing)	% of stakeholder engagement forums established within agreed timescales
Number of businesses benefitting from minor capital works by council	% of stakeholders reporting that they were satisfied with the quality of the engagement by the forum (by council)
Amount spent on minor capital works for businesses by council	% of funding spent on minor capital works for businesses by council
Number of other capital purchase projects by council & type:	% of funding spent on other capital purchase projects by council & type
Street/outdoor furniture, planters, heaters, barriers, hand sanitisation stations, screens, PA systems, signage, collection lockers	% of funding spent on Public Realm projects by council
Amount spent on other capital purchase projects by council	% of businesses in scheme areas reporting that they were satisfied with the improvements to their businesses.
Number of Public Realm projects by council	% of businesses in scheme areas who agreed that the improvements to their businesses and other capital purchase projects addressed safety issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic (by council).
Amount spent on Public Realm projects by council	
Total funding distributed by DfC by council	% of people using the scheme areas who agreed that they were satisfied with the measures taken in the scheme areas to respond to safety issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic (by council).

Is anybody better off?

% of businesses in scheme areas who agreed that the improvements to their businesses and other capital purchase projects would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area (by council)

% of people using the scheme areas who agreed that the improvements to the area would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area (by council).

Number & % of businesses within the scheme areas who reported turnover returning to at least 80% of pre-COVID 19 levels following capital works in the area (by council)

Number & % of scheme areas where footfall levels had returned to at least 80% of pre-COVID 19 levels following capital works in the area (by council)

Objectives

1. To support each district council to develop a costed COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Plan by September 2020.
2. By August 2020, each district council will have established or identified a suitable stakeholder engagement forum to support the delivery of its COVID-19 Revitalisation Plan.
3. To support each district council to deliver its COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Plan by March 2021.
4. By March 2022, 80% of businesses in scheme areas agree that the improvements to their businesses and other capital purchase projects would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area (by council).
5. By March 2022, 80% of people using the scheme areas agree that the improvements to the area would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area (by council).
6. By March 2022, council schemes funded through this Programme will have positively impacted on efforts to see footfall levels returning to a level which is at least 70% of levels recorded prior to the public health crisis.
7. By March 2022, surveys completed by traders indicate that council schemes funded through this Programme will have positively impacted on efforts to see sales figures returning to a level which is at least 70% of levels recorded prior to the public health crisis.
8. By March 2022, attitudinal surveys indicate 80% of the public are satisfied with the measures taken in the Scheme areas to respond to safety issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic.
9. By March 2022, attitudinal surveys indicate 80% of the public view the Scheme area positively as a place people would want to live, work, visit and invest.
10. By March 2022, attitudinal surveys indicate 70% of the public are satisfied with walking facilities in the Scheme area.
11. By March 2022, attitudinal surveys indicate 60% of the public agree that they are satisfied with cycling facilities in the Scheme area.
12. By March 2022, attitudinal surveys indicate 40% of the public agree that measures taken in the Scheme area would encourage people to change from car use to more environmentally friendly choices such as walking and cycling for journeys of under two miles.
13. By March 2022, grant fund measures in the Scheme area to demonstrate the benefits of low-emission fuel options.
14. By March 2022 the scheme area will have an increase in land used for active travel (i.e. extended footways, cycle ways, connecting pathways) which connects people with key services and ensures accessibility for all including those with disabilities.

Section 2: Council COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Project

Council to explain the rationale for the project, the need it was considered to be meeting, how the project was managed and delivered.

2.1 Council area - COVID-19 impact on town centres

The Northern Ireland economy experienced a severe impact because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The restrictions placed upon businesses greatly affected the economy, with two years of economic disruption.

Retail was struggling prior to the pandemic and this crisis further undermined local cities, towns, and villages.

Businesses required support to recover following a significant period of lost revenue and to rebuild their customer base.

Ards and North Down Borough Council conducted a survey of local businesses in May 2020 to understand the issues, priorities and needs of the businesses within the borough in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The key findings were:

- Over 70% of businesses were closed, with 3% reporting it was unlikely that they would reopen.
- 81% of businesses reported a loss of revenue.
- 10% reported permanent or likely job losses.
- High demand for financial support – short and long term.
- 58% of businesses requested greater financial support.

Businesses were asked ‘What other support the Government needed to introduce at this time’, responses included financial support, initiatives during the recovery phase and changes in legislation.

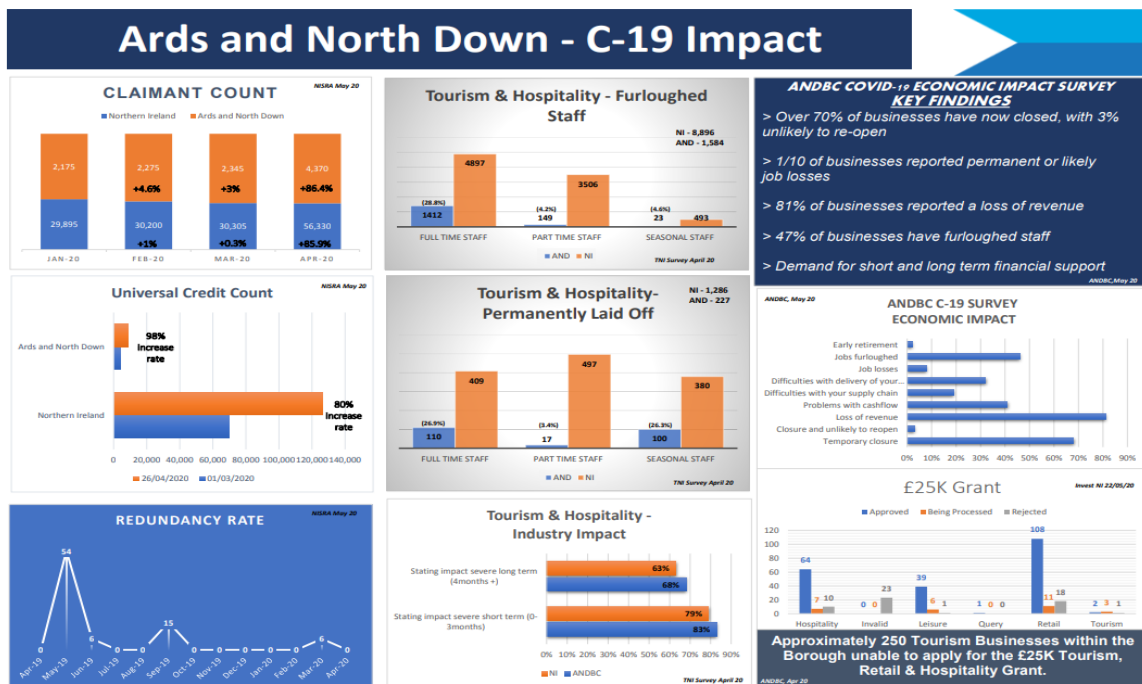
What other support does the Government need to introduce?

<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: white;">Financial Support</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; color: white;">£</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Greater financial support <i>(stated by 58% of businesses)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Wider inclusion of businesses for government support schemes <input type="checkbox"/> Further grants to assist businesses re social distancing & PPE <input type="checkbox"/> Timescales improved for processing of grants <i>(6% of businesses stated they are still awaiting grants)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Grants aimed at manufacturing <input type="checkbox"/> Extend existing schemes <input type="checkbox"/> Rent relief <input type="checkbox"/> VAT reduction <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead reductions <input type="checkbox"/> Tax incentives to stimulate work <input type="checkbox"/> Redundancy support 	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: white;">Coming out of lockdown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lifting of restrictions to re-open economy <i>(stated by 9% of businesses)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Re-opening of facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Clear guidance and schedule of how restrictions will be eased <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance on how businesses can operate safely <i>(stated by 9% of businesses)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Retain connectivity with GB and EU <input type="checkbox"/> Initiative to improve consumer confidence and attract customers back to local shops <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: white;">Change in Legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Change NI Licensing Laws to allow direct sales to customers <input type="checkbox"/> Create a Universal Basic Income
<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: white;">Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Widespread testing for COVID-19 antibodies/virus <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage physical and mental wellbeing initiatives <input type="checkbox"/> Improved broadband and mobile network in rural areas 	

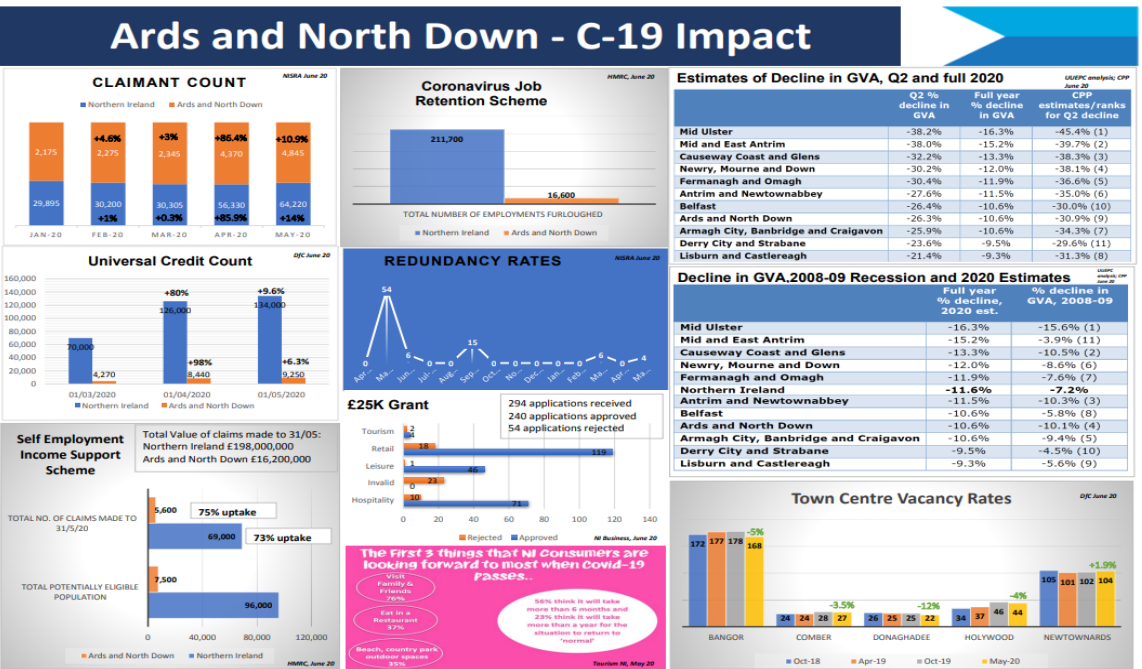
2.1 Council area - COVID-19 impact on town centres

An Economic Dashboard developed by the Council demonstrated the worrying statistics showing evidence of significant claimant counts, significant furlough schemes, high demand for government support, and significant revenue and job losses.

ANDBC Economic Dashboard, May 2020



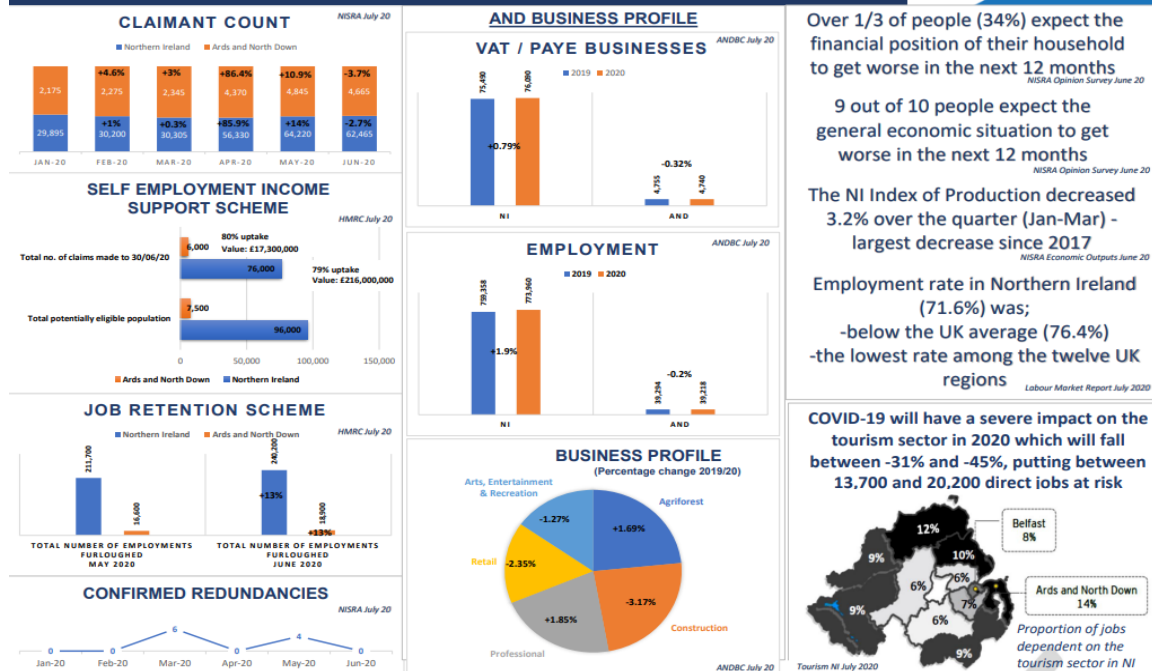
ANDBC Economic Dashboard, June 2020



2.1 Council area - COVID-19 impact on town centres

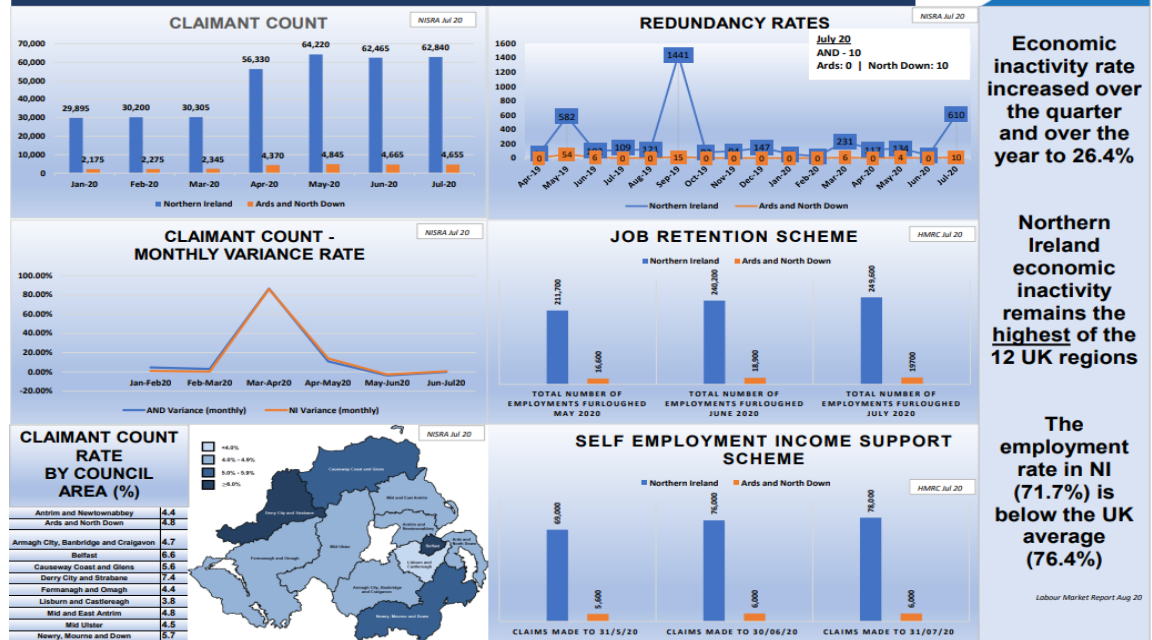
ANDBC Economic Dashboard, July 2020

Ards and North Down - C-19 Impact



ANDBC Economic Dashboard, August 2020

Ards and North Down - C-19 Impact



It was concerning to see the redundancy rates and claimant counts on the rise, accompanied by a decline in GVA. The public's growing concern about the

2.1 Council area - COVID-19 impact on town centres

economic situation underscored the need for swift action and strategic intervention to address the challenges before they escalated further.

Ards and North Down Borough Council welcomed the financial support under the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme to help communities recover from the widespread effects of the pandemic.

2.2 Letters of Offer

Summarise details of all LOOs and Letters of Variation. [Note first LOOs for Tranche 1 were issued to Councils July 2020. Second LOOs were issued Oct 2020 to include Tranche 2 funding. Letters of Variation issued Dec 2020 for further additional grant funding. Councils to input any further LOVs].

A Letter of Offer for Tranche 1 funding package was received by the Council from DfC on the 28 July 2020, allocation of funding awarded was £561,000.00, for the period 26 July 2020 to 31 March 2021.
(£504,000.00 DfC | £57,000.00 DAERA)

A Letter of Offer for Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 funding package combined was received by the Council from DfC on the 28 October 2020, allocation of funding awarded was £1,580,000, for the period 27 July 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Source	Type	Focus	Tranche 1 (£k)	Tranche 2 (£k)
DfC	Capital	Urban towns and cities (i.e. population of 5000 and above).	£504,000	£504,000
DAERA	Capital	Rural settlements	£57,000	£57,000
DfI	Capital	Blue/Green Infrastructure projects	-	£398,000
DfC	Revenue	Programme delivery and promotion	-	£60,000
Totals			£561,000	£1,019,000

A Letter of Variance was received by the Council 08 December 2020 from DfC to inform additional funding had been allocated. The total funding package was increased from £1,580,000 to £1,751,000.

2.2 Letters of Offer

Source	Type	Focus	Tranche 1 (£k)	Tranche 2 (£k)	Additional Funding – Business Grant Schemes
DfC	Capital	Urban towns and cities (i.e. population of 5000 and above).	£504,000	£504,000	£50,000
DAERA	Capital	Rural settlements	£57,000	£57,000	£121,000
DfI	Capital	Blue/Green Infrastructure projects	-	£398,000	-
DfC	Revenue	Programme delivery and promotion	-	£60,000	-
Totals			£561,000	£1,019,000	£171,000

The Letter of Offer sets out the financial offer, the conditions of such, the Council's responsibilities, the objectives, outputs, and outcomes.

Due to unprecedented challenges presented by the pandemic, such as lockdowns and imposed restrictions, the Council was unable to fulfil the delivery of the programme within the funding period. The Department recognised the efforts to ensure delivery by the Council and was aware that in some areas this was beyond the control of the Council.

A series of extensions were permitted to the original funding period:

The Council received notification from DfC on the 22 March 2021 the period of funding would be extended from 31 March 2021 to 30 September 2021.

The Council received notification from DfC on the 15 March 2022 the period of funding would be extended to 30 September 2022.

The Council received notification from DfC on the 04 August 2022 the period of funding would be extended to 31 March 2023.

The Council received notification from DfC on the 30 October 2022 the period of funding would be extended to 31 December 2023.

The Council received notification DfC on the 26 January 2024 the period of funding would be extended to 31 March 2023.

The programme was delivered between the period 27 July 2020 to 31 March 2024.

2.3 Governance Arrangements

Each Council was required to establish a Project Board, meeting monthly, to include Departmental Representatives. Councils were also required to set up a steering group to include local representation. Outline how this was achieved.

Task and Finish Working Groups were set up for each town, city, and the rural villages. The Working Groups played a critical role in identifying projects for delivery, monitoring progress, and ensuring that government funding is spent effectively in alignment with the programme objectives. By closely monitoring spend, progress, and delivery of projects, these groups helped to ensure accountability, efficiency, and transparency in the use of the allocated funds. This structured approach allows for the successful implementation of projects and initiatives aimed at supporting businesses and residents during the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Setting up Task and Finish Working Groups for each town, city, and the villages was a strategic approach by the Council to ensure the funding was allocated with the interests of businesses and residents in mind. These groups brought together diverse stakeholders to collaborate, provide expertise, and make informed decisions regarding the distributions of funds. By involving the relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process, the Council were able to better tailor the support to meet the needs of the community and promote effective recovery efforts.

Urban Task and Finish Working Groups were established for Bangor, Comber, Donaghadee, Holywood and Newtownards. The groups comprised of representatives from the Chambers of Commerce/Trade, Community Groups, elected members, DfC officials, DfI officials and council officers.

It should be noted the Urban Task and Finish Working Groups merged into Advisory Groups during the programme delivery. Membership remained the same with additional stakeholders invited to participate.

Dates of meetings held:

Bangor:

10/11/20 | 24/11/20 | 27/01/21 | 28/4/21 | 17/08/21 | 23/09/21 | 25/11/21 | 22/03/22
| 14/06/22 | 23/02/23 | 15/08/23 | 28/11/23 | 25/03/24

Holywood:

11/11/20 | 20/01/21 | 21/04/21 | 06/05/21 | 21/09/21 | 01/12/21 | 29/03/22 |
09/06/22 | 04/10/22 | 28/02/23 | 09/08/23 | 19/12/23 | 28/03/24

Newtownards:

04/11/20 | 13/01/21 | 03/03/21 | 20/04/21 | 04/04/21 | 15/06/21 | 28/09/21 |
23/11/21 | 23/03/22 | 02/03/23 | 29/08/23 | 23/11/23 | 19/03/24

Donaghadee:

17/11/20 | 28/01/21 | 29/04/21 | 27/09/21 | 29/11/21 | 24/03/22 | 16/06/22 |
10/10/22 | 20/02/23 | 08/08/23 | 12/12/23 | 26/03/24

Comber:

12/11/20 | 14/01/21 | 22/04/21 | 13/09/21 | 06/12/21 | 28/03/22 | 08/06/22 |
03/10/22 | 21/02/23 | 10/08/23 | 13/12/23 | 20/03/24

2.3 Governance Arrangements

The Rural Task and Finish Group comprised of representatives from the rural business community, officials from DfC, elected members and council officers.

Dates of meetings held:

09/11/20 | 14/02/21 | 02/03/21 | 20/07/21 | 07/09/21

-Council Reporting

The monthly Council meetings, attended by elected members and council officers approximately 10 times per year served as a crucial platform for approval and implementation discussions. These meetings facilitate transparency and accountability by providing update on the progress of the programme, sharing insights and the minutes from the Task and Finish/ Advisory Group meetings. By sharing information, the Council ensures effective oversight and alignment with the objectives of the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme.

-Engagement with Government Officials

Regular online meetings, site visits where possible, and diverse modes of communication were utilised to maintain engagement and co-ordination between all parties involved. This flexible approach allowed for ongoing communication, feedback, and oversight, ultimately contributing to the successful implementation of the programme and alignment with both the objectives of the programme and the priorities of the Council and the department.

2.4 Establishing an Action Plan

How did Council undertake stakeholder engagement to develop, agree and oversee delivery of your Action Plan?

Collaborating with the Task and Finish Groups, the Council actively engaged in developing the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Action Plan for addressing key concerns and utilising the funding programme effectively. Through meetings that encouraged discussions on areas needing attention, identifying necessary actions, and exploring how the funding could support addressing these issues, the Council ensured the Action Plan aligned with the needs and priorities of the local communities and businesses, and the objectives of the funding programme. This collaborative approach allowed for a comprehensive strategy to be developed, leveraging available resources to make a meaningful impact on the challenges faced within the towns, city, and villages.

The challenging times faced by each town, city, and village during the pandemic led to dynamic shifts in the Action Plan. Initially launched amidst economic uncertainties, the Action Plans were tailored to respond to the prevailing situation.

As lockdown restrictions eased and the economy transitioned into a recovery phase, the needs of the towns, city, and villages evolved, prompting adjustments to the projects within the Action Plan. This adaptive response ensured that the projects remained relevant and aligned with the changing circumstances, enabling effective support for the recovery and revitalisation efforts in each locality.

The evolution of the projects throughout the programme's delivery was a testament to the flexibility and responsiveness of the funding bodies.

Changes to the Action Plan were undertaken in collaboration with the designated Task and Finish Recovery Groups/ Advisory Groups, ensuring alignment with the objectives of the programme.

Approval for variances was sought from the department, reflecting a structured and consultative approach to adapting the programme to better address the changing dynamics and the requirements in each town, city, and village. This co-ordinated effort facilitated the successful implementation of projects that remained reflective of the current challenges and opportunities within each town, city, and village.

2.5 Council COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme Action Plan

Opportunity to provide any strategic commentary on your Action Plan. Detail will be provided at Section 3.

The division of the Action Plan into four distinct strands provided a clear framework for addressing various aspects of economic recovery and place revitalisation.

The focus on Business Recovery Support, Physical Intervention & Streetscape Projects, Support Local Initiatives, and Sustainable & Active Travel Projects underscored the multifaceted approach taken to bolster local economies, enhance urban and rural landscapes, engage communities, and promote sustainable modes of transportation.

By delineating these key areas, the Action Plan could effectively target different aspects, thereby fostering an all-round, comprehensive strategy for rejuvenating the towns, city, and villages – creating resilient and vibrant communities.

The rigorous screening process of the Action Plan ensured that only projects demonstrating the potential to achieve the programme outcomes were approved. This approach guaranteed that resources were allocated effectively and efficiently to the overarching goals of the programme. By evaluating each project based on its alignment with the desired outcomes, the Action Plan sought to create lasting change in the towns, city, and villages recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section 3: Action Plan Projects

Councils to summarise the various projects delivered through their Action Plan. Councils may edit the categories provided as necessary to add boxes, amend headings to fit their approach and their action plan.

The project-specific KPIs/targets column should set out target numbers, quantities, usage – eg number of events, items, grants, usage of vacant units or sites.

3.1 Grant Based Business Support	Project-specific KPIs or targets	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not
Urban Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme.	Deliver a minimum of £500K grants to businesses across the towns and city within the Ards and North Down borough	<p>Fully achieved.</p> <p>Grants of up to £2,500 to businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements to their properties in order to assist them to continue to operate, improve their business and to ensure the health and safety of their employees and their customers in response to the current impact and recovery of COVID-19.</p> <p>Over £700K value of grants distributed throughout the urban areas under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme.</p>
Rural Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme	Deliver a minimum of £150K grants to businesses across the villages within the Ards and North Down borough	<p>Fully achieved.</p> <p>Grants of up to £2,500 to businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements to their properties in order to assist them to continue to operate, improve their business and to ensure the health and safety of their employees and their customers in response to the current impact and recovery of COVID-19.</p> <p>Over £160K value of grants distributed throughout the rural areas under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme.</p>
Comment		

3.1 Grant Based Business Support	Project-specific KPIs or targets	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not
<p>Grants to the total value of £876,044.50 was distributed to businesses within the urban and rural areas of the Ards and North Down, 34% increase above target.</p> <p>These grants helped businesses to implement necessary safety measures to protect their employees and customers whilst also allowing them to gradually reopen and recover financially. These grants can ultimately contribute to the overall economic recovery and stability of our towns, city, and villages.</p>		

3.3 Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects	Project-specific KPIs or targets	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not
<p>Environmental Improvement Scheme, Copelands Court, Donaghadee</p>	<p>Create a usable town centre event space and host a minimum of 1no event within 12 months of completion.</p>	<p>Fully achieved.</p> <p>The environmental improvement scheme at Copelands Court, Donaghadee, created a safe and welcoming space to accommodate bespoke events with an events mini pillar and performance space. The scheme also included tree planting, improved lighting, and public art reflective of the town’s history.</p> <p>The works improved safety and accessibility with resurfacing, drainage solutions and an improved layout.</p> <p>A successful public event was held, 11 February 2023, at the new event space, which attracted over 100 people. The event brought a vibrant sense of animation and life to this town centre area.</p>

3.3 Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects	Project-specific KPIs or targets	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not
Minor Environmental Improvement Scheme, Comber	Create a linkage to/from town centre to the greenway.	<p>Fully Achieved</p> <p>This project created a connection from the town centre to the greenway with access to the new cycling infrastructure.</p> <p>The installation of seating and bins significantly enhanced this public space, transforming it into a more inviting and functional environment. Providing adequate seating allows people to rest, socialise, and enjoy the surroundings, making the town more comfortable and engaging.</p>
Environmental Improvement Scheme, Car Park adjacent to Comber Leisure Centre, Comber	<p>Create a welcoming, safe, and inviting town centre location.</p> <p>Installation of infrastructure for EV charging points.</p> <p>Create a usable town centre event space and host a minimum of 1no public event.</p>	<p>Fully Achieved</p> <p>The environmental improvement scheme at the car park adjacent to Comber Leisure Centre provides a safe and accessible linkage to the town centre. The project included resurfacing, improved lighting, drainage solutions and enhanced layout – making the car park feel safer, well-lit, and usable for bespoke events.</p> <p>Installing the infrastructure for electrical vehicle charging points was crucial for futureproofing and accommodating the shift towards electric vehicles.</p> <p>A successful public event was held 24 June 2023 with over 11K visitors. Market research demonstrated that 87% of those surveyed rated the new location as excellent.</p>

3.3 Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects	Project-specific KPIs or targets	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not
		<p>This new and attractive town centre space has provided a place where people can gather and connect, fostering community engagement and revitalising a town centre space.</p>
Subway Improvement Scheme, Hollywood	Deliver an art-led community engagement scheme to enhance the existing subway.	<p>Fully Achieved.</p> <p>The Council worked in partnership with Hollywood Residents Association to revamp the existing subway through the use of imagery, literature and nature, creating a vibrant and friendly thoroughfare and enhancing the visitor experience.</p>
Solar Bins throughout our city and town centres	Installation of a minimum of 10no solar bins.	<p>Fully Achieved.</p> <p>14no solar powered bins were installed in a variety of locations across the urban areas. These solar powered bins can store up to 20-times more waste compared to standard bins, with the ability to send electronic messages when they are ready to be emptied.</p> <p>Strategically placed bins promote cleanliness and proper waste disposal, contributing to a more welcoming, safe, and pleasant atmosphere for residents and visitors.</p>
Village Gateway Signage	Installation of a minimum of 42 bespoke gateway signage	<p>Fully Achieved.</p> <p>42no high quality, bespoke gateway/welcome signs were installed at entrance points to each of the rural settlements. The</p>

3.3 Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects	Project-specific KPIs or targets	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not
		signs welcome visitors to our villages and create a sense of place for the local community.
Parklets (Outdoor Resting Areas) – Bangor, Comber and Newtownards	Installation of a minimum of 5no parklets across the urban areas	<p>Fully Achieved.</p> <p>A total of 7no parklets were installed. Transforming parking spaces into community spaces where residents and visitors can stop, rest, and enjoy our outdoor spaces. The parklets utilise greenery and provide seating to reinvigorate our streets, whilst encouraging active travel.</p>
Enhanced Seating Area, Conway Square, Newtownards	Installation of 16no tables and 8no benches to compliment existing seating.	<p>Fully Achieved.</p> <p>The welcomed addition of 8no bespoke curved benches and 16no chess-style tables create a piazza feel and encourage visitors and residents to increase their dwell times in this historical, focal point of the town centre.</p>
Play Park Enhancement Scheme, Johnny the Jig Play Park, Holywood	Enhance new playpark with supporting infrastructure to include bins, seating and cycling infrastructure.	<p>Fully Achieved.</p> <p>This popular town centre play park was recently renovated with a range of new play equipment, resurfacing and signage.</p> <p>To enhance the renovation, public realm additions were welcomed including 2no picnic tables, 2no benches, 2no litter bins and cycle stands. These additions assist to encourage dwell time,</p>

3.3 Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects	Project-specific KPIs or targets	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not
		encourage active travel, and promote a clean and safe environment.
Lighting Improvement Scheme, Castle Park, Bangor	To upgrade existing lighting with LED lighting.	<p>Fully Achieved.</p> <p>Promoting connectivity and improving linkages to the retail core of the city centre by upgrading the existing lighting with new, improved LED lighting. Enhancing safety and encouraging active travel for residents and visitors.</p>
Mobile Urban Orchard, Holywood	Installation of 1no mobile urban orchard.	<p>Fully Achieved.</p> <p>A unique and movable orchard was installed that is educational, functional, and aesthetically pleasing. Trees play a significant role in improving environmental conditions and make an attractive and pleasant place to live as well as responding to environmental issues with close proximity to the busy Bangor to Belfast A2.</p>
Enhanced Seating Area, Lemon's Wharf, Donaghadee	Installation of additional seating to compliment existing.	<p>Fully Achieved.</p> <p>This popular playpark area in the heart of the town welcomed additional picnic tables for families to rest and dine and double-sided benches where visitors can enjoy views of the town centre and to sea. Providing users of this area additional resting points and facilities to encourage increased dwell time.</p>

3.3 Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects	Project-specific KPIs or targets	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not
Comment		
<p>A range of physical intervention and streetscape improvement projects were delivered. The projects have played a crucial role in the recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 by creating more pedestrian-friendly spaces, supporting local businesses, and encouraging outdoor activities that allow for physical distancing (when required). The projects have not only enhanced the aesthetic appeal but have assisted to boost community engagement, economic growth, and overall well-being, which are all essential components to post-pandemic recovery.</p>		

3.4 Sustainable and Active Travel Interventions	Project-specific KPIs or targets	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not
<p>Cycling Infrastructure to Support Active Travel</p>	<p>To install a range of cycling infrastructure in the towns, city, and villages throughout the borough.</p>	<p>Fully Achieved.</p> <p>High-quality cycle stands, cycle pods, and scooter racks were welcomed in various locations in our city, towns, and villages to support and encourage cycling. The increased demand for green travel will assist to reduce air pollution, enhance health & wellbeing for our residents and visitors, whilst assisting economic recovery.</p>
Comment		
<p>Investing in cycle infrastructure can significantly support recovery by promoting active transportation, reducing reliance on cars, and providing a safer and healthier environment. This approach improves air quality, reduces traffic congestion, and enhances overall public health and wellbeing.</p>		

3.5 Support Local Projects	Project-specific KPIs or targets	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not
City Centre Information Screen, Bangor	Install 1no information point within the city centre	<p>Fully Achieved</p> <p>An interactive touch screen information point was installed in the train & bus station in Bangor City Centre to provide residents and visitors with the latest information about the city, including events, local businesses, transport links and much more. Using the latest technology to promote the city.</p>
Artificial Christmas Tree, Holywood Town Centre	Purchase and installation of 1no artificial Christmas tree	<p>Fully Achieved</p> <p>Reducing our carbon footprint with the welcomed addition of a further artificial Christmas Tree within the town centre. Presenting a modern, appealing, and sustainable Christmas feature to welcome visitors and residents during this peak season.</p>
Floral Sculptures Bangor, Comber, Donaghadee, Holywood and Newtownards	Installation of 5no floral sculptures in each of the towns/city	<p>Fully Achieved</p> <p>Unique, bespoke, 'living sculptures' were created with living, growing grasses and plants installed in each of the towns/city. These unique, horticultural creations were individually themed to represent a key aspect of the history or culture of the area. Giving residents and visitors an opportunity to celebrate our local history and culture.</p>
'Support Local' Marketing Campaign, Borough-wide	Digital and print marketing campaign	<p>Fully Achieved</p>

3.5 Support Local Projects	Project-specific KPIs or targets	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not
	to promote 'Support Local' messaging	The 'Support Local' Campaign was launched in 2020 in collaboration with local businesses and Chambers of Commerce across our city and town centres. Aimed at encouraging our residents to change their shopping habits and support their local businesses.
'Development of the towns/ city' Marketing Campaign	Digital and print marketing campaign to encourage residents and businesses to participate in the development of their towns/city (masterplanning)	Fully Achieved The campaign was launched 2022 across our city and town centres. Aimed at encouraging residents and businesses to participate in the review of their town/city masterplan and help to shape future regeneration/ development.
Comment		
<p>The successful rollout of the 'Support Local' marketing campaign was a mechanism for boosting recovery efforts by promoting local businesses, encouraging community support, and revitalising economic activity.</p> <p>Projects such as the information screen, town centre artificial Christmas tree and floral sculptures assist to support recovery by playing a pivotal role in revitalising the towns/city, encouraging and attracting visitors, and strengthening resilience during difficult times.</p>		

Section 4: Project Objectives, Outcomes and Impacts

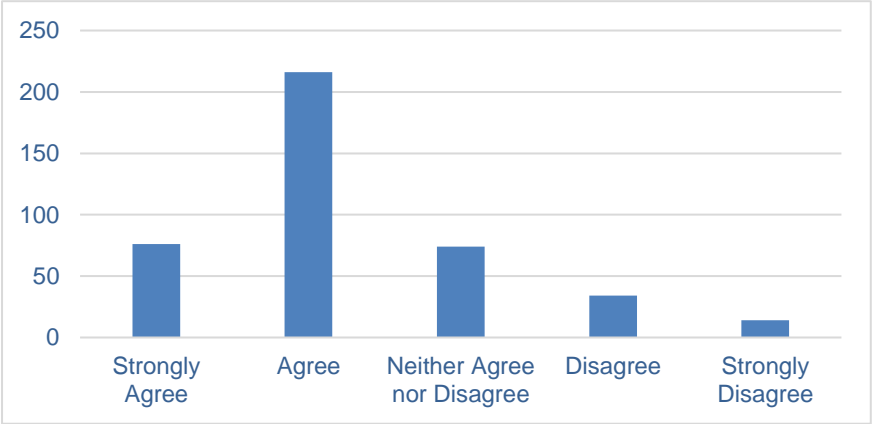
Assess to what extent the programme objectives were achieved through the project. Provide all related evidence, eg surveys, statistics & any baseline data. Where delivery timeframes exceeded that set out in the original objective, summarise delivery completion date & reason for change (more detail can be provided at Section 9).

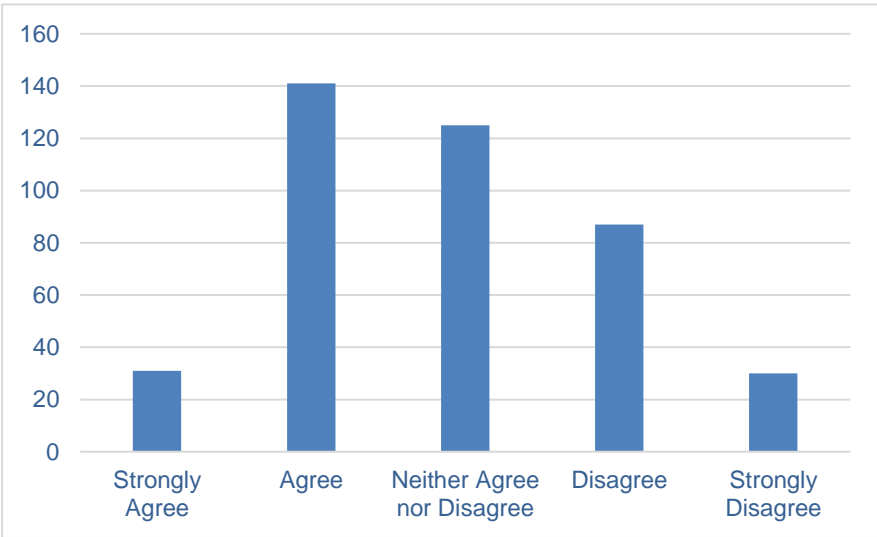
4.1 Governance Objectives	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation
<i>To support each district council to develop a costed COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Plan by September 2020.</i>	Fully Achieved.	<p>A COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Action Plan was formulated and costed by September 2020.</p> <p>The Action Plan was developed throughout the project's lifespan in response to changing circumstances, ensuring that resources were effectively utilised, and projects remained relevant in addressing the evolving needs and priorities during the recovery process.</p>
<i>By August 2020, each district council will have established or identified a suitable stakeholder engagement forum to support the delivery of its COVID-19 Revitalisation Plan.</i>	Fully Achieved.	<p>Task and Finish Working Groups were set up for each town, city, and the rural villages. The Working Groups played a critical role in identifying projects for delivery, monitoring progress, and ensuring that government funding is spent effectively in alignment with the programme objectives. By closely monitoring spend, progress, and delivery of projects, these groups helped to ensure accountability, efficiency, and transparency in the use of the allocated funds. This structured approach allows for the successful implementation of projects and initiatives aimed at supporting businesses and residents during the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Urban Task and Finish Working Groups were established for Bangor, Comber, Donaghadee, Holywood and Newtownards.</p>

4.1 Governance Objectives	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation
		<p>The groups comprised of representatives from the Chambers of Commerce/Trade, Community Groups, elected members, DfC officials, DfI officials and council officers.</p> <p>It should be noted the Urban Task and Finish Working Groups merged to Advisory Groups during the programme delivery. Membership remained the same with additional stakeholders invited to participate.</p> <p>Dates of meetings held:</p> <p>Bangor: 10/11/20 24/11/20 27/01/21 28/4/21 17/08/21 23/09/21 25/11/21 22/03/22 14/06/22 23/02/23 15/08/23 28/11/23 25/03/24</p> <p>Holywood: 11/11/20 20/01/21 21/04/21 06/05/21 21/09/21 01/12/21 29/03/22 09/06/22 04/10/22 28/02/23 09/08/23 19/12/23 28/03/24</p> <p>Newtownards: 04/11/20 13/01/21 03/03/21 20/04/21 04/04/21 15/06/21 28/09/21 23/11/21 23/03/22 02/03/23 29/08/23 23/11/23 19/03/24</p> <p>Donaghadee: 17/11/20 28/01/21 29/04/21 27/09/21 29/11/21 24/03/22 16/06/22 10/10/22 20/02/23 08/08/23 12/12/23 26/03/24</p> <p>Comber: 12/11/20 14/01/21 22/04/21 13/09/21 06/12/21 28/03/22 08/06/22 03/10/22 21/02/23 10/08/23 13/12/23 20/03/24</p>

4.1 Governance Objectives	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation
		<p>The Rural Task and Finish Group comprised of representatives from the rural business community, officials from DfC, elected members and council officers.</p> <p>Dates of meetings held: 09/11/20 14/02/21 02/03/21 20/07/21 07/09/21</p>
<p><i>To support each district council to deliver its COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Plan by March 2021.</i></p>	<p>Fully Achieved.</p>	<p>Ards and North Down Borough Council COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme was successfully completed by the revised end date of March 24. Despite variances to the original timeframes all projects were completed, and the full budget was spent, demonstrating the commitment of all stakeholders in driving the Action Plan forward.</p> <p>With approval for the revised completion date by March 24, resources were effectively utilised to bring about the intended outcomes. The achievement of the Action Plan delivery demonstrates the tangible outcomes in revitalising our towns, city, and villages to support their recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.</p>

4.2 Business Perceptions Objectives	Baseline (where applicable)	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation
Business Surveys			
<p>The Council commissioned consultants, FN Research Ltd, to undertake data collection to assess the achievement of the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme objectives.</p>			
<p>Data collection consisted of two elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business surveys – a survey of businesses within the project areas 2. User surveys – on-street surveys of those using the project areas 			
<p>Data collection took place between the period, Monday 07 August 2023 – Monday 04 September 2023 (4no weeks).</p>			
<p>In addition to the on-street and business surveys, an online survey was available that could be completed by members of the public at any time. The online survey and on-street surveys consisted of the same questions and answers.</p>			
<p>Business surveys contained a total of 11 questions and an area for additional comments. A total of 414 businesses completed a survey.</p>			
<p>A brochure was designed and made available to participants to enable them to understand the variety of projects delivered under the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme.</p>			
<p>In addition to the data collection undertaken by FN Research Ltd, the Council also conducted business surveys with those who received grants under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme. The surveys were completed online following the completion of the funding programme. By engaging in a timely manner following the grant scheme completion, the Council was able to collect effective data to support the evaluation process. A total of 183 businesses completed a survey.</p>			

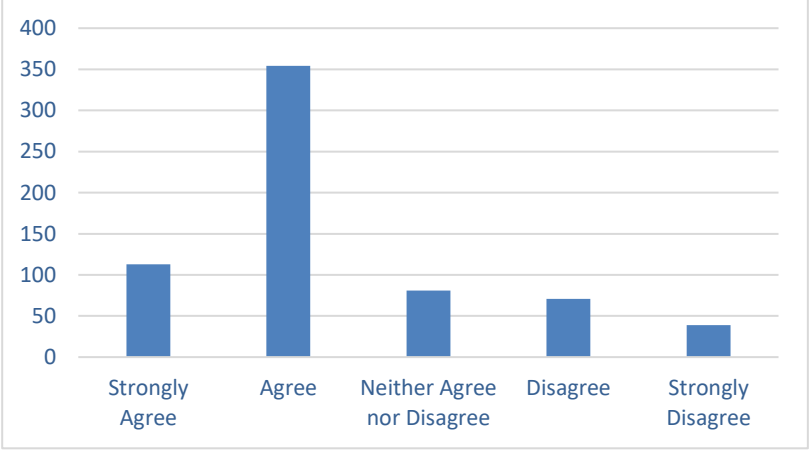
4.2 Business Perceptions Objectives	Baseline (where applicable)	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation												
<p><i>By March 2022, 80% of businesses in scheme areas agree that the improvements to their businesses and other capital purchase projects would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area (by council).</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Partly Achieved</p>	<p>Over 70% of respondents strongly agree or agree that the improvements to their business and other capital purchase projects would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area.</p>  <p>Over 87% of businesses who received grant under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme strongly agree or agree that the improvements to their business and other capital purchase projects would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1137 1214 2018 1378"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Total</th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>64</td> <td>34.97%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>97</td> <td>53.01%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td> <td>18</td> <td>9.84%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Total	Percent	Strongly Agree	64	34.97%	Agree	97	53.01%	Neither Agree nor Disagree	18	9.84%
	Total	Percent													
Strongly Agree	64	34.97%													
Agree	97	53.01%													
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18	9.84%													

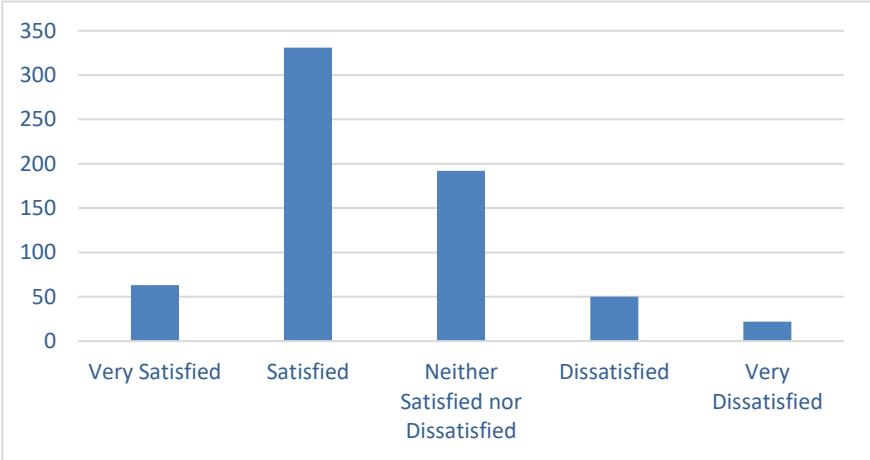
4.2 Business Perceptions Objectives	Baseline (where applicable)	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation												
			<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>3</td> <td>1.64%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.55%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not Answered</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.00%</td> </tr> </table>	Disagree	3	1.64%	Strongly Disagree	1	0.55%	Not Answered	0	0.00%			
Disagree	3	1.64%													
Strongly Disagree	1	0.55%													
Not Answered	0	0.00%													
<p><i>By March 2022, surveys completed by traders indicate that council schemes funded through this Programme will have positively impacted on efforts to see sales figures returning to a level which is at least 70% of levels recorded prior to the public health crisis.</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Achieved</p>	<p>41% of respondents strongly agree or agree that schemes funded through this programme have positively impacted on efforts to see sales figures improve.</p> <p>30% of respondents neither agree nor disagree.</p> <p>28% of respondents strongly disagree or disagree.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Survey Results Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>140</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td> <td>125</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Count	Strongly Agree	30	Agree	140	Neither Agree nor Disagree	125	Disagree	85	Strongly Disagree	30
Response	Count														
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Disagree	85														
Strongly Disagree	30														

4.2 Business Perceptions Objectives	Baseline (where applicable)	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation																					
			<p>Over 75% of businesses who received grant under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme strongly agree or agree that council schemes funded through this Programme have positively impacted on efforts to improve sales figures.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1137 491 2011 826"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="1137 491 1736 539">Option</th> <th data-bbox="1736 491 1865 539">Total</th> <th data-bbox="1865 491 2011 539">Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="1137 539 1736 587">Strongly Agree</td> <td data-bbox="1736 539 1865 587">46</td> <td data-bbox="1865 539 2011 587">25.14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1137 587 1736 635">Agree</td> <td data-bbox="1736 587 1865 635">94</td> <td data-bbox="1865 587 2011 635">51.37%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1137 635 1736 683">Neither Agree nor Disagree</td> <td data-bbox="1736 635 1865 683">33</td> <td data-bbox="1865 635 2011 683">18.03%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1137 683 1736 730">Disagree</td> <td data-bbox="1736 683 1865 730">8</td> <td data-bbox="1865 683 2011 730">4.37%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1137 730 1736 778">Strongly Disagree</td> <td data-bbox="1736 730 1865 778">0</td> <td data-bbox="1865 730 2011 778">0.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1137 778 1736 826">Not Answered</td> <td data-bbox="1736 778 1865 826">2</td> <td data-bbox="1865 778 2011 826">1.09%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Option	Total	Percent	Strongly Agree	46	25.14%	Agree	94	51.37%	Neither Agree nor Disagree	33	18.03%	Disagree	8	4.37%	Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%	Not Answered	2	1.09%
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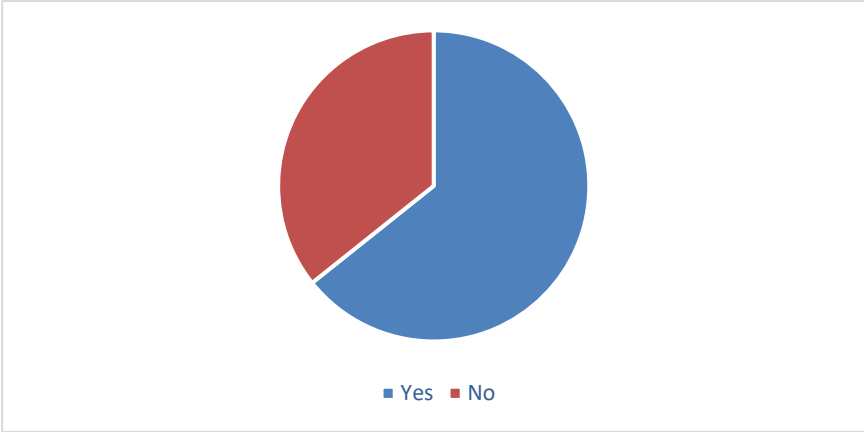
4.3 User Perceptions Objectives	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation
<p>User Surveys</p> <p>The Council commissioned consultants, FN Research Ltd, to undertake data collection to assess the achievement of the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme objectives.</p> <p>Data collection consisted of two elements:</p>		

4.3 User Perceptions Objectives	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation
<p>1. Business surveys – a survey of businesses within the project areas 2. User surveys – on-street surveys of those using the project areas</p> <p>Data collection took place between the period, Monday 07 August 2023 – Monday 04 September 2023 (4no weeks).</p> <p>In addition to the on-street and business surveys, an online survey was available that could be completed by members of the public at any time. The online survey and on-street surveys consisted of the same questions and answers.</p> <p>User surveys contained a total of 8 questions and an area for additional comments. A total of 658 users completed a survey.</p> <p>A brochure was designed and made available to participants to enable them to understand the variety of projects delivered under the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme.</p> <p>In addition to the data collection undertaken by FN Research Ltd, the Council also conducted business surveys with those who received grants under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme. The surveys were completed online following the completion of the funding programme. By engaging in a timely manner following the grant scheme completion, the Council was able to collect effective data to support the evaluation process. A total of 183 businesses completed a survey.</p>		
<p><i>By March 2022, 80% of people using the scheme areas agree that the improvements to the area would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area (by council).</i></p>	<p>Partly Achieved</p>	<p>70% of respondents strongly agree or agree that the improvements to the project area would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the project area.</p>

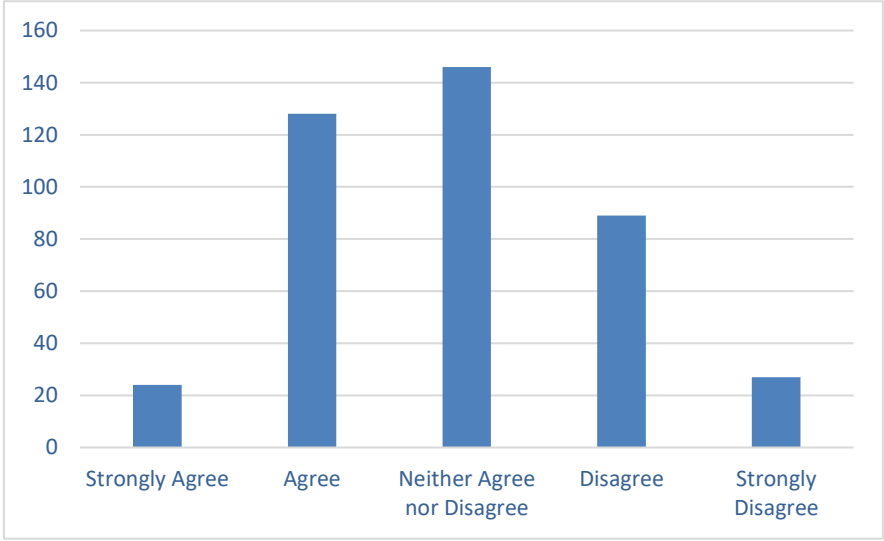
4.3 User Objectives	Perceptions	Extent Achieved fully, partly or not	Explanation
			 <p>The following projects contributed to this objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme (Urban and Rural) >Solar Bins >Floral Sculptures >Donaghadee Copelands Court Environmental Improvement Scheme >Comber Environmental Improvement Scheme (Phase 1 & 2) >Holywood Green Scheme >Parklets >Cycling Infrastructure (Urban and Rural) >Signage scheme (Rural) >Conway Square Seating >Castle Park Lighting Scheme >Donaghadee Seating

4.3 User Perceptions Objectives	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Bangor Digital Information Screen >Holywood Play Park Enhancement Scheme >Holywood Urban Orchard
<p><i>By March 2022, attitudinal surveys indicate 80% of the public are satisfied with the measures taken in the Scheme areas to respond to safety issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic.</i></p>	<p>Partly Achieved</p>	<p>59% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the measures taken in the project area as a response to safety issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>  <p>Over 90% of businesses who received grant under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme were very satisfied or satisfied with the measures taken in the scheme area to respond to safety issues raised by the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>

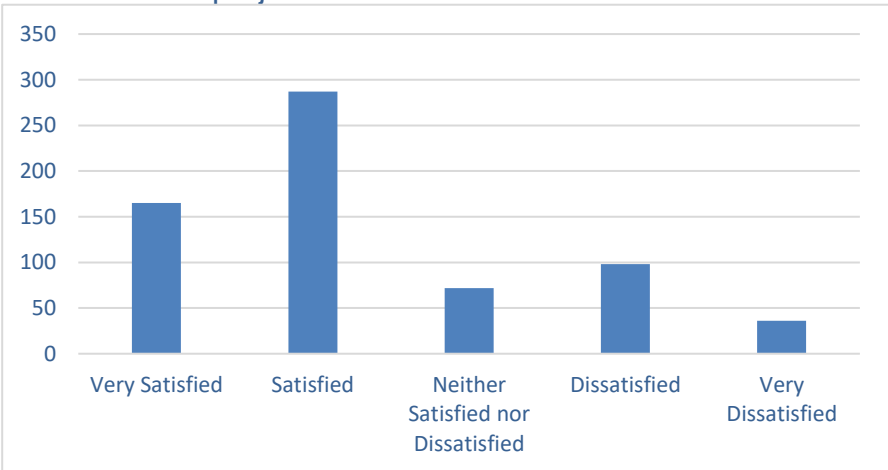
4.3 User Perceptions Objectives	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation		
			Total	Percent
		Very satisfied	97	53.01%
		Satisfied	77	42.08%
		Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	3.83%
		Dissatisfied	2	1.09%
		Very dissatisfied	0	0.00%
		Not Answered	0	0.00%
		<p>The following projects contributed to this objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme (Urban and Rural) >Solar Bins >Donaghadee Copelands Court Environmental Improvement Scheme >Comber Environmental Improvement Scheme (Phase 1 & 2) >Holywood Green Scheme >Parklets >Cycling Infrastructure (Urban and Rural) >Signage scheme (Rural) >Conway Square Seating >Castle Park Lighting Scheme >Donaghadee Seating 		

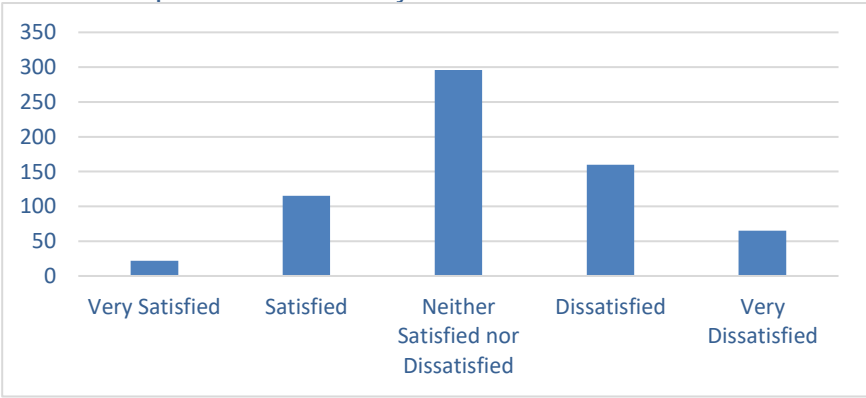
4.3 User Perceptions Objectives	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation
<p><i>By March 2022, attitudinal surveys indicate 80% of the public view the Scheme area positively as a place people would want to live, work, visit and invest.</i></p>	Partly Achieved	<p>The question asked of respondents was - Do you believe the changes in the project area have improved the appearance of the project area?</p> <p>64% of participants surveyed agreed that the changes in the project area have improved the appearance of the project area.</p>  <p>Businesses who received grant under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme were asked if they felt the changes made under the grant scheme improved the appearance of the project area. 73.22% stated yes, 22.40 did not respond and 4.37% stated no.</p>

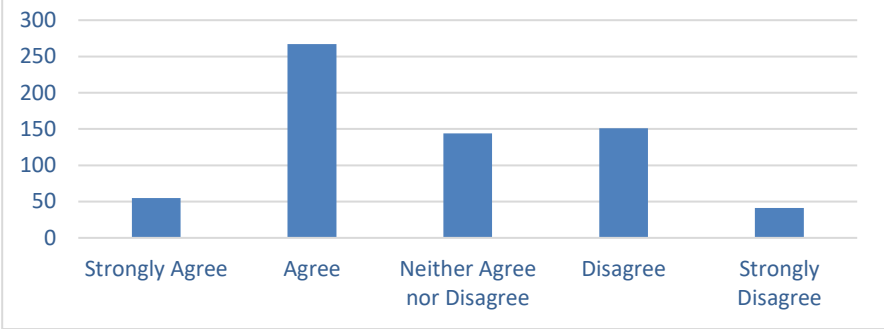
4.3 User Perceptions Objectives	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation
		<p>The following projects contributed to this objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme (Urban and Rural) >Solar Bins >Floral Sculptures >Donaghadee Copelands Court Environmental Improvement Scheme >Comber Environmental Improvement Scheme (Phase 1 & 2) >Holywood Green Scheme >Parklets >Cycling Infrastructure (Urban and Rural) >Signage scheme (Rural) >Conway Square Seating >Castle Park Lighting Scheme >Donaghadee Seating >Bangor Digital Information Screen >Holywood Play Park Enhancement Scheme >Holywood Urban Orchard >Holywood Christmas Lighting Feature

4.4 Footfall Objective	Baseline	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation						
<p><i>By March 2022, council schemes funded through this Programme will have positively impacted on efforts to see footfall levels returning to a level which is at least 70% of levels recorded prior to the public health crisis.</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Achieved</p>	<p>36% of respondents strongly agree or agree that schemes funded through this programme have positively impacted on efforts to see sales levels returning to a level which is at least 70% of levels recorded prior to the public health crisis.</p>  <p>Over 80% of businesses who received grant under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme strongly agreed or agreed that schemes funded through this programme have positively impacted on efforts to see footfall levels returning.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1108 1257 2011 1359"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Total</th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>58</td> <td>31.69%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Total	Percent	Strongly Agree	58	31.69%
	Total	Percent							
Strongly Agree	58	31.69%							

4.4 Footfall Objective	Baseline	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation		
			Agree	90	49.18%
			Neither Agree nor Disagree	28	15.30%
			Disagree	6	3.28%
			Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%
			Not Answered	1	0.55%
			<p>The following projects contributed to this objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme (Urban and Rural) >Solar Bins >Floral Sculptures >Donaghadee Copelands Court Environmental Improvement Scheme >Comber Environmental Improvement Scheme (Phase 1 & 2) >Holywood Green Scheme >Parklets >Cycling Infrastructure (Urban and Rural) >Signage scheme (Rural) >Conway Square Seating >Castle Park Lighting Scheme >Donaghadee Seating >Town Centre Marketing Campaign >Bangor Digital Information Screen >Holywood Play Park Enhancement Scheme >Holywood Urban Orchard >Holywood Christmas Lighting Feature 		

4.5 Travel/Environmental Objectives	Active Extent Achieved fully, partly or not	- Explanation
<p><i>By March 2022, attitudinal surveys indicate 70% of the public are satisfied with walking facilities in the Scheme area.</i></p>	<p>Partly Achieved</p>	<p>68% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the walking facilities in the project area.</p>  <p>The following projects contributed to this objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Donaghadee Copelands Court Environmental Improvement Scheme > Comber Environmental Improvement Scheme (Phase 1 & 2) >Holywood Green Scheme >Castle Park Lighting Scheme >Newtownards Conway Square seating >Donaghadee Seating

4.5 Travel/Environmental Objectives	Active	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation
<p><i>By March 2022, attitudinal surveys indicate 60% of the public agree that they are satisfied with cycling facilities in the Scheme area.</i></p>	<p>Not achieved</p>	<p>>Holywood Play Park Enhancement Scheme</p>	<p>44% of respondents are neither satisfied or dissatisfied with the cycling facilities in the project area.</p> <p>34% of respondents are very dissatisfied or dissatisfied.</p>  <p>The following project contributed to this objective:</p> <p>>Cycling infrastructure (rural and urban)</p>
<p><i>By March 2022, attitudinal surveys indicate 40% of the public agree that measures taken in the Scheme area would encourage people to change</i></p>	<p>Achieved</p>		<p>49% of respondents strongly agree or agree that improvements to the project area will encourage people to make more of their journeys on foot or by bike.</p>

4.5 Active Travel/Environmental Objectives	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation
<p><i>from car use to more environmentally friendly choices such as walking and cycling for journeys of under two miles.</i></p>		 <p>The following projects contributed to this objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Donaghadee Copelands Court Environmental Improvement Scheme >Comber Environmental Improvement Scheme (Phase 1 & 2) >Holywood Green Scheme >Castle Park Lighting Scheme -Cycling Infrastructure (urban and rural) >Newtownards Conway Square Seating >Donaghadee Seating >Holywood Play Park Enhancement Scheme
<p><i>By March 2022, grant fund measures in the Scheme area to demonstrate the benefits of low-emission fuel options.</i></p>	<p>Not Achieved.</p>	<p>This objective was not achieved.</p> <p>The Council were unable to deliver any projects that encouraged low-emission fuel options.</p>

4.5 Travel/Environmental Objectives	Active	Extent Achieved - fully, partly or not	Explanation
<p><i>By March 2022 the scheme area will have an increase in land used for active travel (i.e. extended footways, cycle ways, connecting pathways) which connects people with key services and ensures accessibility for all including those with disabilities.</i></p>	<p>Achieved</p>		<p>The following projects contributed to this objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Donaghadee Copelands Court Environmental Improvement Scheme >Comber Environmental Improvement Scheme (Phase 1 & 2) >Holywood Green Scheme >Castle Park Lighting Scheme >Cycling Infrastructure (urban and rural) >Newtownards Conway Square Seating >Donaghadee Seating >Holywood Play Park Enhancement Scheme <p>Each of the above projects have provided the facilities required to enable active travel and connects users with key services and ensures accessibility for all including those with disabilities.</p>

4.6 Other Key Delivery Outputs & Measures	Number
<p>Number of business grants issued</p>	<p>428 businesses received grant under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme</p>
<p>Number of businesses benefitting from minor capital works by council</p>	<p>428 businesses received grant under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme who benefitted from minor capital works.</p>

4.6 Other Key Delivery Outputs & Measures	Number
Amount spent on minor capital works for businesses by council	The total amount spent on minor capital works for businesses under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme was £876,044.50
Amount spent on other capital purchase projects by council	The total amount spent on other capital purchase projects was £814,955.50
Number of other capital purchase projects by council & type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street/outdoor furniture, planters, heaters, barriers • Hand sanitisation stations • Screens, PA systems • Signage, collection lockers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14no solar bins • 5no floral sculptures • 7no parklets • 74no cycle infrastructure • 42no welcome signs • 14no benches • 16no chess style tables • 1no lighting scheme • 1no digital screen • 5no picnic tables • 6no benches • 2no standard bins • 1no orchard • 1no artificial Christmas tree
Number of Public Realm projects by council	4no minor environmental improvement schemes completed
Amount spent on Public Realm projects by council	The total amount spent on minor environmental improvement schemes was £291,706.08

Section 5: Non-Monetary Benefits & Outcomes

Please consider to what extent these non-monetary benefits & outcomes have been achieved or otherwise in your Council area. If possible show evidence.

5.1 Non-Monetary Benefits	Explanation/Commentary
<p>Improve community safety and confidence to return to small settlements, town and city centres.</p>	<p>The COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation funding package has played a key role in improving community safety and boosting confidence to return to the towns, city, and villages. By allocating sources towards initiatives such as improved infrastructure and capital business improvements, the funding has helped to create a safer environment for residents and visitors. By reinvigorating public spaces, it has encouraged individuals to re-engage with their communities and businesses.</p> <p>Investment in 'Support Local' campaigns have not only increased awareness of the safety measures adapted by businesses but also instilled a sense of trust and reassurance.</p>
<p>Improve economic viability of small settlements, towns and cities.</p>	<p>The concept of the local multiplier effect, where money spent in the local economy generates additional economic benefits has been exemplified through the implementation of the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Scheme in Ards and North Down. By providing over £876K in grants to local businesses through the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme, funds were circulated back into the local economy. This injection of capital not only supported local businesses but also contributed to job creation and economic growth.</p> <p>Improving the public realm through infrastructure upgrades and placemaking initiatives has had a positive impact on economic viability of the borough, these investments have assisted in attracting more visitors. By creating vibrant and accessible public spaces in our towns, city, and village, we have enhanced the appeal of the areas and created a sense of community that fosters economic activity.</p> <p>All of the projects delivered have enhanced the existing services and facilities, this should contribute to increased tourism and job creation, leading to a more prosperous economic environment.</p>

5.1 Non-Monetary Benefits	Explanation/Commentary
<p>Improve accessibility and pedestrian movement in small settlements, town and city centres.</p>	<p>The COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme has significantly contributed to enhancing accessibility and pedestrian movement in the towns, city, and villages by implementing various environmental improvement schemes, capital improvements, and promoting active travel. These initiatives have not only aimed to create safer and more walkable environments but also to encourage sustainable modes of transportation that reduce reliance on cars and promote physical activity. By investing in infrastructure upgrades, such as improved lighting, resurfacing, connection pathways, vibrant thoroughfares and signage, the programme has created more inclusive and user-friendly spaces for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Furthermore, promoting active travel options such as walking and cycling not only benefits public health but also reduces carbon emissions and congestions, leading to a more environmentally friendly community. Overall, these efforts have not only improved accessibility but have also revitalised the towns, city, and villages, making it more conducive for people to move around and engage with their surroundings.</p>
<p>Enhance aesthetics / environment to enable social distancing.</p>	<p>Enhancing the environment to enable social distancing measures was a key objective in the early stages of the programme. The implementation of additional seating, extended pathways, new outdoor spaces (parklets) and infrastructure to encourage outdoor activity has helped residents and visitors to maintain their preferred physical distancing.</p> <p>Through the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme businesses were supported to purchase technology solutions such as contactless payment and ordering systems to help further increase distancing.</p>

5.2 Outcomes	Explanation/Commentary
New and improved physical infrastructure and environment in which opportunity can flourish in economic, social and cultural terms to develop our attractiveness as a home, place of business, and tourist destination.	The COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme provided the Council with the opportunity to invest in new and improved physical infrastructure to create more attractive and thriving towns, city, and villages. Projects such as the Comber Environmental Improvement Scheme and the Copelands Court Environmental Improvement Scheme have enhanced the built environment with upgraded facilities and green spaces. The bespoke parklets and unique floral sculptures added creativity and individuality to our towns and city. These efforts will not only attract businesses and visitors but also promote a sense of pride and belonging among our residents. This programme has provided the opportunity to improve the quality of life for our residents, whilst encouraging tourism and stimulating economic activity; overall making Ards and North Down a desirable place to live, work, visit and invest.
Bring communities together and deliver programmes that target social need through social, economic and physical regeneration of cities, towns and villages.	The COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme provided the Council with the opportunity to foster collaboration among local businesses, local groups, council officers and department officials. Working together to deliver a targeted programme that addressed social need through social, economic, and physical regeneration to have a transformative impact on the overall well-being and prosperity of our borough. This joint-up, collaborative approach can empower individuals, strengthen relationships, and create more resilient communities.
Complete a range of Urban Regeneration Schemes in towns and cities across Northern Ireland to enhance our attractiveness as a home, place of	The implementation of the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme provided the opportunity the borough to significantly enhance its visitor appeal and become a destination that people desire to live, work, visit and invest. The projects delivered under this programme have assisted in revitalising our towns, city, villages. The improved infrastructure and minor environmental improvement schemes have helped to create vibrant places that not only attract residents and businesses but also boost tourism.

5.2 Outcomes	Explanation/Commentary
business, and tourist destination.	
Develop strategic sites across Northern Ireland to provide new and improved physical infrastructure and environment.	The development of our towns, city, and villages through the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme has created a more sustainable and prosperous environment for everyone to enjoy.

Section 6: Programme Funding

Please provide details of costs associated with the programme.

6.1 Project Funding	Amount £
DfC Contribution	£1,118,000.00
DfI Contribution	£398,000.00
DAERA Contribution	£235,000.00
Council Contribution	£0.00
Total	£1,751,000.00

6.2 Project Budget	Amount £
Capital	£1,691,000.00
Revenue	£22,833.50
Professional Fees	£20,194.00
Evaluation Costs	£16,972.50
Total	£1,751,000.00

6.3 Project Spend	Amount £
Capital	£1,691,000.00
Revenue	£22,833.50
Professional Fees	£20,194.00
Evaluation Costs	£16,972.50
Total	£1,751,000.00

Explanation of variation between Budget and Spend
N/A

Commentary
By collaborating with department officials, the council was able to successfully reprofile project budget allocations to accommodate emerging needs, ensuring that the complete budget was allocated effectively.

6.4 COST EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

Please establish relevant cost effectiveness indicators (cost per job, cost per participant, etc) for the project. How do these compare to cost effectiveness indicators for similar projects? Any cost-effectiveness indicators established in the original business case should also be compared to determine whether value-for-money has still been achieved.

Comparison of Cost-Effectiveness Indicators

Actual Cost per Resident

Indicator	Capital cost / Indicator	Indicator £
Cost per resident	£1,580,000 / population of 164,223 (2021)	£9.62

Comparison Cost per Resident

Indicator	Capital cost / Indicator	Indicator £
Belfast City Council	£3,585,000 / population of 348,005 (2021)	£10.30
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council	£1,334,000 / population of 141,316 (2021)	£9.44
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council	£1,088,000 / population of 149,915 (2021)	£7.26
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council	£2,024,000 / population of 220,271 (2021)	£9.19
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council	£1,198,000 / population of 116,994 (2021)	£10.24
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	£1,759,000 / population of 182,634 (2021)	£9.63

The cost-effectiveness achieved by the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Scheme is comparable with those schemes implemented (in parallel) within the other Council areas.

Section 7: Monitoring

What were the monitoring arrangements for this project (for example, who was responsible for monitoring what?).

7.1 Monitoring
<p>The Council and Department for Communities held the responsibility for monitoring the programme, overseeing its implementation, assessing progress, and ensuring compliance with the set objectives and guidance.</p> <p>By proactively monitoring the programme, the Council and DfC were able to track performance, identify any issues or concerns, and make informed decisions.</p> <p>The monitoring role was essential to ensure that the programme remained on track, met its objectives, and delivered the intended outcomes.</p> <p>Council officers were tasked with preparing monitoring returns. Compiling data on the programmes outputs and objectives, and submitting them to the department on a quarterly basis. These reports provided valuable insights into the progress, spend and effectiveness of the programme.</p> <p>The council and the department tracked performance throughout the programme, identifying challenges and making informed decisions to ensure the success of the programme.</p>

Section 8: Management Arrangements

Please provide any further details about how the project’s management arrangements worked.

8.1 Works Duration	
Estimated Start Date of the Project/Programme/Policy	July 2020
Actual Start Date	July 2020
Variation (weeks/months)	N/A
If there is a notable variation between these dates please explain this variation in the box below.	
N/A	

Estimated Completion Date	March 2022
Actual Completion Date	March 2024
Variation (weeks/months)	2 years
If there is a notable variation between these dates please explain this variation in the box below.	
<p>The Council's receipt of two additional lots of funding from the initial letter of offer not only marked a significant financial boost for the programme but also necessitated an extension of the delivery timeline to accommodate the expanded scope of work and resources.</p> <p>Due to unprecedented challenges presented by the pandemic, such as lockdowns and imposed restrictions, the Council was unable to fulfil the delivery of the programme within the funding period. The Department recognised the efforts to ensure delivery by the Council and was aware that in some areas this was beyond the control of the Council.</p>	

8.2 Management Evaluation

Use the boxes below to comment on how well the project/programme/policy ran. This could include:

- **Major project milestones** – what impacted delivery against overarching milestones & deadlines
- **Individual project milestones** – what impacted delivery against individual project elements targets & milestones?
- **Council Management & Governance** – what aspects worked well or what could have been improved? Was the project managed effectively?
- **Risk Management** – how well were the risks managed? Were there any unforeseen risks?
- **Departmental Engagement and Reporting** – Were the arrangements between Council and Departments satisfactory? what aspects worked well or could have been improved?
- **Issues with those contracted to undertake work** - was there an opportunity to influence performance at interim stages?
- **Specialist Advisors** – were specialist advisors used when developing the BC or implementing the project and how well did this work?

8.2.1 Project Management Arrangements - Project Milestones

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on the delivery against project milestones, causing disruptions and delays due to various factors such as lockdown measures, supply chain interruptions, remote working challenges and shifting priorities.

Uncertainties around the pandemic's duration and evolving regulations made it difficult to forecast timelines accurately, leading to adjustments and extension requests.

The Council and the Department worked closely, with both adapting quickly and using technology for virtual collaboration to ensure continuity.

The departments flexibility surrounding the situation played a crucial role in making it easier to reorganise project milestones and revisit delivery plans to mitigate the impacts on project delivery amid unprecedented circumstances.

By adapting quickly to the changing environment brought about by the pandemic, the council and the department were able to reassess timelines and adjust as necessary. This flexibility allowed for a more agile response to disruptions and ensure project success.

8.2.2 Project Management Arrangements – Management & Governance

It was imperative that the Council put in place project management arrangements immediately due to the tight timeframe for securing funding. By swiftly establishing management protocols, the council could optimise the allocation of resources and maximise the impact of the funding to address issues that were presented as a result of the pandemic.

It is important to acknowledge that the challenges faced during the pandemic were of a unique nature and different from the standard regeneration practices the council has experience of. The unprecedented nature of the pandemic brought forth unknown and constantly evolving issues that required innovative and adaptive approaches to project management.

Implementing agile working methods, robust communication strategies, and decision-making processes were key aspects of the successful management of this programme. Additionally, fostering collaboration and managing resources efficiently were critical in navigating the challenges posed and achieving the programme success.

8.2.3 Project Management Arrangements – Departmental Engagement & Reporting

The close collaboration and partnership between the department and the council in delivering the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme was instrumental in its success. The department's proactive involvement in developing the action plan, participating in the Task and Finish Group meetings, maintaining open lines of communication, and providing ongoing support demonstrated a strong commitment.

By working closely together and leveraging each other's expertise and resources, the department and council effectively navigated the challenges posed by the pandemic and ensured the smooth delivery of the programme.

Changes to the programme, including project deliverables, costs and issues were discussed with department officials throughout the programme delivery.

Given the ongoing monitoring of the projects, the Council feel that variance requests below a certain limit could have been handled within the existing framework without the need for formal requests. Variance requests were a time-consuming process of submitting and awaiting approval, it is felt that flexibility and adaptability is required especially in such rapidly changing environments like the pandemic response.

8.2.4 Project Management Arrangements - Third Party Contractors

Managing projects with third-party contractors during the pandemic posed unique challenges such as ensuring health and safety protocols were followed, managing remote working communications, and dealing with supply chain disruptions.

Effective communication, regular contact and flexibility were essential in maintaining project success.

The main issue experienced was the disruption to supply chain as this impacted the delivery of works. Proactive measures by the Council and third-party contractors such as establishing alternative suppliers/ solutions, monitoring risk, and maintaining open lines of communication was crucial in mitigating the impact on project delivery.

8.2.5 Risk Management – how well were the risks managed? Were there any unforeseen risks? How were these risks mitigated against?

Risk management was paramount to ensuring the successful delivery of the programme. The council and department worked closely to identify potential risks, such as the changing government regulations, supply chain disruptions, and health and safety concerns, etc, and implement ways to address these challenges,

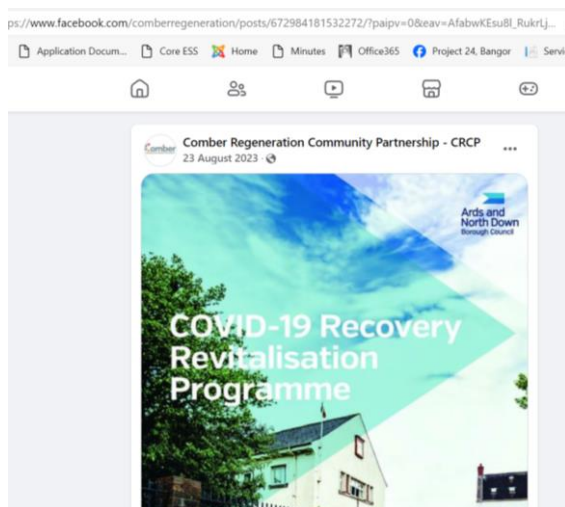
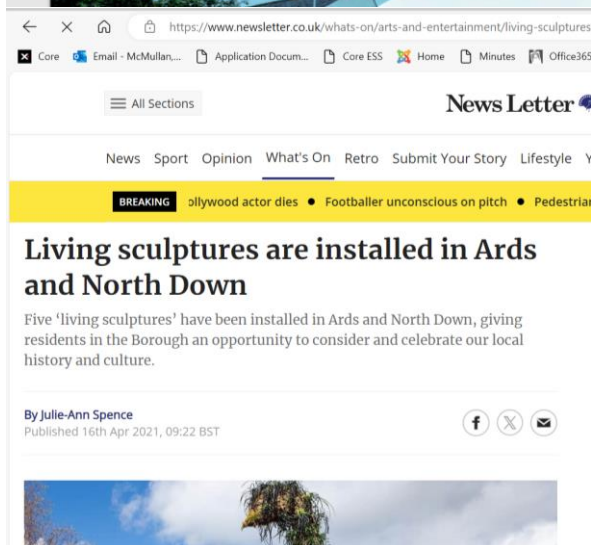
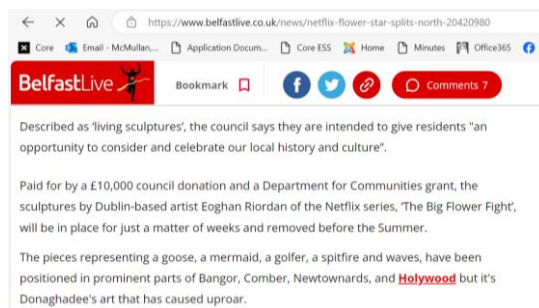
Risks to the programme were highlighted through the monitoring returns. The council and department worked together to address these challenges. Flexibility, adaptability, and clear communication was essential in responding to unexpected events.

A risk register was not implemented for this programme; however, it is evident that risks were managed throughout the programme delivery.

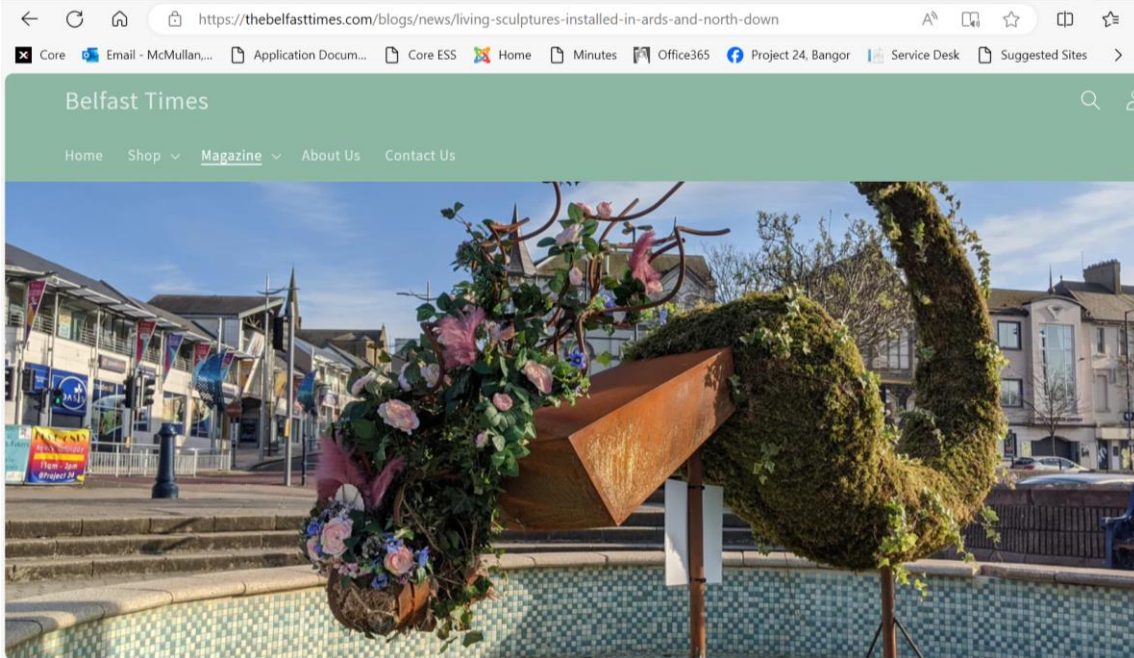
8.3 Publicity

Please provide details of how this programme has been publicised. Methods can include the press, media or social media channels.

The programme and individual projects have received publicity through press, media, web, and social media channels.



8.3 Publicity



https://downnews.co.uk/ards-and-north-down-mayor-says-support-local-business/

With the support of funding from the Department for Communities' Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme, Ards and North Down Borough Council is encouraging everyone to spend their pre-paid card within the Borough as part of an overall Support Local programme, ensuring that our local businesses benefit the most.

 A photograph of Mayor Trevor Cummings, a man in a white shirt and pink tie, wearing a mayoral chain and holding two shopping bags. He is standing in front of a building with a sign that says "ARMY & CUP".

https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/nis-first-solar-powered-compacting-20676709

BelfastLive | Bookmark | Comments

Mayor Trevor Cummings with one of the new solar-powered compacting bins in Bangor. (Image: Graham Baalham-Curry) (Image: Graham Baalham-Curry)

Ards and **North Down** has become the first council area in Northern Ireland to use the latest technology in public bins - with the installation of 22 solar-powered compacting bins across the borough.

Following a successful trial of three similar bins in 2019, the council secured funding from **Stormont's** Department for Communities for more of the state-of-the-art bins in five town centres.

The 240 litre bins have an automatic compacting mechanism, and can store up to 20-times more waste compared to standard bins. They also send an electronic message to the council when they are ready to be emptied, resulting in less collections, lower collection costs and less emissions.

Privacy

https://www.northernnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2021/05/26/news/new-solar-powered-compacting-bin...

THE IRISH NEWS

Northern Ireland

New solar-powered compacting bins installed in Ards and North Down

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https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/environment/northern-ireland-council-leads-the-way-with-solar-powered...

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BREAKING Footballer unconscious on pitch • Pedestrian hit on motorway • Girl, 10, dies in house fire •

Environment

Northern Ireland council leads the way with solar-powered bins

Ards and North Down Borough Council has become the first in Northern Ireland to install solar-powered bins.

By Graeme Cousins
Published 25th May 2021, 18:24 BST

8.3 Publicity

https://www.bangorchamber.co.uk/business-adaptation-and-improvement-grant-scheme-round-2/#:~:text=The%20...
 Core Email - McMullan... Application Docum... Core ESS Home Minutes Office365 Project 24, Bangor Service Desk Suggested Sites Other favori

Bangor
Chamber of Commerce

about member benefits & join blog contact let's keep it local awards member rewards

The Department for Communities and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs are funding a second round of the Business Adaptation & Improvement Grant Scheme.

This scheme covers all businesses across the Borough, now including the businesses outside the Town Centre boundary areas.

The Business Adaptation & Improvement Grant Scheme will provide financial assistance to businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements to their properties assisting them to continue to operate, improve their business and to ensure the health and safety of their employees and their customers in response to the current impact and recovery of Covid-19.

The maximum grant of £2,500 is available per application.

Applications open on Monday 18 January 2021. The deadline for receipt of applications is 12noon on Monday 1 February 2021.

All information available at:

Issue 2022 - BT22 - BT23

FREE THE ARDS ADVERTISER Support Local

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SHOWROOM OPENING HOURS
Monday 9am-5pm, Tuesday 9am-3pm
Wednesday-Friday 9am-5pm
Closed for Lunch 12-1:30pm daily

Supporting our vibrant rural communities
Local businesses benefit from Business Adaptation and Improvement Grant Scheme. In 2020 Ards and North Down Borough Council was awarded funding from the Department for Communities and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for the implementation of a Business Adaptation and Improvement Grant Scheme.

The aim of the scheme is to provide financial assistance for businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements to their properties in order to assist them to continue to operate, improve their business and to ensure the health and safety of their employees and their customers in response to the current impact and recovery of Covid-19. The scheme covers all businesses across the Borough, now including the businesses outside the Town Centre boundary areas.

Council also delivered a number of projects which were funded under the scheme. These included the installation of new street lighting in the town centre, the installation of new street lighting in the town centre, the installation of new street lighting in the town centre, the installation of new street lighting in the town centre.

https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/new-parklets-approved-enhance-bangor-25020108

Core Email - McMullan... Application Docum... Core ESS Home Minutes Office365 Project 24, Bangor Service Desk Sign

News Belfast News Ards and North Down Borough Council

New parklets approved to enhance Bangor and Newtownards

New public seating space has been approved in car parking spaces and on pavements

By Michael Kenwood Local democracy reporter

21:12, 14 SEP 2022 UPDATED 10:25, 17 SEP 2022

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Ards and North Down Borough Council

18 September 2020

Funding Opportunity - Grant increased up to £2,500

A new grant scheme to support the economic recovery of local businesses is now open. The scheme has been provided by the #DepartmentforCommunities (DFC) for town centres and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for rural villages and small settlements.

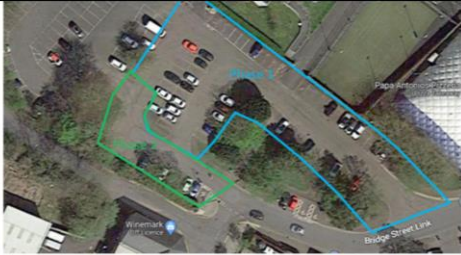
The Business Adaptation & Improvement Grant Scheme will provide financial assistance to businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements... See more

43 82

Like Comment Share

8.3 Publicity

https://www.constructionireland.ie/construction-news/294850/comber-car-park-to-close-for-environr



Work is progressing well on an environmental improvement scheme at Comber Leisure Centre Car Park in County Down.

A phased closure of the car park will take place from Wednesday 08 to Friday 17 March to complete the works.

Since January, contractors have been working on an environmental improvement scheme at the car park located adjacent to Comber Leisure Centre. They have worked to minimise disruption as far as possible by

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https://www.farminglife.com/business/new-location-for-comber-earlies-food

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News Lifestyle Food and Drink Retro Submit Your Story Newsletter

Business

New location for Comber Earlies Food Festival!

A brand new location, live music, cookery demos and more will make this year's Comber Earlies Food Festival bigger and better than ever as Comber celebrates its famed potato on Saturday 24 June.


By The Newsroom
Published 19th Jun 2023, 08:00 BST

f x e

https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=183981443393947

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From Parking Bay to "PARKLET"



https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=604519011470967

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As part of Covid Recovery
81 businesses and organisations
benefitted from the Business Adaptation and Improvement Grant Scheme

Let's hear from just a few...

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Supporting our vibrant rural communities In 2020 Ards and North Down Borough Council was awarded funding from the Department for...

Overview Comments

Supporting our vibrant rural communities

In 2020 Ards and North Down Borough Council was awarded f from the Department for Communities and the Department fo Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for the implementa a Business Adap...

See more

Most rele

Boom Studios
This fund really helped us! Thank-you

1 y Like Reply

Write a comment...

Section 9: Lessons Learnt & Recommendations

What lessons can be learned from this evaluation? Please include any recommendations that Government should consider.

9.1 Lessons learnt

To inform the Post Project Evaluation, a Lessons Learnt Workshop took place with relevant Council officers and DfC officials on Tuesday 31 October 2023.

The following areas of discussion took place:

Partnership Working Model

The success of the partnership working model between the various departments and the council was recognised for its numerous benefits, including improved communication and collaboration, increased efficiency in programme delivery and effectiveness in managing project issues.

Working together allowed partners to leverage each other's strengths, share responsibilities and achieve the programme's objectives more effectively. Additionally, the partnership approach has built trust and mutual understanding, leading to better outcomes.

Variance Requests

Streamlining the process for variance requests will improve efficiency and reduce administrative requirements in future programmes. By setting a predetermined amount where variances are not required, the Council can save time and resources. This approach allows for greater flexibility while still ensuring accountability.

Statutory Approvals

During the programme delivery there were times where statutory approvals were required from funding partners (DfI), despite having the same shared goal there were challenges in obtaining the approvals. It is important that all partners participate in communication and address concerns proactively. The attainment of the necessary approvals is essential in ensuring programme delivery.

Programme Risk Register

9.1 Lessons learnt

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the project team did not create and maintain a programme risk register throughout the project delivery, although risks were still managed. However, it is recommended to maintain a risk register to ensure effective risk control and ensure that potential risks are identified and mitigated proactively.

The main lesson learned from this project is the importance of ensuring post project surveys are completed at key stages to demonstrate project outcomes;

Achievement of Programme Objectives

It should be realised that although some of the programme objectives were not fully achieved, it is felt that the timing of the surveys impacted this. It is suggested that surveys completed at the time of completion for each project would provide a more accurate and timely assessment of public perception. Conducting surveys during each project's completion phase would allow for a more nuanced understanding of the impact and effectiveness of each project, rather than relying on a single, end-of-programme survey that may not capture the evolving nature of public perception. Suggested that surveys should be completed at key stages to gather valuable feedback and insights, which can inform decision-making and improve project outcomes.

9.2 Recommendations

Adopting a standardised, joint-up approach for all future funding activities is a strategic recommendation that can promote greater alignment, efficiency, and collaboration among all partners. By consolidating funding, the council can streamline coordination, enhance communication, and leverage collective resource to achieve the shared objectives more effectively.

Implementing future funding under this joint-up approach not only enhances collaboration but also presents a positive image to the public. This approach can enhance public trust, showcase a shared vision for the future, instil public confidence and promote collaboration in tackling regeneration/ placemaking challenges.

Supporting Evidence

- COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Action Plan
- COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme Brochure

Unclassified

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ITEM 8**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	05 September 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	12 August 2024
File Reference	160135
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: 348
Subject	Update on Village Plan Engagement Process
Attachments	

Background

Members will be aware Regeneration officers have been tasked to work with local rural communities to create new Village Plans, as the current plans are either nearing expiration or have expired.

Engagement Process

The development of the new Village Plans involves a comprehensive engagement process which began in May 2024 and is scheduled to conclude at the end of September 2024.

The Village Plan engagement process is designed to gather a diverse range of input through various methods, including public workshops, involvement of community groups and local schools, engagement at public events and activity groups, conducting on-street surveys and offering an online survey. This multifaceted approach ensures that all community members are provided with an opportunity to share their views and contribute to the development of their Village Plans.

Not Applicable

Local School Engagement

Officers visited local schools within the villages to conduct interactive workshops with a drawing competition aimed at engaging the young people. This initiative not only encouraged creativity among students but provided them with a platform to express their ideas and contribute to the Village Plan, fostering a sense of ownership and involvement in their development.

An age-friendly survey was created to enable the pupils to share their views, opinions and ideas for the future of their village. A total of 321 surveys were completed.

The Mayor, Councillor Alistair Cathcart, also hosted an Awards Event held in the City Hall, on the evening of Tuesday 25th June 2024 for the winners of the drawing competition and their families and teachers. Each winner was presented with a certificate and prize. The winning drawings will feature in the new Village Plans and all the ideas submitted by the pupils will be reviewed as part of the Village Plan process.

Public Workshops

Public engagement workshops were arranged for each village as an opportunity for residents and community members to voice their ideas, discuss their concerns, and make suggestions for improvement (short-medium-long term).

Despite the varying attendance numbers at the workshops, they have been vital in gathering local insights and opinions, ensuring the community voice is heard and considered in shaping the plans.

At the time of this report the following public engagement workshops have been conducted:

Village	Date & Time	Location	No of Attendees
Ballyhalbert	Wednesday 05 June 4pm-6pm	Talbot House	14
Ballywalter	Monday 10 June 4-6pm	Village Hall	6
Carrowdore	Wednesday 12 June 4-6pm	Carrowdore Community Centre	4
Helens Bay & Crawfordsburn	Tuesday 18 June 4-6pm	Crawfordsburn Primary School	5
Kircubbin	Tuesday 18 June 4-6pm	Kircubbin Community Centre	25
Cloughey	Thursday 20 June 4-6pm	The Pavilion	32
Conlig	Monday 24 June 4-6pm	Conlig Community Centre	20

Not Applicable

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Ballygowan	Tuesday 25 June 4-6pm	Ballygowan Community Centre	14
Greyabbey	Thursday 27 June 4-6pm	Greyabbey Village Hall	12
Lisbane & Lisbarnett	Monday 01 July 4-6pm	Lisbane Community Hub	7
Groomsport	Tuesday 09 July 4-6pm	Groomsport Boat House	43
Killinchy	Thursday 08 August 4-6pm	Killinchy Community Hall	32

The following workshops are scheduled:

Millisle | Tuesday 20 August 4-6pm | Millisle Community Hub

Portavogie | Thursday 22 August 4-6pm | Portavogie Community Centre

Portaferry | Wednesday 28 August 4-6pm | Market House

Additional Public Workshop Sessions

In response to public feedback regarding the timing of the public workshops, which did not suit everyone, officers are actively scheduling additional workshops at more convenient times, such as Saturday mornings. These will be consolidated for three to four villages at central locations instead of holding them in each individual village. The impact of these additional public workshop sessions and consolidated locations will be reviewed and assessed to potential steer the format of future public workshop sessions or other engagement methodologies completed by Regeneration officers.

Community Group Engagement

Prior to the official engagement process, officers met with the community groups in each village facilitating discussions about the engagement process and fostering support from the groups.

As previously reported, a series of workshops will be delivered with each of the Community Groups throughout the process:

Workshop 1 – Shaping the New Village Plan

Workshop 2 – Discussion on findings/ outcomes – prioritisation of projects.

Workshop 3 – Review of Draft Document

Officers are currently scheduling the first in the series of workshops to take place in September, with the next workshop to follow in between October and November 2024.

Throughout the engagement process, officers maintain ongoing communication with community groups via a monthly ezine, which offers updates on upcoming events, outlines progress made, and highlights opportunities for participation, this consistent

Not Applicable

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outreach not only keeps the community groups informed but also encourages active involvement and foster a sense of connection among members.

Attendance at Public Events and Local Activity Groups

To maximise outreach and enhance community engagement officers have and will continue to attend a variety of events throughout August and September, for example Artisan Market in Greyabbey and Tide and Turf in Portavogie. This approach aims to connect with a diverse audience, providing opportunities for residents to engage directly, ask questions, and participate in discussions, ultimately fostering stronger relationships within the community.

In September, local activity groups that paused during the summer will reconvene, and officers will actively engage with them to incorporate their insights and ensure that their views are heard and valued.

On Street Surveys

The ongoing on-street surveys across the villages during the Summer will extend until the end of September, allowing officers to enhance the awareness of the Village Plans, engage with the community and gather valuable feedback from residents.

Online Survey

A user-friendly online survey has been created to enable respondents to share their opinions conveniently with the intention of enabling broader participation and capturing diverse perspectives efficiently.

As of this report, a total of 325 online surveys have been submitted, reflecting active engagement from the community in providing their feedback.

Ballygowan	22	6.77%
Ballyhalbert	33	10.15%
Ballywalter	21	6.46%
Carrowdore	8	2.46%
Conlig	23	7.08%
Cloughey	65	20.00%
Greyabbey	29	8.92%
Groomsport	27	8.31%
Helen's Bay & Crawfordsburn	13	4.00%
Killinchy	27	8.31%
Kircubbin	22	6.77%
Lisbarnett & Lisbane	11	3.38%
Millisle	9	2.77%
Portavogie	5	1.54%
Portaferry	10	3.08%

It should be noted that the surveys are in addition to the feedback received at the Public Workshops.

Not Applicable

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Marketing & Promotion

A marketing and promotion campaign is actively supporting the engagement process by generating awareness, providing key information and encouraging participation.

The campaign messaging is **Your Village | Your Voice**.
Supported by the strapline **Shaping the Future**.

A dedicated email address has been created village.plans@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk and a dedicated webpage within the new Council website www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/villageplans provides timely updates.

Next Steps

The public engagement process will remain open until the end of September 2024, after which officers will analyse the collected data from the various activities and compile reports for each village.

Following the presentation of the reports to the community groups for project prioritisation, a subsequent report will be prepared and submitted to the Council for further evaluation.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Unclassified

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ITEM 9**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	05 September 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Finance
Date of Report	15 August 2024
File Reference	FIN45
Legislation	Section 5 Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Prosperity Directorate Budgetary Control Report - July 2024
Attachments	

The Prosperity Directorate's Budgetary Control Report covers the 4-month period 1 April to 31 July 2024. The net cost of the Directorate is showing an underspend of £45k (4.1%) – box A on page 3.

Explanation of Variance

The Prosperity Directorate's budgetary performance is further analysed on page 3 into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£21k favourable	3
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£8k favourable	3
Report 4	Income	£15k favourable	3

Not Applicable

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Explanation of Variance

The Prosperity Directorate's overall variance can be summarised by the following table: -

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	(21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development – (£33k) mainly vacant posts. Tourism – 12k. mainly due to staff costs for Tourism Events. Offset by favourable goods & services and income variances.
Goods & Services		
Tourism	(6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of small underspends.
Income		
Economic Development	(9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bangor Marina – 2023/24 income finalisation slightly higher than the estimate used for 2023/24 accounts.
Tourism	(7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Experiences – (£3k). Tourism Events – (£3k).

Not Applicable

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REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT						
Period 4 - July 2024						
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance	
	£	£	£	£	%	
Prosperity						
700 Prosperity HQ	50,584	51,100	(516)	154,000	(1.0)	
720 Economic Development	396,189	440,000	(43,811)	1,396,000	(10.0)	
740 Tourism	608,215	608,500	(285)	1,868,200	(0.0)	
Total	1,054,988	1,099,600	A (44,612)	3,418,200	(4.1)	
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Prosperity - Payroll						
700 Prosperity HQ	47,727	47,600	127	143,300	0.3	
720 Economic Development	267,255	300,100	(32,845)	912,800	(10.9)	
740 Tourism	344,456	332,700	11,756	987,600	3.5	
Total	659,438	680,400	B (20,962)	2,043,700	(3.1)	
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Prosperity - Goods & Services						
700 Prosperity HQ	2,857	3,500	(643)	10,700	(18.4)	
720 Economic Development	260,833	263,100	(2,267)	974,200	(0.9)	
740 Tourism	284,648	290,100	(5,452)	916,100	(1.9)	
Total	548,337	556,700	C (8,363)	1,901,000	(1.5)	
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Prosperity - Income						
700 Prosperity HQ	-	-	-	-		
720 Economic Development	(131,898)	(123,200)	(8,698)	(491,000)	(7.1)	
740 Tourism	(20,889)	(14,300)	(6,589)	(35,500)	(46.1)	
Totals	(152,787)	(137,500)	D (15,287)	(526,500)	(11.1)	

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Unclassified

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ITEM 10**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	05 September 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Finance
Date of Report	15 August 2024
File Reference	FIN45
Legislation	Section 5 Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Place Directorate Budgetary Control Report - July 2024
Attachments	

The Place Directorate's Budgetary Control Report covers the 4-month period 1 April to 31 July 2024. The net cost of the Directorate is showing an underspend of £28k (5.6%) – box A on page 3.

Explanation of Variance

The Place Directorate's budget performance is further analysed on page 3 into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£37k favourable	3
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£11k adverse	3
Report 4	Income	£2k favourable	3

Not Applicable

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Explanation of Variance

The Place Directorate's overall variance can be summarised by the following table: -

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	(37)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacant posts mainly within Regeneration.
Goods & Services		
Regeneration	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small overspends within Urban and Rural Development. Offset by favourable payroll and income variances.
Income		
Regeneration	(2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project 24 rates rebate.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council notes this report.

Not Applicable

REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT					
Period 4 - July 2024					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Place					
800 Place HQ	127,307	128,700	(1,393)	267,000	(1.1)
810 Regeneration	232,134	250,600	(18,466)	1,128,800	(7.4)
820 Strategic Capital Development	116,980	125,300	(8,320)	453,600	(6.6)
Total	476,420	504,600	A (28,180)	1,849,400	(5.6)
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Place - Payroll					
800 Place HQ	54,636	57,800	(3,164)	173,100	(5.5)
810 Regeneration	192,706	217,300	(24,594)	657,000	(11.3)
820 Strategic Capital Development	113,804	122,600	(8,796)	371,900	(7.2)
Total	361,146	397,700	(36,554)	1,202,000	(9.2)
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Place - Goods & Services					
800 Place HQ	72,671	70,900	1,771	93,900	2.5
810 Regeneration	41,766	33,300	8,466	471,800	25.4
820 Strategic Capital Development	3,176	2,700	476	206,200	17.6
Total	117,613	106,900	10,713	771,900	10.0
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Place - Income					
800 Place HQ	-	-	-	-	
810 Regeneration	(2,339)	-	(2,339)	-	
820 Strategic Capital Development	-	-	-	(124,500)	
Totals	(2,339)	-	(2,339)	(124,500)	

Unclassified

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ITEM 11**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	05 September 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	15 August 2024
File Reference	160121
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Section 75 will be completed when appropriate to do so
Subject	Response to Kircubbin Harbour Deputation
Attachments	None

Background

Members will recall that at the Place and Prosperity Committee meeting on 13 June 2024 a deputation from Kircubbin and District Community Association was heard regarding proposals for Kircubbin Harbour. It was agreed that Council should bring back a report on the potential regeneration of the Harbour.

As with any proposal of this significance, Members will be aware that there are a number of processes and considerations to be undertaken before reaching an informed decision. This report seeks to provide context, proposed considerations, and a recommendation in respect of the next steps of consideration of the deputation.

Context

Kircubbin is a village and townland situated on the eastern shore of Strangford Lough and the coastline and harbour have been and still are prominent features of the area. The Council appreciates the rationale and appeal by some of the community to have the harbour redeveloped, and for a potential additional access

Not Applicable

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point to the water currently available via several nearby shoreline points and the Council owned slipway. This is evidenced by the aspiration contained within the current Village Plan, 'Strengthening the relationship between the village and the harbour'.

Considerations

1. Ownership

The harbour is privately owned and therefore the Council has no remit, responsibility, or influence on its use or state of repair. Additionally, the seabed is owned by the Crown Estate and therefore any potential regeneration of the harbour by the Council would firstly be dependent on a willingness by the owner to sell the asset to the Council, and a potential agreement between Crown Estates and Council for regenerative works to be completed if the seabed was included.

2. Current state of repair

The harbour's current state of repair is widely accepted as being of a poor standard. This is evidenced in a Structural Report completed on 16 December 2015 by Mann Williams Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers on behalf of the DoE NI.

The report details sections of the harbour that have collapsed or were unstable at the time of the report. Additionally, multiple sites of erosion, voids of large sections of the walls and a collapsed section of the parapet wall are some of the noted required remedial works in four locations within the harbour. Costs estimated in the 2016 report for the scheduled works at that time was £177,351.

A full structural engineer's report (inclusive of below the water line) would be required before Council could give any further consideration for a potential purchase and/or regeneration scheme of the harbour. This would normally be completed at the owner's expense. This would be a vital element in the development of an Outline Business Case (OBC) which is a procedural requirement for the Council to consider prior to any decision being made to purchase. Following the 5 case model, the OBC would outline the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management considerations.

3. Potential demand for harbour usage

The potential demand, usage and economic return is a key consideration within the OBC and therefore an independent assessment of this is also a key next step. It is anticipated that nearby established sailing clubs (Kircubbin, Portaferry and Newtownards) provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy water-based activities. A potential challenge for usage capabilities of the harbour is noted in the Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland Accessibility Report 2018. Details are provided of the tidal nature of Kircubbin bay and the significant number of mud flats at low tide, indicating that full time use of the harbour, unlike others within the Borough, would be unachievable.

4. Rationale

Not Applicable

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Upon competition of the noted considerations above an OBC would be completed to assess the rationale of the Council purchasing and regenerating the harbour. The Council's decision would then be made based on this information. (A Full Business Case (FBC) would be required before any construction work would be undertaken.)

As noted, the anticipated expenditure would be significant. Therefore, operational and/or strategical rationale aligned to Council objectives, for example in the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 or Big Plan 2017 – 2032, would be included in the OBC. Any future capital expenditure will also need to be reviewed in line with the Council's Capital Expenditure process.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. Contacts the owner, via their legal representative, to make enquires on the current ownership status of the harbour and to advise that for the Council to consider the request further a structural engineer's report as outlined is required.
2. Writes or meets with representatives of Kircubbin and District Community Association to advise of the Council's decision and the process for going forward.

Unclassified

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ITEM 12**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	05 September 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	13 August 2024
File Reference	RDP236
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: 347
Subject	Comber Gap Sites
Attachments	

Background

The Council was previously advised that it had secured funding from the Department for Communities (DfC) to address the appearance of two gaps sites identified in Comber Town Centre, 18-22 Castle Street and 15 Bridge Street. This funding provided an opportunity to enhance the visual appeal and overall atmosphere of Comber Town Centre. The two gap sites have been recognised as areas that detract from the surrounding environment and do not represent the vibrant community we strive to promote and support. To effectively address these sites, improvement work involving vinyl artwork, digitally printed and laminated was approved.

Artwork

Officers were tasked with collaborating with the site owners and members of the Comber Advisory Group to agree on a proposed design for the vinyl artwork. After discussions, it was decided to use historic images of the town as the central theme.

Not Applicable

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The DfC, along with local businesses, played a crucial role in providing these historical images. A digital design was then created, featuring a selection of the images showcasing various landmarks, events, and everyday life in the town.

Consents

Officers approached both site owners (Castle Street and Bridge Street) to secure permissions to include the sites in the initial funding application. At this time, the site owners were informed that the Council would be required to have agreements with the site owners describing the nature of the work to be undertaken, the proposed artwork and stating that upon completion of the works the licensor shall be responsible for the repair and maintenance of the property and shall indemnify the Council from all liabilities, actions, proceedings, damages, costs, claims, demands and expenses made by third parties against the Licensor in relation to the property and the works.

Following the approval of funding and the successful design of the artwork, officers contacted the site owners to initiate the next stage of the project. An agreement was drafted, clearly outlining the terms and conditions for proceeding with the installation of the vinyl artwork.

Unfortunately, the owner of the Castle Steet site has decided not to enter into the agreement for the proposed artwork installation. The owner's agent communicated he was unwilling to accept the terms and conditions outlined in the agreement and advised his client would not to be moving forward with the project.

The owner of the Bridge Street site has accepted the terms and conditions outlined in the agreement and works will be commencing in the coming weeks.

Decommitment of Funding

Officers have been actively working with Department officials to explore alternative locations for the artwork. However, it has become clear that the alternative sites do not align with the funding contract objectives that were established for the project. As a result, the budget for the Castle Street site will be decommitted.

This decision is necessary to ensure compliance with the funding requirements, which are designed to foster specific outcomes that the alternative locations reviewed do not fulfil. Since the decommitment, Regeneration officers have been contacted by Comber Regeneration Community Partnership and been advised that they could potentially take the project forward. Officers have advised that if they could be of assistance, by providing the artwork for example, they would be happy to assist with approval from DfC who commissioned the artwork.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Unclassified

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ITEM 13**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	05 September 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Economic Development
Date of Report	13 August 2024
File Reference	ED135
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NIESS)/Go Succeed Update
Attachments	N/A

Background

Members will be aware that *Go Succeed* went live 1 November 2023 with revised/combined 18-month targets for Engage and Foundation delivered by ENI and associated Local Enterprise Agency network, and Growth and Scaling delivered by Full Circle consortia partners. All aspects of the service are up-and-running and on target.

Go Succeed Participation

Go Succeed Pillar	18 Month Target	YTD Actual
Engage	429	375
Foundation	147	74
Growth	280	250
Scaling	25	1

Not Applicable

Go Succeed Grants

The *Go Succeed* Grant can provide funding of up to 70% of costs for capital and/or revenue items up to a maximum grant of £4,000 and minimum of £1,000. Grants are available under the Foundation and Growth pillars and clients are eligible when they have completed at least 50% of mentoring.

Go Succeed Pillar	18 Month Target	YTD Awarded
Engage	N/A	-
Foundation	28	0
Growth	51	27
Scaling	N/A	-

Outputs at 13.08.24 (18-Month Target 79)	
Clients invited to apply	87
Applications submitted	42
Letters of Offer issued	27
Amount Awarded to date	£84,276.27
Ineligible/Unsuccessful	11
To be assessed	4

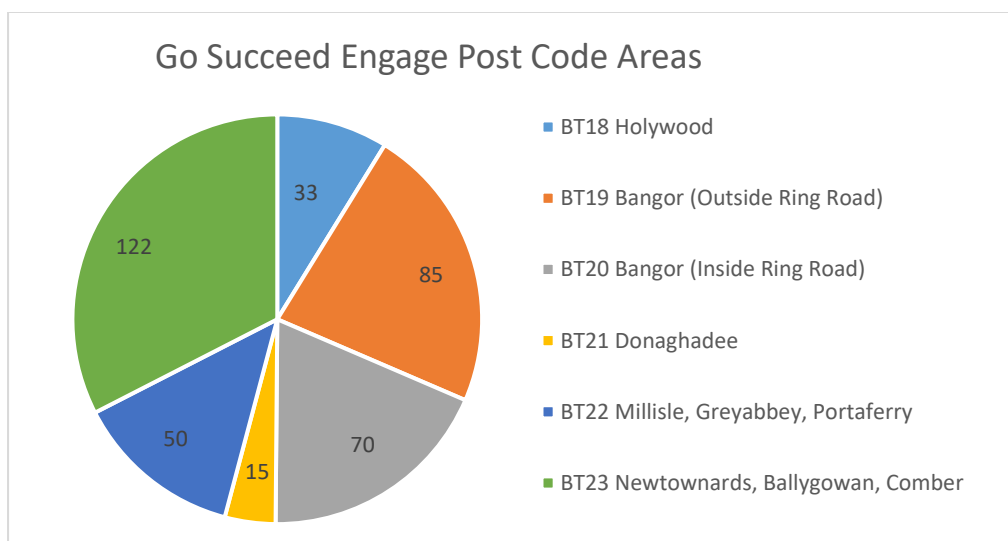
Update on on-going activities to deliver the service:

Engage

As at 13.08.24 (18-Month Target of 397)	
Go Succeed clients assigned on Engage Pillar at point of registration	375
Diagnostic carried out by LEA's, clients progress to mentoring*	223

Note: budget allows for average of 4hrs support including 1 hour diagnostic

*Decrease in number from assigned due to clients not proceeding with support, wanting to put on hold or assigned to other pillars.



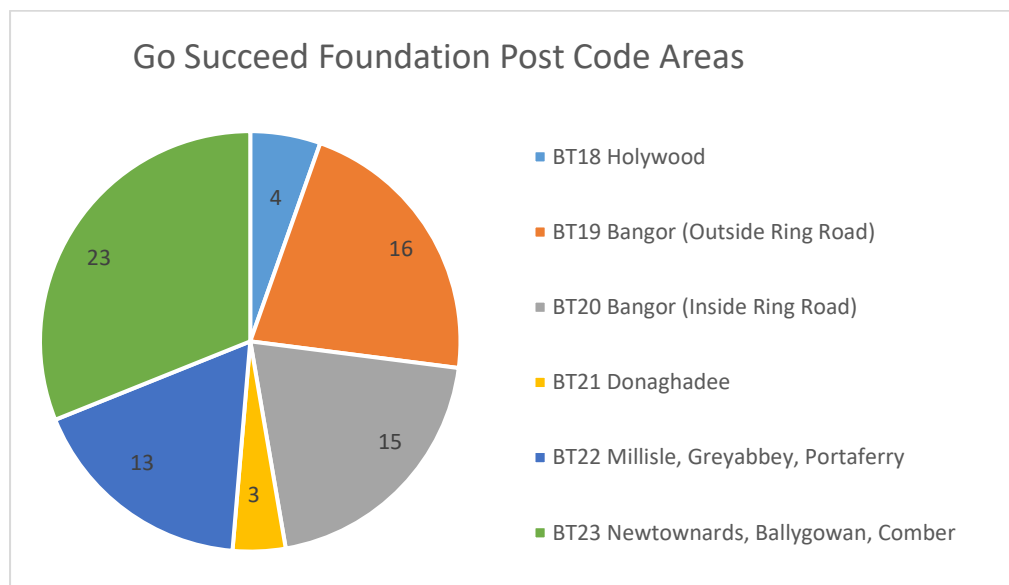
Not Applicable

Foundation

As at 13.08.24 (18-Month Target of 147)	
Go Succeed clients assigned on Foundation at point of registration	74
Diagnostic carried out by LEA's, clients progress to mentoring*	59

Note: budget allows for average of 10hrs support including 1 hour diagnostic

*Decrease in number from assigned due to clients not proceeding with support, wanting to put on hold or assigned to other pillars.

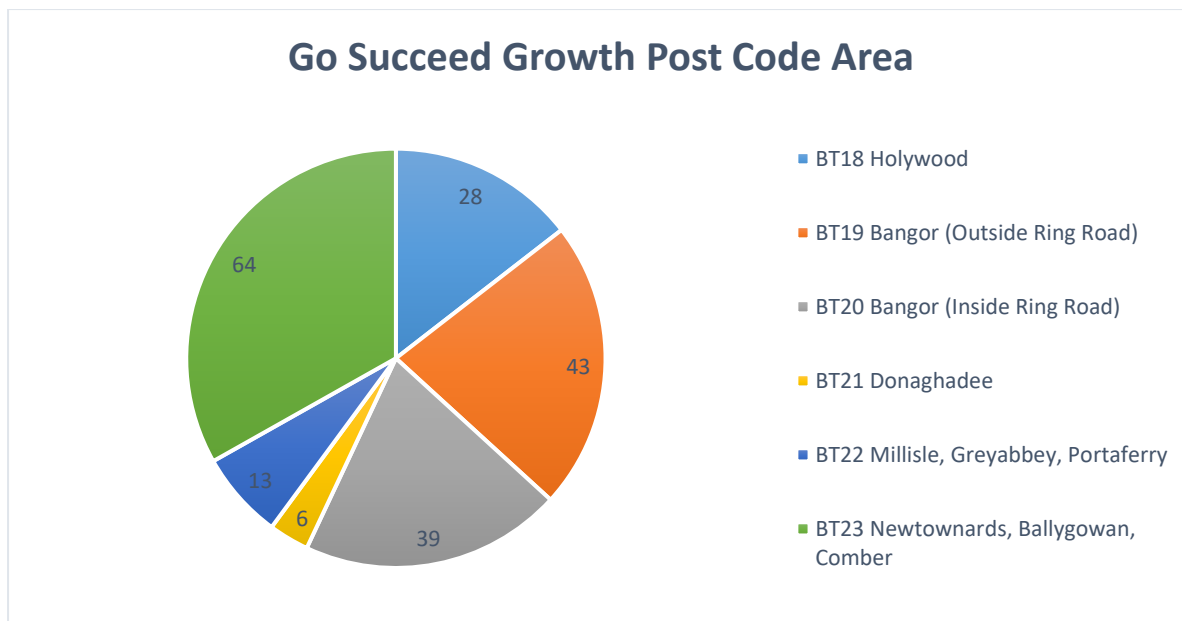


Growth

As at 13.08.24 (18-Month Target of 280)	
Go Succeed companies registered on Growth Pillar	250
ANDBC Officer Diagnostic Approved	193
Mentor Hours Allocated	2864
Average Mentor Hrs per company	14.84

Note: budget allows for average of 15hrs support per company

Not Applicable



Scaling:

To date, one organisation has been signposted to Invest NI as a potential Scaling client. It is anticipated that the final push for Scaling from Full Circle will take place Q3 and Q4 (Oct 2024 – March 25)

Conclusion

Go Succeed is now fully operational and is available to support our enterprise starts and the local business community. Members will have noticed the very prominent marketing campaign on television, radio, social media and through individual councils which have resulted in a high interest in the service. Businesses can be signposted to <https://go-succeed.com> to access the support they need to develop their respective business.

The council contribution for 2024-25 of £118,921 will be settled as detailed in the signed Collaboration Agreement.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the report and welcomes the positive implementation and progress of the *Go Succeed* Service.