

September 24th, 2024

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 25th September 2024** at **7:00 pm** in **Hybrid via zoom/Council Chamber, City Hall, Bangor.**

Agenda

Agenda

(Attached)

[C 25.09.2024 Agenda.pdf](#)

Page 1

1. Prayer

2. Apologies

3. Declarations of Interest

4 Mayor's Business

4.1 Northern Irish Veteran Awards Invitation

[ITEM 4.1 - Northern Irish Veteran Awards Invitation.pdf](#)

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5 Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the Month of September 2024

[Mayoral Engagements September 2024.pdf](#)

Page 6

6 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 28 August 2024 (Copy attached)

[C.28.08.24 Minutes.pdf](#)

Not included

[C.28.08.24 Minutes PM.pdf](#)

Page 8

7 Minutes of Committees

7.1 Planning Committee dated 3 September 2024 (Copy attached)

[PC.03.09.24 Minutes AMcC.pdf](#)

Not included

[PC.03.09.24 Minutes PM.pdf](#)

Page 43

7.2 Environment Committee dated 4 September 2024 (Copy attached)

[EC 04.09.24 MinutesPM.pdf](#)

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📄 *EC 04.09.24 Minutes.pdf*

Not included

7.3 Place and Prosperity Committee dated 5 September 2024 (Copy attached)

📄 *PP 05.09.2024 Minutes.pdf*

Not included

📄 *PP 05.09.2024 MinutesPM.pdf*

Page 102

7.4 Corporate Services Committee dated 10 September 2024 (Copy attached)

📄 *CS.10.09.24 Minutes.pdf*

Not included

📄 *CS.10.09.24 Minutes PM.pdf*

Page 150

7.5 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 11 September 2024 (Copy attached)

📄 *CWB11.09.2024 Minutes.pdf*

Not included

📄 *CWB11.09.2024 Minutes PM.pdf*

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*****ITEM 7.5.1 IN CONFIDENCE*****

7.5.1 Matter Arising from Item 33 - Leisure Transformation Response to Notice of Motion

📄 *Item 7.5.1 Matter arising from item 33 of the Community and Wellbeing Minutes.pdf*

Not included

📄 *7.5.1.1 Appendix - Minutes SpC6.07.17.pdf*

Not included

8. Deputations

8.1 Deputation from NILGA - Leadership Programme for Elected Member Development

📄 *Item 8.1 - Deputation Request.pdf*

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📄 *Item 8.1 - App I - Deputation Request Form.pdf*

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9. Item Withdrawn

10. Sealing Documents

11. Transfer of Rights of Burial

12. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report to follow)

📄 *Item 12 - NoM status report.pdf*

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📄 *Item 12 - App I NoM Tracker(H).pdf*

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13. Notices of Motion

13.1 Notice of Motion from Alderman McIlveen, Councillor Boyle, Alderman McDowell, Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, Councillor Smart, Councillor Kennedy, Councillor S Irvine

That this Council bestows the Freedom of the Borough upon Rhys McClenaghan- European, Commonwealth, World and Olympic Gold Medallist - in recognition of his outstanding achievements in sport.

13.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Irwin and Alderman McRandal

That this Council tasks officers with producing a report outlining how pedestrian access to Household Recycling Centres in the Borough could be facilitated.

This report should include consideration of health and safety requirements, the HRC booking system and the ability to provide pedestrian access in other council areas of Northern Ireland.

13.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman P Smith and Councillor Wray, Councillor W Irvine

That this Council strongly opposes the UK Government's recent Winter Fuel Payment policy change. We resolved to write to the Prime Minister, urging the Government to reverse this harmful decision which will have a far-reaching and devastating impact on pensioner households across the UK. Furthermore, we seek assurance that, at the very least, the Pension Credit minimum income guarantee will be increased, ensuring that more low-income pensioner households, particularly those who narrowly miss out, become eligible for pension credit.

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

14. Renewal of Crown Estate Recreational Lease, Bangor

📄 *Item 14 - Renewal of Crown Estate Recreational Lease, Bangor.pdf*

Not included

📄 *Item 14.1 - App I - Foreshore and Bangor Bay Recreational Map.pdf*

Not included

📄 *Item 14.2 - App II - Recreational Lease HOTs.pdf*

Not included

14.1 Renewal of Crown Estate Recreational Lease, Bangor - Addendum - Bangor Marine request for a licence for site hoarding

▢ *14.1 Renewal of Crown Estate Recreational Lease Bangor - Bangor Marine - request for a licence.pdf*

Not included

15. Tender for Artificial Sports Pitch replacement at Comber Leisure Centre (Two no. tennis courts), Ward Park (Four no. tennis courts) and Bangor Aurora (hockey pitch)

▢ *Item 15 - Tender for Artificial Sports Pitch replacement various.pdf*

Not included

16. LMP Tender for a Transport Academy

▢ *Item 16 - LMP Tender for a Transport Academy (2).pdf*

Not included

17. LMP Tender for Academy for People with Disabilities

▢ *Item 17 - LMP Tender for Academy for People with Disabilities.docx.pdf*

Not included

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

18 September 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid Meeting (in person and via Zoom) of Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor on **Wednesday 25 September 2024 at 7.00pm.**

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough
Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

A G E N D A

1. Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Mayor's Business
 - 4.1 Northern Irish Veteran Awards Invitation
5. Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the Month of September 2024 (Copy to follow)
6. Minutes of Council meeting dated 28 August 2024 (Copy attached)
7. Minutes of Committee (Minutes attached)
 - 7.1 Planning Committee dated 3 September 2024
 - 7.2 Environment Committee dated 4 September 2024
 - 7.3 Place and Prosperity dated 5 September 2024
 - 7.4 Corporate Committee dated 10 September 2024
 - 7.5 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 11 September 2024

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8. Deputations

8.1 Deputation from NILGA – Leadership Programme for Elected Member Development (Report attached)

9. ITEM WITHDRAWN

10. Sealing Documents

11. Transfer of Rights of Burial

12. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)

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

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16. LMP Tender for a Transport Academy (Report attached)
17. LMP Tender for Academy for People with Disabilities (Report attached)

MEMBERSHIP OF ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Unclassified

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ITEM 4.1**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	25 September 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	19 September 2024
File Reference	N/A
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Invitation to Northern Irish Veteran Awards
Attachments	

Background

The Mayor's Office has received an invitation, inviting the Mayor, Councillor Alistair Cathcart and the Veterans Champion, Alderman Trevor Cummings to attend the Northern Irish Veteran Awards due to take place on the 23rd October 2024 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast. The cost of attendance is £90 per person which can be covered by existing budgets.

Liz McConaghy from Ards & North Down Borough (author of Chinook Crew Chick) will host and present awards. It will also provide a platform to fundraise for Blesma, a charity for limbless veterans.

The Ards and North Down Borough is home to many ex-servicemen and possesses a very rich Services history. With the next Armed Forces Day due to be hosted by this Council area in 2025, this invitation provides an important opportunity for attendees to network with key figures from both military and businesses across Northern Ireland.

Not Applicable

5

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council agrees to accept the invitation for the Veterans Champion, Alderman Trevor Cummings to attend the Northern Irish Veteran Awards at a cost of £90 which can be met from existing budgets.

LIST OF MAYOR'S/DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS
FOR AUGUST 2024

Wednesday 4th September 2024

- 11:00 Tide & Turf Primary School Visit - Rubbish to Art Project,
Portavogie Primary School
- 14:00 Positive Ageing Roadshow Photo Op, Carnegie Library,
Hamilton Road, Bangor

Thursday 5th September 2024

- 14:45 RNLI 200th Anniversary Scroll Signing by RNLI Crew, Bangor
Lifeboat Station

Saturday 7th September 2024

- 12:30 Tide & Turf Festival, Portavogie Village Centre

Tuesday 10th September 2024

- 14:00 Connecting Communities - Live Here, Love Here, Ards Blair
Mayne

Wednesday 11th September 2024

- 10:30 Action Cancer Shop Re-opening Opposite Greggs/Nationwide,
Main Street, Bangor
- 13:00 Photo Call, Castle Espie
- 19:00 Bi-Annual Inspection of Sea Cadets, Kinnegar Cadets Centre,
Kinnegar

Thursday 12th September 2024

- 09:30 Skills Information Event for Employers SPACE (Opposite SERC
Bangor)

Saturday 14th September 2024

- 13:00 Chilli Festival Photo Call, The Walled Garden, Castle Park,
Bangor

Tuesday 17th September 2024

- 19:00 Ward Park Bowling Clubs - Irish Lawn Bowls, Mayor's Parlour,
Bangor Castle

Wednesday 18th September 2024

- 13:00 Bangor Rotary Club Lunch, Bangor Golf Club, Broadway, Bangor
- 19:00 Marie Curie Scrabo Fundraising Group Mayoral Reception, Bangor Castle

Thursday 19th September 2024

- 16:00 Bangor Swimming Club Homecoming Event, Aurora Leisure Complex, Bangor

Saturday 21st September 2024

- 10:00 Bangor Bay Cleanup with 9th Bangor Scouts, McKee Clock, Bangor
- 16:30 Columban Way Peace Walk - Journeys' End, Bangor Abbey, followed by St Comgalls Church, Brunswick Road, Bangor
- 19:00 Bryansburn Rangers FC 50th Gala Dinner, Clandeboye Lodge Hotel, Bangor

Sunday 22nd September 2024

- 09:30 Ardnacashel Equestrian Centre Photo Op, Ardnacashel Equestrian Centre
- 13:00 Whitehill Fun Day, Whitehill, Bangor

Tuesday 24th September 2024

- 19:00 Youth Council, Mock Council Meeting, Bangor Castle

Wednesday 25th September 2024

- 10:00 Portavogie Playpark Reopening
- 13:00 Bangor Grammar School Exchange Student Visit, Bangor Castle

Saturday 28th September 2024

- 09:40 North Down Athletic Club 10k starting Castle Park, Bangor

Sunday 29th September 2024

- 11:00 Ballycrochan Presbyterian Church 50th Thanksgiving, Ballycrochan Presbyterian Church, Silverbirch Road, Bangor
- 15:00 Belfast BB 100yrs of Ganaway Camp Site, 270 Ballywalter Rd, Millisle

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Ards and North Down Borough Council was held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor on Wednesday 28 August 2024 commencing at 7.00pm.

In the Chair:	The Mayor (Councillor Cathcart)	
Aldermen:	Adair	McAlpine
	Armstrong-Cotter	McRandal
	Brooks	McDowell
	Cummings	McIlveen
	Graham	Smith
Councillors:	Blaney	Kerr (7.08 pm)
	Boyle	McClellan
	Creighton	McCollum
	Cochrane	McCracken
	Douglas	McKee
	Edmund	McLaren
	Gilmour	Moore
	Hollywood	Morgan
	Irvine, S	Rossiter
	Irvine, W	Smart
	Irwin	Thompson
	Kendall	Wray

Officers: Chief Executive (S McCullough), Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Interim Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Interim Director of Place (B Dorrian), Director of Environment (D Lindsay) and Democratic Services Officers (P Foster and J Glasgow)

1. PRAYER

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

NOTED.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Councillors Ashe, Chambers, Harbinson, Kennedy and McKimm.

An apology for lateness was received from Councillor McClellan.

NOTED.

Councillor Boyle interjected to advise that several Member's laptops were inaccessible. A short break was taken to rectify the issue.

(Councillor Kerr entered the meeting – 7.08 pm)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor McLaren declared an interest in Item 14 – Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG July 2024).

Alderman Smith declared an interest in Item 16 – Community Development Christmas Festival Fund, during the course of the meeting.

4. MAYOR'S BUSINESS

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor extended a big congratulations to all the athletes who participated in the recent Olympic Games in Paris. In particular, he acknowledged Rhys McClenaghan and Jack McMillan, who both brought home a Gold medal. The Mayor felt it was wonderful to have the opportunity to host some of the athletes in Newtownards on 16 August for a special Homecoming event. It was a moment of great pride to watch the athletes compete in the Games and to welcome them home, and he wished them all the very best of luck in the next steps of their careers. The Mayor thanked the Council staff who had been involved in organising the homecoming event in a short turn around. It had been an enormously successful event with tremendous feedback received. He also took the opportunity to wish Barry McClements well in the Paralympics.

The Mayor referred to the recent discovery of a historic, unexploded WW2 device in Newtownards. He extended a big thank you to the staff who worked so hard to enact the Emergency Plan and work alongside statutory Agencies to help and support local residents during this extraordinary incident.

Finally, the Mayor advised that day he had the opportunity to welcome the US Consul General, James Applegate, to the Borough. The visit included tours of some of the thriving local businesses and it had been impressive to see some local businesses exporting around the world in hidden markets and employing hundreds of people. A meeting also took place with some of the pupils of Glenlola Collegiate who had a successful school exchange programme under the Sister Cities initiative. This visit highlighted the strong economic and cultural ties between our region and the United States and he looked forward to fostering an even deeper connection in the future.

NOTED.

5. MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ENGAGEMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST 2024

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- List of engagements.

The Mayor wished to highlight a number of engagements:-

EurlCA6 Closing Ceremony, Ballyholme Yacht Club – The Mayor highlighted the success of the youth championship event with over 40 nations and 300 competitors having attended. He welcomed the step forward in the City Deal bringing investment to the area with the hope to attract much larger events to Ballyholme Yacht Club. It was an attractive venue with world class sailing waters.

Opening of Kingsland Golf & Frisbee Course, Kingsland, Bangor – The Mayor encouraged everyone to visit the new golf and frisbee course which was a fun and free activity.

Sports Awards Hall of Fame Presentation, Aurora Leisure Centre, Bangor – A new member had been added to the hall of fame, Terry Harryman, Rally-Co driver. The Mayor remarked how he had enjoyed attending the presentation with Terry and his family.

Ards Multicultural Family Picnic, Town Hall, Newtownards – That had been encouraging event given the difficult time experienced by ethnic minorities and the recent attack on the mosque in Newtownards. However, the community had rallied round, and the support had been felt. The Mayor looked forward to further engagement and reassured those members of the community that they were welcome and safe in the Borough.

Ards Peninsula Kite Festival, Millisle – The Mayor highlighted the success of the event which had attracted a large crowd and congratulated those involved in the organising.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Alderman McRandal, that the list of mayoral engagements be noted.

Whilst content to propose, Councillor Gilmour highlighted that the list of engagements had been omitted from Decision Time.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Alderman McRandal, that the list of mayoral engagements be noted.

6. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING DATED 31ST JULY 2024

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the minutes be approved and adopted.

7. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

7.1 Planning Committee dated 6 August 2024

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor McClean, that the minutes be approved and adopted.

8. CONSULTATIONS

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

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy correspondence in relation to the above consultation, response date 16 October 2024. Document available at [Consultation on Codes of Practice issued under the Police and Criminal Evidence Northern Ireland Order 1989 | Department of Justice \(justice-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the information be noted.

8.2 Safe and Effective Staffing Consultation Launch

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy correspondence in relation of the above consultation, response date Monday 14th October 2024. Document available at Citizen Space - Safe and Effective Staffing Consultation.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the information be noted.

8.3 Consultation on EqIA of DfC Budget 2024-2025 (Appendices II, III, IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Prosperity attaching EqIA easy read version, EqIA and draft response. The report detailed that the Executive considered and set the NI Budget 2024-25 on 25 April 2024.

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

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

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

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

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

Detail

Areas of responsibility included:

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

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

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

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

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

Labour Market Partnerships

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

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

Affordable Warmth Scheme

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

Urban Regeneration

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

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

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

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman McIlveen thanked officers for preparing the response particularly in relation to the comments on the winter fuel payments and the cuts to the warm home initiative. Many people were worried given the recent announcement by the Labour Government in relation to the cuts to the winter fuel allowance. Cutting that down to means testing and qualifying benefits when there were many people who fell above that line for qualifying and would be sorely in need of support. Clarity around that decision was needed for Northern Ireland and if there was going to be a situation where a winter fuel allowance was not going to be deliverable, it was important that other support was made available.

Councillor Kendall also thanked Officers for the response, the budget cuts were huge and were bound to have an impact over the winter months. She referred to the pressures that were being faced including the cuts in the housing budget with the crisis of homelessness and those with stretched incomes.

Echoing the thanks to the Officers, Councillor Wray referred to the multi-agency response to the situation that had occurred recently in Rivenwood, Newtownards and how the Council reacted.

The Mayor stated that the comments made by Councillor Wray were not relevant to the item.

Councillor Wray disagreed and highlighted on page 2 in Council's response it stated 'this was evident in the recent multi agency co-ordination of the response to an unexploded WW2 ordnance in Newtownards. The regional resilience team was pivotal in the management of the wider response'. It was therefore very relevant that due to the fund being available the Council were able to respond.

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

9. RESOLUTIONS

9.1 Letter from Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council - Hospitality and QR codes

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy letter dated 7 August from the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council regarding the above matter.

Proposed by Councillor Thompson, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the correspondence be noted.

Councillor Boyle noted that the letter was seeking the Council's consideration of the important matter and asked if he could put forward an alternative proposal or an amendment.

Proposed by Councillor Boyle that this Council tasks Officers to bring back a report as to what that would mean to our hospitality venues and how we would assist those businesses.

As that was a direct negative, the Mayor was of the view that amendment was not valid.

Alderman Graham stated that he was not taking away the sentiment of the letter but felt the issue needed to be left with the hospitality industry. He was of the view that the Council would be limited in its ability to enforce the matter. Alderman Graham felt that noting the correspondence was the best option and to have faith in the excellent hospitality industry that existed in the Borough.

Councillor Boyle clarified that his amendment was not suggesting that he did not have confidence in the hospitality sector but rather sought to clarify what the matter meant for this Council.

Alderman McRandal sympathised with what Councillor Boyle was saying and felt it would have been good to explore the matter further. He stated that he would be voting against the proposal to note.

Councillor Kendall concurred and felt it would do no harm to explore the matter further. She stated that she would also be voting against the proposal.

Councillor McClean noted that Councillor Thompson was the Council's disability champion and that there would be a meeting that he would be attending in the next month, and it would be appropriate for the matter to be raised then.

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Adair, as an amendment, that Council invites Angel Eyes NI and RNIB to present to the Council.

Alderman McIlveen brought forward the amendment to strike a balance, noting the resolution and inviting the charities to make a presentation.

Alderman Adair felt the amendment was a common-sense approach. It would be good to hear from those people who were affected rather than following suit of another Council through another stream of letters.

Alderman McRandal was happy to support the amendment.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Adair, as an amendment, that Council notes the resolution and invites Angel Eyes NI and RNIB to present to the Council.

10. STREET NAMING - THE FIRS, HOLYWOOD (FILE FP/2024/1558/MAST / 91200)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that a development comprising of 29 dwellings, being 16 houses and 13 apartments, was currently under construction on lands at 160 High Street, Hollywood.

The developer had requested the name 'The Firs' for the new development. On historical maps circa 1900, the main house and surrounding estate was historically known as 'The Firs'. The Convent School was established in an old family residence called 'The Firs' which was built in 1889. The developer wished to maintain the historical link for the development and the name was also in keeping with the general neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDED that the street name of The Firs be adopted for this development.

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

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor McLaren, that the recommendation be adopted.

11. NOMINATION TO OUTSIDE BODIES

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that places on working groups were filled through nomination at the Council's Annual Meeting and were thus held by individual Members rather than Parties. When a position becomes vacant, it reverted back to Council to nominate a Member(s) to fill the place rather than Party Nominating Officers.

Following the resignation of Peter Martin from Council, a place had become available on each of the following groups:

- Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership – 1 Place + 1 Substitute (1 Year Appointment)
- North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 15 Places (1 Year Appointment)

The below tables reflected the current membership of the above working groups:

Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership

	2022/2023	2024/25
1	Councillor Gilmour	Councillor Gilmour
Sub	Councillor Martin	Now Vacant

North Down Coastal Path working Group

	2023/24	2024/25
1	Alderman Graham	Alderman Graham
2	Councillor Cochrane	Councillor Cochrane
3	Councillor Creighton	Councillor Creighton
4	Councillor Harbinson	Councillor Harbinson
5	Councillor Hollywood	Councillor Hollywood
6	Councillor Irwin	Councillor Irwin
7	Councillor Martin	Now Vacant
8	Councillor W Irvine	Councillor W Irvine
9	Councillor McCracken	Councillor McCracken
10	Councillor McCollum	Councillor McCollum
11	Councillor McKee	Councillor McKee
12	Councillor McKimm (Chair)	Councillor McKimm
13	Councillor McLarnon	Councillor McLaren
14	Councillor McRandal	Alderman McRandal
15	Councillor Rossiter	Councillor Rossiter

Nominations were sought from Council to fill each of the above places for the remainder of the term as necessary.

RECOMMENDED that Council nominate a Member to the following groups:

1. Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership – 1 Substitute (1 Year Appointment)
2. North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 1 Place (1 Year Appointment)

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Adair, that Councillor McClean be nominated to Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership and North Down Coastal Path Working Group.

12. CHANGES TO CONDUCTING COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL MEETINGS AND CHANGES TO THE STANDING ORDERS (FILE CX210)
(Appendix V)

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

Changes to Standing Orders

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

29 Remote Attendance

29.1 Definition of remote attendance

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

29.2 Elected Member remote attendance

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

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

29.3 Press and public remote attendance

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

29.4 Voting when attending remotely

Any vote that would otherwise be taken by a show of hands in line with Standing Order 21.4 will, if any of the Elected Members entitled to vote are in remote attendance, be taken by way of a virtual show of hands from each Member as to whether they are for or against the motion.

29.5 Miscellaneous remote attendance provisions

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

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

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

29.6 Remote meeting etiquette

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

Members should situate themselves in an environment which is free from distraction, and similar to the conditions in the Chamber;

Members should be situated in a location befitting the meeting i.e. a private room with a closed door;

Members should be alone, with the exception of any other Elected Member who is entitled to attend that meeting.

It is essential that Members attending Council and Committee meetings prevent others from hearing the business of the meeting, especially that which is “in confidence”;

Members must notify the Chair of the meeting if they are leaving the meeting and again on their return to the meeting;

Members should conduct themselves in a manner as if they were in attendance in the Chamber;

Members should attend from a location with a strong internet connection and should endeavour to test the connection and audiovisual prior to the meeting;

Members must turn their camera is on and it must remain on for the duration of the meeting;

Members must remain on mute unless given the opportunity to speak by the Chair or when exercising their speaking rights in line with the Standing Orders.

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

- Renumber Standing order 29 as 30
- Renumber Standing Order 30 as 31
- Renumber Standing Order 31 as 32
- Change Standing Order 17.2 (m) reference to Standing Order 29 to Standing order 30.
- Amend the Glossary of Terms definition of “Remote access” to *“Remote access” means the ability to attend or participate in a meeting by electronic means, including by video conference, live webcasts, and live interactive streaming.*

It was proposed to insert the following at Annex 1:

Remote meetings

Committee Members taking part virtually in a Planning Committee Meeting

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

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

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

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

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

96. When taking part virtually:

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

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

Standing Orders Version 11 stated:

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

The deadline in respect of call-in is 5.00 pm

The deadline for Notice of Motions was 11.59 pm

This shall be changed to read:

“Working days” excludes Public or Bank holidays, a Saturday or a Sunday
The deadline is 5.00pm except for in respect of Notice of Motions where the deadline is 11.59 pm

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

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

Making Changes to the Standing Orders

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

Therefore, these Standing Orders were stood down at the Council meeting on 31 July, for discussion at the meeting on 28 August 2024.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to amend the Standing Orders as set out in this report.

Alderman McIlveen stated that he had raised concerns about the potential impacts that the changes in standing orders would have with the Chief Executive and he asked if there had been any investigation into that and if there would be an adverse impact on sections of the community.

The Chief Executive explained that Alderman McIlveen was referring to people, for example, who may have caring responsibilities for children. The report detailed that when attending meetings via Zoom, Members should conduct themselves in the same way as they did in the Chamber. The room should be secure and no one else should be in the room. That meant that Members should not have another adult with them in the room guiding or influencing their decision making. It was understood that there could be situations where children were nearby.

Alderman McIlveen wished for that clarity to be on record as he did not wish to see a situation where a Member with primary caring responsibilities was not able to attend. That was an advantage of the hybrid approach for those who were primary carers. In relation to the etiquette detailed, making the Chair aware when leaving the meeting and when returning he expressed concern regarding the potential impact that could have on the running of meetings.

The Chief Executive stated that Officers hoped that as many Members as possible could attend the meetings in person. Making the Chair aware when leaving and returning assisted Democratic Services in recording that in the minutes. It was easy at in person meetings for Democratic Services to note when Members left and returned to the meeting, however, to keep an eye on a screen as well was extremely challenging. Officers were suggesting that Members provide some sort of indication as that was important when there was a conflict of interest.

Alderman McIlveen noted there was a way to send messages on Zoom and suggested that as a way to provide an indication to Democratic Services. The Chief Executive stated that every approach in Standing Orders should be carried out via the Chair. However, she recognised that as long as a Member was noted leaving and entering that was the main point.

Given the clarity, Alderman McIlveen was content to propose the recommendations, seconded by Alderman McRandal, that the recommendations be adopted.

The Mayor encouraged Members to make it clear when there were leaving and entering a virtual room in particular highlighting the importance of that during considerations of planning applications at Planning Committee.

Councillor Gilmour noted that during her time as Mayor she on one occasion had to attend a meeting virtually via her phone from the Mayoral Car. Under the changes it was suggested she was not able to do that as the driver would be present. When items were not in Committee, she was unsure why there would be a need to be in private location with no one else around. She encouraged Members to attend the meetings were possible, however would not wish to see Members excluded due to the need to be alone in a private room.

The Mayor stated that it would be up to the Chair to interpret what was reasonable under Standing Orders. In terms of attendance, he felt the Council conducted better in person and he encouraged that to continue. Zoom provided a useful mechanism in exceptional circumstances e.g. sickness. He reminded Members of the Code of Conduct and it was up to Members themselves on what was appropriate.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter appreciated the clarity provided by the Chief Executive. She, as a mother, tried to attend every meeting in person however there were times she needed to be at home with her children and there was a chance they could be seen in the background on the Zoom screen. She wished for it to be made clear and she did not ever wish to be accused of not giving the Council the full attention and the appropriate cover in place that if a child was seen that a Member was not breaking Standing Orders.

The Chief Executive reassured the Members that it was to be taken in the spirit that it was intended and if a child was in the house at the time that was not a problem and such locations as the mayoral car would not be seen as inappropriate.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman McRandal, that the recommendation be adopted.

13. REQUEST FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE AREA OF INTEGRATED PARTNERSHIP BOARDS (AIPBS)

(Appendix VII, VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive attaching letter to Council Chief Executives and Information Pack. The report detailed that further to an email that was circulated to all Members by the Chief Executive on 30 July from the Department of Health, informing Councils that the Department intended to set up a number of Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs) and were now requesting nominations of elected Members to the Boards.

Appointment Process and Role of Local Government Representatives

The appointment process was outlined in Section 6 of the Information Pack and the full list of responsibilities could be located in Section 4. Applicants must be serving on a local Council within the area of the AIPB as of July 2024 and must not be employed by the Department of Health, a health and social care body or a health service body.

Applicants must ensure they demonstrate that they have met the criteria. That needed to be clearly detailed otherwise they would not be considered for the role:

- Broad understanding of current health and social care structures and services and appreciation of key issues affecting population health and social wellbeing,
- Experience in working effectively with a broad range of stakeholders from across the statutory and voluntary/community sectors, as well as with local communities, to achieve agreed objectives in a challenging and changing environment, and
- Demonstration of effective listening and communication skills – including negotiation and influencing skills, and interpersonal communication.

Applicants would be required to complete an online application form which would be considered by a panel. The process may be further extended to include an interview, depending on the number of applications received.

The submission deadline was 5pm on 6 September 2024. It was anticipated that the role would undertake a term of four years. It should also be noted that was not a remunerated position.

Members were asked to consider whether they wish to individually submit an application.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the report.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Edmund, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted.

Having previously declared an interest in the item, Councillor McLaren withdrew from the meeting.

14. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS FORUM GRANTS (WG JULY 2024) (FILE SD151)

(Appendices IX-XIV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing attaching Successful Anniversary Report for Approval, Successful Equipment Report for Approval, Successful Event Report for Approval, Successful Goldcard Report for Noting, Successful Individual Travel & Accommodation Report for Noting and Successful Club Travel & Accommodation Report for Noting and Unsuccessful Report. The report detailed that Members would be aware that on the 26th August 2015 Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £45,000 had been allocated within the 2024/2025 revenue budget for this purpose.

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

During June 2024, the Forum received a total of 38 applications: 1 Anniversary, 6 Equipment, 3 Event, 13 Goldcard, 13 Individual Travel/Accommodation Grants and 2 Club Travel/Accommodation. A summary of the **35** successful applications were detailed in the Successful Anniversary, Successful Equipment, Successful Event, Successful Goldcard, Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation and Successful Club Travel/Accommodation Appendices.

2024/25 Budget £45,000	Annual Budget	Proposed Funding Awarded June 2024	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	*£750	-£1,499.90
Coach Education	£3,000	£0	£1,638.75
Equipment	£14,000	*£5,815	£5,718.13
Events	£6,000	*£1,000	£1,637.89
Seeding	£500	£0	£500
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£2,420	-£39.57
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	£1,000
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	£5,000
13 Goldcards Awarded in June (18 Goldcards in total during 2024/25)			

*The proposed remaining budget for Anniversary of **-£1,499.90** is based on a proposed award this month of **£750**.

*The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **£5,718.13** is based on a proposed award this month of **£5,815**.

*The proposed remaining budget for Events of **£1,637.89** is based on a proposed award this month of **£1,000**.

*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **-£39.57** is based on a proposed award this month of **£2,420**, a withdrawn amount of **£200** and a reclaimed amount of **£80.89**.

The proposed remaining budget for 2024/25 was **£13,955.30** (69% of the 2024/25 budget spent).

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

Proposed by Councillor Thompson, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Thompson was pleased to see so many people being awarded grants highlighting the Olympians who had previously received them. Councillor Thompson welcomed its continuation.

(Councillor Blaney withdrew from the meeting – 7.51 pm)

Councillor Boyle stated that the Ards and North Down Sports Forum was a very important part of this Council and the benefits could be seen. He wished to note, that one part that funding had nearly been used in the first quarter of the year. He felt not enough money was being put into the fund and serious consideration should be given to that during the next rate setting process. There was a need to fund young people in Sport across the Borough.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Thompson, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

(Councillor McLaren re-entered the meeting – 7.52 pm)

15. GOOD RELATIONS FUNDING (FILE GREL424)

(Appendix XV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Community and Wellbeing attaching letter dated 4th July 2024 from Chris Gardner, TEO and letter dated 11th July 2024 from Susie McCullough, Chief Executive. The report detailed that the Council meeting held in June 2024 it was agreed that: -

This Council writes to the Executive Office to highlight our disappointment at their failure to provide their share of funding for Cultural Expression events and festivals. Furthermore, that this Council asks The Executive Office to commit to providing their full share of funding for the Good Relations programme in 25/26.

Letter dated 4th July 2024 was received from Chris Gardner, Director Good Relations and T:BUC, The Executive Office prior to call in being agreed. In his letter he thanked the Good Relations Team for its work and confirmed that a 12% increase on last year's budget would be provided in 2024/2025. That equated to 65% of the budget requested from Council to deliver the Good Relations Action Plan. He also stated that it was hoped further funding would be made available after monitoring rounds had taken place.

Also attached to the report was the Chief Executive's letter to Mr Gardner, as requested by Council at its meeting in June 2024.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the report.

Proposed by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Moore noted that the T:BUC strategy described Good Relations as a journey, and she felt that the report highlighted how short sighted it was not to maintain those consistent levels of funding and the unrest that could cause, referring as an example to the unrest last year in Weavers Grange, the impact that had on the community particularly vulnerable young people and also the recent attack on the Islamic centre. Maintaining good relations was a constant effort. She commended the Good Relations team for the amazing work they undertook with a limited budget. Volunteers were relied on to support the work of good relations and therefore Council and other funders needed to fulfil its commitments. Councillor Moore stressed the importance of the Executive Office making the full budget contribution. Good relations did not stop at the boundary of the Borough and there was a need to work collaboratively with other councils and that TEO worked strategically across the whole of Northern Ireland. She thanked the Chief Executive for writing to the TEO and that Members would be happy to work alongside the good relations team to identify potential projects that could be realised quickly if the funding was available.

(Councillor Blaney re-entered the meeting – 7.55 pm)

Councillor McKee expressed his disappointment that the Executive Office was choosing to underfund good relations particularly in times where hate and misinformation was being spread amongst the community. It was important that good relations were given the resources needed to make an impact and outlined the affects the budget cut was having on the programme. The attacks and the hate crimes being suffered by minority communities throughout the Borough demonstrated the need for good relations and he hoped the Executive Office in future monitoring rounds would realise that the work of good relations was a priority.

Councillor Smart outlined his support for good relations, it had been seen what happened when good relations went wrong and the long-term consequences of that. He described the cuts as appalling, recognising that times were hard. He thanked the Officers for the correspondence however suggested that the matter be raised via the Partnership Panel.

Alderman Adair advised that he was the Council’s representative on the Partnership Panel and a meeting was scheduled the following month.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the recommendation be adopted.

(Alderman Smith declared an interest in the item and withdrew from the meeting)

16. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL FUND (FILE CD35C)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Council operated a Christmas Festival Programme for towns and villages in the Borough who receive Christmas Trees from the Council. The purpose of the programme was to enable communities to run local festivals to celebrate the festive period and MUST include switching on of Christmas Lights.

The following towns and villages were eligible to apply for funding:

Villages – Ballygowan, Ballyhalbert, Ballywalter, Carrowdore, Cloughey, Conlig, Greyabbey, Groomsport, Helens Bay, Killinchy, Kircubbin, Millisle, Portaferry and Portavogie

Towns – Donaghadee, Comber and Holywood

The programme enables one application per town or village. The programme for 2024/2025 closed on Monday 10th June 2024 and 17 applications were received from 14 villages and three towns with applications totalling £22,396.00. The maximum amount of funding for each of the village is £1,000 and £3,000 per town. Applications from villages amounted to £13,396.00 and applications from towns amounted to £9,000.00.

Applications were scored by a panel consisting of the Grants & Funding Co-Ordinator, Community Safety Officer and Community & Culture Assistant using the following criteria:

<u>Grant Criteria</u>	<u>Points</u>
Open and accessible	5
Community Participation	5
Volunteer Involvement & training	5
Collaboration and partnership	5
Welfare and safety of attendees/participants	5
Strong sense of Community	5
Value for money	5
Evaluation of Festival	5
<u>Total</u>	<u>40</u>

The assessment panel agreed a pass mark of 45%. The marks were totalled and calculated as a percentage.

All applications submitted were successful in attaining the pass mark and all recommended to receive the full amount of grant requested.

Table 1 (Villages)

	Name of Group	Date & time of Festival	Amount applied for	Score out of 40	Score as %	Awarded amount
	VILLAGES					
1	Ballygowan & District Community Association	07/12/24 @ 4 - 6pm	£810.00	32/40	80.00%	£810.00
2	Ballyhalbert Community Association	06/12/2024 @ 7 - 9pm	£1,000.00	34/40	85.00%	£1,000.00
3	Ballywalter Community Action Group	05/12/2024 @ 7pm	£1,000.00	32/40	80.00%	£1,000.00
4	Carrowdore & District Community Association	30/12/24 @ 6.30 - 8.30pm	£1,000.00	31/40	77.50%	£1,000.00
5	Cloughey & District Community Association	04/12/24 @ 6.30 - 9.30pm	£586.00	29/40	72.50%	£586.00
6	Conlig Community Regeneration Group	07/12/24 @ 3.30 - 5.30pm	£1,000.00	39/40	97.50%	£1,000.00
7	Greyabbey & District Community Association	13/12/24 @ 1 - 9.30pm	£1,000.00	33/40	82.50%	£1,000.00
8	Groomsport Village Association	06/12/24 @ 5 - 8pm	£1,000.00	20/40	50.00%	£1,000.00
9	Helens Bay & Crawfordsburn Residents Association	06/12/24 @ 7 - 9pm	£1,000.00	26/40	65.00%	£1,000.00
10	Killinchy & District Community Development Association	09/12/24 @ 6 - 10pm	£1,000.00	27/40	67.50%	£1,000.00
11	Kircubbin & District Community Association	03/12/2024 @ 7 - 9pm	£1,000.00	33/40	82.50%	£1,000.00
12	Millisle & District Community Association	07/12/24 @ 6.15 - 9pm	£1,000.00	34/40	85.00%	£1,000.00
13	Portaferry Gala Fest	29/11/2024 @ 6.30 - 8.30pm	£1,000.00	36/40	90.00%	£1,000.00
14	Portavogie Regeneration Forum	06/12/24 @ 7 - 9pm	£1,000.00	26/40	65.00%	£1,000.00

VILLAGE TOTAL		£13,396.00		£13,396.00
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Table 2 (Towns)

	Name of Group	Date & time of Festival	Amount applied for	Score out of 40	Score as %	Awarded amount
	TOWNS					
1	Comber Regeneration Community Partnership	28/11/2024 @ 4 - 8pm	£3,000.00	31/40	77.50%	£3,000.00
2	Donaghadee Community Development Association	08/12/2024 28/11/2024 @ 7.30pm	£3,000.00	24/40	60.00%	£3,000.00
3	Hollywood & District Community Council	30/11/24 @ 10am-5pm	£3,000.00	32/40	80.00%	£3,000.00
	TOWNS TOTAL		£9,000.00			£9,000.00
	OVERALL FUND TOTAL		£22,396.00			£22,396.00

Two applications were received from groups in Groomsport. Officers engaged with each of the groups as two applications per village was outside the scope of the funding. It was agreed that the groups would submit applications on alternative years. Groomsport Village Associations application was scored for 2024 and it was agreed between the groups that Discover Groomsport would apply next year (2025), and that sequence would continue going forward. Both groups had agreed to support each other during the festivals.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the assessment panel's recommendations detailed in the tables above and funds Christmas Festivals 2024 at a cost of £22,396.00 and notes the arrangements with the two groups in Groomsport Village.

Proposed by Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Kendall was pleased with the amount of applications that had been submitted and the amounts that had been awarded, albeit what was awarded was small in relation to what was required to deliver a Christmas festival.

Councillor Boyle welcomed the report and congratulated the applicants. He took Councillor Kendall's viewpoint on board and was pleased to see the spread across the towns and villages. He noted Groomsport previously had two groups organising events and he welcomed that those groups would now alternate organising each year.

Councillor Thompson welcomed the report and highlighted the importance of the festivities in the towns and villages. He welcomed the work that had occurred with the two groups in Groomsport.

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

(Alderman Smith re-entered the meeting – 8.02 pm)

17. WINTER HARDSHIP FUND 2024/25 (CW159)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that funding to facilitate a Hardship Fund was provided by the Department for Communities in 2023-2024, totalling £344,027.

The purpose of the fund was to address hardship, due to the current cost of living crisis, particularly the increase in energy and food costs. The Hardship Funding Programme was developed in recognition of the difficult financial circumstances which exist for the community. The Programme welcomed applications for grants between £10,000 to £30,000. Twenty-three applications were approved for funding totalling £330,186.61. In June 2024, the Community Development Manager was informed that two of the applications would not be claiming the funding awarded totalling £40,000. A further £7,000 was unclaimed across the remaining twenty-one applications leaving a total underspend of £47,000.

Approval had been granted from DfC to use this funding during 2024-2025 to facilitate a Winter Hardship Fund as no Hardship Funding had been provided for this financial year.

It was proposed to go to open call in September 2024 for grants up to £3,000 with recommendations brought to Community & Wellbeing Committee in October 2024.

Aim of 2024-2025 Hardship Funding Programme

The aim of the fund was to support people who were experiencing food, fuel, and financial hardship. Hardship funding was non-recurrent funding.

The Fund would be open to the following eligible organisations/groups operating within Ards and North Down -

- Strategic Community Planning Partners (if not delivering statutory functions)
- Community & Voluntary Sector Organisations (application must show additionality)
- Registered charities (application should bring additionality to a charitable purpose).

Types of initiatives the fund could consider included:

- Initiatives that identify and work with individuals and their families at times of crisis.
- Projects that provide spaces with a food offering alongside activities and heat (but food should be the primary purpose).
- Programmes that increase the capacity and integration with existing hardship support services (e.g. Social Supermarkets and food banks)
- School/education-based food projects e.g. breakfast clubs and holiday hunger initiatives.

What we can fund

Types of areas **we can fund include** (but are not restricted to)

- Projects that identify communities and individuals who are financially vulnerable and have an innovative solution based on food, fuel, and financial hardship
- Energy costs (e.g. heating and lighting) e.g. voucher schemes (food, fuel, oil stamp scheme, electricity)
- Costs associated with the provision of food to provide those facing hardship with sustenance e.g., including Social supermarkets, Food Banks, Fareshare, Community Fridges, holiday hunger initiatives, meal projects, school-based food projects, such as breakfast clubs and other meal-based projects.

What we cannot fund

- Individual people
- Private and/or commercial businesses
- General building or maintenance costs
- Projects/services operating outside of Ards and North Down area.
- Funding cannot be used for subsidy schemes (summer schemes and leisure activities), appliances, small grants to community organisations for community-based projects, advice services (including debt), community training (including health and wellbeing, resilience, financial inclusion), uniform schemes, and community transport initiatives.
- Funding cannot be used for Projects already being funded by the Department unless it is being used to enhance or expand provision on a food related project.
- Salaries.
- Capital and expenditure items.
- Advice services including debt.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the launch of the Winter Hardship fund as outlined above.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Adair welcomed the recommendation and thanked the Department for Communities (DfC) for the funding. The fund had been delivered successfully during

the previous winter period. St Vincent de Paul did a good job at getting the funding out to those most at need.

Councillor Edmund welcomed the report, noting the importance of maintaining the fund as best as possible for those experiencing food, fuel and money hardships.

Proposed by Councillor McKee, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that this Council writes to Department for Communities to highlight disappointment at their failure to provide Hardship Funding this year. Furthermore, that this Council asks the Department for Communities to commit to use funding in future monitoring rounds to provide hardship funding in 24/25.

Speaking to his proposal, Councillor McKee expressed his disappointment that hardship funding had not been prioritised by the Executive. Electricity and fuel prices were set to rise this winter, and there had been many months of high inflation with many residents who would be searching for help from community and voluntary organisations who would have very little funding available to assist. It was welcome that there was money left over from last year to distribute to groups however that fell way short of what was needed in the months ahead.

Councillor Kendall noted that there had been two grants of £20k that had not been spent and she asked what were the circumstances that precluded use of those monies. There had been a hiccup previously in relation to the process and she wished to ensure that the process was transparent and fair this time round. She advised that concerns had been raised with her regarding the application form and the validation requirements. The Director of Community and Wellbeing advised that last year one group had received two grant payments, and he was not aware if a control had been built in this time round. He undertook to raise the matter with the Officers. The underspend came from organisations who had not followed through following last year's allocation. Officers were happy to assist applicants.

Alderman McIlveen was happy to support the amendment and referred to the contributing factors to the price rises including the global context of inflationary and energy prices.

Councillor Gilmour raised questions regarding when the report would come back to Committee and when payments would be made. She asked if there were any measures in place this year to ensure no underspends and that any monies be redistributed to those in need. The Director hoped the applications could be processed as soon as possible. Officers could track during the process to ascertain if underspends were likely.

Councillor Gilmour highlighted the importance of keeping an any potential underspends.

Alderman McRandal expressed disappointment that no new monies had been allocated and he was supportive of the proposal.

Councillor Hollywood added his support to the proposal.

Alderman Adair supported the proposal and encouraged groups to apply. Fuel poverty was a big issue and there was a need to ensure the allocation was spent.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McKee, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted and that this Council writes to Department for Communities to highlight our disappointment at their failure to provide Hardship Funding this year. Furthermore, that this Council asks The Department for Communities to commit to use funding in future monitoring rounds to provide hardship funding in 24/25

18. GRANT OF AN ENTERTAINMENTS LICENCE (FILE 90101)

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

1. Duffy's Circus - Site on Comber Road, Newtownards, BT23 4QP

Applicant: Mark McFerran, Unit 140 Moat House, 54 Bloomfield Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5AD

Days and Hours: Monday-Friday 4pm to 10pm, Saturday and Sunday 1pm to 7pm

Type of entertainment: A Circus.

There were no objections received from NIFRS, Environmental Health or the PSNI.

2. Bryansburn Bar & Grill - 149-151 Bryansburn Road, Bangor, BT20 3RQ

Applicant: Mr John Parke, 48 Beverly Gardens, Bangor, BT20 4NQ

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

Type of entertainment: Dancing, Singing or Music or any other entertainment of a like kind.

There were no objections received from NIFRS, Environmental Health or the PSNI.

RECOMMENDED that the Council grants an Entertainments Licence to Duffy's Circus, Newtownards and Bryansburn Bar & Grill, Bangor, subject to satisfactory final inspection by Licensing and Regulatory Services.

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

Alderman Graham wished to be recorded as against.

19. PROPOSAL FOR A CHANGE TO DEATH & STILL-BIRTH LEGISLATION

(Appendices XV, XVI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services attaching letter from GRO and response to proposal. The report detailed that Council had been approached by the General Registrar Office (GRO) for Northern Ireland who were seeking the views of its stakeholders about putting forward legislation that would make the remote registration process of deaths and still-births permanent. Attached to the report was a document detailing the proposed responses by Ards and North Down Borough Council.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the responses in the appendix attached to the report.

Proposed by Councillor McLaren, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor McLaren stated that experiencing still birth was an incredibly traumatic time, any death could plunge a family into a very dark period. In relation to specifically grieving, those parents who were lucky to have children would know that after a birth of a healthy baby going to register that birth at a local Council was often part of the excitement, and it could be difficult for grieving parents to cross paths with happy, smiley parents, compounding the trauma for grieving parents. The recommendation relied on communication between doctors, funeral directors, families and Council but was ultimately for the good of the family. The recommendation prevented trips to the Council offices, assisted those with no family support and those that found it difficult to travel. Councillor McLaren noted that on the Council's website it stated that to register a still birth it needed to be in person. She was of the understanding that registration was occurring remotely and she asked if that could be looked into.

The Mayor noted the comment regarding the Council's website and stated that could be looked into.

Councillor McLaren thanked the Officers for preparation of the response.

Councillor Boyle noted the difficulty of the circumstances for families and supported the assistance the recommendation would bring by streamlining the process. He thanked the Officers for preparing the response, it was a sensitive subject and had been answered very professionally.

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

20. NOTICE OF MOTION REPORT - PAINTING OF DECORATIVE LAMPOSTS IN GREYABBEY

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment providing the undernoted detail: -

In December 2023 the Council agreed a Notice of Motion stating:

That Council welcomes the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter located on Main Street, Greyabbey and tasks officers to ensure it is maintained to a high standard going forward.

Furthermore, Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to ask for the decorative lamp posts on Main Street, Greyabbey, to be repainted to ensure they are maintained as a feature of this historic village; and writes to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to seek funding to deliver a mini public realm or streetscape project in Greyabbey.

Assets and Property Services took forward the action regarding writing to the Department for Infrastructure whereas the letter to DAERA was referred to Regeneration for follow up.

A response from the Department for Infrastructure had been received which stated:

“The Department does not carry out painting due to the limited resources available. All budgets and resources are directed at the maintenance and replacement of the existing network.”

However, if the council wish to paint the columns as part of a regeneration project, I would have no objections. Similar schemes have taken place in other council areas with heritage style columns.”

An update report was brought back to Environment Committee in April 2024 where it was agreed that:

“...on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Edmund that the Council works with Greyabbey Community Association in relation to repainting the decorative lamp posts. Further to this Council brings a report to this committee on the feasibility and costings of completing this work in partnership with the community.”

Proposal

Officers had subsequent conversations with the Community Association representatives on potential ways to help and would propose the following option:

1. Council painting contractors had provided a price to the community group for painting the lamp posts. Should that be acceptable to the group, all costs would be borne solely by the Community Association.
2. Council permits the contractors to use its access equipment (cherry picker) already working in the area, helping reduce contractor costs. Since existing Council contractors were being utilised for the work, appropriate training and insurances were already in place.
3. Provided the Community Association were in favour of this proposal, it would be subject to agreement of the method statement with Dfl, Council officers could assist with this also.

RECOMMENDED that Council considers whether it wishes to assist Greyabbey Community Association as outlined above.

Proposed by Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

(Councillors Kendall and Hollywood withdrew from the meeting – 8.23 pm)

Councillor Wray outlined the background of the issue highlighting that as a good example of collaborative working.

Councillor Edmund thanked the community association and officers involved. He welcomed that the Association wished to invest in their own village.

Alderman Adair was happy to support the recommendation. He referred to the motion that had previously been brought to the Environment Committee where that had been amended that the Council would write for funding for a streetscape public realm scheme in Greyabbey and he questioned if the recommendation impacted that scheme being worked up.

(Councillor Kendall and Councillor Hollywood re-entered the meeting – 8.27 pm)

The Director of Place stated that scheme was dependent on funding from the small settlements scheme in the future.

While Alderman Adair welcomed the painting, he highlighted the greater need for a public realm and street scape scheme. Greyabbey was a village of two halves and the scheme he envisaged linked the abbey into the village centre in the Main Street. Alderman Adair commended the work of the community association and the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) working on the matter. He was reassured to hear the Director's response and highlighted the need to do the best it could for Greyabbey.

Councillor Boyle congratulated Councillor Wray, Head of Assets and Dfi for the work that been undertaken. He welcomed the great improvement for the village at no cost to Council.

Having recently met with Greyabbey Community Association, the Mayor congratulated them for the work.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

21. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN OLYMPIC HOMECOMING EVENT

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that on Friday 16 August 2024, Ards and North Down Borough Council hosted homecoming celebrations for the Borough's 10 Olympians.

Four of those Olympians, Rhys McClenaghan, Jack McMillan, Rachel McCann and Michael Young, attended the event, which featured two main components: a reception for invited guests and VIPs, including friends and family of the Olympians

in Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex, and a public celebratory event in Conway Square, Newtownards, running from 4pm to 9pm.

The homecoming celebrations also recognised the medal achievements of the Borough's Special Olympian, Haleigh Miskimmin at the 2023 Berlin games and Paralympian, Barry McClements who was taking part in the Paris 2024 Paralympics.

Benefits

The delivery of an Olympic homecoming event brings numerous benefits to the Borough:

1. **Civic Pride:** Celebrating the local Olympian's achievements fosters a sense of pride and unity within the community. It brings people together to celebrate a shared success, enhancing community spirit.
2. **Inspiration and Motivation:** This event has inspired young people and aspiring athletes. In turn, this brings footfall to the Borough's leisure provision.
3. **Economic Boost:** Local businesses in Newtownards such as restaurants, and shops, will benefit from the economic boost to the area that an event of this scale brings. Extensive collaboration with Newtownards Chamber and associated businesses was carried out in the short period before the event.
4. **Media Attention:** Hosting this high-profile event attracted significant media coverage, putting the Borough in the spotlight. This will raise the profile of the area and potentially attract future events and investments.
5. **Cultural and Social Benefits:** This event included sporting performances, music, and entertainment, providing a fun and engaging experience for residents. It also offered opportunities for social interaction and community bonding.
6. **Recognition and Support for Athletes:** Recognising and celebrating the hard work and dedication of local athletes, may encourage more investment in local sports programmes throughout the Borough in the future.

Budget

Given the nature of the event and the speed at which it was coordinated, no budget had previously been allocated to the activity.

Officers allocated £5,000 from existing budgets and also benefited from grant funding of £5,000 from the Department for Communities (DfC) for town centre animation in Newtownards.

In addition to this budget, Officers required a total of £19,400. That would be managed at an organisational level as underspends materialised throughout the rest of the financial year.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the expenditure associated the Olympic homecoming event.

Proposed by Councillor Smart, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Smart wished to put his thanks on record for what was an incredibly joyful and prideful event. Residents across the Borough watched the Games with huge anticipation and after the great success it was only right that the Council provided all the residents a fitting tribute and a chance to come together. In terms of the spend, he believed that every penny of the modest sum was well spent with a huge number of people having turned out to support Rhys, Jack and fellow Olympians providing a feel good factor, a very strong civic pride, economic boost in footfall and a terrific inspiration to all young people who could see that with dedication and aspiration you could achieve and excel. Newtownards deserved and needed a positive headline and thanks to the athletes, proud residents and the hard-working team in Council provided a positive legacy. Councillor Smart congratulated those Officers who had organised the event in the short space of time for which Members were very grateful.

Alderman McIlveen congratulated Officers for the fantastic seamless event and he felt it had been incredibly fitting setting for the achievements of those young people who were now role models for so many people. Hearing the words from Rhys and Jack were inspirational for everyone; challenges and failures that they had overcome was a lesson for so many. It had been great to see so many young people in attendance to witness and listen. People from all over the Borough had come to the homecoming and he remarked on the posters, shop dressings and cavalcade. He thanked the Officers once again and believed it had been money well spent.

Councillor S Irvine wished to reiterate the previous comments. He noted the Council did come under unfair criticism on the portrayal of the Olympics, however it had been a great homecoming event. He stated that it was great to see the mention of Barry McClements, Paralympian and Hayley Miskimmon, special Olympian.

Councillor Boyle wished to thank the entire Council team for the delivery of the successful event. The Chief Executive was quick to praise the team however, remarked on the amount of challenges that she had undertaken in her short time in her new role and commended her for the work in that regard. The communications were outstanding under the Head of Communications and Marketing. Councillor Boyle did however feel Newtownards town did not promote the Olympians the way they could have on the lead up to the Olympics with best wishes and he felt that potentially had been overlooked. He described the homecoming as superb, providing a Borough wide welcome. He expressed his disappointment that Ciara Magee had been unable to attend. In terms of the cost, the event was fitting for its purpose, and he was content with the expenditure.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter highlighted the pride of the Olympians and noted that Wardens had put window dressings to celebrate. She thanked everyone who was involved and noted the joy shown by Rhys and Jack.

Councillor Moore felt the event had been fantastic and noted the pride that the public had shown. The quick turnaround and putting on an event that was professional and reflective of the pride felt. It was important to acknowledge that it had taken years of

dedication to get to where those athletes were. Councillor Moore also acknowledged the support from the Council provided by way of sports funding and facilities. She therefore wished to thank Council Officers for the efforts over the years to get to this point. The Borough was seeing great success, being top of the medal table in Northern Ireland.

Alderman McDowell thanked the staff for organising the event at short notice. He had found the evening very inspirational and referred to the atmosphere and the length of time the Olympians had spent with the crowd. They recognised the support from the Council. The event did the Council, the Borough and Newtownards proud.

Alderman McAlpine felt the event had been wonderful and inspirational and was proud of the Officers and how they had dealt with the event.

Alderman Graham felt the team organising the event had captured the sense of the people, the event dovetailed with the mood of the people and the people responded to the event. He also noted the contribution that sports made to good relations and that was not engineered, it was spontaneous. He believed the money to have been well spent and was great for the Ards and North Down Borough.

The Mayor shared the feedback and noted the work that had been undertaken by Officers in a short time and felt that Officers had excelled themselves. The event had been a highlight for him as Mayor. The Mayor remarked on how inspiring the event was for young children. The investment in the Borough Leisure Centres was reflective - having an Olympic sized swimming pool with great swimming clubs, as well as with Rhys with his determination and his facilities and the enthusiasm for young people to become involved in gymnastics. The Council should be proud of the event, the Olympians and the legacy that was left.

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

22. SEALING DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that the seal be affixed to the following documents:-

Grants of Rights of Burial: D40570 – D40590.

23. TRANSFER OF RIGHTS OF BURIAL

No transfers had been received.

NOTED.

24. NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS REPORT (Appendix XVII)

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

This was a standing item on the Council agenda each month and its aim was to keep Members updated on the outcome of motions. It should be noted that as each motion was dealt with it would be removed from the report.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted.

25. NOTICES OF MOTION

25.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Creighton and Councillor Moore

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

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

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

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Creighton, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Community and Wellbeing Committee.

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

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

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Brooks, seconded by Councillor Wray, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Place and Prosperity Committee.

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

That this council notes that significant investment was previously made to deliver a play park, MUGA and amateur league sized football pitch on the Clandeboye road.

Notes with regret there have been ongoing issues with the pitch. Instructs officers to reinstate the goalposts and mark out the pitch so that it can be played on by the local community.

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

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Community and Wellbeing Committee.

25.4 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Adair and Alderman Cummings

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

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Community and Wellbeing Committee.

Circulated for Information

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

AGREED on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Thompson that the information be noted.

RECESS

The meeting went into recess at 8.58 pm and resumed at 9.15 pm.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC/PRESS

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

26. CIVIC AND OFFICE RATIONALISATION: APPOINTMENT OF BUSINESS CASE CONSULTANTS FOR BANGOR CASTLE/NORTH DOWN MUSEUM

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION – SCHEDULE 6: EXEMPTION REASON 3 – RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON

A report was presented to Council regarding a tender exercise for consultants to produce outline business cases for both Bangor Castle and North Down Museum.

The report recommended that Council award the tender in line with the process. The recommendation was agreed.

27. PROPOSAL TO CREATE A WAR MEMORIAL IN CONLIG

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

*****NOT FOR PUBLICATION*****

SCHEDULE 6: EXEMPTION REASON 5: A CLAIM TO LEGAL PROFESSIONAL PRIVILEGE.

Council was asked to approve entering into a legal agreement with the Conlig War Memorial Group subject to a set of conditions in relation to the installation of a War Memorial.

28. POTENTIAL REQUEST FROM THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT - UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

(Appendices XVIII)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 EXCEMPTION REASON 3 – RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON

A report was presented to Council regarding the launch of the Communities and Place Funding. The report recommended that Council approve a list of projects as Council's submission to the Shared Prosperity Fund. The recommendation was agreed.

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 10.19 pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Planning Committee was held in the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Tuesday 3rd September 2024 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Alderman McIlveen

Aldermen: Graham
McDowell

Councillors:	Cathcart	McKee (Zoom)
	Creighton	McLaren
	Harbinson	Morgan
	Kendall	Rossiter
	Kerr (19:12, Zoom)	Wray
	McCollum	

Officers: Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Head of Planning (G Kerr), Principal Planners (C Blair (in person) and C Barker (via Zoom)) and Democratic Services Officer (S McCrea)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Alderman P Smith and Councillor Rossiter.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made, but Members were reminded that they could declare at any time throughout the meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF 06 AUGUST 2024

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minute.

NOTED.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

4.1 LA06/2022/0827/F - LANDS APPROXIMATELY 250M SW OF 240 SCRABO ROAD, NEWTOWNARDS. STABLE BUILDING AND ASSOCIATED HAYSHED/TACK ROOM AND EQUIPMENT STORE.

Following the late submission of additional information, Item 4.1 was deferred to a future Planning Committee meeting.

4.2 LA06/2023/1739/F - 5 MARIAN WAY, PORTAFERRY. SINGLE DWELLING WITH NEW ACCESS & ASSOCIATED SITE WORKS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Case Officer's report.

DEA: Ards Peninsula

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

Proposal: Single dwelling with new access & associated site works

Site Location: 5 Marian Way, Portaferry

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the application was before members this evening as it was a local development application attracting six or more separate individual objections, which were contrary to the case officer's report. On this occasion there were 22 objections from nine separate addresses.

Members were asked to note that the objections had been fully assessed in the case officer's report against the planning policy and taking account of consultee responses which offered no objections subject to a number of conditions including by Dfl Roads.

There were a pair of two storey semi-detached dwellings on either side of the site. The site itself descended gradually from roadside ground level towards the rear boundary. A wall with timber fence on top and timber fencing defined the boundary adjoining No.5 Marian Way to the southwest with hedging and bushes marking the boundary with No.3 to the northeast.

In the next slide, Policy QD1 of PPS 7 for Quality Residential Environments was shown to Members. The site was located within the settlement limit of Portaferry with no specific zoning or designation in the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 and the surrounding character was of a residential nature. The site comprised of a former garden area and did not consist of the loss of any public open space.

There were two other recent approvals along Marian Way, which were provided in the case officer's report which showed the granting of permission for two pairs of two-storey semi-detached dwellings on wider plots of land, both accommodating in-curtilage parking to the front of the dwellings meaning the proposed buildings lay slightly behind the existing building line. It had not appeared out of keeping with the surrounding area.

Whilst this current application was for a single two-storey dwelling on a narrower site, it too had been designed to include in-curtilage parking for two cars to the front, and with the proposed house slightly positioned behind the adjacent building line. Although this site could only accommodate a single dwelling, it was within the urban area where proposed development was looked on favourably and street uniformity

was not critical in this area with different types of accommodation welcomed. The overall design of the dwelling respected the neighbouring dwellings and was of a high quality, as was shown to Members in a slide.

A further slide showed the proposed site layout and proposed elevations. The proposed dwelling, which measured 7.66m high, respected the neighbouring properties in terms of size, scale, density and did not dominate the street scene. The dwelling sat slightly behind the building line of neighbouring dwellings however this was due to the proposed in-curtilage parking, which had also been previously granted for other recent approvals.

In terms of private amenity space, the proposed dwelling was provided with over 150 square metres which far exceeded the minimum required for an urban area. In terms of neighbouring residential amenity, the first-floor gable windows serving bathrooms and landing would be obscure glazed.

The separate distance from gable to gable was 3.9m with No.5 and 4.26 metres with No.3. The proposal met the light tests and did not result in an adverse impact due to overshadowing.

The proposed raised terrace at the rear of the new dwelling would only overlook the rear portions of the adjacent long back gardens and would not result in unacceptable overlooking or loss of privacy including into habitable rooms.

Another slide showed cross-sections and photos of the site.

Concerns were raised in objection letters regarding parking. A parking survey was submitted and DfI Roads noted that it had considered the parking survey, objections and proposed site layout which included two in-curtilage spaces. It advised that the application as it stood was acceptable, offering no objection subject to conditions, which were set out in the case officer report.

With regard to representations made in respect of the planning application, there were 22 objections from nine separate address received. The main thrust related to the parking and access, design, residential amenity and impact on natural heritage including removal of hedging and landscaping, and bat roost potential. On the back of these points raised in relation to the bat roost potential and landscaping concerns, a consultation was carried out with NED who offered no objections or conditions to be included.

Members were asked in further slide to note the Orthophotography dated 2003 showing the gardens/spaces, which had since been developed/approved over time. The spaces had been 'filled in' and the site formed a logical infill site consistent with and maintaining the character and appearance of development along Marian Way and did not represent overdevelopment of the site or 'town cramming'.

In conclusion, the Officer explained that it had been considered the proposal would not cause any significant adverse impact on the character of the area, nor would it result in any significant loss of amenity for surrounding residents and as such, he recommended approval of the application.

Other slides provided Members with relevant Planning History

As there were no questions to the Officer, Mr Ballard, speaking in support of the application, was invited to join the Chamber and advised that he had five minutes to present his case. Mr Ballard explained that he was from Reality Architects and present at the committee on behalf of the applicant. He thanked Officers for their efforts and reports and that he could answer any queries or questions.

Councillor McCollum in regard to some representations from objectors that focused on in-curtilage parking which had been previously approved for houses that were under construction on the street, asked if it had alleviated the issue of parking to which Mr Ballard advised an in-depth parking report had been completed and the situation dealt with. Two parking spaces had been provided.

With no other questions, Mr Ballard returned to the gallery at 19:13.

Proposed by Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that the recommendation be adopted, and that planning approval be granted.

Councillor Wray had agreed with Mr Ballard's comments on an in-depth analysis and that objections had been investigated and dealt with. Councillor Cathcart welcomed the approval explaining that with the history of the street, there appeared to be no reasons why planning should go forward.

RESOLVED on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that planning permission be granted.

4.3 LA06/2024/0398/F - Grass Sports pitches adjacent to Ward Arras Pavilion, Ward Park, approximately 55m north of 2a Gransha Road, Bangor. Installation of a ball backstop fence at the western tip of the softball field

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Case Officer's report.

DEA: Bangor Central

Committee Interest: Application made by the Council

Proposal: Installation of a ball backstop fence at the western tip of the softball field.

Site Location: Grass Sports pitches adjacent to Ward Arras Pavilion
Ward Park, approximately 55m north of 2a Gransha Road, Bangor

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Officer (C Blair) explained that the application was before members as it was a Council planning application.

Slide 1 showed an aerial image of the site – The application site was located within the existing Ward Park playing fields area and had a backdrop of mature trees to the south and southwest. The site, which was in the urban area, did not conflict with the area plan or any planning policy.

Members were asked to note that no letters of representation had been submitted.

Slide 2 showed details of the ball back-stop fence and a site photo.

The fencing was to be a green coloured metal mesh and be vibration and tamper resistant. It would not have any impact on existing trees and would have no impact on residential amenity with the closest dwelling approximately 55m to the south with a road in between. The application had no adverse impact on any priority species or habitat.

In conclusion, the Principal Planner recommended that full planning permission be granted.

Councillor Cathcart asked what the requirement for planning permission was in this scenario given it was of such small scale. The Principal Planner explained that as the fence would be over two metres in height, it would require planning permission whilst the Head of Planning added that the application was required to be presented at Planning Committee due to there being Council interest in the land.

Proposed by Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Harbinson, that the recommendation be adopted, and that planning approval be granted.

Councillor Harbinson was happy with the decision, adding that facilities such as this helped promote sport and that he was happy to second.

RESOLVED on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Harbinson, that planning permission be granted.

4.4 LA06/2024/0603/LBC - Market House, The Square, Portaferry **1.1m pedestrian railing at entrance to match existing railings** **to the SW**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Case Officer's report.

DEA: Ards Peninsula

Committee Interest: Application made by the Council

Proposal: 1.1m pedestrian railing at entrance to match existing railings to the SW.

Site Location: Market House, The Square, Portaferry

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Principal Planner (C Blair) advised that the application was before members as it was a Council Planning application for Listed Building Consent. No objections or other representations had been received.

Slide 1 showed the Site Location Plan

The application site was within the settlement limits of Portaferry and was in the Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Portaferry Conservation Area.

Market House was a Grade B+ Listed Building.

Slide 2 showed the proposed railing

The proposed entrance railing as designed to match existing railings located at the site. HED considered the proposed works to be sympathetic in nature with use of appropriate materials and details, which was policy compliant.

The Council Conservation Officer offered no objection given this minor nature of development which had no impact on either the immediate surroundings or wider context of the conservation area.

In conclusion, the Principal Planner recommended that listed building consent was granted.

Proposed by Councillor Wray seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted, and that planning consent is granted.

Councillor Wray had been at the site (in relation to a non- planning matter) on Saturday and was happy with the approval.

RESOLVED on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that listed building consent be granted.

5. UPDATE ON PLANNING APPEALS
(FILE REF: 160051)

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

Appeal Decisions

- 1. The following appeal was dismissed on 9 August 2024.

PAC Ref	2023/L0012
Council Ref	LA06/2022/0521/LDP
Appellant	Greenbay Apartments Ltd
Subject of Appeal	Refusal of a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Use or Development – Commencement of development in the form of construction of foundations and the establishment of sight lines to satisfy conditions 1 and 2 on planning permission X/2008/1064/F.
Location	84 Warren Road, Donaghadee

The main issue of this appeal against the Certificate of Lawfulness for a Proposed Development (CLOPUD) was whether the development had commenced in accordance with planning permission X/2008/1064/F prior to its expiration. Full planning permission X/2008/1064/F was granted on 21st July 2010 for the demolition of a former care home and the development of 26 2-bedroom apartments in three blocks with associated landscaping and car parking.

The Council accepted that foundations were laid prior to the expiration of the above permission however there was one pre-commencement condition (condition 2) applied to the planning permission.

Condition 2 of planning permission X/2008/1064/F stated that the vehicular access, including visibility splays and any forward sight line, would be provided in accordance with the approved plans, prior to the commencement of any works or other development hereby permitted. The reason stated was to ensure that there would be a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

Until the pre-commencement conditions had been satisfied, the Council argued that a decision cannot be lawful.

There was also a speed sign and electricity pole, which were considered to obstruct visibility as it was located within the area for the visibility splays.

The Commissioner considered whether the condition went to the heart of the planning permission, as was set out in case law (The Whitley Principle). She did not accept the presence of the 11m long pavement surfacing as a significant betterment for pedestrians as there was no distinction in the surfacing materials (apart from a dropped kerb) giving little awareness of the presence of a vehicular access leading to serious concerns of road safety.

The Commissioner agreed with DfI Roads position that the location of the speed sign could require a vehicle to drive around it into oncoming traffic exiting the site, compromising road safety.

Finally, the Commissioner did not agree or accept that the Whitley principle had been applied in an 'over-rigid, overly literal' manner by the Council. She concluded that the pre-commencement condition 2 had not been discharged as required, and therefore the planning permission had not lawfully commenced.

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

New Appeals Lodged

- 2. The following appeal was lodged against the refusal of planning permission on 16 August 2024.

PAC Ref	2024/A0055
Council Ref	LA06/2022/0267/F

Appellant	Mr James Overton-White
Subject of Appeal	Dry storage unit (Use Class B4) (Retrospective) & replacement of entrance gate at existing builder's storage yard as per confirmed lawful use of land under ref LA06/2021/1233/LDE (Re-determination of planning application).
Location	7 Glenburn Park, Bangor

Details of appeal decisions, new appeals and scheduled hearings can be viewed at www.pacni.gov.uk.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report and attachment.

The Head of Planning summarised the report to Members.

Councillor Cathcart, in relation to the subject of Warren Road and foundations having been built, said that he hadn't been aware of the principle of preconditions for visibility. The Head of Planning explained that the pre-commencement condition had to be complied with before works. An argument was made at the hearing that Council had been too stringent on their interpretation of policy which Officers disagreed with due to road safety issues. A similar issue had arisen in another appeal raised during this case on The Burn Road where a telegraph pole existed in the splays, but this had a different context.

RESOLVED on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.

6. BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – JULY 2024 (FILE REF: FIN45)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from Director of Prosperity detailing that the Planning Service's Budgetary Control Report covered the 4-month period 1 April to 31 July 2024. The net cost of the Service was showing an underspend of £2k (0.4%) – box A on page 2.

Explanation of Variance

The Planning Service's budget performance was further analysed on page 2 into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£82k favourable	2
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£0.3k favourable	2
Report 4	Income	£80k adverse	2

Explanation of Variance

The Planning Service's overall variance could be summarised by the following table:

-

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	(82)	Vacant posts include HPTO, PTO and SPTO. The HPTO & PTO expected to be filled in August with the SPTO post to be recruited.
Income	80	Mainly Planning application fees. No major applications received yet this year.

REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT						
Period 4 - July 2024						
	Year to Date Actual £	Year to Date Budget £	Variance £	Annual Budget £	Variance %	
Planning						
730 Planning	589,244	591,500	(2,256)	1,740,400	(0.4)	
Total	589,244	591,500	A (2,256)	1,740,400	(0.4)	
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Planning - Payroll						
730 Planning	758,731	840,800	(82,069)	2,522,500	(9.8)	
Total	758,731	840,800	(82,069)	2,522,500	(9.8)	
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Planning - Goods & Services						
730 Planning	70,424	70,700	(276)	367,500	(0.4)	
Total	70,424	70,700	(276)	367,500	(0.4)	
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Planning - Income						
730 Planning	(239,911)	(320,000)	80,089	(1,149,600)	25.0	
Totals	(239,911)	(320,000)	80,089	(1,149,600)	25.0	

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

The Head of Planning summarised the report to Members, stating that it ran from 1st April to 31st July with net cost underspend of £2k and £80k adverse in terms of income and salaries.

Proposed by Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted and that the report be noted.

Councillor Cathcart, in relation to the £80k adverse figure thought it could be argued that the figure was not favourable due to vacancies which ideally should be filled. He asked for outline reasons behind the adverse income and for an update on staffing. The Head of Planning advised that no major applications had been submitted to attract a larger fee, but some majors were anticipated. A meeting with a major investor could happen but nothing had been submitted recently. With staffing, they were looking at filling posts with the SPTO to be recruited for. Some staff were on secondments whilst a confirmation had been received for retirement, thus the team were looking at the overall structure of the Planning Department to have gaps filled.

Councillor McCollum asked if there was any reason why no major applications had been made during the reporting period. The Head of Planning explained that the same issue was being experienced through all eleven Councils with a trend of general downtown. During the pandemic, there had been a high proportion of household development that had tailed off while some projects were in the pipeline. However, construction costs had increased by one quarter with many developers deciding to hold back due to costs. Change-of-house applications had been made potentially due to costs as well.

Councillor McCollum queried if the NI Water issues were still relevant to which the Head of Planning advised that legal advice had been sought as applications could not be left sitting which in turn would have an adverse effect on statistics. From that, a step was taken to attach a negative condition of development not commencing until connections were secured. Just because a developer may receive a green form would not mean that everything would fall into place for construction to begin but with planning permission, they could at least outsource other issues. The Council encouraged developers to talk to NI water first before submitting any application as it could be the case that they'd have to put an element of the funding toward infrastructure.

Alderman Graham, regarding construction costs rising coupled with infrastructure costs all being incumbent on developers of large schemes, asked if it was fair for additional pressures to be added to the industry, and if costs of land would continue to rise. The Head of Planning could not answer the question on land prices but did say that Council did not force developers to pay money to NI Water. There were many factors that needed to be considered by all parties. In very large developments, there has been a willingness to foot the additional charges on infrastructure connections. If it was unaffordable for a developer, they would not do so. Alderman Graham recalled a deputation from the Housing Association who had been very clear that there had been a lack of provision for social housing, and it too tied in with infrastructure requirements. He believed it was a problem that needed addressing from all parties involved.

RESOLVED on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.

7. PLANNING STATISTICS APRIL 2023 – MARCH 2024

(FILE REF: 160051)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from Director of Prosperity which provided an update to Members on the publication by DFI of the annual finalised results of Northern Ireland planning statistics April 2023 – March 2024 issued on 01 August.

The bulletin had been attached, and the press release and detailed tables could be viewed on the Department's website here: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-april-2023-march-2024>

The report advised that the transfer to the new planning portals would have impacted on planning activity and processing performance; this should be borne in mind when making comparisons with other time periods. The reporting of data relating to the number of enforcements concluded and processing times had recommenced in this report.

Applications in the Major category of development

The following table detailed the performance for Ards and North Down against the statutory performance indicators.

Majors	Received	Decided	Approved	Withdrawn	Average Processing Time (target 30 wks)
Quarter 1	1	1	1	0	93.2
Quarter 2	1	0	0	0	-
Quarter 3	3	2	2	0	78.7
Quarter 4	2	3	3	0	96
Total	7	6	6	0	84.7

The time taken to process a decision/withdrawal was calculated from the date on which an application was deemed valid to the date on which the decision is issued, or the application was withdrawn. The median was used for the average processing time as any extreme values had the potential to inflate the mean, leading to a result that may not be considered as "typical".

Majors - Quarter 1

LA06/2021/0917/F was decided for 58no dwellings at Ardara in Comber. The application, on land zoned for housing within the Ards and Down Area Plan, was submitted 28 June 2021.

All of the consultees required submission of additional information and amended designs, which required re-advertising and re- neighbour notification and the carrying out of further consultation and all subsequent further objections assessed.

There were NI Water issues which required a separate legal agreement required to be drafted by the Council's Planning lawyers and then executed between the Council and the applicant and sealed by the Council.

The last information submitted by the applicant was November 2022 and the application was presented to Planning Committee on 06 December 2022 with a recommendation of approval, subject to execution of the legal agreement referred to above. The legal agreement was given approval to be signed and sealed at the Council meeting on 26 April 2023. The agreement was then signed and sealed once the call-in period had expired, and the decision notice was issued dated 17 May 2023 (processing time 93.2 weeks)

Majors - Quarter 3

LA06/2021/0061/F for proposed residential development for 188 dwellings, open space (including NS 43), landscaping, children's play area, next phase of the distributor road, internal road network, SuDS Pond, and all associated site and access works and proposed amendment of the section 76 planning agreement for the Rivenwood housing development in Newtownards was approved at Planning Committee meeting in October and decision issued on 03 November. This application was for the development of phases 3a and 3b of the NS20 zoning.

LA06/2023/1959/F was decided for the erection of new arrival and welcome building (Culture Hub), collection & exhibition building (Industry Zone), staff and volunteer hub and other extensive works at Cultra Folk Museum. The application was submitted on 23 June 2023 and was approved at Planning committee meeting on 05 December 2023 subject to NIEA responses (processing time 20 weeks).

Majors – Quarter 4

LA06/2021/0118/F was decided for a housing development of 98 units and detached garages and extension to footpath on Shore Road at St Andrews housing development in Ballyhalbert.

The application was presented at planning committee meeting on 07 November 2023. The motion to grant permission, subject to conditions, was carried by members of the Committee following which negotiations were required for the inclusion of a playpark which the developer agreed to and required re-neighbour notification and re-advertising.

The application was brought back to the Planning committee meeting in February 2024 and the decision notice issued on 13 February (processing time 144 weeks).

LA06/2022/0873/F was decided for the relocation and redevelopment of Bangor Central Integrated Primary School on vacant site North of Balloo Road, Bangor, to provide a new 22 class primary school building and recreational areas. The application also included a new vehicular access with right turn lane off Balloo Road, internal vehicular configuration and site layout to include car parking, car and bus pick up/drop off areas and pedestrian crossing points.

This application was subject to a significant number of objections in relation to intensification of traffic in the area. There were also NI Water capacity issues on site which required an off-site solution to be found by the developer in liaison with NI Water which required a legal agreement to be drawn up (processing time of 62 weeks).

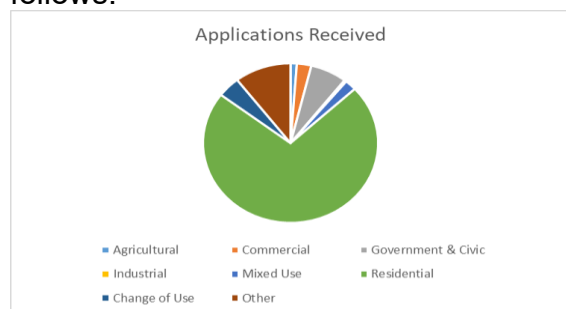
LA06/2023/2434/F - Proposed residential development of 95 dwellings (reduction in density from 108 dwellings approved under LA06/2019/0603/F) to include roads, parking, infrastructure, landscaping and retention of Bawn Wall. Vehicular access to the site would be from Castlebawn Drive.

The above application for social housing which was subject to funding deadlines was presented at the Special Planning committee meeting on 21 March 2024 with a processing time of 16.3 weeks.

Applications in the Local category of development

Locals	Received	Decided	Approved	Average Processing Time (target 15 wks)
Quarter 1	201	248	225	51.0
Quarter 2	184	190	175	14.6
Quarter 3	180	187	176	17.2
Quarter 4	217	186	156	17.1
Total	782	838	732 (97% approval rate)	16.0

Of the application received during this time period, the development types were as follows:



Householder Development

Of the local applications determined above, 333 applications fell within the 'householder development' category of development, i.e. applications for alternations to an existing dwelling such as extensions, conservatories, loft conversions, or outbuildings within the boundary of a dwelling. Planning Service operates an internal target of 65% of householder development proposals being processed within 8 weeks.

In 2023-2024, 223 applications were determined within 8 weeks (67%) whilst of the 353, 290 were determined within the statutory target of 15 weeks (87%).

Additional Activity

In addition to the above planning applications, it was important to draw attention to additional work carried out within the Development Management Section which was not reported upon. Additional activity details the "non-application" workload of the Planning Service, and includes Discharge of conditions, Certificates of Lawfulness (Proposed & Existing), Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)/ Consents to Fell Trees in Conservation Area, Pre-Application Discussions (PADs), Proposals of Application Notice (PANs) and Non-Material Changes. Preparation of Statements of Case for appeals and attendance at hearings is not detailed.

Type	Received 01/04/23 – 31/03/2024	Determined - by 31/03/2024
Discharge of Condition	78	65
Certificate of Lawfulness	46	30
Non-Material Change	46	39
Pre-Application Discussion	37	
Proposal of Application Notice	5	
TPO	55	27

For PADs and PANS, only the received cases are included in the table as it is not considered appropriate to report on decided/withdrawn cases or processing times for these types of activity.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the content of this report and attachment.

The Head of Planning summarised the report to Members. The yearly report explained transfer to the planning portal would affect planning activity and the majors that required work to be carried in relation to stats. Detail was provided of previous applications that had come through majors and decided ones with detail provided on progress in terms of weeks; where delays occurred and why. Local figures were more positive with 16-week averages for the year and from the pie chart, as expected, the type of applications submitted were mainly residential. Household development continued to perform well. Additional activity alongside planning permissions did not attract fees with pre-application discussions, material changes, TPOs etc., all of which stats had been provided for.

Proposed by Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Harbinson, that the recommendation be adopted, and the report be noted.

Councillor Cathcart was pleased to see a decrease in the average number of weeks as well as more household developments, believing it encouraging given the staffing levels still required for the department.

Councillor McCollum wished to convey support to the Planning Department given the impressive figures and the current working conditions.

Councillor Morgan noted that statistics on major applications were not as good and though she appreciated the amount, the Council were low on the scale, and she wanted assurance that everyone was happy that nothing more could have been done to process applications more quickly.

The Director of Prosperity explained that there was no facility on the planning portal to record an approval at Committee before finalisation of likes of legal agreements. The Head of Planning was providing a report on statutory consultee performance. Though other Councils may have looked better on paper, they weren't served by the same consultee divisions. Other factors compounded completion times such as requests for more information from consultees or other major factors such as the Department for Infrastructure Roads or Rivers. The Planning Department had to accept amendments provided due to legislation whilst some were subject to environmental criteria that could only be worked on by Senior Planners of which only two existed in the department who had many other responsibilities to manage.

The Head of Planning agreed that a 30-week target for majors could only occur if a perfect application had been received with all information without further re-consultations. Once additional information was requested, the 30-week target could not be met. Front-loading was encouraged on applications as the department wanted to provide Members with as full a picture as possible on any decision. An example was given of Bangor Central Integrated Primary School; a case with majors listed with the legal agreement to address a water issue but the solution lay beyond land ownership of the school and Education Authority. As such, a legal agreement was required which took months even after finalisation at the Committee. It was only when a decision notice was issued that it would show on stats.

Councillor Kendall recalled a conversation of lobbying in terms of target vs waiting period and wondered if it had yet taken place. The Director of Prosperity explained that she had attended the Planning Statutory Consultee Forum that was chaired by the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure. It examined ways to look at provision of standing advice from consultees to assist. Additionally, more major applications required consultations in which nothing could be rushed to ensure collaborative and productive work to ensure a quality design. The Council had been criticised for the time spent on Premier Inn, Bangor, but the wait had been worth the result. It was hoped that legislation would allow the Council to set their own validation checklist in order to not accept applications that did not meet a particular standard.

RESOLVED on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Harbinson that the recommendation be adopted.

8. UPDATE ON TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS & APPLICATIONS FOR CONSENT WORKS
(FILE REF: 160051)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from Director of Prosperity which represented the quarterly update to Planning Committee regarding detail relating to Tree Preservation Orders served and applications for consent to carry out works to

protected trees. This update provided information from 17 May 2024 (date of previous report) to 16 August 2024.

Detail

The table below provided out the figures from the date of the last report to Committee.

Table 1 Tree Preservation Orders Served

TPO (Full or Provisional)	Date Served	Address
0		

Table 2 Consent for Works Decisions

TPO or Conservation Area	Consent Granted / Notification Accepted*	Consent Refused
Tree Preservation Orders	7	0
Address	1) 44 St Annes Wood, Donaghadee	
	2) 17b Kathleen Avenue, Helens Bay	
	3) High Trees, Donaghadee	
	4) 160 High Street, Holywood	
	5) 27a Bridge Road, Helens Bay	
	6) Lands to the rear of the Walled Garden, 47 Craigdarragh Road, Helens Bay	
	7) Lands to the rear of Beechlands Park, Helens Bay	
Conservation Area	1	0
	1) 65 Victoria Road, Holywood	

* Notification referred to when the Council received notification of proposed works to trees within a conservation area. If the Council did not accept the proposed works, it would have to serve a TPO within the 6-week period from the date of notification. 'Notification Accepted' meant that the Council did not consider it necessary to serve a TPO and thus there was no objection to the proposed works.

Detail

Works to Trees - Tree Preservation Order Protection

1. **44 St Annes Wood, Donaghadee** – felling of one tree - the tree had significant decay at the base and suspected internal decay and therefore

removal was required for safety reasons. Replacement planting was not considered necessary given the limited scope within the property to replant.

2. **17b Kathleen Avenue, Helens Bay** – felling of one tree and carrying out of works to one tree – the tree to be felled had poor form and showed a loss of vigour, given its close proximity to the dwelling, removal was required for safety reasons. Works to the second tree was for management and maintenance reasons. Replanting was conditioned with 1 no. standard native tree at a height of 3-3.5m within the curtilage of the property.
3. **High Trees Donaghadee** – felling of one tree – the tree showed a significant loss of vigour and was suffering from extensive ash dieback; therefore, removal was required for safety reasons. Replacement planting was not considered necessary given the limited scope to replant within the area of removal. The High Trees development has an extensive landscaping scheme approved which will more than compensate for removal.
4. **160 High Street, Holywood** – felling of two trees and carrying out of works to 86 trees – one of the trees to be felled had significant decay at the base and the second tree showed a significant loss of vigour as the tree was suffering from extensive ash dieback, therefore removal of both trees was required for safety reasons. Works to 86 trees was required for management and maintenance reasons. Replacement planting was conditioned with 2 no. standard native trees at a height of 3-3.5m to be planted within the curtilage of the site.
5. **27a Bridge Road, Helens Bay** – felling of one tree – the tree was located immediately adjacent to the gable of the dwelling and the crown overhung the roof significantly. Given the stature of this tree and its location adjacent to the dwelling, it had outgrown this position and therefore there was no objection to removal. Replacement planting was conditioned with 1 no. standard native tree at a height of 3-3.5m within the curtilage of the property.
6. **Lands to the rear of the Walled Garden, 47 Craigdarragh Road, Helen's Bay** – felling of one tree and carrying out of works to 11 trees – the tree to be felled showed a significant loss of vigour and had decaying cavities throughout, therefore removal was required for safety reasons. Works to 11 trees was required for management and maintenance reasons. Replacement planting was conditioned with 1 no. standard Oak tree at a height of 3-3.5m to be planted in as close a position as possible to the tree to be removed.
7. **Lands to the rear of Beechlands Park, Helens Bay** – felling of three trees and carrying out of works to five trees – one of the trees to be removed had a large decaying cavity on the main stem and internal decay was evident. The second tree to be felled had a poor crown and a significant loss of vigour. It was suffering from extensive dieback. The root structure of the third tree had partially failed and the tree was leaning significantly and was hung up on an adjacent tree. Removal of all three trees was therefore required for safety reasons. The carrying out of works to five trees was required for management and maintenance reasons. Replacement planting was conditioned with 3 no.

heavy standard native trees at a height of 3.5-4m within the area of tree removal.

Conservation Area Protection

1. **65 Victoria Road, Hollywood** – felling of four trees – three of the trees were maintained in ornamental form and had no public visual amenity given their location and limited stature. The fourth tree, although larger in stature, had limited visual amenity and was located immediately adjacent to the gable of the garage. For these reasons, there was no objection to removal. Replacement planting cannot be conditioned in this case.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the content of this report.

Proposed by Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the recommendation be adopted, and the report be noted

Councillor Cathcart referred to a TPO issue on a site where a tree had long since been removed which was subject of enforcement action and asked for a general view from Officers. The Principal Planning Officer (C Barker) explained that reviews were ongoing on all TPOs including that which the Councillor had referred to. It was a difficult situation and one that had been picked up by a conveyancing solicitor. It was extremely unlikely that Council would do anything in regard to the site where there was, at present, limited tree cover in regard to the old TPO. The review would assess whether to continue protecting areas based on the situation on the ground and taking account of approvals.

RESOLVED on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the recommendation be adopted.

9. **RELEASE OF DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE (DFI - RIVERS DIRECTORATE) 'RIVERS SIX YEAR STRATEGY'** (FILE REF: 160051)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from Director of Prosperity outlining that;

1. A new strategy was circulated by Department for Infrastructure (DFI), Rivers Directorate to its partner organisations (Item 9a) '**RIVERS SIX YEAR STRATEGY, 2021-2027**' (Item 9b)
2. DFI envisaged that the Strategy would act as a bridge between higher level strategic policy and the day-to-day activity of both Rivers Directorates. It had been developed to coincide with the current cycle of the of the Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plan (2021-2027), which identified objectives and measures to manage flood risk across Northern Ireland.

3. A copy of the strategy was attached for information which set out the strategic priorities for both Rivers Directorates for the 2021-2027 period and coincided with the timeframe of the second cycle Flood Risk Management Plan.
4. DFI intended to develop a subsequent Six Year Strategy to cover the 2027 to 2033 period and recognised the need to continue and enhance an approach to flood management in light of climate change. This would require developing infrastructure, which was adaptable and, DFI states also 'helping society to learn to 'live with flooding' as the construction of infrastructure for the complete prevention of flooding becomes less tenable.'

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

The Head of Planning summarised the report to Members, advising that it was not a policy for Planning but a document to be aware of and be taken into account especially with statutory consultees.

Proposed by Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that the recommendation be adopted the report be noted.

Councillor Morgan referenced an element of the attachments where it had been mentioned about learning to live with increased flooding. The Director of Prosperity advised that this was in the context of not continually seeking to develop hard protection measures.

RESOLVED on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Morgan that the recommendation be adopted.

Exclusion of Public/Press

AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business at 19:50.

10. QUARTERLY UPDATE ON ENFORCEMENT MATTERS

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

In Confidence Explanation

This report is presented in confidence to Members under Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014, Exemption 6a – Information which reveals that the council proposes to give under any statutory provision a notice by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person.

11. ADVANCE NOTICE OF CONSULTATION RE LISTING

(FILE REF: 160051)

In Confidence Explanation

This report is presented in confidence to Members under Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014, Exemption 6a – Information which reveals that the council proposes to give under any statutory provision a notice by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person.

Re-admittance of public/press

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McCollum, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting at 20:00.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 20:01.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Environment Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards and via Zoom, on Wednesday, 4th September 2024 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: McAlpine

Aldermen: Armstrong-Cotter
Cummings

Councillors:	Blaney	Irwin
	Boyle	McKee (Zoom)
	Cathcart	Morgan
	Douglas	Smart (Zoom)
	Edmund	Wray

Officers: Director of Environment (D Lindsay), Head of Waste and Cleansing Services (N Martin), Head of Assets and Property Services (P Caldwell), Building Control Services Manager (R McCracken), and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Rossiter.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

NOTED.

3. RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION – STATION ROAD DOG CONTROL ORDER

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that a Notice of Motion was agreed by the Council as followed:

That Council brings a report with a view to implementing a “dogs on leads” policy on that part of the Coastal Path which traverses the private road serving the properties 91 to 117 Station Road, Holywood inclusive.

Aim of Introducing a Dog Control Order

The Members bringing the Motion had received a complaint about dogs fouling on the pathway and of dogs straying into private gardens and fouling there.

The aim of the proposed Dog Control Order would be to reduce dog fouling along this approximately 470m length of the North Down Coastal Path, by requiring dogs to be kept on a lead of not more than 2m length when on that stretch of the coastal path.

When dogs were kept on a lead in that manner, the opportunity to foul without the knowledge of the responsible person was reduced.

This stretch of the coastal path was a private road, which was a shared private driveway, over which there was a public access right of way.

Enforcement History

In a search of Council records for the past year, there had only been one reported incident on this section of the coastal path, of a 'dog not under adequate control'. There have been no recorded incidents of dog fouling in that time period.

Power to Make Dog Control Orders

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011 (Sect. 40) provided the Council with the power to create an Order establishing a specified offence or offences relating to the control of dogs in respect of any land in its district (known as a "Dog Control Order"). In relation to dogs on leads, this part applied to any land which was open to the air and to which the public were entitled or permitted to have access (with or without payment).

Specified offences included 'not keeping dogs on leads in a designated area', and the Dog Control Orders (Prescribed Offences and Penalties, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 provided the method of creating such an Order. It was not possible to completely exclude dogs from a road since that particular control was exempted on roads (as defined by The Controls on Dogs (Non-applicable to Designated Land) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012).

Dog Control Orders: Supplementary

Section 41 of the Act provided for the Department to prescribe the penalties, or maximum penalties, which may be provided for in a Dog Control Order in relation to any offence. A fine may not exceed Level 3 on the standard scale in relation to any offence (currently £1000).

The current level agreed for all Dog Control Order offences was £80 fixed penalty, discounted to £60 if paid within 14 days.

The Members bringing the NOM had received a complaint about dogs fouling on the roadway and of dogs straying into private gardens and fouling there.

Consideration of Possible Introduction of Dog Control Order

Benefits of creating this particular Dog Control Order included the regulation of a section of coastal path where:

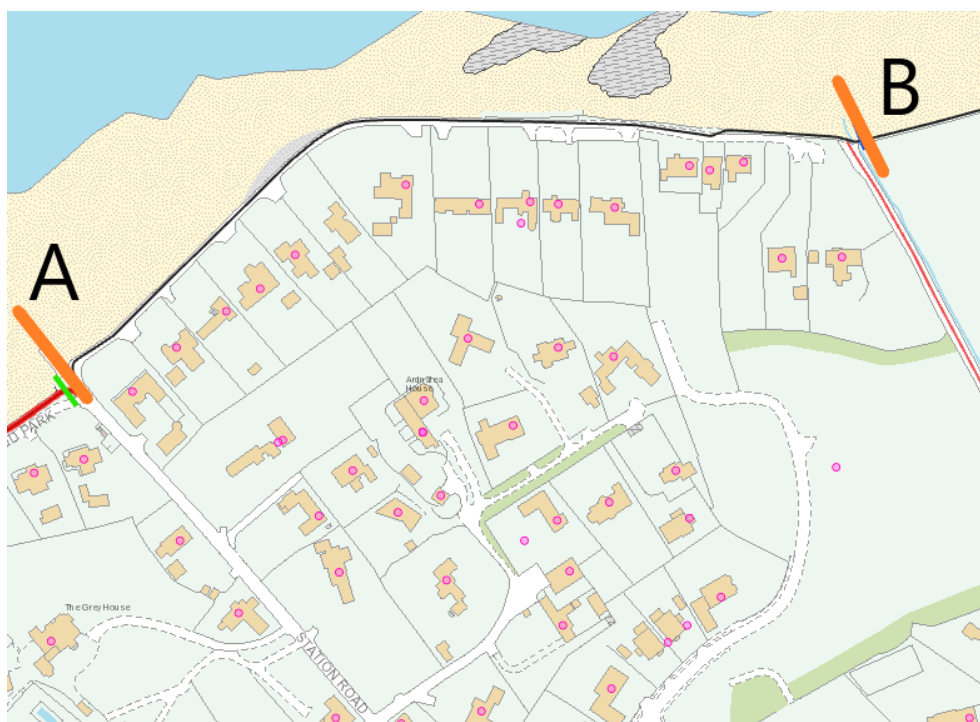
- residents directly affected may welcome the introduction of such a control
- dogs on leads cannot stray into adjacent gardens
- dogs on leads were unlikely to foul without the knowledge of the responsible dog walker
- dogs on leads were more likely to be under control and be less likely to be involved in attacks or incidents with runners or cyclists.

Disbenefits of creating this Dog Control Order included:

- the added restriction imposed on dog exercise may be opposed
- Council enforcement capacity would be limited due to staffing capacity and the difficulties associated with identifying offenders
- potential to create an expectation of further control areas elsewhere in the Borough, with the resource pressures that would create.
- no offence was committed where the person had a reasonable excuse for failing to keep the dog on a lead, or the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land had consented (generally or specifically) to the person failing to do so. Landowners and occupiers would be exempt and could permit others to walk dogs without leads, only on the land owned by them. They may also oppose introduction.

Land Ownership

The area of land under consideration was a section of the coastal path, between points A and B on the map below. It was a private road with a public access right of way over it. It was not owned or maintained by the Council and officers were aware of previous land dispute issues in the vicinity.



Statutory signage would be required at either end of the designated roadway.

Unfortunately, the land at both ends of the proposed restricted section was unregistered and the Lands Section had been unable to establish ownership.

In order to erect poles and signage it would be necessary for the Council to do so at risk. The Order could not be enforced without signage.

The specified wording to be used in, and the form of, a Dog Control Order was detailed at Appendix A. The statutory procedure for implementing Dog Control Orders was outlined in Appendix B.

Next Steps

Should the Council decide to progress the making of a Dog Control Order, the actions required would include:

- Further attempted clarification of land ownership/use for erecting signage
- A public consultation exercise
- The hearing of any representations by the Council
- A final decision by the Council on the making of an Order.

Cost to the Council of implementation (consultation process and signage) was envisaged to be in the region of £500. That did not allow for any legal costs associated with potential land dispute issues that may arise with the making of an Order at this location.

It would be anticipated that a 6-month time frame could be expected.

RECOMMENDED that the Council decides whether to proceed with the process of making a Dog Control Order as set out in this report.

Proposed by Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the Council proceed with making a Dog Control Order as set out in this report.

Councillor Cathcart thanked officers for the detail within the report which had come about following a Notice of Motion brought by Alderman Graham to the Environment Committee. He stressed that this was quite a unique part of the coastal path and agreed that it was inappropriate not to have dogs on leads in that area. It was also for that reason that he did not believe it should set a precedent for other parts of the Borough.

Councillor Edmund saw the very real problem in this place with the path being close to local residents' gardens and he understood that dogs straying into private property would be an annoyance and he stressed the need to take appropriate action to improve the situation for residents.

Councillor Morgan also supported the recommendation but had concerns about setting a precedent and pointed out that while dog fouling was horrible, dog owners already had a duty to clear it up. She asked where the funding of £500 for signage was coming from and the Building Control Services Manager explained that would come from the existing NET budget.

Councillor Wray was happy to support the proposal and knowing the area he thought it made sense. He shared the concern about further calls for similar control in other residential areas and believed it should be stressed that this was a very specific area of the coastal path, and the Council had no plans to extend it further.

The Member went on to query the land ownership of that area and if that could be established and in response the Building Control Services Manager explained that that was ongoing work and did not affect the setting up of a Dog Control Order.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted and that the Council proceed with making a Dog Control Order as set out in this report.

4. REQUEST FROM LIDL REGARDING SUNDAY TRADING

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Members would recall that a report was brought to Committee in June 2024 advising that Lidl Northern Ireland Limited had written to request that the Council consider making Newtownards and Bangor 'seasonal towns' in order that they could benefit from extended Sunday opening hours.

Currently, large shops with a retail space over 280 sq. metres can only open on a Sunday between the hours of 1pm and 6pm excluding Easter Sunday or Christmas

Day; with a few exceptions including petrol stations, pharmacies and shops selling motor supplies and accessories.

Under the Shops (Sunday Trading &c) (NI) Order 1997 a Council can designate an area as a holiday resort which would permit extended Sunday trading hours in large shops between 1 March and 30 September each year, on up to 18 days. The term holiday resort was not defined in the Order.

Ards Borough Council had previously designated Donaghadee and Ballywalter.

It was agreed that "Council engages with both Bangor and Ards Chambers of Commerce, along with relevant unions to seek views regarding the request from Lidl to extend Sunday opening".

Officers engaged with the four Trade Unions listed as representing the retail in Northern Ireland; GMB, SIPTU, USDAW and Unite, who were asked to make any comments on the matter by 16 August 2024.

Unite requested additional information, however, did not make any comments.

The response in Appendix 1 was received from USDAW who stated they firmly believed that no decision to extend Sunday trading hours should be made without considerable further consultation with retail workers who would have their working and personal lives directly impacted by the decision. USDAW also advised they would be happy to facilitate a meeting should the Council decide to progress with the designation process. No comments were made by GMB or SIPTU.

Officers also engaged with Bangor and Ards Chambers through the City and Town Advisory Groups. Ards Chamber opposed the designation of Newtownards as a holiday resort under the Shops (Sunday Trading &c) (NI) Order 1997.

Bangor Chamber stated they would be supportive of the designation of Bangor as a holiday resort under the Shops (Sunday Trading &c) (NI) Order 1997. They referred to the Queens Parade re-development and how it would be advantageous to have more flexible opening times for tourists and shoppers in the city when it was completed.

One further expression of support for the designation of holiday resorts was received by email from an individual who stated they were in agreement. This individual's interest and connection to the retail sector was currently unknown.

The designation process was set out in the Order. If the Council made a designation, it shall publish a notice of the designation.

RECOMMENDATION that the Council considers the responses from the Trade Unions and Bangor and Ards Chambers and decide if it wishes to designate Bangor and/or Newtownards as holiday resorts.

Proposed by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Edmund that the report be noted and that neither Bangor nor Ards be designated as holiday resorts at this time.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter was mindful that this was a relatively easy decision to make in terms of Newtownards where the Chamber of Commerce had shown support for the needs of families, those who would be expected to work additional hours and also people who observed a day of rest as part of their faith. She referred to student employment she had had when younger and the pressure she had felt to work on a Sunday and indeed had had a job offer retracted because of her unwillingness to work on that day. She had not heard any argument to suggest that a change was necessary and until a strong reason was presented, she believed the position should remain as it was.

Councillor Edmund referred to the pressures faced by those who worked in retail, and he said it happened across the board and at different times of the year. He believed that making this decision protected staff, students and their wider families and allowed them to enjoy a longer day of recreation.

Although Councillor McKee respected the views of Bangor Chamber of Commerce on this issue, he was also happy to support the proposal not to pursue extended opening hours for either Bangor or Newtownards. He thought there were sufficient hours in a week and a day off was important to protect a balance for retail workers. He did not think it was appropriate to decide at the present time without having consulted with those who would be affected by the decision. He reminded Members that long term sustainable growth within the economy relied on more than the retail sector alone.

Councillor Boyle stated that Sunday Trading hours came before the Council from time to time and while he understood the very important position of the family and faith within society, he had run a retail business most of his life and recognised the needs of businesses. His view was that the Council had a duty to protect small businesses throughout the Borough and there were many family businesses who had a personal attachment to their customers, and he was sure that the big multi nationals did not care so much about individuals as long as they were making a profit. He cautioned allowing these large businesses to become a one stop shop which would be very detrimental to villages and towns across the Borough. He viewed Newtownards as having more of an affinity with small businesses so whether a person did not want to work due to their faith, family time, the need for a break, no wish to work seven days a week, equal protection should be given to the businesses that had operated locally for generations. It was clear that big businesses were welcome, but he thought people should be wary of giving them a free run while forgetting to protect the Borough's own small business ratepayers.

Councillor Cathcart asked what form of consultation would take place if the Council was to proceed and the Committee was informed that there was no formal process in terms of consultation and that it was in the gift of the Council to agree. The Member stated that in his opinion the existing legislation was clumsy and referred to the differences between Bangor and Newtownards. He did not think that holiday makers and tourists were actively seeking to shop in Lidl on a Sunday morning and had

concern for smaller businesses and retail workers. While it was known that there was legal protection for workers there remained pressure for those people when additional hours were added. He would have preferred to have explored the options for Bangor more fully but would prefer to explore that under new legislation.

Councillor Morgan expressed that she would struggle to support the proposal and pointed to the protection workers had under the Shops (Sunday Trading) NI Order 1997 and reminded the Committee that the decision only related to 18 Sundays each year. She considered that shopping was a leisure activity for many people and thought that Bangor was clearly a tourist destination with Pickie, the Marina and the fairground.

Councillor Smart felt he could support the proposal and it was clear from the Chamber of Commerce in Newtownards that the intention was to support small businesses since the Sunday Trading legislation was one of the few advantages that they had at this time. He viewed the proposal as the right way forward and the Council would respond and consider Bangor further in time.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter thanked Members for their comments, and she understood the points that had been raised against her proposal however she warned against a knock-on effect on smaller shops which could break them. While protections were in place under current legislation, she doubted many students would be in the position to take legal action to enforce their rights if necessary. She believed that power lay with the Council currently and she was not hearing any points that suggested she should reconsider her proposal.

When a vote was taken with a show of hands 9 voted in Favour of the proposal, 2 voted Against, one Abstained and the proposal was CARRIED.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that neither Bangor nor Ards be designated as holiday resorts at this time.

5. GRANT OF ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that applications had been received for the Grant of an Entertainments Licence as followed:

1. McKenna Community Centre, McKenna Road, Kircubbin, BT22 1AS

Applicant: Emma Keith, 19a Deerpark Road, Portaferry, BT22 1PN

Days and Hours:

Monday to Sunday during the permitted hours when alcohol may be served on these premises under the Licensing (NI) Order 1996

Type of entertainment:

A theatrical performance;

Dancing, singing or music or any other entertainment of a like kind;
Any entertainment which consists of or includes a public contest match, exhibition or display of boxing, wrestling, judo, karate or any similar sport, billiards, pool, snooker or any similar game, darts. Equipment for Playing Snooker or Similar Games.

There had been no objections received.

2. Alexanders, 57 High Street, Holywood, BT18 9AQ

Applicant: Ben Stewart, 80 Belfast Road, Antrim, BT41 1PQ

Days and Hours:

Monday to Sunday during the permitted hours when alcohol may be served on these premises under the Licensing (NI) Order 1996

Type of entertainment:

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

There had been no objections received.

RECOMMENDED that the Council grants an Entertainments Licence to McKenna Community Centre, and to Alexanders Holywood, subject to satisfactory final inspection by Licensing and Regulatory Services.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that the recommendation be adopted.

6. ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – JULY 2024

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the Environment Directorate’s Budgetary Control Report covered the 4-month period 1 April to 31 July 2024. The net cost of the Directorate was showing an underspend of £209k (2.2%) – box A on page 3.

Explanation of Variance

Environment’s budget performance was further analysed on page 3 into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£231k favourable	3
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£46k favourable	3
Report 4	Income	£70k adverse	3

Explanation of Variance

The Environment Directorate's overall variance could be summarised by the following table: -

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	(231)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste and Cleansing (£91k) – vacancies within Waste Collection which are in the process of being recruited. Assets and Property (£75k) – vacancies within Property Operations and Fleet Management. Regulatory Services (£66k) – vacancies within Building Control and Neighbourhood Environment Team.
Goods & Services		
Assets & Property	(48)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly fleet costs under budget (vehicle fuel)
Income		
Waste & Cleansing	38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade waste income £35k. Special collections income £11k.
Assets & Property	(15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wind Turbine (£17k).
Regulatory Services	47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Control income (£33k). Car Park income £63k. Licensing income £8k. NET – fine income £6k.

REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT					
Period 4 - July 2024					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Environment					
200 Environment HQ	69,873	70,100	(227)	211,700	(0.3)
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	6,002,872	6,052,200	(49,328)	17,782,500	(0.8)
220 Assets and Property Services	2,956,363	3,094,900	(138,537)	9,764,700	(4.5)
230 Regulatory Services	162,281	182,700	(20,419)	571,900	(11.2)
Total	9,191,389	9,399,900	A (208,511)	28,330,800	(2.2)
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Environment - Payroll					
200 Environment HQ	58,073	58,200	(127)	174,300	(0.2)
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	3,157,569	3,248,100	(90,531)	9,971,600	(2.8)
220 Assets and Property Services	724,914	800,200	(75,286)	2,415,200	(9.4)
230 Regulatory Services	697,260	762,800	(65,540)	2,292,500	(8.6)
Total	4,637,816	4,869,300	B (231,484)	14,853,600	(4.8)
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Environment - Goods & Services					
200 Environment HQ	11,800	11,900	(100)	37,400	(0.8)
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	3,452,432	3,449,000	3,432	9,261,800	0.1
220 Assets and Property Services	2,341,509	2,389,300	(47,791)	7,542,000	(2.0)
230 Regulatory Services	220,194	222,400	(2,206)	582,400	(1.0)
Total	6,025,935	6,072,600	C (46,665)	17,423,600	(0.8)
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Environment - Income					
200 Environment HQ	-	-	-	-	-
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	(607,129)	(644,900)	37,771	(1,450,900)	5.9
220 Assets and Property Services	(110,060)	(94,600)	(15,460)	(192,500)	(16.3)
230 Regulatory Services	(755,173)	(802,500)	47,327	(2,303,000)	5.9
Totals	(1,472,362)	(1,542,000)	D 69,638	(3,946,400)	4.5

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

Proposed by Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Douglas, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor McKee asked about staff vacancies and if the Council had sufficient staff to offer a sustainable service. In response the Director stated that he was not aware of any specific problems other than the general problem of recruitment and retention

currently within the public sector. The Council was looking at that and seeking to market the Council as an employer of choice. The Member had also noted a deficit in trade waste income and the Head of Waste and Cleansing explained that the estimates were based on the current and the previous year so businesses would come and go and the competitive private sector for business collection was being marketed aggressively at the current time. This year the trade waste requests had been fewer and the figures would be adjusted accordingly for the coming year.

Following from that Councillor Cathcart asked if the collection of trade waste was a gain or a loss to the Council finances. The officer reported that the Council had a duty to collect waste if requested and was also duty bound to make a reasonable charge. He went on to explain that the Council's service generally suited small businesses and larger businesses often required a more frequent service which often was better suited to the private sector.

The Member also asked about the revenue collected from car parking which was adverse and was advised that the car park income had not fully recovered since the Covid pandemic. Pricing had not been increased for many years either, so this was all affecting income for the future.

While Councillor Morgan accepted that the Council was not a business, she suggested that if the car parks were not producing a suitable revenue then it would be difficult to maintain them, and many were already in a poor condition. The Director replied that provision of car parking was a discretionary rather than a mandatory Council service, and any nett cost of providing that service would have to be borne by the ratepayers at large whether they used the car parks or not.

He shared the concern of the growing challenge about the condition of the Council's car parks and Council had agreed help address that by amending car park tariffs through its Car Park Strategy, but that had been hampered by the legislative situation at present. However there had been encouraging signs lately that the Department was moving to resolve that issue. The Council would exert urgency by writing to the Department if the situation was not resolved soon.

Councillor Edmund saw the need for balance in car parking charges pointing out that it was often the retailers wish for cheaper car parking to encourage activity in town centres.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Douglas, that the recommendation be adopted.


7. Q4 NET ACTIVITY REPORT – JANUARY TO MARCH 2024 (Appendices II - V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the information provided in the report covered, unless otherwise stated, the period 1 January to 31 March 2024. The aim of the report was to provide Members with details of some of the key activities of the Team, the range of services it provided along with details of level of performance.

Applications to the Neighbourhood Environment Team

Dog Licences - The Dogs (NI) Order 1983

It should be noted that these figures included block licences where one licence could be issued for multiple dogs in specific circumstances.



	Period of Report Jan – March 2024	Same 3 months Jan – March 2023	Comparison
Dog licences issued during the three months	4825	5165	

Concessionary licences remained at 82% of dog licences issued over the period. That included the categories of neutering (£5)/over 65 (Free – 1st dog)/over 65 subsequent dog (£5) and income related benefits (£5). Standard dog licence £12.50 and block licence £32. The application fees were set by statute.

DOG CONTROL – Dog Licences	2024	2023
Full Cost	890	928
Reduced - Neutered	2449	2651
Reduced - Benefits	483	512
Free – Over 65	877	956
Reduced – Over 65 Subsequent Dogs	112	105
Block Licence	14	13
TOTAL	4825	5165



Investigations

The Neighbourhood Environment Team responded to a range of service requests. In terms of time spent, some types of service requests would be completed immediately whilst others required a longer-term strategy to find a resolution. The breakdown within the categories for the types of service requests received had been detailed in Appendix 1.

SERVICE REQUESTS			
	Period of Report Jan – March 2024	Same 3 months Jan – March 2023	Comparison
DOG CONTROL	371	591	
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL	441	511	



Fixed Penalty Notices

The Neighbourhood Environment Team issued **107** Fixed Penalty Notices for various environmental offences in the Borough.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES			
	Period of Report Jan – March 2024	Same 3 months Jan – March 2023	Comparison
DOG CONTROL	71	25	
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL	36	47	

Prosecutions

Breakdown of cases being prosecuted through the Court.

PROSECUTIONS			
	Period of Report Jan – March 2024	Same 3 months Jan – March 2023	Comparison
DOG CONTROL	2	0	
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL	3	9	

Educational Programme

Project Ella began its roll out in schools and had been well received. The most popular topics were outlined below together with the number of presentations carried out in the quarter.

Project ELLA Topics	Jan – March 2024
500 Million Years Ago	
Anti-Litter Presentation	
Beach Cleans	
Cry Wolf	
Debating Forum	
ELLA Education Talk	
ELLA In the Community	
Litter Picks	9*
Rock Pooling	
Rubbish Quiz	
Scavenger Hunts	
Sea Trout	3 Schools

*Rathmore PS(P4); Greyabbey PS (P6/7); Hollywood PS (P6)

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

Proposed by Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Cummings asked about staffing within the section and if the Council had its full quota of staff and Members were informed that was the case with one position being recruited currently.

Councillor Cathcart welcomed the increase in Fixed Penalty Notices for the dog patrols and hoped that would continue. He referred to a situation in relation to dogs off leads in Ward Park and considered that there was a lack of appropriate signage in that place and hoped that enforcement would be strong in that area to enforce byelaws and engage with the public.

Councillor Wray had a question around fly tipping which appeared to be levelling out when taken over the past six months and it was noted that there had been no evidence of increased incidences of fly-tipping. He asked how fly-tipping was defined and how that differed from general littering. Members were informed that fly-tipping was considered more than the average person could carry in their hands. When the Council was informed of incidences of fly-tipping those were recorded on the computerised system.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter referred to farmers who often had to deal with incidences of fly-tipping and thought that they should be offered reasonable assistance to deal with the matter after it was recorded. Landowners had responsibility to deal with the fly-tipping on their land and were encouraged to inform the Council for further investigation, and possible enforcement action. Overall, there had been no evidence that the fly tipping figures were being under-represented, and they had always been recorded in the same way.

Councillor McKee noticed that there appeared to be a spike in offences of dogs off leads and was interested to hear how that had come about. The Committee was informed that there had been an increase in targeting and although the Council was not quite where it wished to be, the work would continue with the resources available. It was pointed out that there had been added signage at Marine Gardens and that enforcement targeting would be necessary for Marine Gardens and other Dog Control areas.

Councillor Blaney referred to dog fouling and it was still one of the main areas of concern for local residents. He asked if it was possible to break down the figures to demonstrate the level of enforcement activity in different problem areas. The Director said that was a good point and the team did identify hot spots, where there was a concentration of problems in the area – which would be targeted proactively with patrols/enforcement, and those interventions could be described in a section of future reports.

Councillor Morgan stated that she always found this report extremely frustrating when it referred to dog fouling and attacks against the public. She suggested the matter needed more publicity and communication in the same way as waste collection, informing dog owners that the Council thought this was unacceptable and could lead to prosecutions.

The Head of Regulatory Services said that there was a body of work ongoing to increase the visibility of enforcement officers across various areas and to help influence social responsibility, but it was a work in progress and required resource allocation. The Director agreed this would be considered along with ongoing social media and other communications interventions.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that the recommendation be adopted.

8. Q1 NET ACTIVITY REPORT – APRIL TO JUNE 2024


(Appendices VI – IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the information provided in this report covered, unless otherwise stated, the period 1 April to 30 June 2024. The aim of the report was to provide Members with details of some of the key activities of the Team, the range of services it provided along with details of level of performance.

Applications to the Neighbourhood Environment Team

Dog Licences - The Dogs (NI) Order 1983

It should be noted that these figures included block licences where one licence could be issued for multiple dogs in specific circumstances.



	Period of Report April – June 2024	Same 3 months April – June 2023	Comparison
Dog licences issued during the three months	4783	4794	

Concessionary licences remained at 83% of dog licences issued over the period. This included the categories of neutering (£5)/over 65 (Free – 1st dog)/over 65 subsequent dog (£5) and income related benefits (£5). Standard dog licence £12.50 and block licence £32. The application fees were set by statute.

DOG CONTROL – Dog Licences	2024	2023
Full Cost	790	776
Reduced - Neutered	2441	2518
Reduced - Benefits	506	480
Free – Over 65	912	888
Reduced – Over 65 Subsequent Dogs	120	117
Block Licence	14	15
TOTAL	4783	4794



Investigations

The Neighbourhood Environment Team responded to a range of service requests. In terms of time spent, some types of service requests would be completed immediately whilst others required a longer-term strategy to find a resolution. The breakdown within the categories for the types of service requests received had been detailed in Appendix 1.

SERVICE REQUESTS			
	Period of Report April - June 2024	Same 3 months April – June 2023	Comparison
DOG CONTROL	385	440	
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL	348	361	



Fixed Penalty Notices

The Neighbourhood Environment Team issued **95** Fixed Penalty Notices for various environmental offences in the Borough.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES			
	Period of Report April - June 2024	Same 3 months April – June 2023	Comparison
DOG CONTROL	37	16	
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL	58	35	

Prosecutions

Breakdown of cases being prosecuted through the Court.

PROSECUTIONS			
	Period of Report April – June 2024	Same 3 months April – June 2023	Comparison
DOG CONTROL	7	11	
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL	5	8	

Educational Programme

Project Ella began its roll out in schools and had been well received. The most popular topics were outlined below together with the number of presentations carried out in the quarter.

Project ELLA Topics	April – June 2024
500 Million Years Ago	
Anti-Litter Presentation	
Beach Cleans	2
Cry Wolf	
Debating Forum	
ELLA Education Talk	
ELLA In the Community	
Litter Picks	15
Rock Pooling	2
Rubbish Quiz	
Scavenger Hunts	2
Sea Trout	

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

Proposed by Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter referred to the number of severe dog attacks in one of the housing estates of Newtownards. It was encouraging that she had spoken with one lady who had praised the Council's response to her complaint and the help she had received. The Member wondered if it was within the Council's remit for officers to patrol areas where the dog attacks were taking place since some residents were frightened in their own neighbourhoods and a situation where dogs were not under control was unacceptable.

The Committee was informed that the Council did not have the ability to take action until a dog strayed, attacked, or was out of control. The presence of Dog Wardens may provide a feeling of increased safety and could be considered but the Council needed to be mindful of its resources which were limited.

Following from that the Director praised the dedicated team within the Council which dealt with these matters but the key message was that if any member of the public had a concern about dog safety or welfare, they should report it and officers would assess, gather information and do their best to intervene and follow up.

Councillor McKee noticed an increase in Fixed Penalty Notices for litter and that was very welcome. It was clear that many people were being caught in car parks and retail establishments and he asked for the rationale in targeting those areas. Responding the Director stated that these were not soft targets and that car parks were busy areas and invariably located in main thoroughfares, and therefore those areas received the most complaints of littering and the higher penalty numbers reflected that.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that the recommendation be adopted.

9. NI MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STATISTICS JANUARY TO MARCH 2024

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the official waste management statistics for the final quarter of 2023/2024 (January to March 2024) had been released by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

The aim of this report was to:

1. Report key quarterly waste management performance statistics relative to the same period last year (found in part 1 of the report) and to our baseline comparator year of 2021-22 (found in the KPI section of part 2 of the report), and
2. Provide some detail around operational waste service management activities/actions that had been implemented during the quarter with the aim of improving performance.












In summary, all key indicators were positive for this reporting period. They showed that the Council had largely been successful in maintaining the overall gains achieved since it started a renewed programme of performance improvement since 2021-22. The reduction in the landfill burden seen over recent quarters had been maintained. Very significantly, the HRC recycling rate had, for the very first time, surpassed the average performance for other NI Councils.

Looking at the 'quality' of recycling performance, an important statistic included in DAERA's report, was the proportion of waste sent to landfill which was biodegradable (and therefore more harmful to the environment in terms of landfill gas production). The Council had the lowest percentage of municipal waste to landfill which was biodegradable, at 51.9% compared to a NI Council average of 57.9%. That reflected the relative success in capturing more biodegradable waste materials for recycling, for example organic/compostable waste.

Furthermore, in terms of assessing sustainable waste resource management performance, which must be judged in terms of not just recycling rates but also reduction and reuse of waste, it was significant to note that ANDBC has experienced the greatest fall in total municipal waste tonnage of all NI Councils. The Council achieved a provisional **8.2% drop in municipal waste arisings** over the 12 months to March 2024, compared to the baseline assessment year of 2021-22. The average across other Councils was **2.9%**.

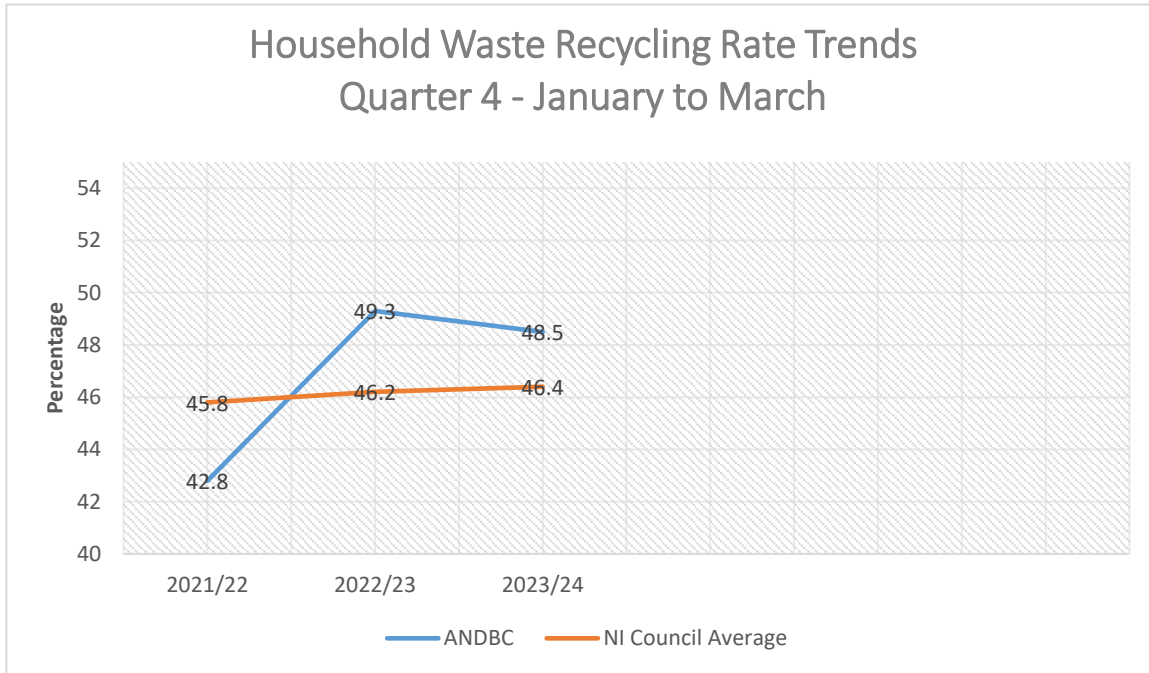
Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics – October to December 2023

Summary Table of Key Changes Q4 2023-24 v Q4 2022-23

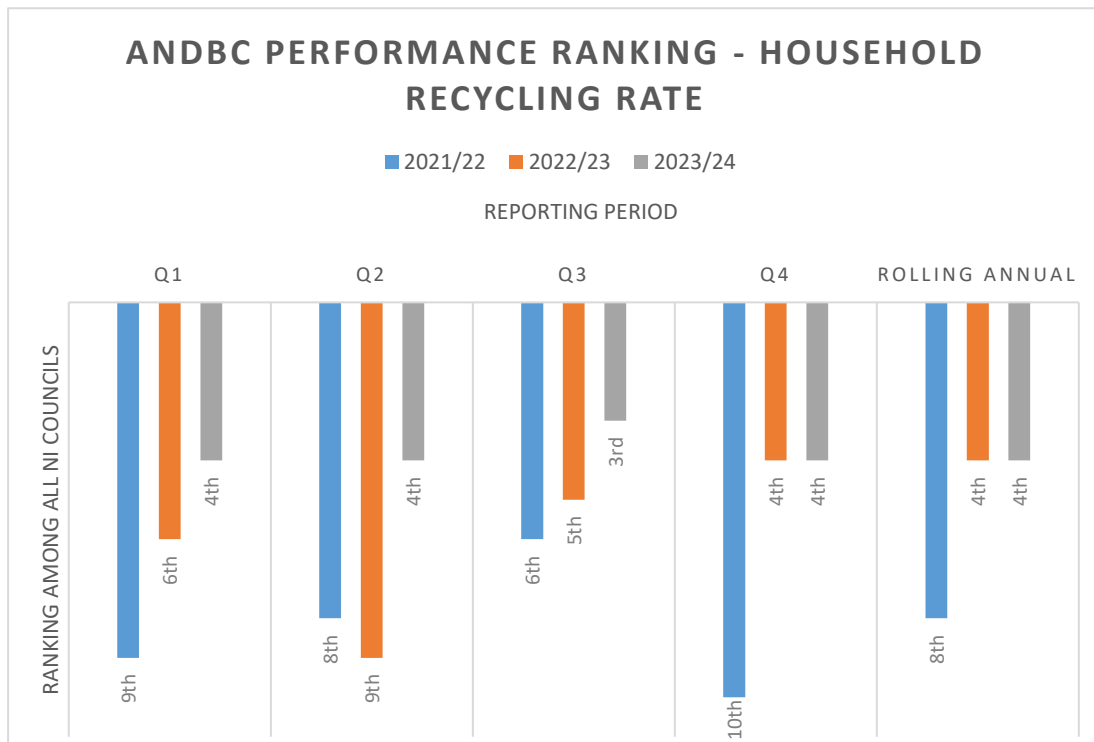
	2022-23	2023-24	Change
Household Waste Recycling Rate	49.3%	48.5%	 0.8%
Recycling Rate Ranking	4th	4th	 same
Composting Rate	25.3%	26.1%	 0.8%
Dry Recycling Rate	23.5%	21.9%	 1.6%
Total HRC Waste	5405T	4753T	 12.1%
HRC Residual/Landfill Waste Received	1942T	1416T	 27.1%
HRC Recycling Waste Received	3463T	3337T	 3.6%
Proportion of HRC Waste Received for Recycling	64%	70.2%	 6.2%
Total Kerbside Waste	12829T	13284T	 3.5%
Kerbside Residual Waste Received	5877T	6352T	 8%
Kerbside Recycling Waste Received	6952T	6932T	 0.3%
Proportion of Kerbside Waste Received for Recycling	54.2%	52.2%	 2%

The significant headlines contained within the latest DAERA report showed that:

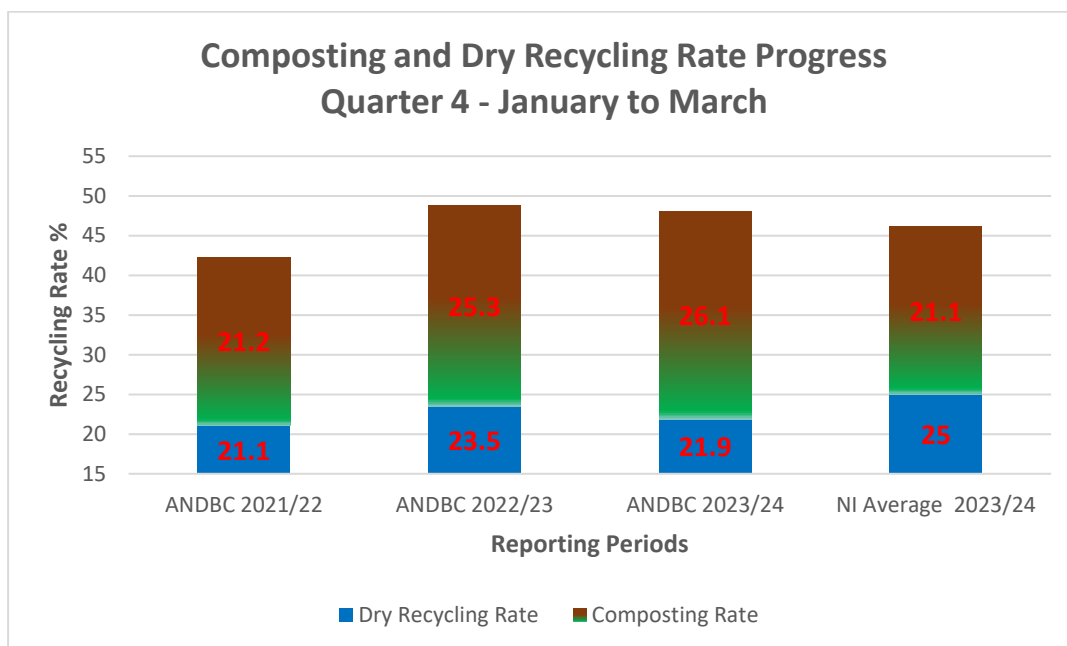
- i. The Council's household waste recycling rate **dropped slightly** by 0.8% compared to Q3 last year, from 49.3% to 48.5%.



- ii. The Council's household waste recycling rate of 48.5%, was 2.1% **higher** than the NI average of 46.4%.
- iii. The Council was ranked **fourth** out of the eleven NI Councils for its household waste recycling rate, the same ranking as last year.



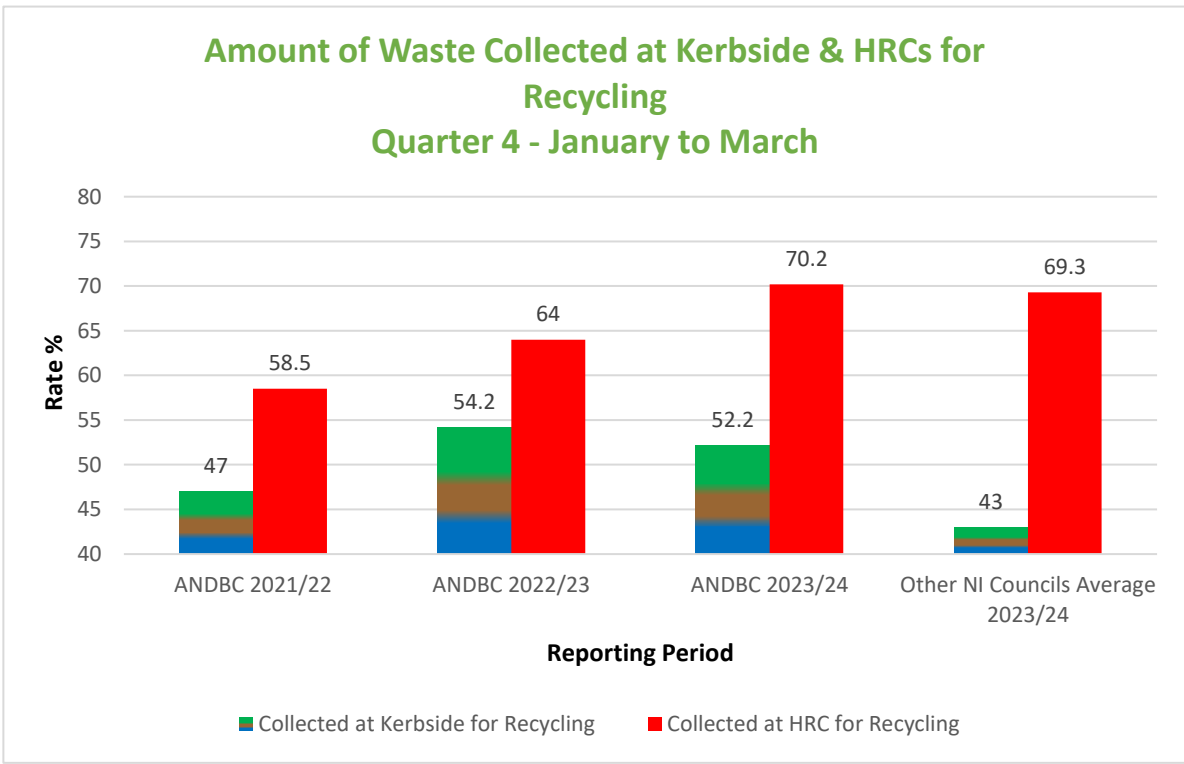
- iv. The Council’s household waste composting rate **rose slightly** by 0.8% - from 25.3% to 26.1%. The household waste dry recycling rate **fell** by 1.6% - from 23.5% to 21.9%.
- v. The Council’s household waste composting rate of 26.1% was 5% **higher** than the NI average of 21.1%.
- vi. The Council’s household waste dry recycling rate (i.e. recycling of items other than organic food and garden waste) of 21.9% was 3.1% **lower** than the NI average of 25%.



- vii. The Council’s kerbside recycling capture rate of 68.2% for household compostable waste materials compared to a NI Council average of 59.4%.
- viii. The Council’s **lowest** kerbside capture rate for recyclable materials was for mixed plastics, at 18.9%.

Kerbside Capture Rate for Recyclable Waste Types – October to December		
Recyclable Material	Kerbside Capture Rate for Recycling %	NI Average Kerbside Capture Rate for Recycling %
Glass	61.3	50.9
Paper & Card	57.1	53
Mixed Metals	31.6	31.5
Mixed Plastics	18.9	21.3
Organic/Compostables	68.2	59.4

- ix. The Council ranked 9th in the Council performance table for 'dry' recycling rate and 3rd for composting rate.
- x. The Council received 5.6% **less** total waste per capita at its HRCs compared to the average for other NI Councils; during the same period the previous year it received 13% **more** HRC waste per capita.
- xi. The Council received 13.8% **less** residual/landfill waste per capita at its HRCs compared to the average for other Councils, compared to 42% **more** during the same period the previous year.
- xii. **For the very first time**, the proportion of waste collected at the Council's HRC sites for recycling was **more** than the average for other Councils – 70.2%, compared to an average rate of 69.3% for other Councils. During the same quarter the previous year, the HRC recycling rate was 64%, compared to an average of 70.2% for other Councils.
- xiii. The Council collected 4.7% **more** waste per capita from homes through its kerbside bin collection services compared to the average for other Councils. During the same period the previous year, it collected 1% **more**.
- xiv. The Council collected 11.4% **less** residual/landfill waste per capita from homes through its kerbside bin collection services compared to the average for other Councils. During the same period last year, it collected 18% **less**.
- xv. The proportion of waste collected for recycling through the kerbside bin collection system was significantly **higher** than the average for other Councils – 52.2%, compared to an average of 43% for other Councils.



Operational Performance Improvement Measures

Marketing and Communications Indicators

MC1 – 31 social media posts were issued, with associated engagement/management of feedback across Waste and Recycling on ANDBC corporate channels.



9,880
Accounts Center accounts reached
0% from boosted posts


9,880 organic 0 paid

471
Post engagements

19 reactions	13 comments
18 on post	12 on post
1 on shares	1 on shares
2 shares	437 clicks
1 on post	12 photo clicks
1 on shares	11 link clicks
	0 clicks to play
	414 other clicks

Ards and North Down Borough Council
Published by Alison Weir
- March 30 -

Aluminium drink cans can be recycled over and over, with no loss of quality.
Please recycle drink cans via your household blue bins



11,235
Accounts Center accounts reached
0% from boosted posts

11,235 organic	0 paid
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779
Post engagements

26 reactions	20 comments
26 on post	20 on post
0 on shares	0 on shares
1 share	732 clicks
1 on post	5 photo clicks
0 on shares	5 link clicks
	0 clicks to play
	722 other clicks

5,589
Accounts Center accounts reached
0% from boosted posts


5,589 organic	0 paid
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98
Post engagements

55 reactions	2 comments
14 on post	0 on post
41 on shares	2 on shares
19 shares	22 clicks
19 on post	6 photo clicks
0 on shares	0 link clicks
	0 clicks to play
	16 other clicks

Ards and North Down Borough Council
Published by Alison Weir
- February 21 -

Most of us regularly recycle our food waste, but latest estimates from Recycle Now suggest that food still makes up a third of our rubbish bins!
Embrace your food recycling caddy for all those unavoidable scraps – from coffee grounds to plate scrapings.
Find out more about what goes in your caddy on our website:
www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/foodwaste
#RecycleNow #NIRecycles #RecycleYourFoodWaste Recycle Now



MC2 – 5 Bin-Ovation ‘News and Info’ articles were published, 7 Bin-ovation ‘Push Notifications’ issued, and 1931 Bin-ovation downloads recorded.

MC3 – Officers delivered 12 community and engagement events, talking to over 270 people.

- 10 x Recycling Educational Presentations
- 2 x Pre-school Recycling Education session

Household Recycling Centre Indicators

HRC1 – Volume of blue bin recyclable materials separated from mixed waste by residents on-site: 862,000 litres.



That equated to approximately 36 tons of blue bin waste; whilst that was a relatively modest weight of material, it represented a very large/visible volume of recyclable waste extracted from bags of mixed waste which was initially intended to be placed in landfill skips at HRCs. A collateral benefit of the practice of requiring removal of blue bin recyclables from black bags of mixed waste before using the landfill skip was that it should help to 'educate' householders - promoting more efficient separation of waste in the home and greater use of blue bins at the kerbside.

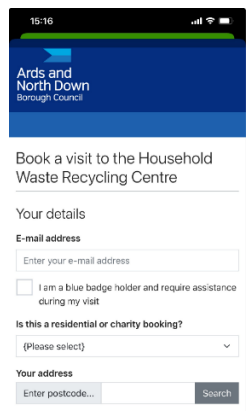
That represented just one type of recyclable waste category which was prevented from entering landfill skips at HRCs as a consequence of the more focused attention to supervision of landfill skip access; many other recyclable waste types would also have been prevented from entering the landfill skips as reflected in KPI, HRC3.

HRC2 – Number of visitors turned away from site: 528

This was a significant number in itself, but it was likely to be the case that a significant number of out of Borough residents would have avoided coming to our sites because of the widely publicised focus upon checking ID for everyone entering and those turned away would, in all probability, avoid further attempts to enter and use the HRCs; the impact of that would also be reflected in HRC3 and other KPIs.

HRC2a – Number of HRC bookings: 68,353

HRC2b – Average number of HRC visits per household: 0.96 (averaged across the 71,182 households in the Borough)



HRC3 – % change in tonnage of total waste received (compared to same period in baseline year 2021-22)

- The Council experienced a **26% decrease** in the total amount of waste received at its HRCs, from 6409T to 4753T.

HRC4 - % change in tonnage of waste received for landfill (compared to same period in baseline year 2021-22)

- The Council experienced a **47% decrease** in the amount of waste received for landfill at its HRCs, down from 2659T to 1416T.

HRC5 - % change in tonnage of waste received for recycling (compared to same period in baseline year 2021-22)

- The Council experienced an **11% decrease** in the amount of waste received for recycling at its HRCs, down from 3750T to 3337T.

HRC6 - % change in proportion of HRC waste materials collected for recycling (compared to same period in baseline year 2021-22)

- The Council experienced a **11.7% increase** in the proportion of all waste received at HRCs which was collected for recycling, up from 58.5% to 70.2%.

Kerbside Household Waste Collections Indicators



KS1 – Number of recycling alert stickers applied to grey bins (yellow): 2989

KS2 – Number of recycling alert stickers applied to grey bins (amber): 281

KS3 - Number of recycling alert stickers applied to grey bins (red): 116

KS4 – % change in tonnage of total waste collected (compared to same period in baseline year 2021-22)

- The Council experienced an **8.2% increase** in the total amount collected at the kerbside, up from 12,241T to 13,248T.

KS5 - % change in tonnage of grey bin waste collected for landfill (compared to same period in baseline year 2021-22)

- The Council experienced a **2% decrease** in the amount of grey bin waste collected, down from 6482T to 6352T.

KS6 - % change in tonnage of waste collected at kerbside for recycling (compared to same period in baseline year 2021-22)

- The Council experienced a **20.4% increase** in the amount of waste collected at kerbside for recycling, up from 5759T to 6932T.

KS7 – % change in proportion of kerbside waste materials collected for recycling (compared to same period in baseline year 2021-22)

- The Council experienced a **5.2% increase** in the proportion of kerbside waste that was collected for recycling, up from 47% to 52.2%.

Summary and Trend Analysis of Indicators

Indicator Reference	Monitoring Period 1 (December 2022 – March 2023*)	Monitoring Period 2 (April 2023 – June 2023)	Monitoring Period 3 (July 2023 – Sept 2023)	Monitoring Period 4 (October 2023 – Dec 2023)	Monitoring Period 5 (January 2024 – Mar 2023)
	*Waste tonnage indicators reflect period Jan to March 2023 only				
MC1 Social media posts	25	23	43	36	31
MC2 Print press and online articles	10	13	55	7	12
MC3 Engagement events/sessions	17	29	14	5	12
HRC1 Blue bin waste (litres)	1,322,000	762,460	604,600	769,002	862,000
HRC2 Visitors denied entry	1742	397	262	1258	528

HRC2a No. of bookings	N/A	N/A	22,199	72,423	68,353
HRC2b Average no. of HRC visits per household in the Borough	N/A	N/A	0.3	1.02	0.96
HRC3 Total HRC waste compared to same period 2021/22	16% Decrease	26% Decrease	19% Decrease	34% Decrease	26% Decrease
HRC4 Landfill skip waste compared to same period 2021/22	27% Decrease	42% Decrease	32% Decrease	50% Decrease	47% Decrease
HRC5 Recycling skip waste compared to same period 2021/22	8% Decrease	15% Decrease	11% Decrease	24% Decrease	11% Decrease
HRC6 Proportion of HRC waste collected for recycling compared to same period 2021/22	5.5% Increase	9.1% Increase	6% Increase	9.5% Increase	11.7% Increase
KS1 Yellow warning stickers on grey bins	2784	6079	2714	2269	2939
KS2 Amber warning stickers on grey bins	255	414	226	165	281
KS3 Red warning stickers on grey bins	52	179	92	55	116
KS4 Total kerbside waste compared to 2021/22	4.8% Increase	0% No Change	5% Decrease	1% Decrease	8.2% Increase
KS5	9.3% Decrease	16.5% Decrease	17.4% Decrease	10% Decrease	2% Decrease

Grey bin waste compared to 2021/22					
KS6 Kerbside waste collected for recycling compared to same period 2021/22	20.7% Increase	13% Decrease	4.9% Increase	6.2% Increase	20.4% Increase
KS7 Proportion of kerbside waste collected for recycling compared to same period 2021/22	7.2% Increase	7% Increase	5.2% Increase	4.3% Increase	5.2% Increase

Summary Analysis of Indicators

This report confirmed continued improvement in the Council's sustainable waste resource management performance. Following the changes to the waste service model design and the associated education and engagement campaigns, the Council was experiencing sustained falls in the amount of landfilled waste as well as improvements in recycling rates. During the reporting period, the Council experienced:

1. A further improved reduction in the amount of landfill waste received at HRCs. In total, we received/collected 1,373 tons less of landfill waste at the kerbside and HRCs over the 3-month reporting period compared to the same period in the baseline year of 2021/22; at prevailing landfill cost (£127.42/T), **that represented a £178,545 landfill saving (plus other handling and transport cost savings).**
2. Falls in the total amount of waste collected at HRCs and kerbside. In total our municipal waste arisings **fell by 3.8%** compared to the same period in the baseline year of 2021-22; this compared to a **2.7% increase** on average across other NI Councils.
3. A significant further rise in the Council's HRC recycling rate. The percentage of materials collected for recycling at HRCs **rose by 11.7%** compared to the same period in the baseline year of 2021/22. Although we saw a 2% drop in the proportion of materials collected at the kerbside for recycling compared to the same period the previous year, the Council had maintained a **rise of 5.2%** in this rate compared to the same period in the baseline year of 2021-22. The recent modest deterioration experienced in kerbside recycling performance would be addressed through sustained and enhanced focus upon the kerbside grey bin monitoring programme to further improve kerbside recycling engagement. **The overall Borough household waste recycling rate rose by 5.7% compared to the same period in the baseline year of 2021/22.**

Whilst the information set out in this report maintained a very encouraging picture of the Council's progress and reflected a lot of hard work and dedication on the part of our waste and recycling teams, we undoubtedly had much further progress to make if we were to have any chance of ultimately reaching the 70% recycling target for 2030 that was laid down in the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Continued bedding in and ongoing careful management of the new booking system for HRC access, the ongoing review of the kerbside collections model and a future strategic review of HRC capital assets, would be critical.

It was important to reiterate that further 'step change', sustained improvements in both our HRC and kerbside recycling rates would be required to move the Council towards the new 70% target.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

Proposed by Councillor Wray, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Wray thought that the report largely read well but noticed the rise of residual waste collected at the kerbside and he questioned if that was due to householders making fewer visits to the Household Recycling Centres (HRCs). The Director suggested that that was probable, and indeed people were being encouraged to use kerbside collection services to the maximum rather than make unnecessary car journeys to HRCs.

The figures within the report came from a larger report showing Northern Ireland wide figures and officers took time each quarter to carefully analyse all the report data, so that trends could be noted. It was unfortunate that the local press sometimes took figures out of context, misrepresenting the key messages arising from the full report data. The Director noted that the Council had generally held on to the overall Borough recycling rate rise that had been achieved the previous year, and the sub trends were even more encouraging. For the first time the Council was showing an HRC recycling rate that was above the Northern Ireland average, due to the significant changes that had been made around HRC access and use.

Councillor Wray was encouraged by that and asked about the collection of textiles at the kerbside and when that was likely to become available. The Director said that there was currently a depression in the textile recycling market, and he hoped that there would be movement on the matter soon, with a report being brought to the Committee.

Alderman Cumming acknowledged the change in trends and asked about the high numbers of people being turned away from Household Recycling Centres and how the booking process was impacting that figure. The Director agreed that it was right that this was looked at, but it was also a testament to the effectiveness of the booking system. The fact that some people who potentially were not entitled to use the Borough's HRCs, were still trying to gain access, showed the need for the

ongoing strict application of the new system – to ensure that those individuals continued to be kept out of the sites.

Councillor Morgan passed on her thanks to the entire team, reporting that she had visited the Balloo site recently and the staff had been most helpful and were a positive reflection of the work the Council was doing. Although she was encouraged to see the amount of waste falling, she noted that the Council was not performing quite so well on the recycling of mixed plastics and recognised the confusion of householders. She was aware that the public mainly wanted to do the right thing, so she called on more education and information campaigns.

The Director agreed stating that one of the benefits of the report and the detailed analysis and auditing had shown that only 20% of plastic recyclable material was being captured in kerbside collections. There was now a vast range of plastic items that could be recycled – plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays of all shapes sizes and colours - but for some reason that message was not getting through and that would be a focus for urgent progress going forward.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter believed that the BinOvation App was very helpful and showed the latest plastic items that could be recycled, and she felt it was important to get the message out. She remembered previously a booklet being sent out with the Borough magazine and thought that could be helpful. The Member asked for monthly figures to be presented but was advised that was not possible due to the weekly collection system and a more accurate picture would be presented over the quarter period. She stressed the need to view trends and asked to show figures against the baseline year 2021-2022 when the changes to waste services began.

Councillor Cathcart referred to the sticker system on household bins and thought that could be confusing for elderly residents particularly and felt that people should be informed directly of what they were doing wrong. He asked for more detailed communication to keep the public engaged.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the recommendation be adopted.

10. QUARTERLY ENERGY CONSUMPTION UPDATE

(Appendices X & XI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that in June 2024 the Council agreed the Sustainable Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan. One of the key actions within the Plan was to “Improve governance arrangements to ensure that energy management has effective oversight and accountability within the Council.”

Improving oversight and accountability within the Council for energy management would ensure that consumption performance and the implementation of the Strategy and this action plan would be continuously monitored. Improved monitoring and governance would improve energy performance by ensuring actions were effectively

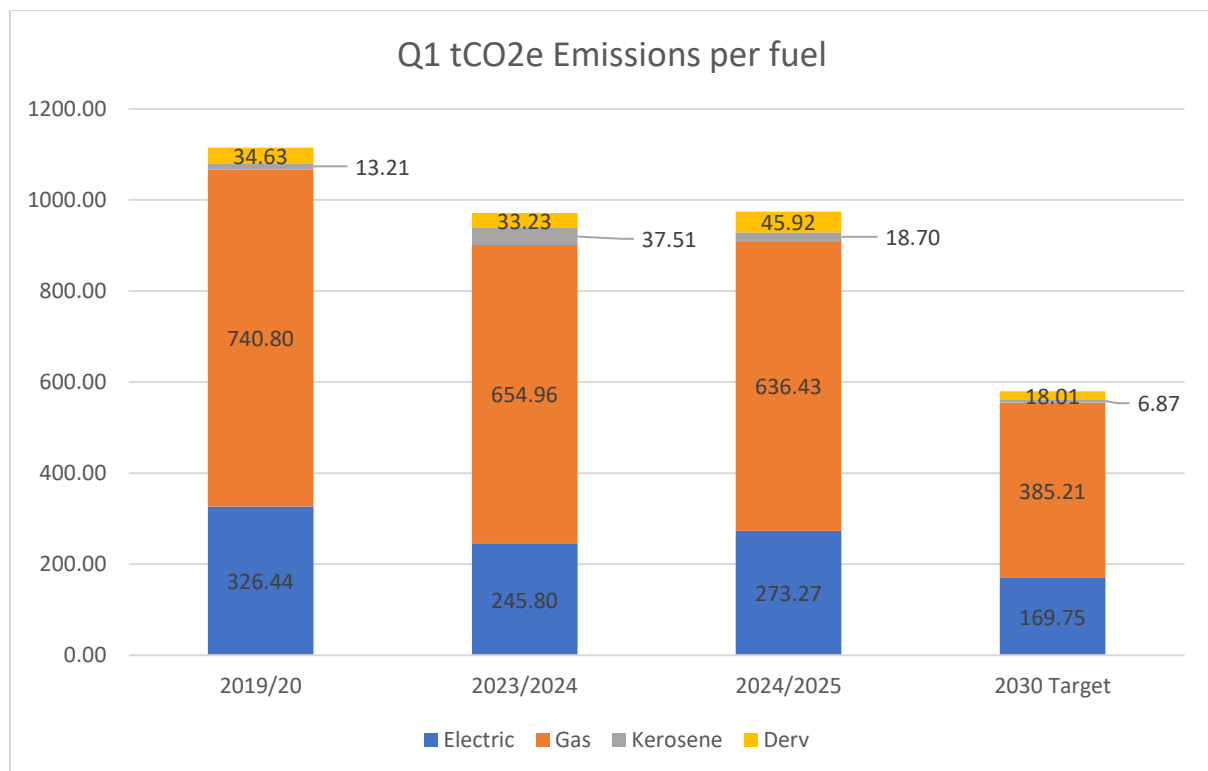
implemented and consumption trends routinely monitored, which should result in reduced consumption, costs, and emissions.

Reporting Periods

This was the first of routine, quarterly reports that looked at energy consumption against a 2019 baseline, outlining current and forthcoming energy saving initiatives and tracking progress with implementation of the Council’s Sustainable Energy Management Strategy Action Plan.

Period:	Reported in:
Quarter 1: April to June	September
Quarter 2: July to September	December
Quarter 3: October to December	March
Quarter 4: January to March	June

Energy Carbon Emissions for this Period



Electricity

As could be seen in the graph above carbon emissions from electricity consumption had reduced by 16.3% in comparison to the baseline year of 2019/2020. The Council had been reviewing its electric consumption year on year and had made conscious efforts to replace light fittings with LED on a general maintenance scheme

and also replacing equipment with more energy efficient versions when replacing items.

There had been a slight increase in the first quarter this year compared to the previous year; efforts to reduce that going into the next quarter of the year would focus upon educating staff on energy awareness - switching off lights and equipment when not required etc., and by implementing lighting replacement and control schemes.

It was worth noting that ANDBC had several buildings that were heated by electricity, and that it had been necessary to keep the heating switched on in 2024 over a few additional periods due to cold snaps in the weather. It was suspected this to be the reason for the electricity usage increasing slightly from the same period in 2023.

Natural Gas

The Council's carbon emissions from gas consumption had reduced by 14.1% in comparison to the baseline year of 2019/2020. That had been the result of reviewing time controls for boilers and reducing temperatures where possible. It had also been due to a number of internal reviews that led to Air Handling Unit (AHU) operating times being reduced to better suit higher occupancy times in buildings.

The Council had reduced its carbon emissions from gas usage in the first quarter from the same period last year by 3% and hopefully could improve further on that in Quarter 2.

Kerosene

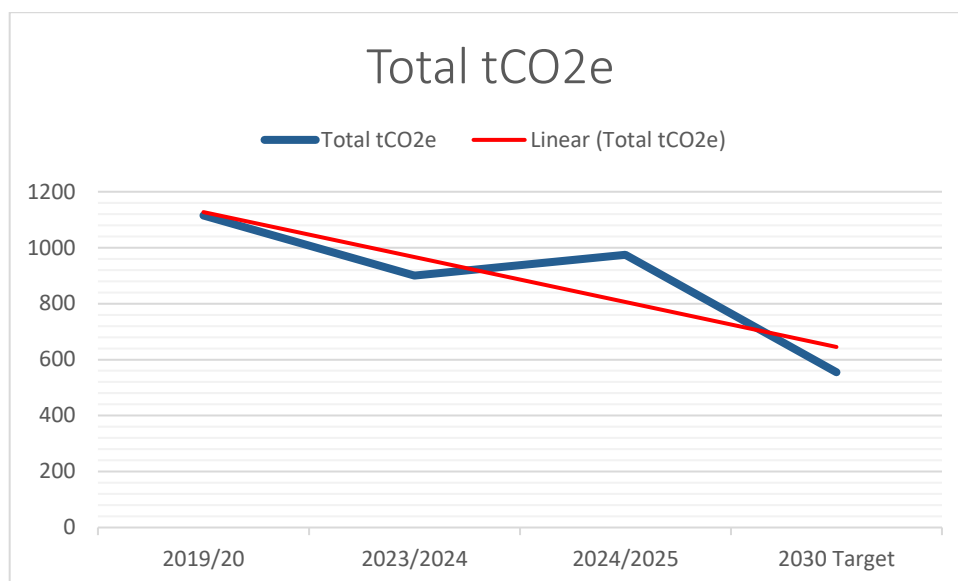
Carbon emissions from Kerosene consumption increased slightly from the baseline year of 2019/20 for this quarter, and that was similar to the situation for buildings using electric heating. Oil fired boilers had to be in operation more due to colder weather snaps in the region during Quarter 1.

Diesel

The figures showed that the Council had also increased carbon emissions from Derv (Diesel) in the first period of the business year in comparison to the baseline year. It was believed that that was largely due to all the tractors and landscape machinery being switched from Gasoil to Derv.

Target Consumption/Emissions

In the graph below it showed the Council's current overall fuel carbon emissions for each of the periods and the 2030 target. The linear trendline showed the path needed to meet the 48% carbon reduction by 2030, and it could be seen that there was some work to do to reduce consumption to match the required trendline. However, there were moves in the right direction, and with improvements and ongoing projects through Quarters 2, 3 and 4 it was aimed to get back on track.



Consumption Costs

The costs of the fuels could be seen in the table below for consumption of fuel in Q1 of each of the reference years, based on current unit costs.

Quarter 1	2019/20	2023/2024	2024/2025
Utility			
Electric	£163,709	£152,106	£169,108
Gas	£234,079	£207,997	£202,112
Kerosene	£3,218	£9,138	£4,555
Derv	£12,147	£11,786	£16,275
Total Cost	£413,153.76	£381,026.62	£392,049.30

Energy efficiency measures taken since the baseline year of 2019/20 had yielded a Q1 saving of £21,104 in utility costs, based upon current unit costs.

Energy Saving Initiatives taken in this Period

- LED lighting and controls upgrade at Walled Garden Depot Work Shed.
- Controls Maintenance at Londonderry Park and Hamilton Hub.
- LED lighting replacement schemes at Community Centres.
- Installation of Electric Showers and Instantaneous Water Heaters at Ward Arras Sports Pavilion to replace existing hot water calorifiers.
- High Efficiency boiler replacements to a number of Communities properties.

See updated Sustainable Energy Action Plan attached, to show a full update on each of the actions noted.

Future Measures Currently Under Consideration/Planning

- Replacement of boilers at various Council properties and upgrade of control systems.
- Lighting control and LED replacement projects at numerous Council properties.
- Photo Voltaic (PV) Installation at chosen Council properties.
- Park lighting efficiency projects.
- Data Centre at ABMWLC for heat recovery to provide 'free' pool water heating.
- Installation of EV charging points for small and medium vans in fleet.
- Walk-round surveys of properties to examine existing controls and settings.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

Proposed by Councillor Morgan, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Morgan thanked officers for the report which showed that there was a large amount of work to be done. It was clear that making real change would be dependent on much investment which was not available at the present time.

Seconding the recommendation Alderman Armstrong-Cotter was in agreement that much of this was down to the Council's finances and affordability. She encouraged the Council to look for government grants if, and when, they became available.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Morgan, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the recommendation be adopted.

11. HARBOUR KPI REPORT AND HARBOUR 5 YEAR SAFETY PLAN

(Appendices XII & XIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that at the March Environment Committee meeting, Members agreed a number of recommendations by the Council's Designated Person for Harbours, as part of his routine audit.

This report followed a standardised template to address a number of the recommendations and keep Members informed about ongoing safety measures and statistics at Harbours. It also addressed some key elements of the Marine Safety Management System and specifically the need to keep the Environment Committee, as "Duty Holder" (under the Port Marine Safety Code), fully informed of relevant matters at our Harbours.

The report covered the period 1st January to 31st June 2024.

Harbours Key Performance Indicators

See Appendix attached.

Marine Safety Training Scheme (MSTS)

The MSTS utilised the income from the slipway permit system to educate local users via a variety of marine-based safety initiatives. In this reporting period a safety day took place in Donaghadee Harbour. It was attended by berth-holders, slipway users, open-water swimming groups and members of the public who were offered the chance to win one of two new lifejackets.

One of the benefits of holding the safety day was that it enabled Harbours staff to conduct surveys to establish any perceived training needs amongst the users. VHF radio training was a popular choice and was subsequently arranged. MCA approved VHF radio courses were part funded by the MSTS and 14 candidates successfully completed the course.

Items Reviewed Under the 5-year Safety Plan

The 5-year safety plan (Appendix) set out a schedule of reviews for the extensive safety plan covering all marine based activities. During that period the following reviews took place:

- Marine Safety Management System
- Operation Risk Assessments
- Harbour User Risk Assessment
- Navigational Risk Assessments
- Training for harbour staff in Sea Survival, First Aid, Oil Spill Response, Firefighting and Safety Awareness.
- Hydrographic survey at Ballyhalbert
- Structural Survey at Ballyhalbert
- Emergency Response Plan
- Oil Spill Response Plan
- Port Waste Management Plan
- Operational check of Work boats

There were no notable developments from any of the above reviews.

Harbour Stakeholder Group Meeting

The newly formed Harbour Stakeholder Group was being set up with invitations sent to berth holders, harbours fisherman, local water sport and safety groups along with the Chair of the Environment Committee.

Any notes from future meetings would be included in this section of future half-yearly reports.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the half-yearly harbours safety update.

Proposed by Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Boyle welcomed the report, and it was something that had been started some time ago. He said it was good that income from the use of slips was being reinvested back into the community through training provision. In relation to the vessel recently abandoned on the shore of Strangford Lough, the Head of Assets and Property Services confirmed that the vessel was not on Council property and did not therefore fall within Council remit in relation to arranging removal/disposal.

Councillor Edmund was encouraged by the report and passed on his thanks to the team.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

12. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Blaney, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business.

13. EXTENSION OF EXISTING GLASS RECYCLING CONTRACT

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

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

A report on extension of an existing contract for glass recycling, was considered.

It was agreed to recommend an extension of the Glass Processing Contract for a further 12-month period under the existing Tender Option.

14. NOM REPORT – DONAGHADEE HARBOUR

(Appendix XIV)

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

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

A report on a Notice of Motion relating to sea defences at Donaghadee, was considered.

It was agreed to recommend that Council proceeds as proposed in section 4 of the

report, with the outcome of engagement outlined being reported back to the Environment Committee by January 2025.

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 9.22 pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Place & Prosperity Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Thursday 5 September 2024 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Gilmour

Aldermen: Adair
Armstrong-Cotter

Councillors: Blaney McCollum
Creighton McCracken
Edmund Smart
Kennedy Thompson

In Attendance: Interim Director of Place (B Dorrian), Interim Head of Regeneration (A Gozzo), Head of Tourism (S Mahaffy), Head of Economic Development (C Magill) and Democratic Services Officer (P Foster)

1. APOLOGIES

The Chairman (Councillor Gilmour) sought apologies at this stage.

Apologies had been received from Councillors Ashe and Hollywood.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman sought any Declarations of Interest.

Alderman Adair expressed an interest in Item 6 – Visit Belfast 12 Month Overview 2023/24.

NOTED.

3. EVENTS GRANTS REVIEW/AND EVENTS AND FESTIVAL REVIEW REPORT (FILE TO/EV105)

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity and Director of Community and Wellbeing advising that 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 was currently in 'delivery'.

2 Current position

The application process, delivery and drawing down of the funding by the event and festival organisers was 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 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 had been many positive outcomes from bringing the Community and Tourism teams together to deliver and test AND Events and Festivals Fund. Those included 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 had, 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 had identified barriers in terms of bureaucracy i.e. form completion;
- It had been concluded that a more detailed application was 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;
- Frustrations and uncertainty associated with DfC budget having a match requirement, leading to challenges for those event organisers that required 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 had been concluded that the Fund was 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 met economic aims with additional social outcomes, would be managed by Tourism, whilst those Community events and festivals that meet social/cultural aims, would be managed by Community Development.

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

The guidance for each fund would be adapted accordingly, but an attempt to retain similar organisation information requirements would be replicated across both. A similar approach would 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 could 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 was also proposed that the tiers of funding remained within the previous same ranges.

Community Development would also release its YouTube video on guidance to support all applicants so that access to the information session was 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 would continue as required for panel assessment and advisory support.

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

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 would be funded by Council, subject to the Rates setting process – total £80,000.

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

It was 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 would be presented to Corporate Services Committee for approval on 10 September 2024. This represented Phase 1 of a process to review all associated grant

processing across Council and to update the policy. Phase 2 was underway in liaison with the Council's Transformation Unit to procure an appropriate digital platform to manage and administer grant applications accordingly.

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.

Alderman Adair proposed, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Alderman Adair, welcomed the review and the separation of the two Funds, particularly as he was aware of some schemes which had fallen between both. Continuing he added that this change could also see further funding for a wide variety of events and as such he looked forward to 2025. Referring to the recent Kite Festival held at Millisle Alderman Adair reported that it had been very successful with more than 6,000 people attending and he took the opportunity to commend the Council's Events Team for their continued good work in successfully marketing the Borough as a visitor destination.

Commenting as seconder, Councillor Edmund concurred with all that had been said by the proposer adding that he welcomed the recommendation which had been put forward.

Councillor McCollum commended officers on the amount of work which had been undertaken to date. Referring to Donaghadee Community Development Association (DCDA) which she stated played a huge role in events in that part of the Borough and advised that she was aware they were concerned about some aspects of the new proposals. As such she sought some clarity on what consultation if any had been carried out in respect of the proposed new arrangements.,

In response the Head of Tourism advised that there had been review points undertaken last summer but added that no open consultation as such had taken place. Instead feedback had been obtained directly by officers from applicants during the application process.

Continuing Councillor McCollum stated that it seemed a pity particularly as organisations such as DCDA as part of its summer festival had overseen some 32 different groups organising 56 different events, an onerous task and one which deserved much credit. As such she felt it was remiss for an organisation such as this and potentially others not to have had any input at this stage particularly as they believed that it was quite an onerous task to try to consider which category their events fell into. Continuing she also referred to a wide variety of concerns for those smaller groups making their own applications.

The Head of Tourism advised that both teams were running this as an umbrella fund for which there would be a Workshop for those regular applicants and officers would be available to answer questions and provide guidance. Timelines had also been discussed as had budgets which had previously been oversubscribed and as such it was a concern that it perhaps no longer fitted the needs of the Groups. Officers she added were confident that in respect of the timelines enough space had been factored in to allow for those Groups which may not fit the criteria of the Fund it had applied for.

Councillor McCollum asked if there was still room for input at this stage on any of those direct aspects of the Policy. She also asked if guidance was available from officers at pre-application stage that may inform Groups of the Fund to which they were applying.

In response the Head of Community and Culture commented that in terms of Community Grants those processes would initially be tested, taken through the Community Development Members Working Group and then retested with some Groups throughout the Borough.

As a member of that Group Councillor McCollum indicated that had been her understanding and agreed that it was important that was undertaken.

The Head of Tourism agreed that was a very valid point and as a point of reassurance in respect of the Tourism Fund, added that much of what had been included last year had been retained. It was noted there were questions around bed nights and visitor spend and Members were assured that all feedback obtained would be taken onboard.

The Chairman sought reassurance that those lower levels of funding of £1,000 were made available for local events and referred to a previous Notice of Motion which she along with her colleague Councillor Cathcart had previously brought forward, which may involve further changes to funding streams. She also acknowledged that funding of £1,000 would not go far in respect of events.

The Head of Community & Culture confirmed that would be considered by the Working Group and it would be up to them to decide if they were happy with that amount. She added that it would also be considered as part of the new Grants Policy and as such it was noted there could be many changes to funding streams going forwards.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter indicated that she too had some concerns over the split and how that was to be managed to ensure that both funds remained easily accessible. She acknowledged that the funding pot had now broadened which was great but the effect of that would be that the Council would be unable to continue to give to individual projects. As such she stated that she was assuming that any oversight would be split between both Committees.

In response the Head of Tourism indicated that she imagined that would be the case but was yet to be discussed by officers.

Continuing Alderman Armstrong-Cotter emphasised that her concern was to ensure that along with continuing with the new community ethos, it was imperative to ensure that those areas of social deprivation were given due consideration. She encouraged officers to continue to be proactive to ensure that DfC came forward with this funding particularly given that more communities than ever were now working together. She added that she wished to ensure that DfC remained open and upfront about what funding was available to the Council.

At this stage the Head of Community and Culture stated that those seeking funding of £1,000 and below would receive one hundred percent of that whereas those seeking funding of more than £1,000 would receive a percentage of that should the full budget not be available.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter welcomed this adding that communities were largely self-funding and the Council was essentially providing a top up of those funds. She added that the events held in many cases were lifelines to many communities.

The Head of Tourism confirmed that they would be adopting this approach as well.

Welcoming the report, Councillor Smart commented that it was important to untap the tourist potential there was throughout the Borough. He acknowledged the issues with oversubscription and in terms of analysing how the funding would go he asked if it was possible to feedback to those unsuccessful applicants. He also suggested that it may be useful to obtain some feedback from those areas where currently there was no uptake.

The Head of Tourism confirmed that every unsuccessful applicant had the opportunity to obtain feedback on where they had gone wrong. Alongside this was the Festivals Forum where any Group could gain assistance as well as capacity development in respect of all things event related. She also acknowledged that there were without doubt those areas which did not submit funding applications despite being openly advertised and as such officers could only deal with those applications which it received.

Continuing Councillor Smart suggested that some feedback from those sessions could be brought to the attention of Members to provide some encouragement to them.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

4. ATTENDANCE AT TOURISM TRADE SHOWS (FILE 170871)
(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that 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 three-year period, through to March 2025.

Those had 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 those shows was to create, maintain and develop relationships with Tour Operators and in the case of consumer shows, market the Borough to the consumer market. This was 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.

It should be noted that most Northern Ireland Councils regularly attended those 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 were also regularly in attendance.

Bookings open for attendance at shows early; therefore, officers were 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 was to ensure a place on the stand and best prices for travel and accommodation were secured. Attendance was for up to two staff members, as deemed appropriate for each UK/Ireland event. If attendance was secured at any of the European shows only one officer would attend.

This type of sales platform had returned fully since Covid-19 and officers believed 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 Council officer/s. Those opportunities would be only offered where there was no additional cost to Council. See Appendix for list of potential shows.

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

2023/24 Expos/ Buyer Meeting Attendance

Throughout the year, officers attended eight 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
Meet the Industry	Virtual	February	26
Coach Tourism Association	Belfast	February	7
Meet the Buyer	Belfast	March	23
IAGTO	Derry/Londonderry	October	18
GEM	London	November	17
World Travel Market	London	November	23
ITOA (Irish Tour Operator Association)	Armagh	November	21
BIM	London	January	22
			Total 157

Developing and secured opportunities

It could take several years to develop strong relationships with Tour Operators before business is secured. Officers were 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 was successful it was 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 were currently scheduling a tour beginning in 2025 including Bangor Castle Walled Garden and the Walled Garden Helen’s Bay.

Other companies with whom officers continued to meet and develop relationships with included Prestigious Travel who brought small bespoke groups of Americans on tours around Strangford Lough on an annual basis, Rabbie’s Tours who offered tours that took in Mount Stewart, Middleton Tours who visited Strangford Lough including Donaghadee, Mount Stewart and Ballywalter and an Educational Tour Operator who brought small groups to NI using the Strangford Arms for accommodation.

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.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter proposed, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer Alderman Armstrong-Cotter commented that she believed there was substance and value in attending events such as these particularly given the networking opportunities which they created. She encouraged officers to ensure there were enough funds accounted for this as part of the forthcoming rates setting process for attending such events.

Concurring with those comments the seconder, Councillor Edmund agreed that it was important for the Council's Tourism Team to attend these events which provided great networking and promotional opportunities for the Borough.

Alderman McDowell commented that while in principal he had no problem with the recommendation he was disappointed that no costings had been provided within the report. He added that members were being asked to approve officers to attend the events over the next three years and as such an estimate of the costs involved would have been useful in order to assist members in making a decision on the matter. Continuing he also asked for a presentation on the Council's Tourism Strategy be brought to the Committee to help members understand the rationale and strategy to attract visitors to the Borough and assist in ensuring there were enough available beds to accommodate those visitors. In summing he indicated that he could not support the recommendation without that information.

In response the Head of Tourism advised that officers had considered including those costings within the report but the reason they had not appeared was because officers were still projecting the numbers at this stage. She advised that the budget last year to attend all of the shows was £7,500 and added that she would not see the new budget going much beyond that figure. Members were advised that officers usually tried to partner with some of the Council's larger partners in order to achieve both the best value and return. It was noted that the Tourism Manager proposed to set aside up to £10,000 which would be ringfenced for such activity. Continuing she advised that there was not currently a Tourism Strategy for the Council but instead there was the Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy which set out a number of key priorities one of which was how to promote the Borough as a key destination. Following on from the Covid19 pandemic it had noted that there was a definite presence again by a number of other partner Councils and officers were of the opinion that it was important to get the presence of the Borough out there. Many interesting and indeed bespoke bookings had commenced with seven significant

contacts with operators bringing seven new tours into the Borough and officers were of the opinion that the return was now starting to pay dividends.

At this stage Councillor Blaney concurred with Alderman McDowell's comments around having a fixed budget for this particularly as many trade shows had been attended over the past three years and his suggestion would be for officers to consider which of those had been the best and which had not been so beneficial. Continuing he also agreed that costings included within the report would have been beneficial. Councillor Blaney emphasised the importance of getting those visiting the Borough to do certain things such as stay overnight, book accommodation and spend time in the many town centres. In summing up he indicated that he was fully supportive of the Council but on the proviso that it was appropriately costed and met with its tourism strategy targets.

Alderman Adair expressed disappointment with the level of negativity which had been expressed in the Council Chamber. He read out the recommendation in the report which included the line that 'funded from existing tourism development budgets'. Furthermore it also stated that 'Offer the opportunity to local trade/tourism business representatives to attend shows, where relevant, at no additional cost to Council'. Continuing he referred to the request for a presentation on the Tourism Strategy being made to the Committee stating that it had in fact already been presented to the Council. He acknowledged that during the last year over 50 coaches had visited Greyabbey and spent money in the village and the surrounding area. Alderman Adair expressed the view that the Tourism Team had carried out a wonderful job marketing the Borough as a premier tourist destination in Northern Ireland, adding that its close proximity to the George Best City Airport provided it with a unique opportunity to market and attract visitors to the Borough. The Borough also had the largest coastline in Northern Ireland with many beautiful beaches and as such he encouraged members to support the recommendation to market the Borough as a premier tourist destination.

Concurring with those comments Councillor Thompson agreed that the Borough had indeed so much to offer and acknowledged that much had been done to promote it during the past few years. Referring to the matter of bed nights he noted that the report confirmed that a Tour Operator who brought small groups to Northern Ireland used the Strangford Arms Hotel, in Newtownards for accommodation. As such he encouraged members to support the recommendation to enable officers to continue to promote the Borough as a tourist destination.

At this stage the Chairman acknowledged the work carried out to date by the Tourism team in encouraging visitors to come to the Borough.

By way of summing up Alderman Armstrong-Cotter referred to a recent visit to the Borough by the US Consul General who along with the Mayor had visited a number of businesses throughout the Borough. While visiting Harrisons at Greyabbey he had met with a visiting group of tourists from the US and from his hometown and he spent some time speaking with them. It came to light that the Tour Operator had

been made aware of this through one of the familiarisation events and as such provided evidence that attendance at those events was bringing results. Continuing Alderman Armstrong-Cotter also reported that the Consul General had indicated that he would intend to make people aware whenever possible about how wonderful the Borough was and would even consider hosting an event in one of the hotels in and around the Strangford Lough area. She expressed the view that the Borough was already a premier tourist destination and people were just not aware of that at the moment and attendance at those events would provide the opportunity to raise awareness. Alderman Armstrong-Cotter congratulated officers for their work undertaken to date and encouraged them to continue with that.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

5. ARDS AND BANGOR BUSINESS AWARDS 2024-25 (FILE 160094)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that following the success of Bangor Business Awards held on Thursday 12 October 2023, Bangor Chamber of Commerce wished to host the annual business ceremony 2024 to celebrate the achievements and successes of the local business community.

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

Detail

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

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

Members would be aware that Council officers had 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 included 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 had yet to be announced. It was anticipated that Newtownards Chamber of Commerce would 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 was proposed that Council support sponsor of the Bangor Business Awards, Business Development category at a cost of £3,000, which was covered within this year's ED budget allocation. As part of the package, five complementary tickets were being made available to Council. The Mayor and the Chief Executive would be invited separately as guests of the Chamber.

A budget of £3,000 remained available under the ED budget for the Ards Business Awards event in February 2025. Officers would provide a further update report when details become available from Newtownards Chamber of Commerce.

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

The Interim Director of Place advised that five nominations were being sought from the Committee and both the Mayor and Chief Executive would receive separate individual invitations.

Alderman Adair proposed, seconded by Councillor McCracken that the recommendation be adopted.

At this stage the Chairman sought nominations.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter proposed, seconded by Alderman Adair, that Councillors Gilmour and Thompson be nominated to attend.

Councillor McCracken proposed an alternative that a ticket be allocated to each of the representatives within the Bangor Central DEA.

At this stage the Chairman sought further proposals and there were none. She sought agreement on the proposal which was already on the floor for Councillors Gilmour and Thompson to attend. A vote was undertaken by way of a show of hands and six voted for and six voted against. The Chairman used her casting vote and the proposal was declared carried.

Councillor McCracken suggested that as a compromise the remaining three tickets be allocated to each of the largest parties in the Bangor Central DEA.

A debate ensued on the suggestion made by Councillor McCracken at this stage.

Councillor McCracken proposed, seconded by Alderman Adair, that Councillors Blaney, McCracken and McKimm be nominated to attend.

In terms of the £3,000 budget Councillor Smart sought clarification that had not recently been reviewed.

The Head of Economic Development advised that it was in line with what was being charged and on this occasion the Council had been asked to sponsor a category and the budget of £3,000 was in line with that.

Continuing Councillor Smart commented that he aware that the Ards Chamber was struggling with the grant which had been made available and experiencing difficulties with accommodation also. He added that he was hopeful they would feed that back to Council for the following year to make it aware of what their needs would be.

In response the Head of Economic Development reminded members that it was fast approaching the rates estimation time and as such that would be a matter for elected members. She added that officers had been in touch with Ards Chamber to make them aware and encourage it come forward with a business plan.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, that the recommendation be adopted and furthermore that the following members be nominated to attend the Bangor Business Awards on 24 October 2024:

**Councillor Blaney
Councillor Gilmour
Councillor McCracken
Councillor McKimm
Councillor Thompson**

(Alderman Adair having declared an interest in the next item left the Council Chamber at this stage – 7.48pm)

6. VISIT BELFAST 12 MONTH OVERVIEW 2023/24 (FILE 170871)
(Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that Ards and North Down BC had a partnership Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place with Visit Belfast (VB).

The purpose of the partnership was 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 were efficient and represent value for money for each of the Council areas.

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

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

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

The Regional Tourism Partnership (RTP) ensured 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 had been maintained throughout the 2023/24 SLA period, across a wide mix of digital and traditional promotional channels and Visit Belfast continued to be a key strategic partner.

Key benefits of the SLA

The SLA ensured 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. Those include the Visit Belfast Welcome Centre (VBWC) opposite Belfast City Hall and both main NI airports. It enabled the Council to leverage the reach and visibility of AND to a much wider audience than Council resource alone could achieve.

VB worked in collaboration with the Council's 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 ensured that the Borough was promoted as part of the Belfast region under the Belfast Plus brand (along with Lisburn Castlereagh) which was a key strength for the continued promotion as an appealing visitor destination.

It was worth noting that as one of only two local authority members in this partnership (other than Belfast City Council) AND was at a significant advantage in presenting the Borough to those visitors. It enabled the Council 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 was 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.

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 Northern Ireland 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, RoI, 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 ensured 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 17,000 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 had been held static since 2015 through to 2025, however it was anticipated that in line with increased delivery costs, the annual cost for the local authority membership would increase in future years i.e. 2026/27 onwards. Meetings were 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 secured primary promotional space in the Belfast Welcome Centre at a cost of £6,000 per annum. This was a destination display desk with dedicated racking, headline imagery and a profile of AND. To purchase the promotional elements included in the SLA and gold package outside of the RTP was almost 50% higher cost – so the RTP delivered excellent value for money for 24/7 and year-round promotion.

Conclusion

Throughout 2023/24 Visit Belfast had continued to prove to be a critical tourism partner for the Council, providing year-round enhanced promotional exposure for the Borough's tourism offering and vital visitor servicing support. VB's audience size was growing, the level of promotion for Ards and North Down BC was increasing across digital and traditional channels with new engaging video and blog content further enhancing how AND was 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 was higher than the contribution, presenting good value for money. The strong partnership approach ensured that AND destination campaigns and event programme promotion reach a large international visitor audience, which was critical to continue to keep AND 'front of mind' as international competition for visitors continues to increase.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

Councillor McCracken proposed, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer Councillor McCracken welcomed the comprehensive report tabled before them congratulating all of those involved in the Council's Tourism team and encouraged them to keep up the good work. He did however make reference to a slight mismatch in respect of some of the work previously discussed and the outcome of tourism which was in decline. As such he indicated that he would agree with the comments made earlier by his colleague Alderman McDowell that a more comprehensive report on Tourism overall was brought to members attention for consideration of that decline which had taken place over a number of years. He added that would enable the Council to consider where the gaps where and identify further funding opportunities which may be available for the Borough. In summing up he reiterated his thanks to officers for the report tabled before members.

At this stage Alderman Armstrong-Cotter also welcomed the report and sought clarity from Councillor McCracken on whether or not his suggestion for a report was a proposal or merely a suggestion at this stage.

Councillor McCracken indicated that at this stage it was not a formal proposal and more of a suggestion.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter thanked him for clarifying.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McCracken, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that the recommendation be adopted.

(Alderman Adair re-entered the Council Chamber at this stage – 7.50pm)

7. COMPLETION OF COVID-19 RECOVERY REVITALISATION SCHEME (FILE RDP236)

(Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place as members would 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. Those 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.

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
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 Hollywood Town Centre	Additional 2 solar bins for Hollywood 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 for electrical vehicle charging points was crucial for futureproofing and accommodating the shift towards electric vehicles.	£143,441.93
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.	£171,405.00

	3 in Bangor 3 in Newtownards 1 in Comber	
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
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
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 Hollywood 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. Those grants helped businesses to implement necessary safety measures to protect their employees and customers whilst also allowing them to gradually reopen and recover financially. Those grants could ultimately contribute to the overall economic recovery and stability of towns, city, and villages.

2. Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects

A range of physical intervention and streetscape improvement projects were delivered. The projects had 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 had not only enhanced the aesthetic appeal but had assisted to boost community engagement, economic growth, and overall well-being, which were all essential components to post-pandemic recovery.

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 improved 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 had been submitted to the Department for Communities, and a lessons learnt workshop had been conducted.

A copy of the Post Project Evaluation can be found in the Appendix, 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 was a strategic recommendation that could promote greater alignment, efficiency, and collaboration among all partners. By consolidating funding, the Council could 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 enhanced collaboration but could also enhance public perception. Additionally, this approach could enhance public trust, showcase a shared vision for the future, instil public confidence and promote collaboration in tackling regeneration/ placemaking challenges.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

Alderman Adair proposed, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Alderman Adair, commended the officer and her team on the successfully roll out of the Village Gateway Signage which had been well received throughout the Borough. He particularly thanked officers for their assistance with the signage issue in Kircubbin which had finally been resolved. Continuing he also welcomed the Grants which had been delivered to many local businesses and as such invested in the local Borough, adding that many of those businesses had been

in touch to say how invaluable that financial assistance had been at that time. He stated that the added value the assistance had provided could not be quantified.

Commenting as seconder, Councillor Edmund noted that the interventions had been brought in four different strands and Alderman Adair had mentioned one of those, that being the Business Strand. Councillor Edmund referred to the Physical Interventions and Streetscapes which had meant a lot to many people as they slowly got back to normal life in their towns and villages. He noted the new seating installed in Conway Square, Newtownards and the amount of work and effort which had gone into that in an attempt to ease people back into a normal way of life and he took the opportunity to express his thanks to the Director and his team for all of their hard work in relation to that.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter also welcomed the report and the evaluation on the work which had been undertaken, adding that the projects remained ongoing with one of the town's Parklets to possibly be relocated in Newtownards. As such the projects remained live projects which many people were benefiting from and one which the Council was very much involved in. Continuing Alderman Armstrong-Cotter suggested that everyone should remain mindful of how good those investments were and how well used they were now and that there was more potentially to ask for in an attempt to attract more people to come to Newtownards Town Centre in the evenings and market Conway Square for that purpose.

Concurring with colleagues comments of thanks to officers, Councillor Smart agreed that the projects were fantastic and many of the businesses he had spoken with were very much in agreement. One of the pressures undoubtedly had been the need to put schemes in place quickly once the funds had been made available. Councillor Smart noted that a review of the Masterplans had subsequently taken place since then and the Council appeared to be slightly further ahead than it would have been in subsequent years and as such he asked officers if the Council perhaps was in an even better position should additional funds become available.

In response the Interim Head of Regeneration indicated that officers had a suite of projects already worked up and had used the experience of this programme over the past three years. The value of both the CAG and TAGs and their evidence base would also continue to be used going forwards.

At this stage the Chairman commented that the Covid 19 pandemic demonstrated that the Council could do things quickly if necessary and adapt to evolving situations. She thanked officers for their endurance at that time and commended them for the benefits which that had brought to many throughout the Borough.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

8. UPDATE ON VILLAGE PLAN ENGAGEMENT PROCESS (FILE 160135)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place, stating that as members would be aware Regeneration officers had been tasked to work with local rural communities to create new Village Plans, as the current plans were either nearing expiration or had expired.

Engagement Process

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

The Village Plan engagement process was 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 ensured that all community members were provided with an opportunity to share their views and contribute to the development of their Village Plans.

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 25 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 would 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 had been vital in gathering local insights and opinions, ensuring the community voice was heard and considered in shaping the plans.

At the time of this report the following public engagement workshops had 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
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 were 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 were actively scheduling additional workshops at more convenient times, such as Saturday mornings. Those would be consolidated for

three to four villages at central locations instead of holding them in each individual village. The impact of those additional public workshop sessions and consolidated locations would 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 would 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 were 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 outreach not only keeps the community groups informed but also encouraged 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 had and would 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 aimed 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 would reconvene, and officers would actively engage with them to incorporate their insights and ensure that their views were heard and valued.

On Street Surveys

The ongoing on-street surveys across the villages during the Summer would 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 had 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 had 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 were in addition to the feedback received at the Public Workshops.

Marketing & Promotion

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

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

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

Next Steps

The public engagement process would remain open until the end of September 2024, after which officers would 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 would be prepared and submitted to the Council for further evaluation.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Councillor McCollum proposed, seconded by Alderman Adair, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Councillor McCollum commented on how pleased she had been as an elected member to be able to engage with this process and many local residents. She also commended the local schools engagement adding that it was particularly welcome as they were such an important group of stakeholders. Continuing Councillor McCollum stated that she felt the programme which had gone out to schools was wonderful and congratulated officers for their creativity and engagement which she felt had really brought the process alive. She indicated that she had one question around the workshop at which a query had arisen around whether or not a survey would be circulated to parents. She asked if that had been followed up at all.

In response the Interim Head of Regeneration indicated that he could not be sure if the surveys had specifically gone out to parents but he undertook to check this further and report back to the member in due course.

Thanking the officer Councillor McCollum noted the 43 residents who had turned out at Groomsport adding that this did not come as a surprise and had provided a wonderful opportunity for engagement. She stated that she particularly liked the use of 'sticky pads' on which ideas were written down and shared for consideration adding that she would look forward to all of those being collated and brought back to Committee for consideration. Continuing she acknowledged that timing was critical to the success of those events and the turnout in some areas had reflected the demographic makeup of some areas within the Borough and why some attendance between the hours of 4pm and 6pm had been low. She welcomed that that would be revisited in time given the importance of the consultation which was being undertaken. Councillor McCollum also referred to the excellent workshop which had been held at the City Hall, Bangor at which one of the emerging themes had been that people did wish them to merely be 'talking shops' and instead would prefer to see things happen. That way Council would be seen to be effectively 'rewarding' residents for coming along to the engagement sessions and participating in the future aspirations for their respective towns and villages. Ongoing communication and planned return visits to the towns and villages was also to be welcomed and would enable residents to prioritise their ideas going forwards. She again praised officers for their work undertaken to date.

Also commending officers Alderman Adair noted that a lot of lessons had been learnt from past experiences and welcomed that the Council's own officers had undertaken this work rather than consultants. At this stage he paid tribute to the officers within the Council's Regeneration Team adding that the sessions had been very vibrant and he had been encouraged by the number and variety of ideas which had come forward. It had also been useful that Council officers were aware of the ongoing issues within each of the towns and villages and that had been very well received. Alderman Adair also welcomed that at each session residents were informed of what had previously been delivered and that had been very much appreciated. Ever mindful of the forthcoming rate setting process Alderman Adair added that it would

be necessary to ensure that funding was protected as part of that process. At this stage he referred to the Rural Development funding reporting that his colleague Michelle McIlveen MLA had raised this as an Assembly question and she had received a positive response on that to say that a new model for Rural Development funding was being considered. Reiterating his thanks to officers he added that both the availability of online surveys and hard copies had been welcomed by many and in summing up he stated that he looked forward to the Plans being published.

At this stage Councillor Thompson also took the opportunity to welcome the report and the sessions which had been undertaken to date adding that they had provided residents with reassurance that the Council was onboard and taking an interest. He too also welcomed that this work had been undertaken by Council officers rather than consultants as he believed there was an ongoing issue in respect of trust previously. As such he was hopeful that this time would result in something better and much more in keeping with what the residents of the many towns and villages were hoping for. He added that he had been really impressed by the level of turnout at the session in Groomsport particularly given the inclement weather on the day. Councillor Thompson stated that he looked forward to further reports coming back which would help to secure a positive outcome for all involved.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McCollum, seconded by Alderman Adair, that the recommendation be adopted.

9. PROSPERITY DIRECTORATE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – JULY 2024 (FILE FIN45)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that the Prosperity Directorate's Budgetary Control Report covered the four -month period 1 April to 31 July 2024. The net cost of the Directorate was showing an underspend of £45k (4.1%) – box A on page three.

Explanation of Variance

The Prosperity Directorate's budgetary performance was further analysed on page three into three 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

Explanation of Variance

The Prosperity Directorate's overall variance could 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).

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)	

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Smart, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted.

10. PLACE DIRECTORATE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – JULY 2024 (FILE FIN45)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating that the Place Directorate's Budgetary Control Report covered the four-month period 1 April to 31 July 2024. The net cost of the Directorate was showing an underspend of £28k (5.6%) – box A on page three.

Explanation of Variance

The Place Directorate's budget performance was further analysed on page three into three 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

Explanation of Variance

The Place Directorate's overall variance could 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.

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)	-

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

Councillor Smart proposed, seconded by Councillor McCracken, that the recommendation be adopted.

The seconder Councillor McCracken noted payroll variance of £37,000 particularly after a recent successful recruitment exercise and as such he sought how that would be accounted for going forwards.

In response the Interim Director of Place advised that temporary members of staff had been recruited but had left after three weeks, and as a result he confirmed that advertisements had gone out seeking permanent longer term members staff. He

added that the bulk of the £37,000 was as the result of the Urban Development Manager retiring.

Councillor McCracken commented that it would be important to ensure that money was invested back into staff in that section rather than put back into a Corporate budget given the number of projects there were in the pipeline for the future.

The Interim Director confirmed that the Interim Head of Regeneration would be recruiting an assistant to work alongside him and that would bring the Regeneration Team up to five members.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Smart, seconded by Councillor McCracken, that the recommendation be adopted.

11. RESPONSE TO KIRCUBBIN HARBOUR DEPUTATION (FILE 160121)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating 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 would be aware that there were a number of processes and considerations to be undertaken before reaching an informed decision. This report sought to provide context, proposed considerations, and a recommendation in respect of the next steps of consideration of the deputation.

Context

Kircubbin was a village and townland situated on the eastern shore of Strangford Lough and the coastline and harbour had been and still were prominent features of the area. The Council appreciated the rationale and appeal by some of the community to have the harbour redeveloped, and for a potential additional access point to the water currently available via several nearby shoreline points and the Council owned slipway. This was evidenced by the aspiration contained within the current Village Plan, 'Strengthening the relationship between the village and the harbour'.

Considerations

1. Ownership

The harbour was privately owned and therefore the Council had no remit, responsibility, or influence on its use or state of repair. Additionally, the seabed was 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 was widely accepted as being of a poor standard. This was 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 detailed sections of the harbour that had 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 were 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 was a procedural requirement for the Council to consider prior to any decision being made to purchase. Following the five 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 was a key consideration within the OBC and therefore an independent assessment of this was also a key next step. It was anticipated that nearby established sailing clubs (Kircubbin, Portaferry and Newtownards) provided opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy water-based activities. A potential challenge for usage capabilities of the harbour was noted in the Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland Accessibility Report 2018. Details were 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

Upon completion 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 strategic 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 would also need to be reviewed in line with the Council's Capital Expenditure process.

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.

Alderman Adair proposed, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer Alderman Adair welcomed all of those present in the Public Gallery in the Council Chamber and commended the work of all of those on the Kircubbin Harbour Working Group who had worked so tirelessly on this matter. He also acknowledged the assistance provided by former elected member Kieran McCarthy noting that had been appreciated by many in the village.

Referring to the recommendation, he agreed that it was essential to bring the owner of the harbour to the table and encourage collaborative working amongst all those parties involved with this matter. He also acknowledged the work which had been put in by members of the Kircubbin and District Community Association and he commended them for that and he also thanked his fellow Ards Peninsula DEA members for their time and assistance to find a solution to this matter. Alderman Adair believed the recommendation included in the report was a positive one which would send out a positive message to the residents of Kircubbin and reassure them that this project was very much alive. He acknowledged that Kircubbin Harbour was a vital part of the area's history and heritage adding that it was sad to see that it had fallen into such a sad state of repair. Therefore it was crucial that contact was made with the owner and they were brought to the table to make plans to secure its future.

Commenting as seconder, Councillor Edmund stated that the pier had significant historical links to Kircubbin, with herring being fished in Kircubbin Bay for many years. It was also of great importance to the people of Kircubbin and that was something the Council needed to remain mindful of. He further informed members that the late Duke of Edinburgh had stepped ashore from the pier in Kircubbin. While he had hoped the project would be further along at this stage, the recommendation before them would go some way to assist in getting there. In summing up he stated that he was delighted to second the proposal and he sent his best wishes to all of those involved with whatever challenges may lie ahead.

Agreeing wholeheartedly with the previous comments, Councillor Smart also recognised the passion within the local community for this project. He also agreed that there were so many aspects to this including tourism, heritage and also safety particularly on a very busy section of a main road. As such he noted that this analysis was key to any future steps to be taken and given the implications for that stretch of road asked if there was there any merit in involving Dfl at this stage.

In response the Interim Director confirmed that DfI had been involved and carried out inspections by their own engineers and concurred that the wall supporting the road was perfectly sound and therefore from their point of view there was no issue.

Alderman McDowell also welcomed former elected representative Kieran McCarthy in the public gallery. Continuing he stated that he would love to see the issue resolved but asked if the owner did not provide a structural engineers report would that be the end of the road for the project.

The Interim Head of Regeneration confirmed that would be the case.

In response to a further query from Alderman McDowell about who would carry out the OBC the Interim Director advised that the Council's own Capital Projects Team would carry out the majority of the work associated with that.

While supportive of this he emphasised the importance of the meeting adding that it would be important for the Council to have some firm ideas and proposals for the future of the Harbour in Kircubbin. He added that further funding sources should also be identified along with new ideas and solutions so that the Council could demonstrate value for money for its ratepayers.

The Interim Head of Regeneration indicated that he was in total agreement with Alderman McDowell and was able to confirm that officers already had a plan worked up for the Kircubbin Coastal Path. He added that officers would be more than happy to meet with representatives of the Association as plans progressed.

Rising in support of the recommendation, Councillor Thompson acknowledged the frustration felt by all in Kircubbin and particularly those on the Association who had been working on finding a solution to this matter for many years. He added that this issue would not be going away anytime soon and instead it was more likely that it would only get worse. As such he welcomed the recommendation and was hopeful that something would happen particularly through the involvement of all of those interested parties to get a solution as quickly as possible.

By way of summing up, Alderman Adair thanked members for their support adding that he had been in regular contact with DfI and the latest information was that the road was sound but kept under constant review. Continuing he reiterated that the only way to progress the matter was for everyone to work together and encourage the owner to also come to the table for discussions to try to obtain a positive outcome for all.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

12. COMBER GAP SITES (FILE RDP236)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating that 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 had been recognised as areas that detracted from the surrounding environment and did not represent the vibrant community the Council strived to promote and support. To effectively address those 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.

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 had 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 had accepted the terms and conditions outlined in the agreement and works would be commencing in the coming weeks.

Decommitment of Funding

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

This decision was necessary to ensure compliance with the funding requirements, which were designed to foster specific outcomes that the alternative locations

reviewed did not fulfil. Since the decommitment, Regeneration officers had been contacted by Comber Regeneration Community Partnership and been advised that they could potentially take the project forward. Officers had 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.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Alderman Adair proposed, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Alderman Adair commented that his colleagues Councillor Douglas and Michelle McIlveen MLA while disappointed with the response by the owner of the Castle Street site welcomed the news that the proposals for the site at Bridge Street would be commencing.

Commenting as seconder Councillor Smart raised a query in respect of the Castle Street site and any potential tie up with the Comber Regeneration Community Partnership and asked if that would need to be reported back to the Committee.

In response the Interim Head of Regeneration indicated that it would be the intention if that was the case to bring back a report to the Committee. He added that officers had contact with the Partnership through the Comber Town Advisory Group where an appetite and willingness to take that forward had been indicated. It was noted however that the Partnership would need to have that same conversation with the owner of the site.

The Interim Director added that the Partnership would be undertaking that on their own initiative.

Councillor McCracken empathised with officers for doing their best to take forward the proposals for the Castle Street site acknowledging that often the most difficult part of any such proposals was gaining permission in the first instance. He added that it was disappointing when owners did not wish to become involved in such projects which were ultimately for the greater good of the town. In respect of the proposed artwork he noted that members had not yet had sight of that and noted previously that the default for that had been historical images which he felt was the safer option but not entirely ambitious. As such he suggested that the artwork going forwards should reflect the future, tell the future of the Borough and include some of its values.

The Chairman indicated that those comments would be taken on board along with the views of City and Town Advisory Groups.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the recommendation be adopted.

13. GO SUCCEED UPDATE – AUGUST 2024 (FILE ED135)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating 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 were 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

Go Succeed Grants

The Go Succeed Grant could 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 were available under the Foundation and Growth pillars and clients were eligible when they had 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

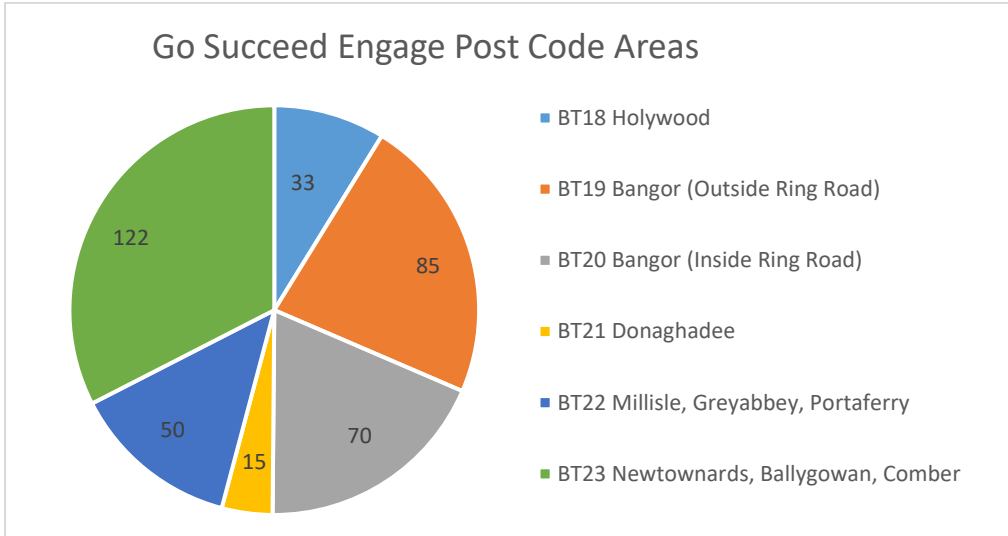
Update on on-going activities to deliver the service:

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 four hours support including one hour diagnostic

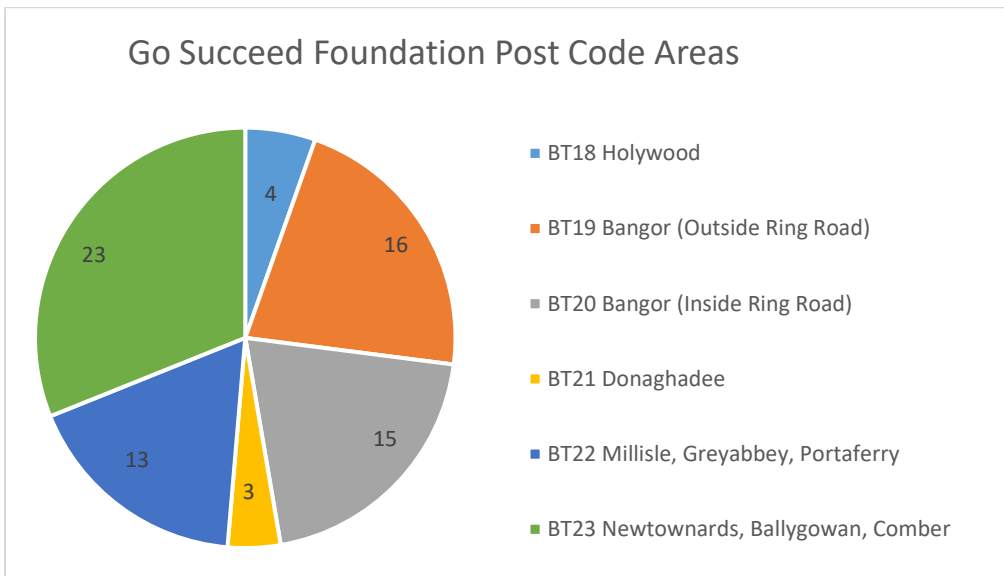
*Decrease in number from assigned due to clients not proceeding with support, wanting to put on hold or assigned to other pillars.



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

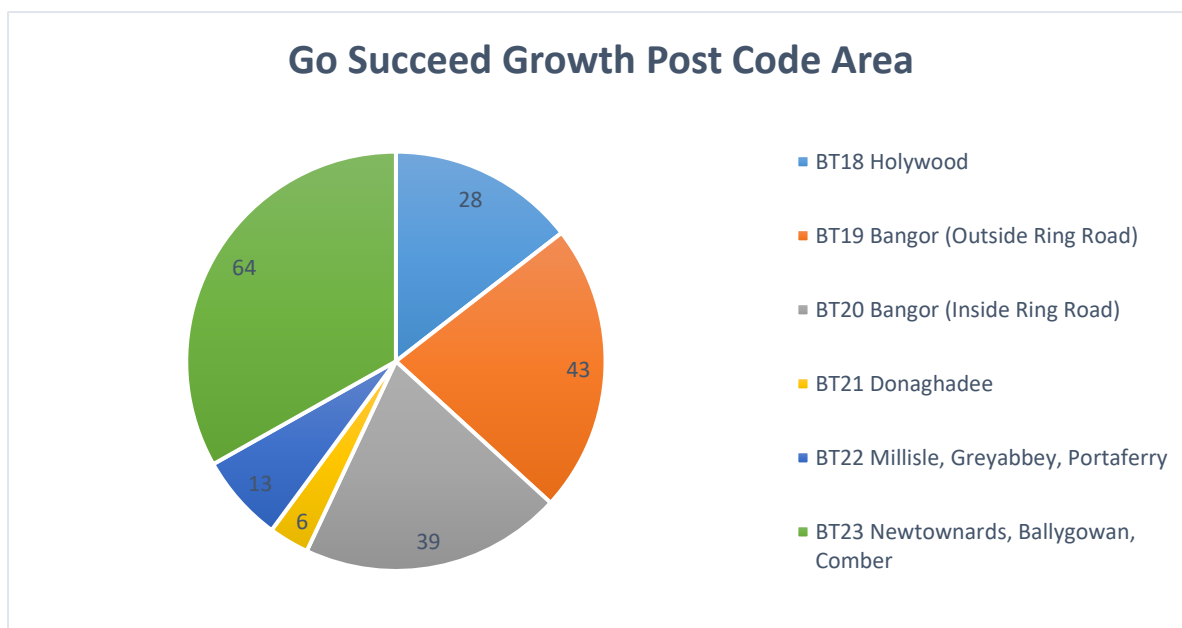
Note: budget allows for average of 10 hours support including one hour diagnostic
 *Decrease in number from assigned due to clients not proceeding with support, wanting to put on hold or assigned to other pillars.



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 15 hours support per company



Scaling:

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

Conclusion

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

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

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report and welcomes the positive implementation and progress of the Go Succeed Service.

Councillor Smart proposed, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Councillor Smart, welcomed the report along with the fantastic efforts which had been undertaken to date. Referring to the targets of Foundation and Scaling he asked if they were potentially slow burning ones or was it more the case there was no demand for this.

In response the Head of Economic Development commented that in respect of Foundation there had been a few glitches in terms of bringing the whole programme together. She added that the CRM system had also been challenging and getting input into that had taken a considerable amount of time but added that those issues had since been resolved and figures should start to increase. Continuing she commented on Scaling advising that its target was a Northern Ireland target over the anticipated five years and officers were pleased with how that had progressed to date and were hopeful it could be built upon.

At this stage Councillor Kennedy echoed congratulations to offices on the work which had been carried out to date acknowledging that it was not an easy task. Continuing he asked if there was a breakdown on the type of businesses engaged as part of the process.

In response the Head of Economic Development confirmed there was such a list and an updated report on that could be brought back to members in due course.

The Chairman also welcomed the positive uptake on this.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Smart, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted.

14. NOTICE OF MOTION

14.1.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Brooks and Councillor Chambers

Alderman Brooks proposed, seconded by 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.

The proposer Alderman Brooks provided a brief synopsis of the history behind the installation of the Camera Obscura at the Moat in Donaghadee. This facility was something which provided a unique opportunity within the Borough and for visiting tourists alike. The installation of signage for it had been overlooked hence his proposal and he advised members that many local organisations and businesses had expressed an interest in sponsoring signage for the Camera Obscura. He acknowledged that while there was limited information about it in the town visitors

needed to be made aware of it and as such he asked members to support his proposal.

Commenting as seconder, Councillor Chambers stated that Alderman Brooks had covered the main points adding that this was a straight forward proposal which he expected all members to be able to support. Continuing he noted the hard work and effort which had gone into the installation of the Camera Obscura which he felt was now being let down by this oversight in respect of signage. He suggested that signage should have been a formality which had not yet taken place but he was hopeful that this proposal would go some way to rectify that. Councillor Chambers expressed the view that it was a bizarre situation to have this facility in the town without directional signage in place and as such he sought the support of members.

Councillor McCollum commended Alderman Brooks and Councillor Chambers for bringing forward their proposal which would hopefully see those loose ends being tied up. She agreed that residents and visitors alike needed to be made aware of this facility and as such she welcomed the proposal for directional signage.

Also indicating his support for the proposal, Councillor Thompson commented that he believed this had been an oversight. He referred to an A4 piece on the Camera Obscura situated at Lemons' Wharf in the town but agreed that directional signage was required, adding that it was important to have it installed as soon as possible.

Alderman Adair also expressed his support for the proposal and commended Alderman Brooks and former elected member Janice MacArthur for their efforts in respect of this. He noted that the Camera Obscura was the only one of its kind in Northern Ireland and it was wonderful to see it installed in Donaghadee and agreed that signage would be very much welcomed by all.

By way of summing up the proposer, Alderman Brooks thanked members for their supportive comments.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Brooks, seconded by 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

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

NOTED.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

16. BELFAST REGION CITY DEAL AND BANGOR WATERFRONT UPDATE (FILE RDP22/RDP56) (Appendix V)

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

Option 3: NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

SUMMARY

Update report on the Belfast Region City Deal projects, including an update on the Bangor Waterfront Regeneration Project. Includes further update on the current procurement processes for the various Integrated Consultancy Teams (ICT), as well as an update on the procurement processes for the new operating contracts for both the Marina and Pickie Fun Park.

The report also attaches the BRCD Annual report 2023/24 for Council approval

17. BANGOR MARINA Q1 - APRIL TO JUNE 2024 (FILE 141671)
(Appendix VI)

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

TITLE OF REPORT: Bangor Marina Q1 Report Apr-Jun 2024

Option 3: NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

SUMMARY

This report contains commercially sensitive information and details of the financial performance of the Operator, which is not appropriate to have in the public domain.

18. LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP (LMP) UPDATE - SEPTEMBER 2024 (FILE ED123)

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

Option 3: NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

SUMMARY

This report has detailed information about contractors who were appointed to deliver the programmes and the academies, as well as detailed operational information. It is not felt that it is appropriate to release this information to the public. It is unlikely to add any value to the outcomes of the report.

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

At this stage the Chairman informed members that this would be the last Committee meeting for the Council's Head of Economic Development who would shortly be leaving the Council. She wished her well in the future and thanked her for all of her assistance and guidance over the years.

Concurring with those comments Alderman Adair also took the opportunity to wish the officer well for the future.

NOTED.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 9.10pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting of the Corporate Services Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards and via zoom on Tuesday 10 September 2024 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Irwin

Aldermen: Brooks McIlveen
Graham McRandal
McAlpine Smith (7.02 pm)

Councillors: Cochrane Irvine, S (zoom*)
Chambers McCracken
Gilmour Moore
Kennedy Thompson
Irvine, W

*It was noted that Councillor S Irvine was unable to turn on his video function.

Officers: Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Head of Administration (A Curtis), Head of Finance (S Grieve) and Democratic Services Officer (J Glasgow)

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for lateness was received from Alderman Smith.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were notified.

(Alderman Smith entered the meeting – 7.02 pm)

3. REVIEW OF GRANTS POLICY (FIN58)

(Appendices I – IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services attaching Grant Declaration of Interest, Grant Claim Form, Standard terms & conditions Grant Funding and Draft Grants Policy v2.0. The report detailed that Members would be aware that Council had a Grants Policy. That had been in place since March 2016.

A Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cathcart and Councillor Gilmour requested that the Council commit to 'undertaking a root and branch review of community development funding, arts and heritage, sports development and all other funding streams to ensure that it provided the most efficient, effective and responsive service to our community, thus maximising impact, accessibility and equitable allocation of resources'.

The review requested a review under 4 categories:

1. Accessibility
2. Communication Enhancement
3. Equity
4. Efficiency

In response the ANDBC Grants Management Working Group, an internal working group consisting of relevant heads of service, service unit managers and officers that have responsibility for managing grant schemes was established to support a detailed internal review and evaluation of grants that are offered and administered across Council. The group had its first meeting on 23 January 2024.

The project aims and objectives were:

Phase 1

- Development of an updated ANDBC Grants Management Policy with further consideration given to the Appeals Process.
- Implementation of a standardised framework, processes and documentation for grants management across Council in accordance with agreed Policy.
- Monitor the progress of identified work, identify potential challenges and how to mitigate against.
- Ensure council wide knowledge and understanding of grants management process.

Phase 2

- Electronic Grants Management Project

For the last number of months, the Transformation team had been working together with the Grants Management Working Group to review the current arrangements for Grants Management across all relevant services across council.

The current Grants Policy sits within Community and Wellbeing. It was proposed that going forward the policy would sit within Finance as a financial policy that would cover all grants administered by Council. It was intended that that changes made to the policy would provide an efficient and effective framework for grant management that allows budget holders to make decisions in line with the updated scheme of delegation and within appropriate timescales as well as delivering an improved customer experience to include the development of a digital grants management system.

The main changes to the policy included:

- The requirement to have all Grant scheme documentation agreed by parent committee in advance of launching.
- Grants schemes to be screened by Policy Screening before launch – that would apply to all grants in the first year of the new policy being in place.
- Only significant changes to a previously agreed grants schemes would need to be brought back to committee.

- Awarding decisions would be made by officer panels rather than Council in line with the updated Scheme of Delegation, that would speed up decision making. Members would receive interim award reports for noting or this information would be included in the annual evaluation report.
- Each year a report should be brought to committee evaluating each grant scheme to ensure that it was achieving the objectives set out in the approved scheme.
- The policy aimed to set out minimum standards for grants management which can be enhanced to meet the conditions which Council may be required to meet from other external funders.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the updated Grants Policy for implementation across Council.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Gilmour asked if there was a suitable appeals mechanism built into the policy. The Head of Finance explained that the orientation of the policy was that a separate scheme was designed for each grant process which would set out the terms and conditions. Within the scheme it would address how appeals would be dealt with.

Alderman McAlpine noted that often applicants did not understand why their application had been refused and felt that feedback was invaluable. The Head of Finance stated that the policy did not directly address that issue however he undertook to feed that back to Officers.

Councillor McCracken commended the work bringing greater consistency and coherence to the grants policy. He noted on rare occasions money had been approved without going through a grant process. He asked with the policy would that still occur as the policy applied to all external organisations, individuals for all revenue and capital grant funding or could there be situations when there would be exceptions e.g. through Chief Executive approval and if that could be documented.

The Head of Finance recalled a matter which had been raised a number of years ago and it was thought a financial assistance policy was required. He explained that grants were defined when the Council was inviting people to apply through a recognised scheme. While it that was not been formalised, it was recognised that the policy did not address all possible financial assistance that the Council may give. The policy may be amended, enhanced further or a separate policy created to cover that aspect. The Head of Finance outlined that there were issues in particular in terms of equality if someone approached the Council for money and no one else had been invited to apply however Officers intended to work further to address that matter.

Councillor McCracken asked if there were any assessments in relation to resilience of the organisation outlining his concern regarding giving money to organisations who did not have the financial resilience to be sustainable. The Head of Finance

stated that he expected that to be part of the scheme to provide proof that the organisation was resilient.

Councillor W Irvine welcomed the work that had been done and questioned if the detail of the awarded amounts would be presented to the parent Committee. The Head of Finance explained that the grants scheme would include the title of the award, objectives, criteria, timelines and appeals process etc. Depending on the scheme, he expected that at some point the list of awards would come back to Committee.

Councillor Moore raised a question regarding publicising grant opportunities and asked if applications were being received from a breadth of organisations, was there a gap and what type of outreach the Council undertook to ensure as many organisations were aware of the grant opportunities. The Head of Finance advised that the policy did set out the intention to publicise at the beginning of the financial year the likely funding opportunities that would be launched during the year. He was not aware that the Council had that holistic approach and felt that as the Council moved forward to an electronic system that information would be more streamlined.

Alderman Smith appreciated there was diverse range of customers and appealed that the application forms could be less complicated. He recognised that certain information was required however having received feedback from applicants, the applications and questions were becoming more difficult.

The Head of Finance took that on board and hoped that matter could be addressed through the electronic system.

Alderman McRandal recalled that Holywood and District Community Council had their application for funding for May Day refused previously. There had been an issue with the application however one of the issues was the timing of the application process which resulted in the appeal being held very close to the May Day event. He asked if timing and accessibility had been considered.

The Head of Finance stated that the funding opportunities would be publicised at the start of the year. May Day was at the beginning of the financial year and that likely instead would be considered at the end of the previous financial year. Officers were endeavouring to undertake multiyear budgeting which would entail earlier planning and earlier publication of funding schemes.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the recommendation be adopted.

4. DRAFT ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2023/24 (FILE 26051)
(Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services attaching Draft Annual Self-Assessment Report 2023/24. The report detailed the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 puts in place a framework to support the

continuous improvement in the delivery of council services in the context of strategic objectives and issues that are important to those who receive the services.

Section 92 of the Act places a requirement on councils to assess and report on their performance against the previous financial years; and to compare its performance, so far as was practicable, with the performance of other councils in the exercise of the same or similar functions. The comparison and assessment report covering 2023/24 should be published by 30th September immediately following the financial year to which it related.

The purpose of the report was to review our performance in the delivery of our agreed Improvement Objectives for the 2023/24 financial year and to assess our performance in discharging our duties under Section 84 of the Act.

The intention of the report was:

- to provide a transparent and balanced account of the council's position in terms of the priorities agreed in the Corporate Plan Towards 2024 which align to the 5 outcomes set out in The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032;
- to give an assessment of the effectiveness of our continuous improvement arrangements; and
- to provide an assessment of wider performance aspects including against statutory indicators and self-imposed indicators.

The past few years have seen the Council and the Borough face unprecedented challenges; however, Council was confident that it was demonstrating good overall performance and would continue to further develop, monitor and manage its activities to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions.

The draft Self-Assessment Report 2023/24 reflects on performance against the Performance Improvement Plan 2023/24, Statutory Indicators for Waste, Economic Development and Planning and provides some high-level statistics of how the council had performed in key areas identified by its residents. The report also updates progress against proposals made by the NIAO Audit and Assessment Report 2023/24.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the attached Self-Assessment Report 2023/2024.

Proposed by Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor McCracken, that the recommendation was adopted.

Alderman Smith noted that the document was comprehensive and there a lot of information and data contained. The information displayed the Council in a good light, particularly in respect of residents' satisfaction. He felt additional benchmarking would be useful and suggested net cost per person being benchmarked against other Councils.

Councillor McCracken thanked the Officers for producing the comprehensive report. He felt it would have been useful to have more detail on the covering report to help

Members navigate through the self-assessment report. He outlined his concerns regarding the report being weighted to output measures which could be misleading. There was other data available to suggest the Borough was not doing so well and alluded to commercial rates were decreasing and tourism had been in decline for 10 years as examples.

To some extent, the Director agreed with Councillor McCracken and advised that following on from the update of the Corporate Plan, work was being undertaken to align the output measures with the plan. Including stronger priorities in relation to economic development, regeneration, tourism etc. For the first time, service planning and budget planning would be occurring simultaneously. He was keen that the KPI's were more focused. The Director took the Members comments on board and stated that Officers were alive to the issue.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor McCracken, that the recommendation be adopted.

5. BLAIR MAYNE BURSARY SUB-COMMITTEE (ADM24)

(Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services attaching minutes of the Blair Mayne Bursary Sub-Committee held on 8th August 2024.

Items of note in the minutes were detailed below:

There would be a new narrative for the applicants to aspire to.

The successful applicant would aspire to the example of Blair Mayne including *the relentless pursuit of excellence (academia, sport, and adventure), indomitable spirit (personal resilience in the face of adversity), humility (supporting others), underpinned with a commitment to service.*

The Scoring system was reviewed and amended.

Scoring going forward would be based on:

- **Relentless pursuit of excellence/self-belief**- A history or aspiration to be the very best at what you do
- **Personal Resilience** – The ability to overcome failure, disappointment, and adversity
- **Humility** – A track record and commitment to support others
- **Service (actively engaged in your community)** – A history of service or commitment to be a positive contributor of society.

Patronage and Ambassadors would be considered.

The subcommittee discussed establishing a Patron and Ambassadors.

Application process.

It was agreed that applications could be made by both video 3-minute limit and online written application.

RECOMMENDED that the minutes and the decisions contained therein be adopted and that delegated authority be granted to the Sub-Committee to move forward with the recommendations discussed ready to assess applications and award Blair Mayne Bursaries in February 2025.

Proposed by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Moore welcomed the recommendation advising that there was more of a focus on young people with a disability, encouraging as many people as possible to access the bursaries.

Councillor Thompson also welcomed the recommendation referring to the success of the scheme.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconder by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted.

6. UPDATE ON PROPOSALS REQUIRING EQIAS (FILE EQ15) (Appendix VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services attaching Cabinet Office email and guidance. The report examined three separate but similar requests:

- The renaming of Portavogie Square
- The renaming of Marine Gardens, Bangor
- A memorial to Queen Elizabeth II at Marine Gardens

In March 2023, the Council agreed to a Notice of Motion 'to *rename the square area at Portavogie War Memorial Queen Elizabeth Square in memory of the late Queen Elizabeth II*'.

In January 2024, Council agreed that 'The Marine Gardens, Bangor, once redeveloped be named *The Queen Elizabeth II Marine Gardens, subject to equality screening and consultation, and officers continue to engage with the Cabinet Office to seek their approval.*

In March 2024, Council agreed that 'in recognition of the 70 years of service rendered by the late her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II gives consideration to the erection of a permanent memorial of Queen Elizabeth II at the redeveloped marine gardens. A report to be brought back to Council to include options on the commissioning and costings of the memorial. Any decision arising from this will be subject to an EQIA.'

Update on Portavogie

It was noted during the Council meeting in March 2023 that this proposal would be subject to new guidance. A request for permission to use a protected title was submitted to the Cabinet Office for approval.

The Cabinet Office had responded by suggesting requests that incorporate 'memorial' or 'remembrance' in a proposed name were likely to be looked upon favourably, where possible. The full title of Queen Elizabeth II would continue to be closely protected and only be granted for applications with strong Royal connections.

To ensure the use of Queen Elizabeth II's name continued to be undertaken in a dignified and appropriate manner, approval would be required.

It was suggested that the following information be included in any request:

- Reason(s) why the name is being sought
- A history of the organisation/body
- Details of any Royal connections or associations (where applicable)
- Any other information that is considered appropriate

The Cabinet Office state that the request be resubmitted on completion of the above information and have also suggested **that a public consultation be carried out.**

Update on Marine Gardens

A request for permission to use a protected title was submitted to the Cabinet Office for approval in May 2024 and a follow up sent in September 2024. A response had yet to be received. It was anticipated that a similar response to the request for Portavogie was likely to be received.

Update on a Memorial to Queen Elizabeth II at Marine Gardens

An options paper was expected to be presented to October Corporate Committee. Once a preferred option was chosen, a request for approval would be submitted to the Cabinet Office.

Next steps

The Council had engaged with a consultant for initial advice on these EQIAs. The recommendation was for a single EQIA to be completed for all 3 requests (entitled 'Request to Cabinet Office for Renaming of Council Facilities at: Portavogie Square; Marine Gardens/Queen's Parade; Memorial Statue) and would provide an opportunity to gauge opinion on each proposed request both separately and in combination.

The EQIA would proceed once Cabinet Office guidance had been forthcoming for the two further proposals for Bangor - but working to the assumption that the guidance was not likely to be dissimilar.

On completion of the EQIA the Council would then be in a position to approach the Cabinet Office with a request for renaming supported by public consultation.

It should be noted that EQIAs were resource intensive and so therefore in combining them the Council was seeking to maximise efficiency and minimise cost. It would be essential to dedicate necessary time and resources to the consultation process to

encourage and maximise participation, particularly by marginalised groups. It was anticipated that the cost of this EQIA exercise would be approximately £6,500. This included, advertising fees, hire for the venues for consultation and fees for the consultant. That would be considerably higher if the EQIAs were conducted individually.

Consultation process

Public consultation would include an online questionnaire, which would be available through the Council's Citizen Space portal; alternative paper copies and alternative languages can be requested through the Compliance Officer (Equality and Disability). The ECNI recommends that for an EQIA, public authorities allow a minimum consultation period of 12 weeks.

The EQIA would be advertised in The County Down Spectator, The Newtownards Chronicle, and on the Council's Social Media Platforms, as well as being emailed to all consultation groups within Equality and Good Relations Sections.

Three face-to-face public consultations would take place during the consultation phase. Those would be held in Bangor, Newtownards, and another area within the Ards Peninsula. Holding a public consultation in the Ards Peninsula would allow those from more rural areas to attend without having to travel a great distance in line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016. Council to agree this location.

A special meeting of the Ards and North Down Consultative Panel would be held in line with the Equality Scheme and within the agreed constitution.

After the 12-week consultation, a final report would be written, presented to the Council, and made available online for the public, prior to any request being sent through to the cabinet Office.

RECOMMENDED that the Council agrees to the approach outlined (to complete a single EQIA for all 3 requests), subject to:

- Approval of a preferred option for a Memorial to Queen Elizabeth II; and
- Responses from the Cabinet Office regarding the renaming of Marine Gardens and the Memorial to Queen Elizabeth II.

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Chambers, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman McIlveen believed the approach was sensible and wise.

Councillor Chambers asked if the consultation with the public could be held an area where there was a high footfall e.g. Aurora or Ards Blair Mayne and Leisure Complex.

The Director advised that Officers could come back to the Committee to advise on the plans for the consultation.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Chambers, that the recommendation be adopted.

7. BUDGET REPORTS:

(a) Strategic Budget Report (Appendix VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services attaching strategic budget report. The report detailed that was the first budget report for the financial year. It set out the variances for expenditure and income for the first four months and showed a budgetary surplus of £171k, thus far. The budgeting policy agreed during the year required officers to forecast potential outturn on four occasions during the financial year – those would occur at the end of June, August, November and January. The final column on page 2 of the report show that management were forecasting a potential surplus of around £725k. That was an early indication. The next forecasts two forecasts would feed into the estimates process and allow judgements to be made in respect of potential reserves positions at the year end.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the Strategic Budget Report for July

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

(b) Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management 2024/25 Q1 (FIN165)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services detailing In February 2024, Council approved its annual Capital and Treasury Management Strategies, including the setting of Prudential Indicators (PIs) for the current financial year ending 31 March 2025. These are statutory requirements in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011, the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code. The purpose of this report was to provide Members with an update on the PIs and treasury management activity as required by the CIPFA Codes, at the end of July 2024. The report was appended.

Proposed by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman McRandal, that the recommendation be adopted.

In terms of capital expenditure, Alderman Smith raised a question regarding the element of risk with it being evidenced over the past few years that the Council had not spent as much as it had planned. The Head of Finance advised that in a number of the previous year's, 50% less of the original budget had been spent. Officers were working on forecasting, altering the budgeting cycle to looking more forwards and not just backwards. Figures would now be revised four times a year to provide a much better ability to predict and inform the budget estimates.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman McRandal, that the recommendation be adopted.

8. **RESPONSE TO NOTICES OF MOTION:**

(a) **Response to Notice of Motion – Deep Concern at the Poor state of the Roads across Ards and North Down**

(Appendices IX, X)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services attaching letter to DfI from the Chief Executive dated 19 July and letter from DfI to Chief Executive dated 23 July. The report provided the undernoted detail:

A Notice of Motion was originally agreed by Council:

“That this Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to once again express our deep concern at the poor state of roads across Ards and North Down.

Council further requests that DfI changes their policy in relation to the depth of potholes that are required to be repaired back to 20 millimetres from the current 50 millimetres in order to improve the quality and safety of our roads network.

Further that Council writes to the Minister for Infrastructure expressing concern that Ards and North Down continues to receive the lowest Roads investment across Northern Ireland Councils and requests an increase in funding to make road repairs and resurfacing a priority and for fair allocation in funding for coastal defences, roads and pavements resurfacing and street lighting investment across our Borough as a matter of urgency.”

Replies were received which were reported back to Committee in June 2024. The Committee subsequently asked for a further letter to be issued asking for the Council to:

Write back to the Minister to seek clarification on the range of weighted indicators being used to allocate resources for road maintenance.

A letter was sent from the Chief Executive to DfI on 17 July 2024. A reply was received on 23 July 2024.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the response.

Proposed by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that Council notes the response but write back to the Minister to ask for the data on the metrics he refers to in his letter that DfI use to allocate the budget and also ask for the benchmark data from Newry, Mourne & Down, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Councils so we can assess the budget.

Referring to the correspondence, Alderman Smith noted that the Minister had stated that the budget allocation was fair and there was a series of metrics at which that budget was assessed. Alderman Smith stated that he would be keen to see those metrics and for those to be benchmarked against Newry, Mourne & Down, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Councils.

Alderman McIlveen stated that there had been several debates around the issue and the issue of allocation to the Borough had been consistently raised. Referring to the

amount of maintenance funding received by Newry, Mourne and Down he did not believe that could be fair.

Councillor W Irvine supported the proposal and did not agree that the allocation was fair and proportionate.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that Council notes the response but write back to the Minister to ask for the data on the metrics he refers to in his letter that DfI use to allocate the budget and also ask for the benchmark data from Newry, Mourne & Down, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Councils so we can assess the budget.

9. NOTICES OF MOTION:

9.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Brooks and Councillor Chambers

That the Council, following the 80th anniversary of D-Day, recognises the service of US regiment(s) stationed in Donaghadee and our Borough prior to D-Day and tasks officers to bring a report back looking at ways in which our Borough could provide a lasting memory to them.

Proposed by Alderman Brooks, seconded by Councillor Chambers, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Alderman Brooks outlined the context of bringing the motion before the Council. A local constituent had visited Portstewart and he had brought it to the attention of the Alderman that it had been documented on a war memorial that a US regiment had been stationed in Portstewart during the war. There had been similar US regiments stationed throughout Northern Ireland and this Borough, in particular in Donaghadee. A local historian in Donaghadee, had found out that there had been at least two US regiments. One in the New Road, Donaghadee, Detachment E 1624 Signal Photographic Company, US Army. With the second one being the Field Force Replacement Depot Casual Detachment stationed at Portavoe House. He felt that it would be appropriate for this to be documented and suggested further research be undertaken by contacting the MOD, researching previous minutes and making with contact with Causeway, Coast and Glen Council to see how they had ascertained the information. Alderman Brooks tasked Officers on finding out the relevant information and where would be appropriate for such a memorial to be placed.

As seconder, Councillor Chambers did not feel the information should be on a war memorial and would be more appropriate on an information plaque. He was pleased that the motion was not limited and could be extended across the Borough to other areas that could benefit.

Councillor Gilmour rose in support of the motion and remarked that when the Council had marked the 80th Anniversary of D-Day many people had said to her that they had not realised that the Borough had played such a significant role in D-Day and many US troops had been there. With the passing of time, those that remembered

such historical events were becoming less. She felt it would be good to document the role the Borough played and record the different US troops that had come. Councillor Gilmour resighted a personal story and she felt it was important that such stories were remembered. There would be also family members who may wish to visit the Borough and see where their relations had been stationed.

Councillor Cochrane added his support to the motion, he was interested to see what would come back in the report and believed it would be a fitting tribute to the US troops. He remarked Donaghadee was an incredibly historical seaside town.

Alderman Graham supported the motion and felt it had potential to interest visitors from America who were interested in learning that type of history. He believed the US troops were also stationed around the Clandeboye area and felt it was important to get as much information from the people and historians who could tell the story.

Alderman McAlpine outlined some her families' historical connections. She felt it was important to document such stories as living memory started to fade.

Councillor Thompson advised that he had attended the Eagle Wing Concert the previous weekend which had included some memories from a lady in Groomsport during the war years when the US troops had come to the village. Councillor Thompson welcomed the motion and felt the memorial could enhance areas.

Councillor McCracken suggested the consideration of a digital archive collecting stories, digital photos and personal accounts and putting them online. Creating a lasting memory, would be of interest to tourists and could create a trail of connections. There were so many interesting artefacts in the Borough that could be used as part of the American story. A digital archive would allow the content to be changed, refreshed and include photos. Councillor McCracken felt that would be a wonderful way to celebrate that connection and a crucial period of history and the Borough's connection with America.

Alderman McIlveen noted that there was a piece of work with regards to QR codes that was being undertaken by the Council for monuments, buildings and places of interest. He suggested that the work in connection with this motion could be possibly tied in to that.

Alderman Brooks thanked Members for their positive and constructive comments. He was not asking for the information to be placed on a war memorial but to find various suitable alternatives somewhere where it could be marked and was visible.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Brooks, seconded by Councillor Chambers, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

10. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

(a) Bangor District Orange Lodge – Act of Remembrance, Ward Park

Councillor W Irvine had submitted an item of any other notified business in respect of

Bangor Orange District Lodge not being given permission to hold a short act of remembrance in Ward Park, Bangor on Sunday 8th September due to an EQIA not being completed.

Councillor W Irvine felt the matter was an important issue to raise as many people across the Borough did not understand and some were dismayed that the District Orange Lodge were not able to hold a short act of remembrance on Sunday 8th September 2024. That was due to the request of land having been screened in and it was deemed necessary that an EQIA would need to be undertaken before permission could be granted. Unfortunately, that process was not known to the organisers. He noted that local press and other media outlets had taken up the story that the Council had seen to have turned down a service to remember members of the Orange Order who had lost their lives during the troubles.

Councillor W Irvine did not feel any Member would put any obstacles in the way of that service having taken place. Services as such were important for healing and remembrance. Councillor W Irvine explained the context around the reasoning for the service with the Orange Order having lost 343 of its members during the Troubles. The date for the service was chosen as on 1 September 1975, a group of Orangemen were holding a meeting in an isolated Orange Hall in the rural area of Tullyvallen when two masked men burst into the hall armed with assault rifles while others stood outside and fired. 5 Orangemen were killed and 7 other wounded and he outlined the names of the victims and their ages.

Councillor W Irvine was aware that Bangor District Orange Lodge had planned to meet the Chief Executive in the weeks ahead and that was one of the issues that would be raised.

Councillor Cochrane stated that it was unfortunate that the Orange Lodge had not been able to access Ward Park however he commended the Lodge on the very respectful and dignified way they had held the parade and wreath laying. He was committed to working alongside the Orange Order and Council Officers to ensure next year the service could be held. Councillor Cochrane echoed the sentiments of Councillor W Irvine regarding the importance and the need for the service.

Councillor Gilmour thanked Councillor W Irvine for providing the context. She asked the Director to outline the process for organisations applying for the use of Ward Park and the timeline entailed.

The Director explained that the request received was for holding a service for Orange Victims Day. He cited a section of the lands policy and under legislative requirements that included Section 75 that required the Council to have due regard to Equality and Good Relations. It was determined that an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) as required. An EQIA would take approximately 12 weeks. Engagement with organisations well in advance would enable Officers to conduct the necessary assessments.

Councillor Gilmour asked what would occur when an organisation used the land without the request of use being submitted and was there a process in place to prohibit such.

The Director undertook to come back to Councillor Gilmour regarding that point.

NOTED.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

11. CONTRACT AWARD FOR THE PROVISION OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE (FIN 167)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6:3 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

The Council was asked to award a contract for the provision of a 'software as a solution' financial management system, procured through G-Cloud 13.

The recommendation was that Council agrees the budget strategy including specifically the budget principles, the principle of the establishment of a Capital Sub-Group and timetable.

12. BUDGET STRATEGY FOR ESTIMATES 2025/26 (Appendix XI)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6:3 - 4. Exemption: consultations or negotiations

The Council was asked to consider a budget strategy for the 2025/26 budgeting process. This included a review of the prior year end outturn, internal and external context, budgeting principles, capital issues and a proposed timetable.

The recommendation was that the Council consider the responses provided to the conditions outlined.

13. ACQUISITION OF LAND AT AMBLESIDE, BANGOR

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Council was asked to consider proceeding with the acquisition of land at Ambleside, Bangor.

The recommendation was that the Council consider the responses provided to the conditions outlined.

14. RENEWAL OF TENANCY AGREEMENT – ABBEY STREET GATE LODGE

(Appendix XII)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION**SCHEDULE 6:3 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

Council was asked to consider the renewal of the tenancy agreement for the Abbey Street Gate Lodge. It was recommended that the Council renewed the Agreement.

The recommendation was that Council engages the services of John Minnis Estate Agents and approves the request to let the property to the current tenant for another 12 months.

15. RENEWAL OF LICENCE – ACCESS OVER LAND AT PARKWAY, COMBER

(Appendix XIV)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION**SCHEDULE 6:3 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

Council was asked to consider the renewal of the Licence for access over Council land at Parkway, Comber. It was recommended that the Council renewed the Licence.

The recommendation was that the Council accedes to the request from Kingsland Table Tennis Club to renew their licence, subject to the terms and conditions outlined above.

16. REQUEST FOR A LEASE OF FORMER ALLOTMENT SITE AT KERR PARK, HOLYWOOD

(Appendices XV)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6:3 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

Council was asked to consider granting a lease of a section of the former allotment site at the entrance to Kerr Park, Hollywood. It was recommended that the Council granted a lease.

The recommendation was that the Council accedes to the to the request Holywood Co Farm and agrees to do the following:

1. Grant a lease for 15 years for the section marked “A” on the attached map at appendix 3.
2. Grant a Licence for 15 years for access for the section marked “B” on the attached map at appendix 3.

Subject to the terms and conditions as listed above.

17. REQUEST FROM KINGSLAND TABLE TENNIS CLUB TO RENEW THE LICENCE AT KINGSLAND PAVILION

(Appendix XVI)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6:3 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

Council was asked to consider the renewal the licence for Kingsland Table Tennis Club at Kingsland Pavilion, Bangor. It was recommended that the Council renewed the Licence.

18. GRANT OF A LEASE TO DEEP GREEN FOR LANDS AT ARDS BLAIR MAYNE WELLBEING AND LEISURE COMPLEX, NEWTOWNARDS OR BANGOR AURORA AQUATIC & LEISURE COMPLEX (THE 'SITES')

(Appendix XVIII, XIX)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

Council was asked to consider giving authority to officers to progress the items listed at points 1 to 6 of the report and to bring a final report to members seeking consent to grant a lease to Deep Green.

The recommendation was that the Council gives authority to officers to progress the items listed at points 1 to 6 and to bring a final report to Members seeking consent to grant a lease to Data Green.

19. STEP BOARD REPORT JUNE 2024

(Appendix XX)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6:3 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

The Council was asked to note the report.

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBIC/PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 8.59 pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Hybrid meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards, and via Zoom, on Wednesday 11 September 2024 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Alderman Brooks

Alderman: Adair
Cummings

Councillors:	Ashe	S Irvine (Zoom)
	Boyle	W Irvine
	Chambers	Kendall
	Cochrane	McClellan
	Harbinson	Moore
	Hollywood	

Officers in Attendance: Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development (A Faulkner), Head of Community and Culture (N Dorrian), Head of Leisure Services (I O’Neill), Head of Parks and Cemeteries (S Daye) and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Alderman McRandal and Councillor Douglas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were notified:

Councillor Chambers

Item 3 – Appointments to the Board of the Northern Community Leisure Trust

Item 32 – Aurora Moveable Pool Floors

Item 35 – Northern Community Leisure Trust Q1 2024-2025

Councillor S Irvine

Item 11 – Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG August 2024)

Councillor W Irvine

Item 3 – Appointments to the Board of the Northern Community Leisure Trust

Item 32 – Aurora Moveable Pool Floors

Item 33 - Leisure Transformation Response to Notice of Motion

NOTED.

(Councillor W Irvine and Councillor Chambers left the meeting having declared an interest in Item 3 – 7.02pm)

3. APPOINTMENTS TO THE BOARD OF THE NORTHERN COMMUNITY LEISURE TRUST (FILE CW51)

(Appendix I – II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that following the resignation of Peter Martin from the board of the Northern Community Leisure Trust as a Council representative, Council was asked to consider his replacement. Council proposed, at the meeting of 31 July 2024, that the names of two elected Members be forwarded for consideration to the Trust, and to ascertain if both could be accepted giving a total of 3 Council places on the Board.

The joint Chairs of the Trust had advised that currently there were six board members, and if two further elected Members were added, there would be three Councillors, thus making up 1/3 of the Board membership. They felt that this would create an imbalance in the makeup of the membership. Furthermore, the contractual arrangement with the Council was that up to two Members could sit on the board, representing the Council. Therefore, the joint Chairs had advised that only one further nomination from Council could be accepted.

At a meeting with the joint Chairs, it was agreed that there were two ways available to Council to deal with this:

1. Council agrees which of the two nominated Members (either Councillor McCracken or Councillor Thompson) is put forward for consideration by the Trust Board. Members are reminded that this would not automatically guarantee appointment as the Trust have an application process that must then be undertaken when the nomination is received in order for the nomination to be accepted by it. Or;
2. Both names are put to the Trust Board and the Trust Board process referred to above is undertaken for both, resulting in the Trust selecting which one would then join the Board.

The Northern Community Leisure Trust application form and code of conduct is attached for members information.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to proceed with one of the options outlined above.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that Councillor Thompson be put forward for consideration by the Trust Board.

Councillor Kendall proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that both Councillor Thompson and Councillor McCracken be put forward for consideration by the Trust Board.

Proposing the amendment, Councillor Kendall felt it was odd that Council representation was restricted and suggested that both Members should be considered.

Councillor Moore had wished to nominate Councillor McCracken so was happy to support the proposed amendment given that he was included. She felt that the Trust Board would then be able to consider how the Members could complement its existing skillsets. Alderman Adair was also content with that approach.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that Councillor Thompson and Councillor McCracken be put forward for consideration by the Trust Board.

(Councillor Chambers and Councillor W Irvine returned to the meeting – 7.07pm)

4. CONSULTATION THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CREMATION) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2024 (FILE PCA128)

(Appendix III – IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailed as follows:

Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members in relation to the Draft Local Government (Cremation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024, attached in Appendix 1 of this report.

Background

The Department for Communities (DfC) was proposing to bring forward subordinate legislation under Article 17 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1985. The Local Government (Cremations) Regulations 2024 would be the first set of regulations to be made under this provision. Subject to the consultation's outcome, the draft regulations would align with similar legislation in England and Wales.

The new regulations (Appendix 1) aim was to clarify that all Councils in Northern Ireland were authorised to establish and maintain crematoria. These proposed regulations aimed to update and replace the Cremation (Belfast) Regulations (NI) 1961, which currently applied only to Belfast City Council.

The Department for Communities initiated a consultation on 24th June 2024 which closed on 14 October 2024 on the draft Local Government (Cremation) Regulations (NI) 2024. It was noted that the closing date for this consultation was initially 30 September 2024 but had been extended to 14 October 2024 at 17.00.

The suggested consultation response for ANDBC was attached.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the consultation response to The Department for Communities (DfC) and welcomes the proposed regulations and finds them fit for purpose.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Ashe, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the recommendation be adopted.

5. COMMUNITY TRAILS UPDATE (FILE CW72)

(Appendix V – VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailed as follows:-

Background

In May 2014, Ards Borough Council funded the Peninsula Healthy Living Partnership (PHLP) which in turn appointed Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI, now known as Outscape) to assess the feasibility of developing Community Trails in nine villages within the Ards Peninsula.

Community trails were identified as: -

- Ones which connected communities to outdoor spaces and were close to where people lived and worked.
- One which connected different communities together e.g. two villages.

In addition, a Community Trail:

- Could be urban/rural.
- Provides opportunity on people's "doorstep" for walking/cycling etc.
- Should be traffic free (and 70% off road).
- Includes an area of "green space".
- Trailhead with information.
- Looped or linear.

A further report was brought to Ards and North Down Borough Council in May 2015 to seek Council support to progress the Ards Peninsula Community Trails Project. This required a further feasibility study to agree the priority projects, identify individual project costs suitable for development and delivery on the ground, examine access arrangements and develop each of the projects to a stage suitable for inclusion in funding applications. That project was delivered in 2016.

Due to issues relating to landownership and statutory authority advice it transpired that some of the trails identified were not able to be progressed despite significant effort and negotiations.

In 2019 a revised list of priority trails was identified, again in partnership with PHLP, but again similar issues in relation to land ownership and statutory authority concerns prevented some of those trails being progressed.

To date the Community Trails that had been delivered in the peninsula included:

- The extension to the Cloughey Boardwalk (Council owned)

- Slan's Graveyard (privately owned)
- Upgrade and extension of trails in Corrog Wood (Woodland Trust site)
- Upgrade and extension of the trail in Nugent's Wood (National Trust site)

PHLP contributed financially to the development of the above trails in partnership with Council and external funding sources.

Ards Community Trail Report 2024

In 2023/2024 a further review of the trails was undertaken by Outscape and this work was commissioned by PHLP in partnership with Council. The report was attached. This updated report highlighted where the need for trails was greatest across the peninsula and it also sought to identify sites which had a greater chance of delivery as the land, they were located on was owned by organisations such as the Woodland Trust or the National Trust, who were keen to work with Council on these projects. There were some that had been identified that were on private land which in officers experience could therefore be problematic.

Recently a planning application was submitted for the upgrade and extension of the trail and car park at Glastry Clay Pits, Ballyhalbert owned and managed by the National Trust. This project had been included in the application for Peace Plus funding under the Rural Regeneration Strand.

Memorandum of Understanding

Given the close collaboration between Council and the PHLP on the Community Trails projects it was considered that it may be prudent to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalise the partnership. It may have assisted the PHLP in drawing down funding to further these projects and also assisted Council in developing community links in the peninsula. The MoU was attached for Council's consideration.

If approved, in partnership with the PHLP, Council would then continue to explore Community Trail projects delivery and programming. Council recently recruited a Community Trails and Greenways Development Officer, and they would be able to further develop events on the existing trails and those to be developed, as well as the delivery of future trails.

Strangford Lough Community Trails Feasibility Study

Council commissioned ORNI (now known as Outscape) in 2022, to undertake a feasibility study for Community Trails on the western shores of Strangford Lough, report attached. The trail at Island Hill (Council owned) was highlighted as being in need of upgrading and potentially that it could be extended. A planning application had been submitted to upgrade and extend the trail, creating a viewpoint at the highest point. This project also formed part of the Peace Plus funding application.

Another project was identified on Sketrick Island, Whiterock. The land was privately owned, but a trail did exist and is well used by locals, albeit its condition was slowly deteriorating. A planning application had been prepared and was awaiting sign off by the landowners before it was submitted. The project would involve upgrading the existing trail, rerouting sections of it and extending it. This project also formed part of the Peace Plus funding application.

If the Peace Plus funding was not awarded, other funding sources would be explored.

Other Projects

The National Trust had made us aware of a site they owned at Lowrys Wood near Groomsport/Orlock where they had created a small woodland. There was an informal trail around it, and it was proposed to upgrade and extend this trail.

Through funding that Outscape obtained they were currently undertaking a feasibility study on this trail and working out the planning requirements and construction costs etc. Once that was complete, a planning application would be submitted, and funding sources would be explored for delivery of the project.

Conclusion

Through consultation with village communities, the need for the Community Trails had been identified as a high priority. Many communities felt isolated or did not have the provision to access sites for recreation due to distance and other factors. These “on the doorstep” trails provided a vital network of recreational trails that could be utilised by local populations for walking/exercise purposes. Walking was generally considered to be one of the most cost effective and accessible ways of exercising to improve health and mental wellbeing. There was also a continued need/demand for such trails to be off road/green spaces.

RECOMMENDED that Council:

- Notes the attached reports, and that Officers continue to progress the delivery of the trails.
- Agrees to sign the attached Memorandum of Understanding with Peninsula Healthy Living Partnership.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.

Proposing, Alderman Adair felt that the trails programme had been a huge success. He welcomed the upgrades at Nugent’s Wood and Corrog Wood along with the reported progress regarding Glastry Claypits. He praised the partnership work between Council and other organisations involved such as the Woodland Trust and Peninsula Healthy Living and spoke of the importance of encouraging people to enjoy and explore the outdoors.

Welcoming the report, Councillor Boyle noted the important work of Peninsula Healthy Living Partnership. He felt it was important to have an MOU in place which could assist the organisation in accessing funding opportunities.

Concurring, Councillor Kendall asked if there were plans to take a holistic approach in terms of developing other opportunities across the Borough and the Head of Parks and Cemeteries advised that work was always ongoing in terms of developing opportunities across the Borough, adding that projects were either delivered or in development for other locations.

Councillor Kendall welcomed that approach, pointing to the great community benefits that had been achieved.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.

6. CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT 2024 (FILE CW174)
(Appendix VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing the following:

Background

The Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 was reviewed in March 2016 by the Department of Health (DoH) to ascertain whether it was still fit for purpose. The work on scoping policy proposals that would underpin a new health protection legislative framework for Northern Ireland was paused due to other work pressures and the Department's emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Current position

In May 2022 the work on this area resumed and DoH were now consulting on proposals which would underpin a new health protection legislative framework for Northern Ireland, and which was based on the recommendations of the 2016 Review of the 1967 Act and learning from recent public health emergencies. The overarching principle of the draft Bill was to protect the population against various forms of infection and contamination including biological, chemical and radiological, in addition to infectious diseases, which is the focus of the 1967 Act.

The draft response

A draft response to the consultation had been prepared by Environmental Health Northern Ireland (EHNI), a group comprising of all the heads of Environmental Health in the 11 Councils. The response, which was attached, generally welcomed the Act and the principles it was aiming to achieve. However, clarity was needed on the expectations on local government and its role in enforcing this legislation and the associated resources to do so.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached proposed response.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

7. FAST TRACK CITIES POSITIVE LIFE (FILE CW173)
(Appendix IX – X)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailed as follows:

Background

Positive Life, Northern Ireland's only charity dedicated to working with people affected by HIV, had written to the Council requesting that we sign up to becoming a Fast Track City region and support initiatives aimed at reducing the number of new HIV cases to zero by 2030.

Over the last decade there had once again been an increase in the number of HIV cases in Northern Ireland. The latest HIV data (Dec 2023) from the Public Health Agency (PHA) recorded the following:

- There were 105 new HIV diagnoses made in Northern Ireland residents (71 men and 34 women) in 2022; a 38% increase from 76 in 2021. This was the peak number of new HIV diagnoses reported in Northern Ireland since 2012 and reflected both individuals newly diagnosed with HIV and individuals with previously diagnosed HIV moving to Northern Ireland.
- The largest route of transmission for new HIV diagnoses occurred through heterosexual transmission (circa 50%), a significant increase from 21 new diagnoses in 2021 to 52 in 2022. This was the highest number of heterosexual transmissions reported since 2012.
- Eight (8%) new HIV diagnoses occurred through injecting drug use. This was a significant new risk group emerging in Northern Ireland in recent years.
- Less than 5 new HIV diagnoses occurred through mother to child transmission.
- The majority (76%, 80/105) of people newly diagnosed in 2022 were aged between 25 and 49 years, with the 25-34 years age group increasing by 32% from 28 diagnoses in 2021 to 37 in 2022. The 35-49 years age group increased by 39% compared to the previous year. The proportion of people diagnosed aged 50 years or over increased to 18% in 2022 compared to 11% in 2021. Diagnoses in those aged over 65 remained low with only 21 new diagnoses reported since 2012.

In the light of these concerning figures, the Positive Life charity was aiming to make Northern Ireland a Fast Track region in the hope of increasing awareness and reducing the number of new cases.

Fast Track Cities

The Fast-Track Cities initiative was a global partnership between cities and municipalities around the world and four core partners – the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (IAPAC), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and the City of Paris.

Mayors and other city/municipal officials designate their cities as Fast-Track Cities by signing the Paris Declaration on Fast-Track Cities, which outlines a set of commitments to achieve the initiative's objectives i.e. achieving the World Health Organisation's target to reach zero new HIV diagnoses by 2030.

Belfast City Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council recently joined Positive Life in signing the UN pledge to become Fast Track Cities (template attached).

Positive Life's Request

Positive Life had written to the council stating that they would love to have all local district councils in Northern Ireland committed to supporting their work to make Northern Ireland a Fast Track region by World AIDS Day, 1st December 2024. Through this global movement, they believed that with local community, civic and public health support, Northern Ireland can be the first UK region to reach the WHO target.

To help reach this goal, Positive Life wished to offer free pop-up HIV testing clinics in the council area, including an introductory HIV and Sexual Health Awareness training for Ards and North Down Borough Council staff, at no cost, if in return the Council could make available suitable venues.

They also requested that Ards and North Down Borough Council pass a motion to sign up to the Fast Track Cities Pledge, to commit to working with them towards zero new diagnosis of HIV in the Northern Ireland by 2030.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the request from Positive Life and commits to signing the UN Pledge to become a Fast Track City; and agrees to explore further the awareness raising opportunities offered by Positive Life.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Adair praised Positive Life and its work across Northern Ireland and was delighted that Council was able to support the organisation. Positive Life helped to end the stigma associated with HIV and helped people get the support they needed and that the diagnosis did define who they were. He felt that it was important to have fast track testing and anything that the Council could do was worthwhile.

Councillor Kendall rose in support of the proposal, fearing that the 2022 statistics provided in the report would have risen in 2023 due to a drugs epidemic and therefore it was important for Council to assist in providing support to those who were vulnerable.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.

8. VAPING EDUCATION EVENT FOR POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS (FILE CW14)

(Appendix XI - XII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Derry City & Strabane District Council (DCSDC) recently hosted an event for post primary school children to raise awareness of the dangers associated with vaping. Following the success of this, they wrote to all councils to share their materials and learning as a model of good practice; and encouraged other councils to offer a similar event. A letter was attached.

Background

A Department of Health report, "[Young Persons Behaviour and Attitudes Survey 2022](#)", had revealed that almost half of young people aged between 15 and 16 have at one stage used an e-cigarette. A total of 7,498 children in school years 8 to 12 in Northern Ireland completed the survey.

Around 95% of respondents said they had heard of e-cigarettes or vaping, while 21% said they had used one.

Those in older year school groups were found to be more likely to report ever having used an e-cigarette, with 6% of those in Year 8 to 44% of those in Year 12.

The split in e-cigarette used between boys and girls was similar, with around 6% described as regular users.

Since 2000 there had been a consistent decrease in the number of young people who smoked, with only 2% of respondents to the 2022 survey reporting that they currently smoked.

Those who smoked once a week, described as regular smokers, had also decreased from 12% in 2000 to 1% in 2022, with boys more likely to report ever having smoked compared to girls.

In contrast the Department of Health survey results suggested that 9% of 11 to 16-year-olds in Northern Ireland were vaping, with 6% doing so regularly, and most worryingly, "underlying this, 24% of Year 12 children currently vaped".

As well as concerns over the highly addictive nicotine, vaping could contain other harmful illicit substances. High levels of THC or synthetic cannabinoids such as Spice or Pine could be present and have a negative outcome when vaped. Sharing vapes could lead to young people inhaling illicit substances without realising.

Current Situation

Environmental Health Protection and Development (EHPD) received funding from the Public Health Agency (PHA) to provide Tobacco Control Officers (TCOs) working across 3 Councils in a shared service model, to enforce the smoke free and related legislation. This work included underage sales enforcement, which had recently extended to vapes, with regular contact and advice to premises selling e-cigarettes etc and test purchasing exercises to ensure that sales were not made to anyone under the age of 18.

Until recently, the PHA service level agreement has restricted the TCOs to enforcement work, with signposting to smoking cessation services, but this year they had for the first time permitted the TCOs to be involved in education/awareness raising events which "provide information and advice on the laws on Nicotine Inhaling Products and the associated risks". PHA supported the DCSDC event and were keen to see something similar delivered in all council areas, as a condition of their funding.

In ANDBC there was already some work being done with young people in schools. As part of engagement with young people, our Community Safety Officers discussed vaping and the risks involved during their community safety visits to schools.

Cancer Focus was also delivering services in ANDBC. They employed Stop Smoking Development Workers who currently covered a lot of vaping and tobacco related topics in schools through assemblies, awareness sessions, small groups, and any other way of conveying the message. The age range was normally young people, year 8 and onwards, and tailored needs depending on the specific age group.

They usually talked about the key issues around vaping and the potential dangers surrounding it. They educated young people about vapes as there was a lot of new information consistently coming out regarding vapes and so inform the young people about this information and the potential dangers and side effects they were/could experience. After these sessions, Cancer Focus offered the young people a 12-week support program to help them quit vaping or smoking tobacco through proven methods. There was a high success rate with this program and a lot of positive feedback from the young people that Cancer Focus had worked with over the years.

Proposed Action

EHPD had liaised with DCSDC to obtain more detailed information around the organisation and delivery of their event, plus the learning and evaluation afterwards. They had also held conversations with other relevant partners such as Cancer Focus, YMCA, PSNI etc and internally our Community Safety team, Consumer Protection team, etc. Liaison with local secondary schools was also in progress to determine local interest and need. Once the schools indicate their willingness to participate and preferred delivery model, EHPD will work to coordinate a Vaping Educational Event/events for post primary schools which best utilises the resources available in ANDBC and meets local need, within existing budget.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the letter from DCSDC, with thanks for their willingness to share good practice information; and supports Officers in delivering similar event(s) as agreed with the local secondary schools and appropriate partner organisations.

Proposed by Councillor Hollywood, seconded by Councillor Chambers, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Hollywood pointed to the growing prevalence of vaping and the concerns of parents and teachers with regards to the dangers and health risks. He welcomed the opportunity for Council to provide education and encourage healthy choices and prevent young people of the future falling into those habits.

Councillor Chambers expressed a similar view, noting that there had been a decrease in tobacco use as a result of education and expense. However on the flipside he noted that there had been increase in the use of vaping products and would have been interested to see how the historical figures of tobacco use compared with current use of vaping products.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Hollywood, seconded by Councillor Chambers, that the recommendation be adopted.

9. SINGLE USE VAPES (FILE CW165)

(Appendix XIII – XIV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that The Director of Environmental Resources Policy Division at the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) wrote to Council advising that the Minister of Agriculture had announced his intention to prohibit the sale and supply of single use vapes in Northern Ireland, in parallel with the rest of the UK.

The Director asked Council to advise if duties to enforce the single use vape ban could be incorporated into our work plan as Council Officers already undertake enforcement duties in relation to tobacco products and product safety.

The Director went on to advise that DAERA was concerned about the alarming rise in littering of single use vapes and the devastating environmental impact they had and so removing these from circulation should allow these resources to be utilised elsewhere.

The Director suggested that enforcing the ban on single use vapes would provide a further opportunity for councils to demonstrate the significant role they played in improving the quality of our shared environment and requested a response by the 16 August 2024.

This matter was discussed at SOLACE on 2nd August 2024, and it was agreed to send a letter to DAERA to seek clarity on what resource/funding would be available if Councils were to take this on.

DAERA had also sent Council a link to the draft regulations and had asked that representations/comments should be made by Friday 6th September 2024. Unfortunately, time did not allow for a regional response to be drafted and some Councils preferred to fully understand the position on resourcing before making any comments.

The Environmental Health, Protection and Development department had commented on the draft legislation (as attached) and saw this as an early opportunity to shape and influence the drafting of the legislation. This had been submitted with the caveat that it was subject to Council approval, and we reserved the right to amend the response once Council have had a chance to consider it.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the response sent to DAERA regarding the draft regulations.

Proposed by Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the recommendation be adopted.

Proposing, Councillor W Irvine was happy with the response, believing that the negative impacts of vaping were clear.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the recommendation be adopted.

10. SOCIAL SUPERMARKET ADDITIONAL FUNDING (FILE CW142)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the confirmation of funding from Government Departments was delayed at the start of the current financial year. In the interim, Departments where possible issued a comfort letter for the first three months of the year, based on previous years funding. The Department for Communities implemented measures and awarded this funding to cover a three-month period up to the 30 June 2024 for the Community Development Services, which included social supermarkets. The 2023/24 funding award from DfC for the Social Supermarket programme in Ards and North Down was £100,277.48.

An open call for the Social Supermarket provision opened for applications on 25 April 2024 and closed at 4pm on 16 May 2024.

Kilcooley Women's Centre (KWC) were successful and based on the 2023-2024 amounts were awarded £38,500.00 by Council in June 2024. This had been calculated based on the population it proposed to serve, as follows.

Area	Population	Funding for 1 st July 2024 – 31 st March 2025 based on 2023/24 budget	Funding for 1 st July 2024 – 31 st March 2025 based on 2024/25 budget
Bangor, Holywood, Donaghadee	55%	£38,500	£53,944.68
Ards, Comber, Ballygowan, Killinchy	30%	£21,000	£29,424.37
Peninsula	15%	£10,500	£14,712.19

On 3 July 2024 Council received a Letter of Offer from DfC with confirmation of total funding for the Social Supermarket for 2024-2025 of £127,822.24.

It was recommended that a Letter of Variation be granted to KWC for £15,444.68 in accordance with the total budget now confirmed for 2024-2025 and based on the population figures above (55%) as previously agreed by Council.

To date, despite significant effort officers had been unsuccessful in securing a potential provider for the rest of the Borough.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves additional funding of £15,444.68 to Kilcooley Women's Centre for the provision of a Social Supermarket in Bangor, Holywood and Donaghadee for 2024-2025.

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

The Director outlined the report, explaining that it followed a Committee decision taken in April/March 2024 following an open call for providers. The response to that had been limited to the areas of Bangor, Holywood and Donaghadee. He explained that as this covered 55% of the Borough geographically, the decision had been taken by Council to allocate 55% of the money to the proposed provider, Kilcooley Women's Centre. This report was indicating that further funding had been made available and this report was seeking to add 55% of that further funding to KWCs award of funding.

Councillor W Irvine queried if another potential delivery partner had been approached for the rest of the Borough or if there would be an open call again next month. The Head of Community and Culture advised that discussions had taken place with procurement who advised that as the market had already been tested a direct approach to others could be made. This had been done and a report would follow next month which would provide clarity.

In a further query, Councillor W Irvine queried if capital funding would be provided for the new provider in terms of start-up equipment required to deliver the service. He understood that this had been made available to the previous provider. The Officer advised that she would need to check the terms of conditions of that particular agreement.

Councillor Boyle was content with the proposed action and that a report would follow with regards to further service delivery in the rest of the Borough. Councillor Hollywood highlighted the importance of social supermarkets given the financial pressures resulting from other recent Central Government funding cuts such as the winter fuel payment.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.

(Councillor S Irvine, attending remotely, was excluded from the meeting having declared an interest in Item 11 – 7.22pm)

11. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS FORUM GRANTS (WG AUGUST 2024) (SD151)
(Appendix XV – XVIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that on the 26 August 2015 Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £45,000 had been allocated within the 2024/2025 revenue budget for this purpose.

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

During July 2024, the Forum received a total of 36 applications: two Anniversary, three Equipment, eight Goldcard and 23 Individual Travel/Accommodation Grants. A summary of the **36** successful applications are detailed in the attached Successful Anniversary, Successful Equipment, Successful Goldcard and Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation Appendices.

2024/25 Budget £45,000	Annual Budget	Proposed Funding Awarded July 2024	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	*£1,250	-£2,749.90
Coach Education	£3,000	£0	£1,638.75
Equipment	£14,000	*£2,597.41	£3,120.72
Events	£6,000	£0	*£1,649.46
Seeding	£500	£0	£500
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£3,010	-£3,049.57
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	£1,000
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	£5,000
8 Goldcards Awarded in July (26 Goldcards in total during 2024/25)			

*The proposed remaining budget for Anniversary of **-£2,749.90** was based on a proposed award this month of **£1,250**.

*The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **£3,120.72** was based on a proposed award this month of **£2,597.41**.

*The proposed remaining budget for Events of **£1,649.46** was based on reclaimed costs of £11.57.

*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **-£3,049.57** was based on a proposed award this month of **£3,010**.

The proposed remaining budget for 2024/2025 was **£7,109.46** (84% of the 2024/25 budget spent).

It should be noted that, based on data from previous years, it was expected that the value of grants which could be received in August 2024 could exhaust the allocated Sports Forum Grants budget for 2024/2025.

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

Proposed by Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.

Reflecting on the Olympic Games during the summer and success for local athletes, Councillor Boyle praised the Sports Forum for the opportunities it provided for local clubs and athletes. That success however had meant that allocated funding for

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grants this year was nearly used up – 84% in one particular category he noted -and this was only the middle of September. He asked if there would be any further funding provided and the Head of Leisure Services advised that Members would be provided with an options to allocate some of the higher than budgeted for Ards Leisure income to this sports grants budget.

Councillor Boyle welcomed that approach and spoke of the importance of supporting the Borough's athletes while Councillor Kendall added her support for the opportunity of further budget and praised the success of the leisure team which had been under great pressure but this was an example of good long-term thinking in terms of turning out successful athletes.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.

(Councillor S Irvine was returned to the meeting – 7.29pm)

12. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS DEVELOPMENT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024-2025 (FILE SD150)

(Appendix XIX – XX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Sports Development Capital Grant Scheme would have historically opened for two tranches within any one financial year however in 2020/21 only one tranche was delivered due to the pandemic, with the process proving to be very successful. It was therefore proposed that the process of one tranche would continue and be kept under review. Therefore, this year's 2024/2025 Capital Grants programme opened on Thursday 4th April 2024 and closed on Monday 29th July 2024 with an approved budget of £45,000 for 2024/2025.

The Council received 15 applications; all of which were received before the deadline time of 12 Noon.

Eligibility screening of the 15 applications was carried out. One of the applications failed to meet the eligibility criteria and therefore did not proceed to the assessment stage of the project.

The 14 applications were then assessed against the following criteria:

1. Benefits to the club/organisation and the local community; clearly detailing anticipated outcomes of the proposed project
2. Increasing Participation
3. Increasing participation within key target groups: Women and girls, disability, over 50's and socially disadvantaged areas/groups
4. Improving and/or sustaining activities within the club setting; and
5. Improving the health and wellbeing of club members and/or wider community.

Applications were assessed by the Sports and Recreation Development Officer, NCLT/Serco's Sports Development Officer, the Leisure Service's Officer and Leisure Project Officer.

One out of the 14 applications did not meet the threshold score of 45, and therefore was not recommended for funding. The remaining 13 applications scored above the minimum threshold for funding and therefore all 13 were proposed for funding, subject to project management requirements being met. These were listed within Appendix 1.

Unfortunately, Ballywalter Bowling and Recreation Club withdrew their application on 5th August 2024 due to additional costs associated with planning that the club had not anticipated at the time of submission. The remaining 12 successful applications requested a total of £50,774.61 and it was proposed to award £47,032.11

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the recommendations of the Assessment Panel which are listed in Appendix 1- Successful Applications and Appendix 2 - Unsuccessful Applications.

Proposed by Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Ashe, that the recommendation be adopted.

Proposing, Councillor W Irvine spoke of the importance of the funding programme to local sports clubs and that it was vital for it to continue.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Ashe, that the recommendation be adopted.

13. ARTIFICIAL SPORTS PITCH RENOVATION AND REPLACEMENT STRATEGY (FILE LA/LS8)

(Appendix XXI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailed as follows:

Introduction

Council owned a large number of artificial surface sports pitches and courts across its Estate which were operated by the Council's Leisure Department to cater for a wide range of sports including soccer, hockey and tennis. Artificial sports pitches provided an invaluable resource for many clubs to train and play during the winter months when there was decreasing daylight hours and inclement weather where it was impossible for teams to avail of natural turf pitches, and during the summer months when natural turf pitches were closed for post season maintenance programmes.

The following table detailed the specific sites that had been installed in the various locations at various stages over the last 25 years:

Location	Type of Pitch
Comber Leisure Centre	2G Hockey Pitch
	2G Tennis Courts x 2 (outdoor)
	2G Tennis Courts x 2 (dome)
Londonderry Park	Intermediate Status 3G Soccer Pitch
	Community Status 3G Soccer Pitch
	2G Hockey Pitch
Commons, Donaghadee	2G Tennis Courts x 3
Cloughey	Multiuse 2G Tennis Courts x 3
Cloughey	2G bowling green
Ward Park	2G Tennis Courts x 10
Spafield, Holywood	Community Status 3G Soccer Pitch
Sportsplex, Bangor	Community Status 3G Soccer Pitch
Bangor Aurora Aquatics & Leisure	3G Soccer Pitch
	3G MUGA Pitch
	2G Hockey Pitch
Ards Blair Mayne L WC	2G Multiuse Pitch/Tennis Courts (dome)

Additionally, Council was currently undertaking work on capital projects which included the provision of new 3G facilities at Portavogie, Portaferry and Donaghadee, and are engaged in discussions on others at Holywood and Comber, which would need to be considered in terms of operation and lifecycle maintenance upon completion.

The lifespan of an artificial turf pitch was usually circa 10 years depending on the use (the sport played, frequency of play, weather conditions, etc), product quality, and maintenance of the turf over its life, after which the turf system may have needed to be replaced.

As with all aspects of the Council's estates portfolio, it was necessary to consider the lifecycle of our artificial pitches, recognise the need for continuous investment to ensure continued provision and plan for future replacement of these valuable assets. In some cases, artificial pitches within the Council's portfolio were now past their life expectancy. The aging of Council's current pitch portfolio had had negative impacts at some sites, with Officers receiving increasing numbers of complaints and increasing the need for ongoing, expensive maintenance and repair work and the associated operational downtime and pitch closures.

Council's Parks Staff commissioned condition reports in 2023-2024 to assess the current condition and expected longevity of pitches at all sites listed. These reports had highlighted that several of the Council's artificial pitches had now reached the end of their usable lifespan and were in need of immediate replacement. The

condition reports also highlighted that with many pitches ageing and nearing the end of life, there was a need for an ongoing annual review and replacement plan.

Proposed Long Term Solution

As part of the 2024-2025 rate setting process, Leisure Officers submitted an Artificial Sports Pitch Replacement Strategy business case proposing the implementation of a rolling replacement programme covering the next 10-year period, with £500,000 allocated to Leisure's budget in 2024-2025.

Based on the number of facilities within the current portfolio and most recent condition reports (2023-2024), Leisure proposed that there was a requirement to replace a minimum of two pitches per annum on a rolling basis across each 10-year period.

The Artificial Sports Pitch Replacement Strategy, therefore, involved the utilisation of an annual condition review of artificial pitches across the Borough, along with an accompanying needs assessment in order to prioritise the replacement of circa two pitches each year to ensure that all pitches were replaced by their end of life, ensuring the local community can avail of and benefit from safe, fit for purpose facilities.

The financial requirement for this was circa £500,000 (plus inflation) per annum over the next ten years. This was currently deemed sufficient up to the next policy review date but may have needed to increase further over time due to other changes in costs.

It was further proposed that, in year one of this replacement scheme (2024-2025), budget was approved to allow for the replacement of the 2G hockey pitch at Bangor Aurora and, four tennis courts at Ward Park and two tennis courts within the dome at Comber Leisure Centre. All of these facilities had been assessed as being at end of usable life in the most recent condition reports carried out by Sportlabs in 2023.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve and adopt the Artificial Sports Pitch Replacement Strategy for Ards and North Down Borough Council and that Leisure, Parks and others as required are authorised to proceed as outlined above.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Adair believed it was important to invest in sports pitches and ensure they were future proofed. He queried if the European ban on single use plastics affected upgrades to the Portavogie 3G pitch, if this had been factored into the budget and if there were any alternative solutions identified.

The Head of Leisure Services explained the huge challenges that the ban and lack of alternative guidance had caused in terms of maintaining the Council's existing stock, but there were alternatives now being built elsewhere. Leisure had been represented at a site visit in Dublin along with Parks and Capital Projects officers to examine one such alternative and he would also be attending another upcoming visit which involved looking at a number of alternative solutions. He was aware of other

alternatives but officers were not completely confident in terms of impact of the local climate on those types. He added that it would be preferable to see examples that had been set up and utilised for a number of years rather than just a few months and until that was the case he would not be confident in advising the Committee of suitable alternatives at this stage. He was normally appreciative of any lobbying from Members but in this case he felt it was a scientific issue rather than a political one.

He continued, explaining that he had been in Paris during the Summer and had seen a number of sites that were similar to what the Council had proposed to use in what he felt was a similar climate, particularly as the same surfaces were used in Belgium and Holland. Officers were exploring that option right now but if he could not recommend a solution soon then it could present difficulties if significant maintenance is required on existing pitches.

Alderman Adair was disappointed that those regulations had been imposed on the Council by the European Union without any guidance for viable alternatives. It had created another mess for the Council to try and deal with. He was extremely concerned to hear that facilities may be unable to be upgraded because of that measure which had failed to include any clear or sensible guidance.

Councillor Chambers was pleased to read the report and it demonstrated the need for this strategy and how valuable sports pitches were. It was important to renovate and maintain them to a high standard. He asked if this strategy would impact any current or future capital projects that might come on to the Council's portfolio and referred to Donaghadee as an example.

The Officer explained that the strategy would include any new pitches and this strategy recognised there would need to be a rolling programme in terms of maintenance which had not been in place previously. He explained the process before this and that included waiting until a facility was beyond repair and then bringing a capital business case forward to replace it. He explained that Donaghadee would be dealt with under the capital priority list and not be affected by this strategy although it was obviously the same pot of money being spread even more thinly.

In a further comment, Councillor Chambers referred to over 30 playing surfaces used by various sports and clubs in the Borough, and each would probably argue that they should be next in line for an upgrade. He therefore felt that a communications plan should be in place to show the rationale and explain the priority setting process.

Alderman Cummings welcomed the report and referred to sustainability, particularly in relation to planned work for Comber, wondering if further money would be available to enable facilities to be upgraded to IFA standards in terms of access and location of changing facilities for example. The Officer explained that while the policy related specifically to pitches there would be consideration given to a wider upgrade of the surrounding facilities at the same time. He explained the financial challenges of keeping up with guidance set by the IFA and the confusion around the future direction of some of that guidance in terms of Intermediate football. He explained the difficulty this caused for upgrading existing facilities.

Councillor Kendall queried why Clandeboye Village MUGA was not on the list and she wondered if there was an alternative strategy for the maintenance of those types of facilities. The Officer clarified that the playing area and MUGA at Clandeboye Village were not deemed to be sports facilities in the way that they were not available for public hire, they were deemed to be recreational facilities and covered by the Play Strategy. The MUGA and playpark there were already reviewed annually in relation to significant maintenance decisions.

Councillor McClean sought clarity on the single use plastics ban and if that related to the artificial grass or the micro-plastic infill, but he appreciated that the ban affected many different countries and was pleased that Council was not taking the lead and trying to implement something that might not be suitable longer term.

The Head of Leisure Services clarified that the focus was on the infill, specifically the rubber crumb that was getting into waterways. Officers had asked for clarity on what the other elements of plastic within the construction may be involved. Council had been told that it could have mitigating measures in place to prevent contamination of the waterways so a solution would be trapping it at the site. At the moment it was agreed that Council should not develop any future pitches using the rubber crumb infill and he highlighted that we were a sustainable Council which was planning for the future.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the recommendation be adopted.

14. COMMUNITY & WELLBEING DIRECTORATE BUDGETARY CONTROL JULY 2024 (FILE FIN45)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Community & Wellbeing Directorate's Budgetary Control Report covers the 4-month period 1 April to 31 July 2024. The net cost of the Directorate was showing an underspend of £445k (11.1%) – box A on page 3.

Explanation of Variance

Community & Wellbeing's budget performance was further analysed on page 4 into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£317k favourable	3
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£75k adverse	3
Report 4	Income	£203k favourable	3

The Community & Wellbeing Directorate's overall variance could be summarised by the following table (variances over £25k): -

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	(317)	Payroll underspends throughout the Directorate mainly due to vacant posts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Health (£76k). • Community & Culture (£57k). • Parks & Cemeteries (£88k). • Leisure (£96k).
Goods & Services		
Parks & Cemeteries	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running costs slightly higher than budget but offset by payroll and income favourable variances.
Leisure	62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This adverse variance is due to Aurora maintenance work coded to Leisure in error as it should have been charged to Assets & Property. This will be corrected next month.
Income		
Parks & Cemeteries	(55)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cemeteries income (£40k). • Franchise income (£17k).
Leisure	(139)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure Centres & Londonderry Park – (£104k) • Sports/Football Development – (£13k) • Community Centres – (£16k).

REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT					
Period 4 - July 2024					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	78,209	73,500	4,709	221,500	6.4
110 Environmental Health	755,469	836,700	(81,231)	2,333,500	(9.7)
120 Community and Culture	813,766	880,500	(66,734)	2,529,800	(7.6)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	1,349,199	1,478,300	(129,101)	5,246,800	(8.7)
150 Leisure Services	578,819	751,300	(172,481)	2,567,300	(23.0)
Total	3,575,462	4,020,300	A (444,838)	12,898,900	(11.1)
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing - Payroll					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	58,073	58,300	(227)	174,300	(0.4)
110 Environmental Health	820,774	896,700	(75,926)	2,692,500	(8.5)
120 Community and Culture	573,055	630,000	(56,945)	1,949,700	(9.0)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	1,285,109	1,373,400	(88,291)	4,142,900	(6.4)
150 Leisure	1,583,694	1,679,700	(96,006)	5,225,900	(5.7)
Total	4,320,704	4,638,100	(317,396)	14,185,300	(6.8)
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing - Goods & Services					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	21,774	16,900	4,874	48,900	28.8
110 Environmental Health	80,280	77,700	2,580	290,700	3.3
120 Community and Culture	440,836	450,100	(9,264)	1,916,100	(2.1)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	356,829	342,100	14,729	1,632,600	4.3
150 Leisure	321,167	258,400	62,767	1,008,100	24.3
Total	1,220,885	1,145,200	75,685	4,896,400	6.6
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing - Income					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	(1,638)	(1,700)	62	(1,700)	3.7
110 Environmental Health	(145,584)	(137,700)	(7,884)	(649,700)	(5.7)
120 Community and Culture	(200,125)	(199,600)	(525)	(1,336,000)	(0.3)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	(292,739)	(237,200)	(55,539)	(528,700)	(23.4)
150 Leisure	(1,326,042)	(1,186,800)	(139,242)	(3,666,700)	(11.7)
Totals	(1,966,128)	(1,763,000)	(203,128)	(6,182,800)	(11.5)

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

Proposed by Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor W Irvine was pleased to see some positive variances. He queried the variance in relation to payroll, acknowledging the previous difficulties in filling particular posts and asked if there had been any progress on addressing those challenges.

The Director advised that HR would be able to provide a more global response as it affected all areas of the Council, but he explained Council had been working to budget that assumed a level of vacancies throughout the financial year so current spend was even below that level which provided further perspective. In terms of restructuring, he explained that both Parks and Leisure had undergone a regrading of posts and as previously reported that had made jobs in the leisure section more attractive.

Councillor Kendall noted the extent of the payroll underspends and it was clear that the Council did not have enough people and she went on to highlight the importance of the job regrading process in addressing that. Councillor Kendall noted a variance under Community and Wellbeing HQ and queried what that related to but the Director advised that he would report back to her directly with that information as it was not specified in the report.

(Councillor Hollywood left the meeting – 7.45pm)

Referring to Leisure staff, Councillor Boyle asked if any progress had been made in relation to the ongoing recruitment and retention difficulties and the Head of Leisure Services explained that around half of the leisure posts had undergone re-evaluations and this was helping to retain existing staff. He added that there were ongoing discussions with SERC around opportunities for apprenticeships.

(Councillor Hollywood returned to the meeting – 7.47pm)

Councillor Boyle appreciated the challenges and praised the leisure team, assuming there was a lot of good man-management in terms of covering posts at different locations. In a separate matter he praised Newtownards swimmer Barry McClements for his recent performance at the Paralympic games, explaining that he had achieved a personal best in the S9 100m butterfly Final. The Chair, Alderman Brooks, added his congratulations on behalf of the Committee.

At this point the Chair asked Members to avoid discussing any specific staffing matters in public.

Councillor Ashe raised a query around staffing summer schemes and asked if plans were in place now to ensure that those services could be covered next summer.

The Head of Leisure Services advised that a meeting had taken place with Community Development officers and another was due to follow as officers attempted to plan for next summer. He explained the challenges of filling positions at that time of year in specific locations across the Borough and how it used to work well for students and teachers who were free during the summer to work at the summer schemes, however that marketplace had now changed.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.

15. NORTH DOWN COASTAL PATH WORKING GROUP (FILE CW30)
(Appendix XXII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the second meeting of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group was held on 29 April 2024, and the attached minutes of that meeting were approved by the Working Group at its July meeting.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the attached minutes.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Harbinson, seconded by Councillor McClean, that the recommendation be adopted.

16. GREEN FLAG AWARDS 2024 (FILE PCA12)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Green Flag Award scheme was the benchmark national standard for parks and other green spaces in the UK. The Green Flag Award Scheme encourages high environmental performance and good management. Parks and other green spaces are judged against following eight key criteria:

- Welcoming Place
- Healthy, Safe and Secure
- Clean and Well Maintained
- Sustainability
- Conservation and Heritage
- Community Involvement
- Marketing
- Overall Management

The judging criteria also considered the fact that each park/green space would offer different kinds of facilities and would be managed and developed to varying opportunities and constraints. Innovation and the way facilities offered were tailored to the needs of the community would also be taken into account.

Judging was carried out between May and July 2024. The seven locations below had achieved a Green Flag Award, including Cairn Wood and Clandeboye Cemetery that had received the prestigious accolade for the first time.

- Kiltonga Nature Reserve
- Castle Park including Walled Garden
- Ballymenoch Park
- Linear Park
- Kiltonga Nature Reserve
- Clandeboye Cemetery

- Cairn Wood

Winning seven Green Flag awards was the most that Ards and North Down had ever received.

Holding a Green Flag Award brought with it a vast amount of prestige. It was an excellent example of civic achievement and provides communities with a great sense of civic pride. Winning a Green Flag Award visibly demonstrated to the local community that a site was being well managed for the benefit of the local community and local wildlife.

Having a Green Flag Award was also a great attraction for tourism as research showed that people would make special trips to award-winning sites, and an excellent lever for obtaining external funding through improvement grants and maximising revenue opportunities from within the site.

The Parks & Cemetery Service envisaged that working towards future Green Flag status would reinforce our management strategies and help us identify any improvements needed.

When a site was well managed, via The Green Flag Award Management Plan, it could encourage the local community to use the site more which was important as numerous studies had linked both physical health and mental health to access to outdoor space. Mid and East Antrim was committed to promoting health by providing sites where people could exercise, play, learn and relax in an outdoor environment.

The accreditation of sites for Green Flag was a performance measurement element within the Parks and Cemeteries Service Plan.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the contents of the report.

Proposed by Councillor Cochrane, seconded by Councillor McClean, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Cochrane praised the Parks and Cemeteries team for its work in achieving the awards and asked if there was a plan in place to gain Green Flag status in other parks of the Borough. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained the Council's approach followed the Green Flag guidelines and it was only once the parks met that criteria that they would be put forward. The two new awards had followed work over a couple of years. He also referred to the importance of having a 'Friends Of' group in place and the contribution that made in terms of Green Flag acceptance.

Councillor McClean asked how many parks had been entered this year and the Officer advised that seven had been the total number entered and that Council only put forward parks that met the guidance.

As matters of accuracy Councillor McClean highlighted Mid and East Antrim was listed in report but it should have read Ards and North Down and Councillor Moore noted that Kiltonga was listed twice in the seven parks that had been accepted. It

was clarified that Londonderry Park should have been included on the list and the number was indeed 7.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cochrane, seconded by Councillor McClean, that the recommendation be adopted.

17. CORRESPONDENCE FROM DFI MINISTER ON THE COMBER TO NEWTOWNARDS GREENWAY PROPOSAL (FILE CW30)
(Appendix XXII – XXIV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that

In response to a letter from the DFI Ministers office dated 18th July 2024 (appendix 1), Council agreed to reply, and express disappointment at the refusal to meet to discuss issues that were hindering the process of delivering the proposed Comber to Newtownards Greenway. A letter from the Councils Chief Executive was sent on 1st August and was attached for information at appendix 2.

The Minister had responded accordingly and his letter which was dated 19th August was attached at appendix 3. This indicated that the Active Travel unit of DFI would continue to engage fully with the greenway project team. However, he had added that as a statutory consultee, his department played an essential role in the planning process and highlighted the importance of this statutory consultation within an open and transparent planning system. He went on to conclude therefore that for this reason, it was imperative Network Planning's engagement with applicants was undertaken within the planning process.

In order to help assist with progress he stated that, in this case, he had asked his officials to make themselves available to attend any meetings on this project within the planning process.

Planning colleagues had confirmed that officials within Network Planning had been engaging, and were continuing to engage, as appropriate with the planning application process, and that re-advertisement had recently taken place in respect of the revised scheme (excluding the mid-section), and Planning Service would progress the application to Committee at the earliest opportunity.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this correspondence.

Proposed by Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Ashe, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Cummings felt that the response was nothing more than expected and noted a lack of movement. He noted that the door had been left open for Planning matters to be discussed in the future and sought assurances that alternative options were still being explored for the route between Newtownards and Comber.

(Councillor Kendall left the meeting – 8pm)

The Director confirmed that they were and referred to a report received from a consultancy which was working on behalf of the Levelling Up funding provider and this included recommendations on how to progress that particular section within the required timeframe. A report would follow at the next Committee meeting with details of that.

(Councillor Kendall returned the meeting – 8.01pm)

Alderman Cummings queried the Council's working relationship with two separate teams within Dfl – Active Travel and the Network team. He wondered if those were both consulted at the same time or separately and the Director advised that the Council's Planning Service interacted with the Network team as a statutory consultee and the Project team engaged with the Active Travel team with a representative from Active Travel actually sitting on the Project team. Both were done in a different way but were making their appropriate contributions.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Ashe, that the recommendation be adopted.

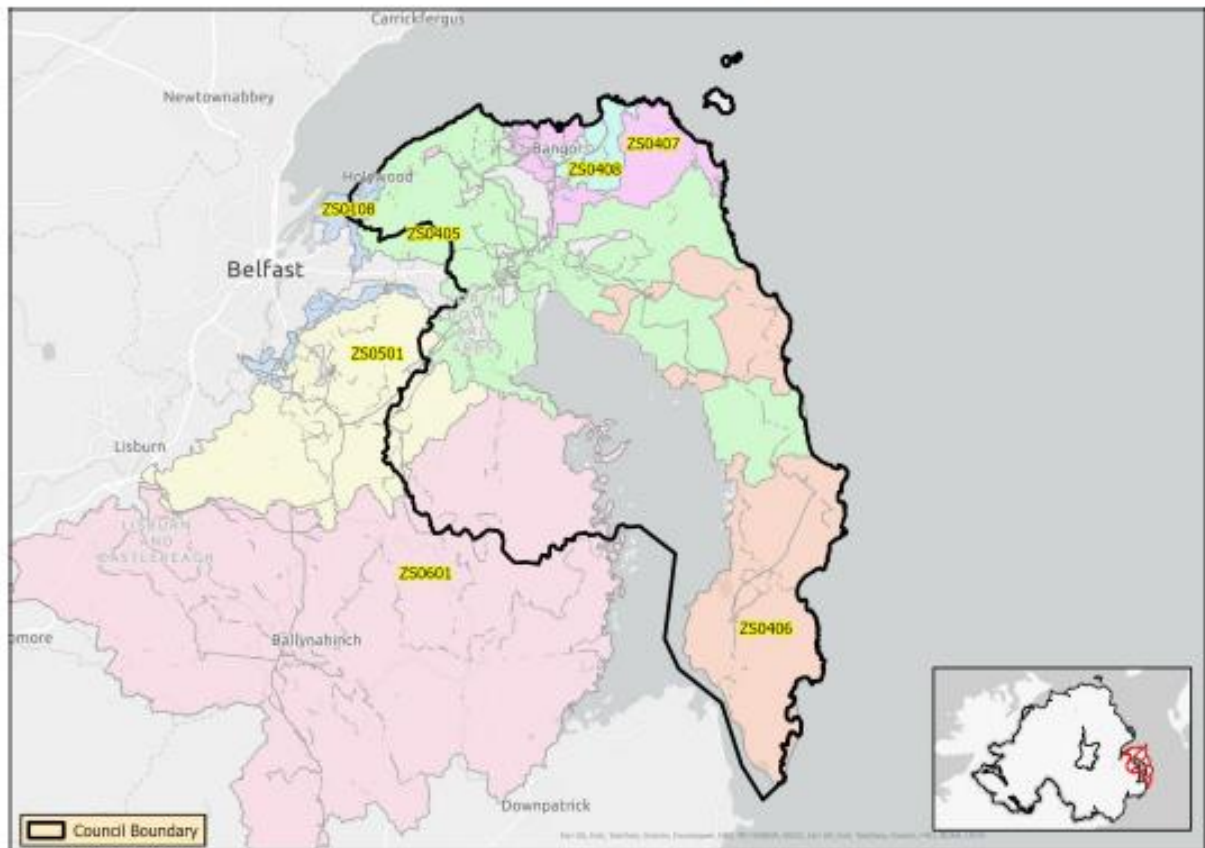
18. PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SUPPLY 2023 (FILE CW98)
(Appendix XXV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that attached was the Drinking Water Quality Report produced by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) for the Ards and North Down Borough Council area for 2023. The report indicated a 100% level of compliance with an extensive array of drinking water quality parameters as laid down in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 as amended in 2018.

No classified major water quality failures were recorded for the Borough during the year; however, two serious incidents were reported. The first incident related to high demand across Northern Ireland from 31 May to 19 June 2023, as a result of low rainfall and high temperatures. The second incident related to Ballygowan Service Reservoir following refurbishment at the site. A high number of residents contacted NIW to complain of taste and odour problems with their supply. The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) had an ongoing investigation into this incident.

There was one significant drinking water quality event, as raised levels of aluminium were detected in water leaving Drumaroad Water Treatment Works, which provided drinking water to most of the Borough. However, only a small number of properties in the borough were impacted as the levels were associated with two service reservoirs that primarily supplied another district. DWI had enforcement action in place to deal with this issue by April 2025. The map below showed the various supply zones that operated in Ards and North Down, as well as compliance levels from 2018 onwards.

Ards and North Down Borough Council



Percentage Compliance at Customer Tap (including Supply Points)

	Target	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Northern Ireland Compliance	99.7%	99.8%	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%
Ards and North Down Compliance	99.7%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	100.0%	99.9%	100.0%

2022 water supply zones wholly or partially within the council area:

Zone Code	Zone Name	Zone Code	Zone Name
ZS0108	Belfast Purdysburn	ZS0408	Drumaroad Bangor East
ZS0405	Drumaroad Ards West	ZS0501	Drumaroad Lisburn
ZS0406	Drumaroad Portaferry	ZS0601	Drumaroad Ballynahinch
ZS0407	Drumaroad Bangor West		

RECOMMENDED that Council note the report.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the recommendation be adopted.

**19. VAPING AND YOUNG PEOPLE UPDATE (FILE CW165)
(Appendix XXVI – XXVII)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailed as follows:

Background

In May 2024, Council agreed to the following as a result of a report concerning young people and vaping.

1. Council to write to the Northern Ireland Health Minister
 - a) supporting the introduction of the proposed new legislation to tackle youth vaping and
 - b) requesting the introduction of legislation to:
 - prohibit the sale of NIPs from vending machines making it more difficult for children and young people to access them,
 - requiring retailers of NIPs to register in line with tobacco retailers or introduce a licensing scheme for tobacco retailers and vape retailers
 - make provision to combat online sales of NIPs
 - apply the above restrictions to other nicotine products and non-nicotine vapes.
2. Council to write to CTSI to request the extension of Operation Joseph to Northern Ireland. This project provided financial resource, as well as guidance and advice to local authorities in England and Wales. If the operation and associated funding could be extended to Northern Ireland it would provide essential resource to the Council.
3. Council to write to HMRC to request extension of Operation CeCe to Northern Ireland. Border Force and HMRC Operation CeCe only targets GB, if this was extended to Northern Ireland it would help with the importation of non-compliant e-liquids and cigarettes.

These communications were duly actioned by the Chief Executive and replies had now been received.

Responses

Northern Ireland Minister of Health

The response from the Minister highlighted the King's Speech on 17 July 2024 where the UK Government stated its intention to bring forward a new version of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill which was expected to continue to include a provision to address growing concerns about youth vaping. The Minister confirmed that this was a priority for his department and he anticipated a sympathetic response from the NI Executive and Assembly when he sought their agreement to include Northern Ireland in the proposed new UK measures.

Unfortunately he did not comment on the specific requests to look at the gaps in the legislation but there would no doubt be opportunity to raise these concerns again in any consultation process, which the Minister alluded to.

The Minister referred to the proposed ban on disposable and single use vapes being brought by DAERA and the Council had since received communication on this directly, as detailed in a separate report to the Community and Wellbeing Committee.

The Minister was aware of Operation CeCe and Operation Joseph and stated that his officials would welcome involvement in any conversations regarding possible expansion of these and provided contact details which Council Officers were now following up.

HMRC

The Director of Fraud Investigation Service for HM Revenue and Customs responded to advise that Operation CeCe in England, Scotland and Wales only covers illicit tobacco sales and not vaping products. He further advised that Operation Gaila tackles illicit tobacco at retail level in Northern Ireland and he was open to discussions on how this work could be strengthened, considering the new illicit tobacco strategy: [Stubbing out the problem: A new strategy to tackle illicit tobacco - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/stubbing-out-the-problem-a-new-strategy-to-tackle-illicit-tobacco)

Contact details for the Fraud Investigation Service Assistant Director for Northern Ireland & Scotland were provided to enable discussions on Operation Gaila as well as opportunities arising out of the new Strategy; and again, Officers were facilitating discussions, with the hope that consideration could also be given to tackling illegal vapes.

CTSI

To date no response had been received.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this update on the engagement with other relevant organisations and that work continues to protect our young people from the dangers of vaping.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Hollywood, seconded by Councillor Cochrane, that the recommendation be adopted.

20. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2023-2024 (CW45)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that under the Council's scheme of delegation and in order to allow for timely service delivery, the application of legislation relating to Environmental Health matters had been delegated to officers to implement. A condition of this delegated authority was that related activity was reported to Council from time to time. The following was the report for the 2023-2024 year and included such delegated activity.

Summary of Environmental Health Protection and Development Service Activity 2023-24

The role of the Environmental Health Protection and Development Service was to contribute to ensuring a better quality of life for all. From the Health Protection perspective, the service monitored, advised and enforced compliance with Food, Public Health, Pollution, Health and Safety at Work, Consumer Safety and Housing legislation and standards to protect the public from physical, chemical and biological agents, and conditions that may have caused ill health or harm.

Functions within the department

The range of statutory and non-statutory functions delivered on behalf of the Council are as follows:

1. Food Control (including food manufacturing and fisheries).
2. Consumer Protection. (safety of consumer goods)
3. Health and Safety at Work
 - Health and safety in workplaces
 - Caravan Site Licensing
 - Petroleum Licensing
 - Sunbeds
 - Fireworks
4. Pollution Control
 - Noise
 - Air quality
 - Radiation Monitoring
 - Pollution Prevention and Control
5. Public Health and Housing
 - Public Health Nuisance
 - Pest Control
 - Private Rented Housing
 - Bathing Waters
6. Health and Wellbeing / Health initiatives including:
 - Tobacco Control
 - Home Safety
 - Community Planning lead for Age Friendly, Community Resuscitation,
 - Whole Systems Approach to Obesity
 - Health Development including Employee Health and Wellbeing

Service Provision

Service provision includes

- service requests,
- planned inspections & proactive visits to commercial premises and
- wellbeing intervention activities.

Service Requests

Service requests related to individuals’ requests for assistance for example in relation to pest control, or when the activities of one party cause an adverse effect on another for example in relation to nuisance and pollution.

The number of service requests by category 2023-24.

Department Function	Number of Requests
Pest Control	892
General Environmental Health	849
Food Hygiene and Standards	467
Pollution Control	1055
Private Tenancies Complaints	118
Health and Safety	137
Consumer Protection	32
Tobacco Control	17
Caravan/Petroleum Licensing	6
Total	3573

A total of 110 statutory notices were issued under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to secure environmental improvements and abatement of nuisances.

The performance indicator target for a response to service requests is 94% within two working days. For the year 2023/24 the objective was achieved, with 95.7% of requests responded to within the target period.

The number of service requests received in 2023/24 was 485 higher than for 2022/23, an increase of 16.5%.

Planned Inspection and Proactive visits to commercial premises.

There were currently 3954 operating commercial premises on the Environmental Health database. During the year 4317 inspections were made to assess compliance with legislation, to educate business operators on new legislation and requirements and to obtain samples. In order to reduce the burden on businesses many of these visits were carried out concurrently with officers assessing a range of legislative compliance - for example food hygiene, food standards and tobacco control

addressed by an officer during one visit. Businesses and premises are risk assessed to ensure that those which might present the greatest potential risk to public health were visited most frequently.

The following sections provided a breakdown of activities per service unit.

Food and Consumer Protection Activity and Successes 2023 - 24

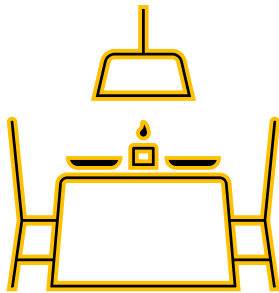
Food Hygiene, Standards and Safety



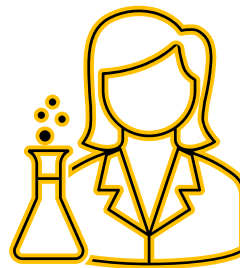
Food Hygiene Premises inspected:
All **3** Category A premises
44 Category B
119 Category C & D
15 Category E
121 new food businesses



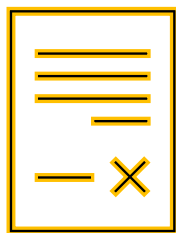
Investigated **82** Food Poisoning identifications on behalf of PHA and **10** alleged food poisoning complaints



Actioned **175 complaints** regarding premises hygiene and **111** complaints regarding allergens, composition and labelling irregularities



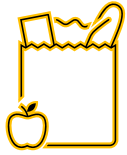
Sampling Collected **615** food samples for microbiological analysis and **104** for chemical analysis



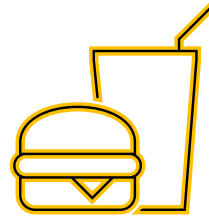
Served 10 Hygiene Improvement Notices
1 Remedial Action Notice
4 voluntary closures



Food Standards Inspections
4 A rated premises inspected
27 B rated premises inspected



Undertook **4**
Northern
Ireland Surveys
for: Acrylamide
in Bakery
goods,
Mycotoxins in
coffee, Origin of
Meat and
Fish speciation



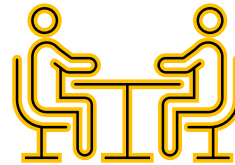
Completed **2**
in house
surveys for
speciation in
beefburgers
and the
presence of
sulphur dioxide
in minced beef.

Consumer Protection



3 market
surveillance
projects:

Jewellery
Mica
Methacrylate in
beauty
salons/nail bars



190 new
premises
registered
110 visits to
premises
59 Product
alerts dealt
with.

Health & Safety, Noise and Petroleum Activities and Successes 2023-24

Health and Safety at Work



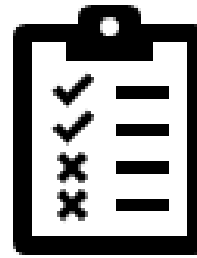
2548 Health and Safety premises registered
462 H&S Visits completed including;
343 Inspections & Revisits



60 Accidents reported Including 1 fatal accident
52 accident investigations (8 not reportable or reported retrospectively)
33 Visits to investigate accidents



9 visits in response to requests for advice &
13 visits in response to complaints about premises or work activity



61 Inspections of Beauticians and Overstocking Visits
68 Inspections and Visits re Gas safety in Catering Premises



Issued 25 improvement Notices for serious contraventions or continuing non-compliance
2 Prohibition Notices for imminent risk to injury



8 Firework Licence applications
8 Firework Display Visits



1 prosecution was instigated re unsafe premises and work activities and consistently recurring contraventions of Health and Safety legislation. This case was withdrawn on the day of hearing as the business had ceased trading, on the basis that the defendant paid the Council's legal costs.

Planning



287 consultations from the Council's planning department were responded to on planning matters that could potentially affect public or environmental health

Noise Control



649 noise complaints received

44 % proceeded after initial contact

126 resulted in formal investigation

8 Noise Abatement Notices served



2 prosecutions completed in relation to loud music and bass beat

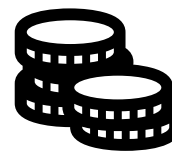
1 other prosecution instigated in relation to barking dogs

Pollution Prevention and Control



2 PPC permits were issued during 2023/2024; 1 for a mobile crusher and 1 for a Dry Cleaner

The total number of permits issued by the end of 2023/24 was 37; 30 Filling stations 4 dry cleaners 2 cement manufacturers 1 mobile crusher



These premises were inspected during the period and application and subsistence fees collected

Caravan Site and Petroleum Licensing



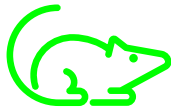
All 27 Caravan Sites inspected for licensing



44 inspections and 14 revisits of petroleum filling stations for licensing

45 Licences issued

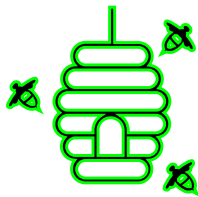
Public Health & Housing Key Activities and Successes 2023-24



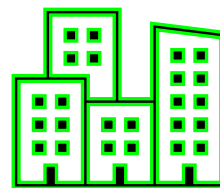
892 service requests relating to pest control, with 533 rodent and 243 flying insect complaints



681 service requests relating to housing/drainage

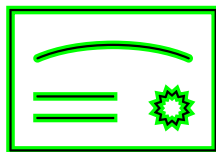


75 wasp nest treatments carried out with a £30 charge

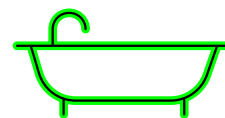


373 service requests relating to neighbourhood nuisance (excluding noise)

£2250 income generated



Private Rented Housing Issued 54 certificates of Fitness

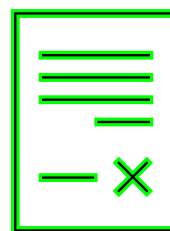


Interactions with around 150 landlords and letting agents each year to ensure compliance with housing standards legislation.

7 properties deemed unfit with Notices of Refusal issued



105 Notices served under Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011 following service requests or

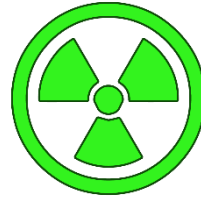


5 Notices of Unfitness and 2 Notices of Disrepair served on landlords in private rented properties

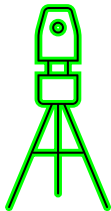
housing standards inspections



Landlord successfully prosecuted for illegal eviction of tenants. First NI council to issue fixed penalty notices under the new Private Tenancies Act



Radiation Monitoring at our Argus station in Portavogie, as well as regular sampling to monitor radiation levels in our environment.



Air Quality Shared Service with LCCC. We carry out regular monitoring at 16 sites in ANDBC, including an automatic site in Hollywood.



Act as beach operator for 7 designated bathing waters in the borough, providing important information to beach users.

Health and Wellbeing Activities and Successes 2023/24



AGE FRIENDLY

Review of AF Strategy & Action Plan 2019-23
AF Alliance - 3 meetings & 1 workshop
2 Positive Ageing Roadshows:
Kircubbin: 17 attendees and 21 exhibitors
Ards: 83 attendees and 36 exhibitors

October Positive Ageing Calendar Launch of AF Strategy & Action Plan 2023-27
Council Tea Dance with 85 attendees
2 Council AF Champions appointed
AF Officer Group established
5000+ copies of Big Guide distributed

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Launch of Herbert Protocol
Dementia Friendly social media posts
Dementia Art Exhibition
2 Dementia Awareness



HOME SAFETY

395 homes visited (231 older people, 164 families with children under 5)
Provided over 2,338 pieces of equipment and 564 leaflets.
171 onward referrals to partner agencies
Targets met or exceeded
87% clients rated service as "Very important" or "Vital"
97% rated the professionalism of the staff as V
Good/Excellent
18 talks & events to 558+
Over 65s
4 Under 5 talks to 32+
3 sessions with NIFRS crews

TOBACCO CONTROL

649 Smoke-Free inspections
70 Test Purchasing exercises with 8 sales
171 Age of Sale advice visits





sessions for 33
ANDBC staff
7 Dementia
Friendly
Partnership
meetings
2 New Dementia
Champions –
Officer & Elected
Member



96 Licensed
premises
inspections
211 smoking
cessation
referrals
67 AED (defib)
registration
visits
Service Level
Agreement
targets met or
exceeded



**OVER 50s
COUNCIL**
8 meetings with 4
guest speakers
10+ consultations
2 campaigns
Workshop with
Disability Forum
and AF Alliance
for Parking
Concerns
Launch of
Newsletter



**MIND.BODY.
BUSINESS**
25 businesses
and a total of
1093 employees
benefited from
Health &
Wellbeing
Activities on
offer through the
Small Grants
Scheme



**EMPLOYER
PLEDGE**
Formally Adopted
Pledge January
2024
878 staff March
2024
49% staff aged
50+
(140 Female &
286 Male)
Committed to
improving
recruitment,
retention and
development of
older workers



**EMPLOYEE
HEALTH AND
WELLBEING**
Quarterly
Meetings
X staff from y
service units



Promotion of
Staff Webhub –
StayWell
Access to health
articles, news,
staff events,
campaigns,
support
services, etc



WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO OBESITY

First Early Adopter site in Northern Ireland Selected for PHIRST research study Development of 6 phase action plan Identified cohort:- in ANDBC 18.% Year 1 and 24.3% Year 8 children considered obese/overweight : and geography:- Newtownards DEA, plus Glen Ward, West Winds Ward, and Conway Square Ward



EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Delivery of 36 events/activities with over 415 staff participating
 9 Be Active events
 7 Learning opportunities
 5 Take Notice activities
 3 Give/volunteering opportunities
 All these offered a chance to Connect – with 2 lunches
 110 health checks at 9 sites
 21 mammograms
 58 flu jabs



BEE SAFE

1,700+ P7 children from 46 Schools
 6 Safety Scenarios covering internet safety, home safety, bus/road safety, fire safety, community safety & mental health
 Event rated as: Excellent (83%) or Good (17%)
 1800 work booklets and supporting videos distributed
 100% commitment from



MENTAL HEALTH CHARTER

22 Mental Health First Aiders
 Suicide to Zero training shared
 Direct access to support organisations
 Promotion of Here2Help app to staff and wider community

schools to return
next year

Summary

During the 2023-24 year the service met the majority of KPI's and targets and had a significant positive impact on the community planning outcomes despite the challenges faced with staff shortages.

Recruitment of Environmental Health Officers continued to be a challenge in Northern Ireland, with private industry offering more competitive salaries than local government. This was also reflected in our inability to fill both student training placements, positions which provided important support roles to the service units, and history showed that our students were more likely to apply for jobs with us on qualifying. Work to address these issues was a priority for 2024/25 as currently the vacancy level was over 10%.

Despite this, the service units had remained focussed and committed to delivering a high standard to service to residents and businesses alike. This was clearly evidenced by the fact that despite the number of service requests received being 16.5% higher than 2022/23, the number responded to within two working days was 95.7%, an improvement of 1.2% on 2022/23.

The key successes and activities of the service units as detailed in this report demonstrate the depth and breadth of work undertaken by EHPD and the positive impact it had on Ards and North Down.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.

On proposing, Councillor Adair praised the work of the Council's Environmental Health team feeling that they addressed a lot of matters that central Government departments were unable to. He paid particular mention to the work undertaken by the team during recent flooding.

(Councillor Boyle left the meeting – 8.03pm)

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.

21. UPDATE ON REVIEW OF GRANTS POLICY AND RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION ON COMMUNITY GRANTS (FILE CW169)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that the current Grants policy had been in place since March 2016, and it currently sat within the Community and Wellbeing Directorate.

It was proposed that going forward the policy would sit with the Finance section as a financial policy that would cover all grants administered by Council. It was intended that that changes made to the policy would provide an efficient and effective framework for grant management that allows budget holders to make decisions in line with the updated scheme of delegation and within appropriate timescales as well as delivering an improved customer experience to include the development of a digital grants management system.

A Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cathcart and Councillor Gilmour requested that the Council commit to 'undertaking a root and branch review of community development funding, arts and heritage, sports development and all other funding streams to ensure that it provided the most efficient, effective and responsive service to our community, thus maximising impact, accessibility and equitable allocation of resources'.

The Motion requested a review under 4 categories:

1. Accessibility

- Simplify application forms
- Digitisation of community grants, tenders and reporting
- Building capacity in the community

2. Communication Enhancement

- Single grants list or 'open grants' page on council website
- A single point of contact
- Showcase & celebrate via case studies on council website

3. Equity

- Make funding available proportional to size of communities/activities being delivered and the type of needs being addressed
- Funding available to reflect the continued rise in costs
- Up front funding is uniform, that groups get the same up front funding percentage
- Removal of 'first come first serve' funding

4. Efficiency

- Creation of reserve lists of funding
- 'Trusted Supplier Scheme'
- Logistical planning.

Following the notice of motion a Grants Management Working Group, an internal working group consisting of relevant heads of service, service unit managers and

officers that had responsibility for managing grant schemes, was established to support a detailed internal review and evaluation of grants that were offered and administered across Council. The group had its first meeting on 23 January 2024.

The project aims and objectives were:

Phase 1

1. Development of an updated ANDBC Grants Management Policy with further consideration given to the Appeals Process.
2. Implementation of a standardised framework, processes and documentation for grants management across Council in accordance with agreed Policy.
3. Monitor the progress of identified work, identify potential challenges and how to mitigate against.
4. Ensure council wide knowledge and understanding of grants management process.

Phase 2

1. Electronic Grants Management Project

For the last number of months, the Transformation team had been working together with the Grants Management Working Group to review the current arrangements for Grants Management across all relevant services across council.

The main changes to the policy include:

- The requirement to have all Grant scheme documentation agreed by parent committee in advance of launching.
- Grants schemes to be screened by Policy Screening before launch – this would apply to all grants in the first year of the new policy being in place.
- Only significant changes to a previously agreed grants schemes would need to be brought back to committee.
- Awarding decisions would be made by officer panels rather than Council in line with the updated Scheme of Delegation, this would speed up decision making. Members would receive interim award reports for noting or this information would be included in the annual evaluation report.
- Each year a report should be brought to committee evaluating each grant scheme to ensure that it was achieving the objectives set out in the approved scheme.
- The policy aimed to set out minimum standards for grants management which could be enhanced to meet the conditions which Council may be required to meet from other external funders.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the progress in relation a review of the corporate grants policy and the notice of motion in relation to the review of community development and other funding.

Proposed by Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Kendall felt that the report had failed to deal with the cut and thrust of the Notice of Motion and she did not agree that this was a finance matter, believing that it was still within the remit of the Community and Wellbeing Committee as this was about how grants best served the community and how they were administered in terms of achieving outcomes. She welcomed the work that had been undertaken but the matter was broader than finance and ultimately in her view it had missed the thrust of the motion. The director clarified that the report was twofold. One part dealt with informing the committee on the changes that had been considered by the corporate services committee to the grants processing policy and that was a finance matter. The other part dealt with an update on the grants notice of motion which is still a work in progress and indeed not all matters in that had yet been addressed given the scale and complexity of that task. That work would be ongoing for some time.

(Councillor Boyle returned to the meeting – 8.05pm)

Councillor W Irvine was content with the report given that all grant schemes would still be agreed by the Community and Wellbeing Committee and therefore would have that oversight. He raised a query around an equity of funding issue and the Director advised that matter was still under review as part of the wider work on the grants notice of motion.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

22. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION (FILE CW84)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the following motion was agreed by Council in September 2023:

That this Council notes that the number of households with homelessness status on the social housing waiting list across NI has increased from 12,431 to 26,310 households between 31 March 2013 and 31 March 2023, an increase of 111.7%; notes the enormous strain the homelessness system is under with the number of households in temporary accommodation at unprecedented levels; agrees that this council has a role to play in preventing homelessness in this borough alongside other organisations and bodies in the Public, Statutory and Voluntary sectors; calls on this Council to assess how it contributes to homelessness prevention through carrying out an audit of its services; and requests that Officers bring back a report detailing the homelessness prevention work currently supported as well as how the Council's community planning function can further support homelessness prevention work in the local area.

Introduction

Ards and North Down Corporate Plan

Ards and North Down Borough Council's Corporate Plan, towards a Sustainable Borough 2024-2028, includes increasing social inclusion and reducing inequality as

one of its three corporate priorities. The Corporate Plan recognises that Council cannot deliver this priority alone and will need to work in partnership with other organisations to collectively address inequality. Social inclusion and reduced inequalities are important to improve people's wellbeing, health and education, and to provide protection for people who are vulnerable. To reduce inequality Council will work to create communities that improve wellbeing, increase aspirations, and enhance economic growth. We will work in partnership with statutory agencies to promote safe communities and improve good relations. Within service plans we will include more specific activities on how we plan on reducing inequalities which over time will help support individuals and families who may have been at risk of homelessness.

Community Planning

Ards and North Down's Community Planning Partnership's Big Plan Part II, Our Big Priorities, has several workstreams that while not directly aimed at addressing homelessness, are relevant:

- **Public Estate and Land Workstream** (Priority Infrastructure)

Working with NIHE to identify suitable land across Ards and North Down to address unmet social housing need. Project has included data sharing of NIHE, ANDBC, SEHSCT, EA, Translink, Invest NI, DfC land across our GIS portal to map ownership of public sector land.

- **Wellbeing, social isolation and loneliness** (Priority Emotional Wellbeing)

This workstream looks at emotional wellbeing and how we can build resilience to support people to look after themselves. People can end up under threat of homelessness due to poor mental health, or they can experience poor mental health as a result of homelessness.

- **Age friendly** (Priority Welcoming)

The Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2023-27 contains a housing theme. The focus of this theme is helping older people remain in their own homes for as long as is practically possible, and to help people reduce the cost of heating over the winter to help reduce fuel poverty.

- **Dementia friendly** (Priority Vulnerable People)

The South Eastern Area Dementia Friendly Partnership has been established. This workstream reports to the Age Friendly Alliance and its purpose is to support people living with dementia and their carer's. An action plan is being developed. People living with dementia could be at risk of homelessness if they are not able to access appropriate care pathways and other interventions including benefit entitlement.

- **Poverty and Hardship** (Priority Economic Inequalities)

As part of this workstream an extensive research project into poverty and hardship across Ards and North Down has been completed. In addition to understanding the extent of poverty via official NISRA statistics, this research also included a literature review into minimum income standards and cross referenced these with median gross annual wages for Ards and North Down. Median wages taken home in AND are below the minimum income standard. This research initiative also included data from the two Trussell Trust Food Banks (Newtownards and Bangor), data from Community Advice Ards and North Down, data from Well Fed the Social Supermarket pilot and data collected via a survey run by Ards Development Bureau. The purpose of the research was to understand the reasons people find themselves

vulnerable and need to access support services. The report included recommendations to be considered in the development of an Anti-poverty Action Plan for Ards and North Down. One of the recommendations to be considered included 'affordable housing and homelessness prevention'. Suggested interventions include implementing measures to increase affordable housing stock and the prevent homelessness through early intervention, rent support and housing stability programmes. The recommendations in this report will be considered by both Ards and North Down's Strategic Community Planning Partnership and AND's Poverty Forum. Other recommendations within the report that may relate to homelessness include education and skills development; employment and economic opportunities; financial inclusion and poverty reducing; access to affordable food; child poverty; and health and wellbeing.

Council's assessment of how it contributes to homelessness prevention works 2023-24

Community Development

The Community Development section do not work directly with supporting homelessness, but do support other organisations that work with people who are at risk of presenting as homeless as listed below:

- Community Advice Ards and North Down (CAAND)

The Advice Services Funding is to provide a high-quality general advice service to the public in line with the key principles and values of the Department of Social Development's (DSD) "Opening Doors" Strategy.

CAAND provide an advice and advocacy service across Ards and North Down Borough Council area on a full range of issues. CAAND provide advice services to meet the developing needs of the community. They deliver their service provision in many ways including, triage/gateway process to ensure that those in greatest need are dealt with quickly, face to face contact throughout the opening hours of 10am-4pm (Mon-Fri) in each of the principal locations and a telephone advice service that is also available 10am-4pm (Mon-Fri). CAAND are also funded to provide a Welfare Reform service in the Borough to support people with welfare reform mitigations and tribunals.

In 2023/24 the overall number of clients supported by CAAND was **6,137**. In regard to Welfare Reform mitigations and tribunals CAAND represented **197** people throughout 2023/24.

Actual spend = **£380,835.57** financial support provided in 2023/24

- Social Supermarket

Funding to support the Borough's 2 Social Supermarkets (SSM) during 2023/24 was to provide people with access to food whilst requiring SSM members to take up a wrap-around of other support services. The core aim of the social supermarket programme is the provision of personalised wrap-around support to equip and empower SSM members to break the cycle of poverty.

In 2023/24 SSM funding supported a total of 104 households. This was broken down further to 98 adults and 98 children being supported through this program.

Actual spend = **£100,277.48** financial support provided

- Hardship funding

To support the most vulnerable in the Borough to address food, fuel and financial hardship caused by the current cost of living crisis, particularly the increase in energy and food costs.

Total of people supported was **31,411**. This was broken down to primary participants supported which was **10,384** and secondary participants were **21,027**.

Actual spend = **£296,044.90** financial support provided

- Running costs

Without access to this funding many groups would not be able to operate. This funding helps towards the hire of premises, insurance and other running costs that allows groups to operate with good governance. Without this provision the groups could not apply for funding including Council and third party. Many of the groups supported applied to the hardship funding (as mentioned above), bringing direct support into their communities. The most vulnerable having support with Food and Fuel, helped sustain long-term tenancies and prevent people from presenting as homeless.

Total of groups supported in 2023/24 with running costs funding was **45** and the financial support allocated was **£90,085.50**.

Externally Funded Programmes

PCSP

Funding provided in 2023-2024 and it is assumed it will be similar in 2024-25:

- Support Hub - The Support Hub has a focus on supporting those most vulnerable in the Ards and North Down Area. The Hub brings together a range of statutory agencies which includes the Probation Board, Education Authority, Youth Justice Agency, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Health Trust, PSNI, Ambulance Service, NIHE and Council. The Hub supported 12 meetings and signposted a total of 9 vulnerable people in 2023-2024. **Budget allocated £3,600.**
- Housing Associations - Meet Monthly to discuss issues with tenants and how they can prevent these issues escalating. No allocated budget
- Drug Awareness - The PCSP works closely with the PSNI regarding the monitoring and reduction of criminality related to alcohol and substance abuse in the Borough. PCSP staff also engage with the South Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Co-ordination Team (SEDACT) to support a range of important interventions to reduce the level of drug related criminality in the Borough. PCSP commissioned two Tier 2 drug intervention programmes and support

community RAPID drug bins for the disposal of prescription medication. PCSP continue to promote a Borough wide drug awareness campaign through social media and the distribution of flyers and posters. A total of 426 sessions were delivered engaging with a total of 128 individuals for counselling support programme for adults with addiction problems. A total of 128 people engaged and increased their knowledge of the risks and harm caused by excessive drink and drugs. It was reported that 90% of participants reported changed behaviours after completing the programme. PCSP continue to promote a Borough wide drug awareness campaign through social media and the distribution of flyers and posters. **Budget allocated £10,500.**

- Drugs Intervention Programme for 130 young people over 41 sessions increased their knowledge on the effects on mental health, caused by alcohol, and drug use. **Budget allocated £9,000.**
- A counselling support programme for adults with addiction problems. A total of 128 people engaged and increased their knowledge of the risks and harm caused by excessive drink and drugs.
- Counselling sessions on the increased awareness of domestic violence for both men and women and the distribution of a DV video translated into 3 different languages helped to deliver the strong message that DV is not acceptable and can lead to individuals leaving their homes. 17 sessions to 45 women who reported feeling safer and having a 93% increase in their knowledge of Domestic Violence and the support services available. 59 counselling sessions with 10 men who recorded 100% feeling safer and having increased awareness of DV and the support services available. Lisburn YMCA ran a very successful schools / children's homes / community programme involving sessions with 28 schools / SERC / 2 cared for children's homes, and 1 community youth setting with 2290 young people resulting in 94.3% increased knowledge of DV and who to contact for help. SEDSVP also held 2 successful masterclass seminars attended by 40 professional social workers, pastoral teachers and Domestic Violence workers educating them on the use of "Digital Devices in Domestic Violence" linked to 2022 legislation. They also held a fun run in June 2023 to highlight the Domestic Violence helpline. **Budget allocated £34,095.**
- The Community Safety Team engaged with young people and raised awareness of the effects of ASB. Working with EA, PSNI, Council leisure staff, and the Street Pastors they addressed this issue through planned patrols. **Budget allocated £6,000.**
- Voluntary street wardens engaging regularly in hotspot areas through reassurance and engagement. **Budget allocated £38,000.**
- Small grants awarded to various community organisations deliver awareness raising sessions/ visits/ diversionary activities to divert young people from ASB. **Budget allocated £28,000.**

Good Relations

- Delivery of programmes on diversity to increase awareness of similarities and differences to help integration in local communities. This can result in families being accepted into the community rather than evicted from the community.
Budget allocated £500.

Drugs, alcohol, addictions, ASB, racism and sectarianism can affect negative behaviour in everyone that in turn can result in the loss of relationships, children, and homes.

Homelessness Interventions

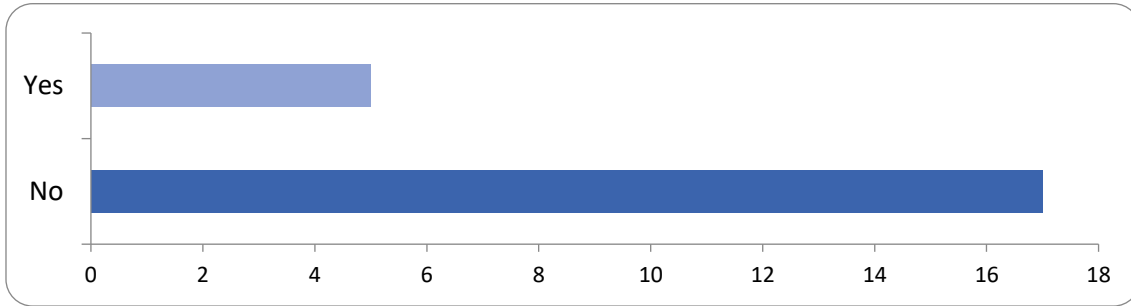
In response to the NOM a survey of community planning partners and organisations held on the Community Development Database was undertaken to ascertain the level of activity across Ards and North Down that focuses on homelessness and its prevention. The survey ran from 25/06/2024 to 20/07/2024 using the Citizen Space Platform.

22 organisations responded to the survey. These were:

1. The Link Family and Community Centre
2. North Down Community Network
3. Bangor Foodbank and Community Support
4. Action Mental Health
5. Kilcooley Women's Centre
6. CAAND
7. Portavogie Culture and Heritage Society
8. MindWise
9. Millisle Health and Wellbeing Group
10. Warehouse Open Centre CIC
11. Friends of Columbanus Bangor
12. Education Authority
13. Ards Community Network
14. Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
15. Volunteer Now
16. Greyabbey Village Hall Management Committee
17. Westwinds Development Association
18. Inspire
19. Donaghadee Community Development Association
20. County Down Rural Community Network
21. North Down YMCA
22. North Down & Ards Women's Aid

Below is a summary of the questions asked and responses received:

Q5 Do you receive funding specifically to provide any interventions that help support people who find themselves homeless? i.e. is it written into a Letter of Offer, Service Level Agreement or Monitoring Report.

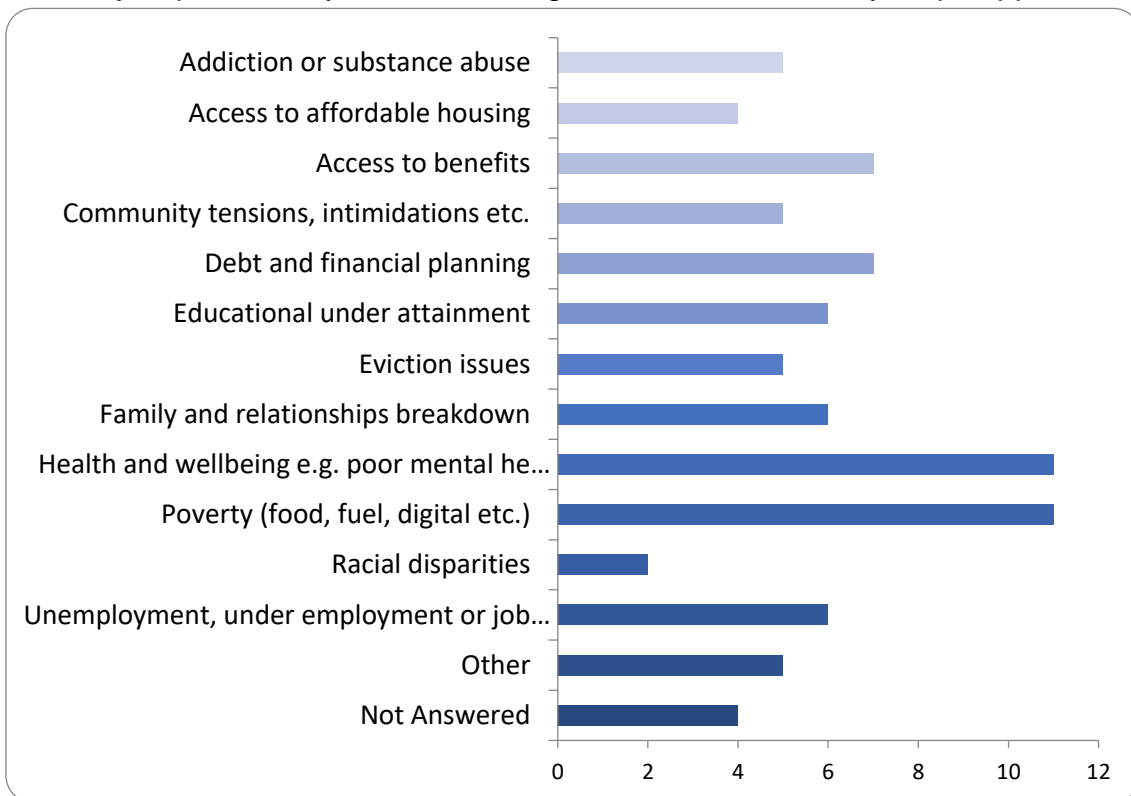


Five organisations receive funding to provide interventions. These are:

1. The Link Family and Community Centre
2. Bangor Foodbank and Community Support
3. Inspire
4. North Down YMCA
5. North Down & Ards Women's Aid

Funding to deliver these services is received from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (Supporting People), the Trussell Trust and the National Lottery.

Q6: Do you provide any of the following interventions that may help support



someone who is homeless or help prevent them from becoming homeless? (Please tick all that apply).

Examples of other support provided:

1. We provide referral and signposting service to people who are, or are at risk of becoming, homeless to all of the above and more.

2. Support to secure employment.
3. Mortgage issues, house repossession.
4. Not provided in this area but we do provide a Mental Health Money Advice Service and Mental Health Advocacy in the area. Elsewhere we support a number of clients experiencing Homelessness via a Hostel funded through the Supporting People programme and more recently in South Down and South Antrim have been providing Tenancy Support to those accepting NIHE offers of housing to prevent the tenancy breaking down and the person entering the homelessness arena.
5. At our annual Columbanus Festival in November we collect Christmas food items and other groceries at our United cross-community Church service which is distributed to local food banks. We are not sure whether the food is distributed to homeless people but perhaps this is something that foodbanks could advise.
6. Above responses [to the question] are specifically connected to young people, whilst the support might help the entire family the focus for our service is the young person under 25 years old.
7. Community Engagement, Support, Capacity Building.

Conclusion

Many of the organisations who responded to the survey do not receive funding to address homelessness but still provide services that help support people who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Of the 17 organisations who do not receive funding, 11 provide at least one of the interventions listed in questions 6. Five of these organisations provided additional examples of the services they provide that were recorded on the survey as 'other'.

Of the organisations that responded:

- 18% of respondents received Community Development Grant aid for Running costs
- 36% of respondents received Community Development Grant aid for Hardship funding
- 27% of respondents received Community Development financial assistance under a service level agreement.

Council Officers will continue to work with all community, voluntary and statutory partners to assist with the prevention of homelessness in the Borough.

RECOMMENDED that Council note this report.

The Chair advised that as a non-Committee member Councillor Creighton had been granted speaking rights in relation to this item and was invited forward from the public gallery.

(Councillor Creighton joined the meeting – 8.07pm)

Councillor Creighton wished to thank Mark Ballie from Homeless Connect for his assistance on raising the matter along with Council officers for their work on the report. It indicated that Council was taking the matter seriously and the report highlighted the excellent work going on in the Borough. She referred to financial

assistance through grant aid to support groups, support for drugs and alcohol addiction, community tensions and relationship breakdown which were only just a few examples.

Sadly the situation continued to worsen and she pointed to the number of people on the social housing waiting list and those undergoing housing stress and deemed to be homeless continued to rise.

As a Council, and as a country, Northern Ireland needed to build more affordable net zero homes. She referred to a recent report from the Chartered Institute of Housing published last month which reported that Northern Ireland needed substantial increases in capital funding and for housing to be a much higher priority. Councillor Creighton thanked officers for the report.

Alderman Adair commended Councillor Creighton for bringing the Notice of Motion and recalled that it was an issue he had raised alongside Councillor McArthur in the previous Council mandate. Homelessness was an issue that the Council needed to take seriously. He pointed to a housing crisis across Northern Ireland and the demand for social housing and how that outstretched supply. He felt it needed to be a priority of the Government and Council would continue to pursue those with decision making powers to make the matter a priority.

Councillor Moore asked if the Council engaged with regional groups set up by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as it was important to have that collaboration with different service providers. She wondered if there could be further opportunities that the Council could capitalise on and the Director advised that NIHE was part of the Community Planning process but it was something that could be explored further.

Councillor Moore referred to local area groups that included community representatives and residents' associations, among other organisations, and felt that it would be beneficial for the Council to link up.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Hollywood, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.

(Councillor Creighton left the meeting – 8.12pm)

23. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024 (FILE CDV54)

(Appendix XVIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that attached was the Community Development Sections Annual Report for 2023 - 2024 outlining the work of the section throughout the year.

The Community Development section worked closely with all other sections in the Community and Culture Service to avoid duplication and ensure a cohesive delivery of programmes to the community.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Harbinson, that the recommendation be adopted.

24. PCSP ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024 (FILE REF PCSP ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024)

(Appendix XVIX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that PCSP was required to submit an Annual report to the Joint Committee before the end of June annually.

The Annual report 2023-2024 was attached.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the PCSP Annual report 2023-2024.

Proposed by Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Cummings thanked officers for the report and wanted to acknowledge that the PCSP had operated with skeleton staff for much of the year but had still achieved a lot.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the recommendation be adopted.

25. HOME OFFICE FUNDING (FILE CW154)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the war in Ukraine had seen many refugees arriving in the UK and NI seeking sanctuary. The Ukrainian refugees were given permission to enter by the Home Office under three different schemes:

- Ukraine Family Scheme
- Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme
- Ukraine Extension Scheme

Those who entered under the Ukraine Family Scheme were allowed to live, work and study here with access to public funds for up to 3 years.

Earlier this year the Good Relations Officer applied to the Executive Office for funding of £50,000 in respect of refugee integration funding with monies to be used by 31 March 2025.

This funding had been released by Home Office to support projects which would support refugee integration and self-sufficiency.

Funding needed to be specifically used for projects using some/all of the following headings:

- Cultural and community orientation
- Stakeholder engagement and raising of awareness
- Language support and advocacy services
- Provision of telephony advice
- Building local integration capacity
- Sporting and cultural integration activities
- ESOL classes
- Supporting mental and physical wellbeing
- Wraparound support and coordination hubs.

The funding would continue to provide support for the Refugee and Asylum Forum, YMCA, The Link and Council.

The YMCA service will provide:

- Language support and advocacy services to refugees living and arriving in AND, such as access to health care, education, welfare and employment.
- Information and support to local individuals and organisations hosting Ukrainian refugees under 'Homes for Ukraine' and Ukrainian Family scheme.
- Facilitate access to 'Home for Ukraine', Ukrainian Family Scheme and Ukrainian Extension Scheme for both sponsors (individuals and organisations based in AND) and beneficiaries (Ukrainian citizens).
- Weekly drop-in advocacy clinics at YMCA North Down (Bangor) and at The Link in Newtownards plus floating support across AND (including Ards Peninsula outreach).
- Provide a meeting space for refugees and their sponsors.
- Support refugees to transfer biometric permit/ card to evisa, a new requirement of the Home Office.
- Facilitate access to ESOL classes for refugees.
- Facilitate access to support groups and organisations for refugees.
- Facilitate and support the refugee forum addressing local needs.
- Support the forum and their members to provide events and needs based sporting and cultural integration activities.
- Support the forum and its members to build local integration capacity.

In addition to the wraparound service provided by YMCA, Council would enrol the services of The Link in Newtownards to continue to provide:

- ESOL classes for refugees.
- Provide a meeting space for refugees and their sponsors.
- Language support and advocacy for the students as the need arises.
- Supporting mental and physical well-being.
- Weekly drop-in advocacy clinics at The Link provided by YMCA.

Council would support and assist the Refugee and Asylum Forum with funding to:

- Encourage participation in sporting and cultural activities with the provision of materials and equipment e.g. football boots, celebratory events.
- Build local integration capacity with workshops on increasing their knowledge of local customs.

- Increase the knowledge and capacity of local communities to aide integration by providing workshops and real-life scenarios.
- Deliver programmes/ workshops to encourage refugee employment.
- Support the wraparound services provided by YMCA, The Link, and Forum Members including churches and local facilitators.
- Source providers for any specific identified needs.
- Support eligible individuals with business plans and sources of funding through the Council Go Succeed programme.

The support would be kept under review and could be amended in response to the needs of the service users.

Now more than ever the need for support and integration for refugees in ANDBC was paramount to ensure they did not feel isolated or unsafe whilst living in our Borough.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

Proposed by Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor Ashe, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor W Irvine queried the existing arrangement between the Home Office and the Marine Court Hotel and if it was known how long that would continue for and how many asylum seekers were being housed there at present. The Head of Community and Culture advised that staff met monthly at a forum which included relevant parties and this also included discussions around integration opportunities. The numbers accommodated in the hotel changed daily so she was unable to provide a current figure and she was unclear how long the arrangement would continue for.

Councillor W Irvine wished to be recorded as against the recommendation.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor Ashe, that the recommendation be adopted.

26. PORTAVOGIE AND PORTAFERRY 3G PITCHES AND PORTAFERRY SPORT CENTRE FLOOR BI-MONTHLY UPDATE (FILE CW74)

(Appendix XXX – XXXI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that in February 2024, Council agreed to the following, “that Council notes the closure of the training area at Portavogie Football Pitch due to health and safety concerns, recognises the negative impact this has on local provision and sports development and tasks Officers to bring forward a report on options to provide temporary training facilities in the village in the short term and repairs to the pitch in the long term. As a matter of urgency Council tasks Officers to bring forward a bimonthly progress report on the development of the Portavogie 3G Pitch, Portaferry Sports Centre and Portaferry 3G Pitch to this committee.”

This report provided the 3 updates requested on a bi-monthly basis, and for the 2 capital projects, in a 'RAG' format as requested by the proposer in May 2024.

1. The project update for the Portavogie 3G project is attached at appendix 1.
2. The project update for the Portaferry 3G project is attached at appendix 2.
3. In relation to the completion of the repairs to the sports hall floor of the Portaferry Sports Centre, the hall remains only partly usable, with no funding yet committed by the owner to carrying out the remaining repairs. A further meeting was requested by the Leisure Services Manager with the Diocesan Trustee and St MacNissi's Educational Trust on 2nd August in relation to this issue to which elected members can be invited. A meeting has been proposed for week beginning 16th September.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the updates included in this report. Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Adair was reluctant to note the report, advising that he would prefer to see each of the three issues reported separately in order to allow sufficient time to scrutinise each matter.

The Director explained that the information was contained in one report as this was a result of one notice of motion asking for a report on three issues.

Alderman Adair queried the timeframe of the report and referred to information on the Portavogie 3G pitch which was dated in June. The Director clarified that the report as indicated on it was up to date as of 7th August 2024.

In relation to the Portavogie 3G pitch, Alderman Adair expressed disappointment over the pace of the matter which had ran on for 12 years and that the most recent business case was completed 18 months ago. He accused the Council of dropping the ball on the issue many times and referred to issues around the planning process caused by NI Water. He added that this was only for an upgrade of an existing facility yet he had not recalled seeing as much fuss over one matter throughout his time on Council.

In terms of Portaferry Sports Centre, he called for urgency and asked that the planned meeting with Diocesan Trustee and St MacNissi's Educational Trust be changed to an in person site meeting rather than the virtual meeting highlighted in the report. The Director clarified that arrangements had changed and the meeting would be a face to face meeting on an alternative date and other stakeholders would be invited.

Alderman Adair welcomed that decision and highlighted the importance of having a site meeting which would be beneficial for better discussion.

The seconder, Councillor Boyle said that the plan for Portavogie 3G pitch had been to simply resurface it and he was perplexed that it had been ongoing for 12 years. He recognised that there were a number of hurdles for the Council and given those

he was not surprised that the Council was unable to put an estimated time for completion on it. He wondered if the Council genuinely wanted to deliver on the projects and if they would ever happen. He sympathised with the football club in Portavogie and the people involved.

Referring to Portaferry 3G pitch he explained that there was not a single Council GAA facility within the Borough which he found to be amazing given the success of GAA. It was important therefore that this facility was delivered.

In relation to Portaferry Sports Centre, he noted that the sports hall had now been in a state of disrepair for 16 months. He explained that the meeting referred to in the report had been changed to an in person meeting with additional stakeholders. He had received a letter from St MacNissi's Educational Trust denying ownership of the building or any responsibility for repairs.

Councillor Boyle felt that the meeting needed to be opened up to all stakeholders to help clarify ownership of the site. The initial meeting that had been planned had not included the Education Authority, the school principal or the Board of Governors and he felt it was important for them to be represented. Given that the St MacNissi's Educational Trust had confirmed that they did not own the building, he asked the Director if he was aware who owned it.

The Director clarified at the outset that Council did not own the building and as a result of hearing at the meeting that the Trust denied it was them it needed to be determined who did and what their responsibilities were. He advised that it might be that one organisation owned the building but another was responsible for repairs. It was known though that the Trust owned the land and had given permission for the building to be constructed and the Council's Lands team was investigating this. He further clarified the meeting had initially been organised only with St MacNissi's Educational Trust as this was the request from Members.

Councillor Boyle expressed frustration over the lack of clarity on ownership and referred to the impacts this was having on users of the Leisure Centre who continued to have no or only partial use of the sports hall.

In terms of the 3G pitch situation, the Chair commented that he sympathised with Alderman Adair because in his own DEA he had a similar situation with sports facilities and it was elected members who were left at the coal face and required to manage expectations.

Summing up, Alderman Adair said he had asked for a meeting with the St MacNissi's Educational Trust because he was told by the Director that they owned the building and he was alarmed that that was not the case having been advised of this by another elected member. He found it worrying that the Council continued to put money into a building when it did not know who owned it and he hoped to get clarity urgently in writing. He believed that the St MacNissi's Educational Trust, as land owners, should have evidence of ownership given that it had given permission for the building to be constructed. He felt it was important to determine ownership before the stakeholder meeting and he requested that the Director make contact with St

MacNissi's Educational Trust as soon as possible and provide an update to Members on the situation.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the recommendation be adopted.

27. NOTICES OF MOTION

27.1 Notice of Motion received from Councillor Creighton and Councillor Moore

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

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

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

(Councillor Creighton joined the meeting – 8.35pm)

Proposed by Councillor Creighton, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the notice of motion be adopted.

Speaking to her proposal, Councillor Creighton spoke about the person who brought the concept to her, explaining that he had hoped to be in attendance but having undergone a four-hour dialysis session at the hospital earlier he had not been well enough to attend.

The person was born with kidney failure in 1966 and had lived a full and active life obtaining a degree and masters degree whilst in England, playing semi-professional rugby for London Irish. At the age of 28, he returned to Northern Ireland requiring a kidney transplant and began dialysis. During that time he had endured four-hour dialysis sessions up to four times per week, he conceived the idea of an organ donation bench. It would be a bench designed by the young citizens of North Down as a tribute to those who had given life to others.

Designed by pupils of Bangor Academy, who had won a competition, funds were raised and set aside. Covid and ill health had then intervened and the concept had lost momentum. However, throughout this person had been a tireless advocate for organ donation as a poet and play write and had spoken of organ donation at Westminster and he was invited to speak at Stormont in relation to the Opt Out bill which came into effect in 2023. She did not have enough time to list all of his achievements but she hoped to see the bench installed in a prominent place within the Borough where people could engage and have conversation and spark interest

in this important issue as well as being somewhere to reflect and remember loved ones.

The seconder, Councillor Moore rose to support the motion and provided some information on organ donation. In Northern Ireland 135 people were currently waiting for one and while 90% supported organ donation, only 53% were registered on the NHS Organ Donor Register. In 2021/22, 55 families supported the gift of organ donation which enabled 127 lifesaving transplants across the UK. However 122 people were still waiting for the call for someone to give them the gift of life. Over 6,000 people in the UK currently needed a transplant and over 400 people died waiting each year because there w not enough organs available. Those were stark numbers. She spoke about the Opt Out law and said it was essential for people to know our wishes and have those conversations.

Councillor Moore explained that she had mentioned this project to a work colleague whose sister died at 18 and her parents decided to donate her organs. Her uncle's partner enjoyed several fulfilling years of good health before he died last year, because of organ donation. It was only by raising awareness, by having those conversations that we came to appreciate the value that's hard to quantify.

Councillor Kendall rose to support the motion and recalled that the Green Party had raised awareness for the change in the law. She felt that there was nothing more noble than to give someone the gift of life.

In summing up, Councillor Creighton thanked members for their comments.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Creighton, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the recommendation be adopted.

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

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

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

(Councillor Gilmour joined the meeting – 8.41pm)

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Speaking to her proposal, Councillor Gilmour explained at the outset, that the Notice of Motion had the support of all Bangor West Councillors.

She added that in 2014/15, the then Mayor of North Down Councillor Peter Martin officially opened Clandeboye playpark, MUGA and football pitch. This was after the council had invested £500k in the area, it was a project where the community had been at the forefront in campaigning, co design- before co design was a thing! carrying out consultation with local residents and identifying what they wanted in their area. The community drive behind the project meant that they had a great pride and ownership when it was delivered. They got to choose what equipment was to go into the park, and where the playpark and MUGA would be situated and it was even designed to have an area for the willow burner for the 11th night, which would allow for an amateur league sized football pitch as well.

The football pitch was to be amateur league sized- they were not looking for floodlights, changing rooms or the likes that would be required for amateur accreditation but just amateur league sized. So that the local community could practice or have non-competitive games. When it was opened the community realised that the pitch was narrower than had been agreed and the surface, which had been heavily sand based was struggling to grow grass and was being dug up by dogs. Many, many meetings had taken place to try and resolve the issue and the community were told that there was a course of action that could be taken to treat the pitch but it may take a couple of seasons to bed in. The goalposts were removed, i think it was before covid as some work was done on the width of the pitch and they needed to be moved so they would be relocated in the middle of the pitch. They were never replaced, despite requests.

Members may have recalled, back in 2023, the not locking the playpark issue and at that time, at a meeting with community reps, the director, and a number of council officers. Cvca asked for the posts to be reinstated and were told that “they would look to arrange it, and that the pitch had been over engineered.”

It was not the community group who engineered the pitch, but it was the community who had suffered from the inability to use the pitch. The Clandeboye village community association chairman got excited on 18th July this year and contacted Bangor West Councillors, when a white line was marked out around where the pitch had been, however this then disappeared the following day. On enquiring “Thank you for your email. Unfortunately the white lines was carried out in error by a member of the team,” the response from officers. “This recreational grass area at Clandeboye Park is not a football pitch and leisure have advised that they have no plans to make it one.”

This had concerned CVCA, it was built as a pitch, was lined, had posts and even had a ball stop fence behind where the nets were to protect vehicles from being hit. Councillor Gilmour recalled plans of the site when it was redeveloped that clearly showed it was a pitch, but now the community was being told it's not a pitch. The issue was not just one of a frustrated community who had had their pitch disappear, it was that the area was now being used as a dog toilet, residents had noticed drug activity in the area and judging by the number of nitrous oxide canisters that had been discarded in the area, there was a problem.

Having walked the pitch it would seem that the grass was now well established and was growing across the site and was regularly trimmed by council. The CVCA felt that they had been shortchanged and the pitch that they had worked hard towards has now been abandoned. What the NOM was asking for was firstly, that the lines be drawn and the nets reinstated. By putting these in place it would allow the local community to play football on the pitch, but it would also help to make the wider community aware that this was not a big field to use as a dog toilet but was instead a football pitch and they should show Civic pride.

Secondly that the officers consult with the local community, to discuss the size of the pitch and also whether the ongoing maintenance plan for the pitch surface had addressed the issues which were previously experienced. This notice of motion was something which had the support of all Bangor West Councillors from across the chamber. While not an expert in grass pitches, Councillor Gilmour said she did not know if whatever measures officers had taken over the last number of years had solved the issue. She also did not know what it would involve to potentially widen the area to the size it should have been. What they were asking for was that a report was brought back, if there were costs involved, this would help us inform decisions as part of the rate setting process. I'm not asking members this evening to commit to any major additional spend on the site. As I have outlined, there would be a two-step approach, firstly mark what was there, second step officers consult with local community, assess the area and brought back a report. She would hope that members across the chamber would be able to agree and support this nom this evening, if they were unfamiliar with the site and would like to come and see it and discuss the matter with CVCA, representatives could be given further details of the matter.

The seconder, Councillor Hollywood, said that around 10 years ago, this Council announced plans to develop a fit for purpose, amateur league sized, football pitch alongside a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in Clandeboye, aimed at providing much-needed sports facilities for local youth and community clubs. The project was hailed as a significant step forward, amidst much fan-fare, in an area that had been and was lacking in leisure spaces for social and community engagement. Although well before his time in Council, Councillor Hollywood's understanding was that funding was secured for the project, plans were made and the community was assured that the football pitch would be ready for use within a couple of years. However, as the years had dragged on, delivery of the pitch had remained unfulfilled. Whilst the MUGA site had been developed and was well used, the site earmarked for the football pitch had been left largely untouched, save for overgrown grass and the unfortunate accumulation of dog waste.

The failure to deliver the football pitch had had a profound impact on the Clandeboye area. Young people, particularly older youth and young men who had been deprived of opportunities to engage in physical activity and team sports, which were crucial for their physical and mental well-being, which as you know is also a focus of our Big Plan for the Borough.

It should be known that continued inaction had fuelled a growing resentment among local residents. Repeated inquiries over many years and continual pleas for updates on a project that had yet to materialise.

Therefore, he urged officers and this Council to keep to their commitments and finally bring this facility to fruition in Clandeboye. This Council owed it to the community to deliver on its commitments made a long time ago.

The Chair asked that Councillor McKee who was attending remotely be moved into the meeting from the virtual gallery. He clarified however that Standing Orders prevented Councillor McKee from being able to speak on the motion as he was not the proposer or seconder and apologised that he should have invited him into the meeting at the outset of the Item which would have allowed him to second the motion.

The Chair advised that Councillor Creighton had requested speaking rights in line with Standing Orders and this was the reason why she had been able to speak on the matter.

Councillor Creighton explained that she had intended to be a signatory on the motion that had been submitted by her Bangor West DEA colleagues but was unable to do so due to being the proposer of another Notice of Motion listed on the agenda.

Giving her full support, she believed that a considerable amount of investment from the ratepayers had not been fully realised. When it was first completed there was real enthusiasm from the community but over the years it had deteriorated. She referred to comments from community activists who had stated that young people deserved to play football in their own community on a football pitch that was marked out to the correct size with goal posts. They were not asking for changing rooms or showers, just a fit for purpose pitch which did not seem to be a big ask from the Council. She welcomed the Notice of Motion and would be following its progress in hope of an outcome that would satisfy the community.

Councillor McClean explained that he had architect drawings which referred specifically to a grass football pitch. This was different because the pitch was built and goal posts installed and it suddenly stopped being a football pitch. He understood then the frustration from the community after being told that it was only a recreation area. He believed there was very little to do in order to return it to a football pitch. He was aware that there was a potential issue around the dimensions of the pitch and drainage, and that restorative work could be necessary. However he hoped that this would be addressed in the report. He suspected that the report might also show that contractors had failed to do what the Council had asked which he felt was a recurring theme within the Council. He added that the Council was only being asked to deliver a playable football pitch which would mean an awful lot to the community.

Councillor Kendall referred to the problems that had been outlined by the previous speakers and believed that the pitch at Clandeboye was a community asset provided by the Council but it had now become just a field. That was disappointing and embarrassing and should not have happened. She explained the previous work

there to upgrade the area with both a MUGA and football pitch and in terms of the pitch there had been some construction faults with the playing surface which was still present today and now there were no markings or posts. This situation was not caused by the community and Clandeboye deserved better. The removal of the markings and goalposts had actually resulted in the introduction of less desirable activities in the field. This motion was to establish the pitch at Clandeboye and the markings would also show other users of the field to be respectful, particularly dog walkers. It also called for the Council to address the poor state of the pitch and Councillor Kendall noted there was a lot of money wasted over the years and she questioned where else in the Borough the Council had allowed an asset to deteriorate and never be used for its intended purpose. He hoped that Members would support the motion.

Councillor Chambers welcomed the collaboration between the DEA members to find a resolution and Councillor W Irvine felt it was a shame that the facility had got to this stage and hoped that the motion would see the matter progressed tonight. Councillor Boyle was also supportive, feeling that it was very little work from the Council for such big community benefit, assuming that the report would not flag up any further issues.

The Chair advised that unfortunately there was no way of overriding Standing Orders to allow Councillor McKee to contribute and in summing up, Councillor Gilmour acknowledged that Councillor Kendall had kindly been able to represent him.

She reiterated the issues at the site, summarising that it was installed and marked as a football pitch but then Council realised there were issues and the lines and posts disappeared and they had been making efforts to have those facilities restored ever since. She thanked Members for their positive comments and she looked forward to the report coming back if agreed.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the notice of motion be adopted.

(The meeting went into recess at 9.05pm and resumed at 9.18pm)

27.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Adair and Alderman Cummings

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

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the notice of motion be adopted.

Alderman Adair explained at the outset that Councillor Boyle and Councillor Douglas had intended to support the motion but due to the earlier deadline for submission

resulting from the August bank holiday, had been unable to add their signatures in time.

Speaking to the proposal, he went on to explain that he was bringing the motion as a last resort having tried to resolve the issue over the last three years and despite promises, there had been no change and the issues had still occurred. Up until three years ago, he felt that the Council had done an excellent job in maintaining its football pitches across the Borough and any issues were addressed quickly. However there had been deterioration over the last three years and the maintenance had not been fit for purpose.

He explained that in the last three years there had been changes in contractors and a budget increase last year but the issues remained. When the pitches closed for the off season in May, he noted that there was no sign of any maintenance work taking place despite receiving a schedule of planning maintenance work over that period. He had joined Councillor Boyle and representatives of local football clubs in Greyabbey at the end of June 2024 and that point there had been no work at all at any of the football pitches. If it was one pitch affected then that could be accepted as an isolated incident, however this was affecting all of the clubs in the Ards Peninsula - Cloughey, Kircubbin, Millisle, Greyabbey, Portaferry and Portavogie. The work on the pitches had started in early July and the sand left on the pitches ahead of work starting had reduced significantly by the time it had started due to children playing etc.

Most clubs started matches at the end of August and a week before Greyabbey was due to start there was a statement issued on Rosemount Rec FC's Facebook site complaining about the state of the pitch with photographs which showed holes in the pitch etc, and it was not in a fit place. Alderman Adair felt it was vital that as soon as the season finished in May, the contractors needed to be on site carrying out work in order to have them ready.

The Council had blamed dogs, which he accepted was an issue in Portavogie but it was not an issue in Greyabbey. He also referred to a statement from the Council which blamed badgers and he argued that wasn't accurate as he was not aware of any badgers on football fields. He believed the issue was the failure to start the maintenance at the appropriate time.

He was also aware of grass not getting cut and one club having to cut its own grass to allow a match to go ahead. He was angered that his constituents in the Ards Peninsula were paying the same as everyone else in the Borough but pitches in Bangor and Newtownards were like bowling greens. The Ards Peninsula was home to some of the most successful team in Northern Ireland and clubs from all over NI came to play there and it was embarrassing for club's hosting those teams.

He argued that it was time that Council got to the heart of the problem and ensured that maintenance started as early as possible to ensure those pitches did not fall short and were able to meet the sporting needs of clubs in the Ards Peninsula.

He added that the clubs were all untied on the same issue and referring back to the meeting he noted that Parks had been in attendance but leisure had not been

represented and he felt that was an issue between Park and Leisure and some matters fell between the two. Clubs were frustrated and had raised this issue for three years without any change. He was concerned that the issues would only get worse and the pitches would become unplayable. It was very regrettable and that was the reason for his Notice of Motion which asked for the ratepayers to be afforded the same opportunities as elsewhere in the Borough. He had brought it early to allow for something to be put in place for next summer to ensure no repeat of the last three summers.

The seconder, Alderman Cummings concurred with those comments in relation to those issues that were being experienced by clubs in that DEA. He referred to his own DEA of Comber where clubs were forced to go outside of the Borough to play their home games through the season due to the state of the pitches there. While he appreciated the work that officers had done in terms of delivering a programme of works over previous years but he too had noted the issues over recent years, pointing to issues with drainage and wildlife in terms of burrowing. Those issues continued to plague and frustrate the local football fraternity. While the focus of many was on the grass and state of the playing surface, he felt that there needed to be a wider approach in terms of improving the infrastructure around football pitches in terms of fencing and access for example. He noted that when bollards were taken away people may drive in. He felt it was an interdepartmental issue therefore.

Councillor S Irvine spoke to support the motion and explained that having come from a footballing background he was aware of the type of complaints that the Council was receiving though in his experience in the past he had found that Council dealt with those issues rapidly. In the West Winds over the summer where the sand was left it had not been touched for weeks and there was now debris from the sand lying around residents' cars. The sand was left beside the road where residents would park and there was no clean up undertaken for residents. Another issue was that the pitches were closed at the start of May and no work undertaken until August. The season did not end until the end of May and that had led to some clubs having to finish the season by playing home games outside of the Borough. He was aware of that some of the goal posts had been unstable and offline. He also highlighted the amount of money that clubs were paying to use the pitches and they deserved better. He wondered if parks were receiving green flag awards, if this could be extended to sports pitches as well.

Councillor Boyle added that he had been involved in the issues in the Ards Peninsula and referred to two pitches in Portaferry, at Anne Street and Cloughey Road, noting that Anne Street was kept very well however Cloughey Road had its problems and officers knew that. The Council had done some good drainage work in the past but he now wanted to see that work continue. He further explained that the Portaferry first team was unable to use Anne Street as it did not comply with Intermediate level and while he did not always go around examining football pitches, it was clear if five clubs had come forward with the same issues then there was a problem. While he appreciated the Council was getting some things right, there were things that it clearly wasn't doing correctly and he wondered if the issue were contractor related and that officers could look at that situation and he appreciated that it could be budget related. He felt though that Council needed to remember that it was getting a good fee for the hire of its pitches and not giving a good service. He expressed

further concern ahead of the winter weather arriving and the impacts this would have on the ability to play matches over the winter months.

Summing up, Alderman Adair reiterated that clubs and representatives were united on this matter. He noted that Council had called for something similar in respect to maintenance of cemeteries and that had been helpful so he hoped this would have the same impact. He noted that Councillor S Irvine had referred to some good experiences from Council in the past, and he wondered if Council needed to review its use of contractors and perhaps use its own staff that were clearly capable. The current issues though were unacceptable and there could be no return to the status quo. Tonight would send a message to the clubs that the Council was untied in addressing the issue and wanting to put in place measures to maintain its pitches to standards that they should be.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the notice of motion be adopted.

28. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Chambers, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business.

29. REVIEW OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY (HMO) LICENCE SCHEME CHARGES AND PROPOSED INCREASE IN LICENCE FEE FROM 1 OCTOBER 2024 (FILE EHPD8)

****IN CONFIDENCE****

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

A report was presented to Community and Wellbeing recommending agreement with the changes to HMO license fees.

The Report recommended that Council agreed to the increase of licence application fee, varying cost of licence application fee and note that SOLACE will write to DfC in reference to the above.

The recommendation was agreed

30. CONCESSION OPPORTUNITY TO RUN THE CAFÉ AT NORTH DOWN MUSEUM (FILE HER)

****IN CONFIDENCE****

CW.11.09.2024 PM

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

A report was presented to Community and Wellbeing providing details of a concession opportunity to run the café at North Down Museum.

The Report recommended that Council agreed to award the concession as a result of the procurement process.

The recommendation was agreed.

31. APPOINTMENT OF SUPPLIER OF WILLOW BEACONS (FILE GREL)

****IN CONFIDENCE****

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

A report was presented to Community and Wellbeing recommending that the Single Tender Action be used for the appointment of supplier for willow beacons.

The Report recommended that Council agreed to the single tender action process.

The recommendation was agreed.

(Councillor W Irvine (Items 32 and 33) and Councillor Chambers (Item 32) left the meeting having declared an interest– 9.45pm)

32. AURORA MOVEABLE POOL FLOORS (FILE CW24)

****IN CONFIDENCE****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 5 – EXEMPTION A CLAIM TO LEGAL PROFESSIONAL PRIVILEGE

A report was presented to Community and Wellbeing recommending further solutions for Aurora Pool floors.

The Report recommended that Council agreed to proceed as outlined in the report.

The recommendation was agreed.

(Councillor Chambers returned to the meeting – 9.46pm)

33. LEISURE TRANSFORMATION RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION (FILE LE1 20)

(Appendix XXXIII)

****IN CONFIDNECE****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 5 – EXEMPTION A CLAIM TO LEGAL PROFESSIONAL PRIVILEGE

A report was presented to Community and Wellbeing recommending the next steps for Leisure Transformation.

The Report recommended that Council agree that Leisure continue with the transformation of services as outlined in the report.

The recommendation was agreed with an additional point regarding seeking further information to be brought back in a report

(Councillor W Irvine returned to the meeting – 9.56pm)

34. PCSP MINUTES (FILE PCSP MINS)

(Appendix IIIIV)

****IN CONFIDNECE****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – Exemption relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person

A report was presented to Community & Wellbeing detailing the confidential minutes of the PCSP meeting on 17 June 2024.

The report recommended that Council note the minutes.

The recommendation was agreed.

(Councillor Chambers left the meeting having declared an interest in Item 35 – 9.57pm)

35. NORTHERN COMMUNITY LEISURE TRUST Q1 2024-2025

(Appendix XXXII)

****IN CONFIDNECE****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – Exemption relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person

A report was presented to Community & Wellbeing detailing NCLTs quarter 1 activity and performance.

The report recommended that Council note the report.

The recommendation was agreed

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 10pm.

Unclassified

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ITEM 8.1**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	25 September 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	13 September 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Deputation Request - Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Deputation request form

A deputation request has been received from Northern Ireland Local Government Association, see appendix attached.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council accepts the request for a deputation from Northern Ireland Local Government Association and refers it to the next Council meeting or the appropriate Committee.

Deputation Request Form

A 'deputation request' refers to a person or group of persons asking to appear in person before the Council or a Council Committee in order to address the Council or Committee (as the case may be) on a particular matter.

The procedure governing deputations is contained within section 12 of the Council's Standing Orders, a copy of which is set out below.

If you wish to make a deputation request, please complete this form and return it to Ards and North Down Borough Council via the following email address: member.services@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk, providing us with a contact email or postal address and contact telephone number when doing so (please do not include your personal contact details on this form – see privacy notice below).

Please note that it will be for the Council to decide whether to accede to your request and, if it does, to determine when and where the deputation will be heard. The Council will draw upon the information you provide in this form in order to reach its decision, therefore you are encouraged to clearly outline the topic of your request and the reason why you wish to raise the matter before the Council or a Committee.

Applicant Details

I/we apply to Ards and North Down Borough Council to make a deputation and should this application be successful, I/we agree to comply with section 12 of the Council's Standing Orders.

Name of person(s) making the deputation request:	Alison Allen, Chief Executive, NILGA
Date of request:	12/09/24
If making the deputation on behalf of an organisation or a group of individuals, name of the organisation / individuals:	Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Name of Committee (if known) to which you wish to make your deputation:	Full Council

Please summarise below (continuing onto an additional page if required) the subject matter of your deputation request and the reason why you wish to raise the matter before the Council or a Committee.

NILGA coordinates an all-council Regional Programme of Elected Member Development annually, complementing your Council's local training, designed to provide Elected Members with a co-ordinated toolkit of learning, suited to today's responsibilities and challenges, and in line with the NILGA Political Skills Framework.

This builds on the NILGA-delivered/nationally-accredited Council Development Charter and Charter Plus initiatives. The Regional Programme has been co-designed by councils' elected member development groups and councils' member services and human resource officials, working through the NILGA Elected Member Development Networks.

A key part of this Regional Programme is the CPD-accredited Leadership Programme for Elected Members, offered by NILGA in conjunction with Governance International. The eight 3-hour modules in this Programme aim to develop the practical skills necessary for a strategic understanding of the context within which Councillors work (people, place and systems) and the capabilities they need, using relevant models and concepts to help them improve their strategic leadership approach in a local political environment. This will be the fifth running of this highly commended Leadership Programme and will commence in January 2025, with monthly modules.

NILGA and Governance International would very much welcome an opportunity to come along to one of your Council Meetings in advance of January 2025, to promote the Leadership Programme to your Elected Members.

Thank you in anticipation of your continued positive approach and engagement with the NILGA Regional Programme for Councillor Development 2024-25.

Extract from Ards and North Down Borough Council's Standing Orders, Version 11, April 2024

12. Deputations

(1) Deputations, from any source, shall only be admitted to address the Council provided the Chief Executive has received seven working days notice of the intended deputation and a statement of its objective, and subject to the agreement of the Council.

(2) In the case of an emergency, deputations, from any source, shall only be admitted to address the Council provided the Chief Executive has received one working day's notice of the intended deputation and a statement of its objective, and subject to the agreement of the Mayor.

(3) The deputation shall be confined to the presentation of a statement, or copy of resolutions, and shall not make more than two short addresses by any two members of the deputation. The totality of the address shall not exceed 10 minutes followed by a maximum 15 minutes question and answer session.

(4) Deputations should not be repetitive and, where possible, issues of a similar or linked nature should be contained in one deputation. Where a deputation has made a presentation to the Council, the Council will decline to accept another deputation on the same issue from the same individual or group for a period of six months.

(5) No further discussion or proposals beyond questions shall take place at a Council or Committee meeting until after the deputation has withdrawn. Any subsequent proposal made should be limited to a request for officers to bring back a report on the matters raised by the deputation.

Privacy notice – how we will use information about you

Ards and North Down Borough Council is a Data Processor under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for the personal data it gathers when receiving and administering deputation requests.

You are providing your personal data to the Council whose lawful basis for processing it falls within the following three categories:

- a) **Consent** - you consent to the information being processed for the specific purpose of the Council considering your deputation request;
- b) **Public task** - the processing is necessary in order for the Council to consider your request in line with its Standing Orders which were established under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014; and
- c) **Legitimate interests** - the processing is necessary for your legitimate interests (or the legitimate interests of a third party) in order that Council may consider your deputation request.

The personal data you provide when making a deputation request may be shared internally within the Council with staff who are involved in decision making and administration in respect of Council and Committee meetings. This includes both the data contained within this form and any other data, such as an email address or other contact details, we may gather when you send the form to us.

The information you provide on this form only will be provided as a report to Council and potentially thereafter as a report to a Committee (depending on whether Council accedes to your request). Any such report will not usually be heard 'in confidence' and therefore the report will also be published on the Council website prior to the meeting. Members of the press and public may attend the Council (and Committee) meeting at which the report is discussed. An audio recording and written minute will be made of the meeting and both will be published on the website.

Your personal data will not be shared or disclosed to any other organisation without your consent, unless the law permits or places an obligation on the Council to do so.

Personal data is held and stored by the Council in a safe and secure manner and in compliance with Data Protection legislation and in line with the Council's Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.

If you have any queries regarding the processing of your personal data, please contact:

Data Protection Officer
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Town Hall, The Castle
Bangor
BT20 4BT
Email: dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 013 3333

Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	25 September 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	16 September 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Notice of Motion Status Report
Attachments	Notice of Motion tracker

Please find attached a Status Report in respect of Notices of Motion.

This is a standing item on the Council agenda each month and its aim is to keep Members updated on the outcome of Motions. It should be noted that as each Motion is dealt with it will be removed from the report.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council notes the report.

NoM Ref:	Responsible Committee	Date Received	Submitted by	Notice (Original and any amendment)	Council & Committee Meetings (Date & Item)	Status (Most recent status update at the top followed by detail of what has been accomplished to date)	Final Outcome
11	Community & Wellbeing	31.05.15	Councillor Muir & Alderman Keery	Rory McIlroy Recognition	Council June 2015 Corporate Services Committee October 2015	Officers discussing options with McIlroy Organisation	
330	Environment	21.01.19	Councillor Brooks & Councillor Smith	This Council brings back a report on providing a shelter or sheltered area near the slipway in Donaghadee which would provide cover for the growing numbers of open water swimmers that use the area on a daily basis.	Council January 2019 Environment Committee 06.02.19 Item 16.3	Report to be brought back to Committee	
370	Environment	13/09/2019	Cllr Cathcart & Alderman Gibson	That this Council acknowledges that Council byelaws are in need of review. Many of our Council byelaws are now outdated and do not cover new housing developments and playparks in the Borough. The Council therefore will carry out a comprehensive review of Council byelaws to create a modern system to assist the Council in meeting the outcomes identified within the Community Plan	Council - September 2019 Referred to Environment Committee - October 2019 Environment Committee 02.09.20 Item 12	Review of the byelaws to commence and be undertaken in three stages. Phase 1 - Scope, Phase 2 - Council Review and Phase 3 - Recommendation and Decision	
419	Community & Wellbeing	20.10.20	Councillor Brooks & Councillor Chambers	"I would like to task officers to produce a report to consider what could be a more environmentally friendly and benefit the wellbeing of the community for the use of the disused putting green on the Commons and play park at Hunts park in Donaghadee . Following the success of the Dog park in Bangor and the demand for a Dementia garden, both should be considered as options in the report. The process should involve consultation with the local community."	Council October 2020 Community & Wellbeing Committee December 2020	Report to November C&W Committee. Consideration of Masterplan and application of play strategy with local consultation when it takes place in Donaghadee	

513	Place & Prosperity	17.05.22	Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Kennedy	2028 Centenary of the internationally renowned Ards TT races. Asking Council how best to commemorate this important sporting anniversary.	Council May 2022 Community and Wellbeing June 2022 - Moved to: Place & Prosperity Committee	Working group in place.	
514	Community & Wellbeing	19.05.22	Councillor Cummings & Councillor Johnson	Business case for redesign of the parallel sports pitches and facilities at Park Way, Comber	Council June 2022 Community & Wellbeing Committee September 2022 and deferred to October 2022	Council agreed Comber 3G pitch is ranked 21st in project prioritisation. Stakeholder engagement to commence at the appropriate time	
516	Corporate Services	20.06.24	Councillor Greer & Councillor McKee	Report exploring the possibility of introducing a policy that shows commitment to supporting the wellbeing of our workforce by ensuring appropriate support is available to anyone undergoing IVF.	Council June 2022 Corporate Services Committee October 2022	Further report to follow during 2024	
519	Community & Wellbeing	20.06.22	Councillor Kendal, Councillor McRandal & Councillor McClean	Engagement with relevant community stakeholders to ascertain community need and desires in respect of the Queen's Leisure Complex	Council June 2022 Community & Wellbeing Committee September 2022 and deferred to October 2022	Report to November C&W Committee. Community Engagement took place on 24th September 2024	

522	Corporate Services	05.07.22	Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery Amendment received from Councillor Cathcart	That this Council changes the name of Queen's Parade to Queen's Platinum Jubilee Parade in honour and recognition of the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne. *** Amendment - That this Council, in recognition of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and her conferment of City Status upon Bangor, agrees to name an appropriate place or building within Bangor in her honour and that future Council Bangor entrance signs make reference to Bangor being a Platinum Jubilee City.	Council July 2022 Environment Committee September 2022 Corporate Services January 2024	April 2023 - Letter requesting permission to use the Royal Name sent to the Cabinet Office and awaiting response January 2024 - Report brought to Corporate Committee Amendment Agreed and advice sought from Cabinet Office September 2024 - Advice still outstanding	
525	Community & Wellbeing	24.08.22	Councillor Cooper, Councillor T Smith & Councillor Irvine	Amended 11.10.2022 Corporate Committee: That Council officers bring back a report on relevant Council policies with a view to withdrawing funding to any sporting organisations with any political objectives or named references to terrorism in their constitution, club names, stadiums, or competitions and such a report will be appropriately guided by legal advice in relation to this course of action that this Council agrees.	Council August 2022 Corporate Committee October 2022	Legal advice to be sought by the Councils Equality Officer and a report to be brought back to Community & Wellbeing Committee in January 2025	
529	Environment	22.08.22	Councillor Dunlop & Councillor Douglas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •All pedestrians should feel safe on our pavements, yet street clutter can make walking and wheeling unsafe, forcing people onto the road which is dangerous; •Street furniture should be clean, have a purpose and be consistent; and •Street clutter should be removed. <p>Therefore, Council tasks officers to:</p>	Council September 2022 Environment Committee October 2022	Report to be brought back to Committee	

545	Community & Wellbeing	16.11.22	Alderman McIlveen & Councillor Cummings	That Council officers open discussions with Historic Environment Division regarding the return of the 13th century 'Movilla Stones' to the Borough and the provision of a suitable site for these to be located. Officers are also tasked with promoting these extremely important archaeological artefacts in the local community and local schools when the stones have been returned.	Council November 2022 Community & Wellbeing December 2022 and March 2023 and June 2023	Officers have asked HED to confirm return arrangements and will report to future C&WC when final arrangements for return of the stones is confirmed	
549	Community & Wellbeing	09.12.22	Councillor Douglas & Councillor Walker	That this Council adopts the White Ribbon Pledge to ' <i>Never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls</i> ', agrees to sign the Pledge, and tasks Officers to bring back a report outlining how we can amalgamate existing relevant policies, undertake the Listen, Learn, Lead programme within the Council, and identify effective routes to encourage other agencies and organisations in our Borough to engage with the White Ribbon Project.	Council December 2022 Corporate Services Committee January 2023 Community & Wellbeing Committee January 2024	Report to November C&W Committee. Action plan being developed by PCSP and brought back to C&W Committee. Womens Night Charter reported to January C&W Committee ratified at Council.	

550	Environment	13.12.22	Councillor Cathcart & Councillor MacArthur	<p>That this Council expresses concern with the number of residential and commercial bins left on public footways in the Borough long after the bin collection date. Bins left on public footways are not only unsightly, they can lead to hygiene and contamination issues, as well as safety concerns, forcing pedestrians onto the road due to the blocking of a footway. This Council notes its own lack of enforcement powers to tackle this issue and expresses concern at the Department for Infrastructure's reluctance to use its own enforcement powers. Accordingly, this Council agrees to write to the Department for Infrastructure asking the Department to engage with Councils with the aim of creating appropriate enforcement powers to tackle this issue. Council Officers, will in the meantime, bring back a report to the appropriate committee detailing action that the Council can take under current powers to try address the issue of bins left on public footways.</p>	<p>Council 21.12.22 Item 16.4</p> <p>Environment Committee January 2023 May 2024</p>	<p>12.12.23 Letter sent to DAERA by CEx 08.11.23 Response received from DFI 13.10.23 - Acknowledgement received from PSNI 12.10.23 - letters sent to DFI & PSNI by CEx</p>	
555	Community & Wellbeing	08.12.22	Alderman Wilson & Councillor Douglas	<p>This Council acknowledges the environmental and health benefits associated with the recent increase in cycling and declares Ards & North Down a cycling friendly borough. The Council also recognises that people who cycle are among the most vulnerable road users, and tasks officers with producing a report detailing ways in which we can help improve safety. The report should include possible sources of funding, potential partnerships, and ways in which we can promote good relations between users of different forms of transport</p>	<p>Council January 2023</p> <p>Community & Wellbeing Committee February 2023 and June 2023</p>	<p>Officers working on business case and elements for cycle to work and infrastructure planning. Budget not secured for 2024/25. Further report to future C&WC if budget made available in 2025/2026 including the report to recommend declaration</p>	

562	Environment	18.01.23	Councillor Morgan & Councillor McRandal	The prolonged cold weather spells just before Christmas and last week resulted in icy, slippery, and dangerous footpaths and car parks in the Borough's City and town centres. It is not acceptable that in such circumstances the Council does not have a plan or the resources or facilities to grit these areas to enable residents to walk safely to and from the main shopping areas or fall when they step out of their cars onto ice. It is proposed that officers	Council January 2023 Environment Committee February 2023 October 2023	Supplementary report requested - TBC	
564	Community & Wellbeing	08.02.23	Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery	That this Council tasks officers to begin discussions with the Education Authority with regards to the Future of Bloomfield playing fields, Bangor. This is to include the lease and the exploring of the possibility of bringing the facility up to intermediate level for football. A report to be brought back to Council following said discussions.	Council February 2023 Community & Wellbeing Committee March 2023	Officers awaiting response from EA in order for report to be brought back to future C&W Committee.	
567	Corporate Services	14.02.23	Councillor Adair & Councillor Edmund	This Council rename the square at Portavogie War Memorial Queen Elizabeth Square in memory of our late Sovereign Queen Elizabeth II.	Council February 2023 Corporate Services Committee March 2023	A response has been received from the Cabinet Office and a report went back to Committee 30/5/24 - follow up letter sent to Cabinet Office for update. Letters sent to the Cabinet Office requesting use of the Royal Name July 2024 - Advice now received - Report presented at September CSC. Agreed that combined EQIA more appropriate. A further report to be brought to CSC when EQIA ready to go.	

568	Place & Prosperity	06.02.23	Councillor Smart & Councillor Irvine	<p>Officers are tasked with reviewing current powers and how council could best effect positive change.</p> <p>As part of this review officers would investigate using part or all of Newtownards town centre as a pilot scheme to tackle dereliction, which could then be broadened across the Borough if successful. The review may form a working group which would consider what incentives could be provided through, DFC whom hold regeneration powers, the Planning system, Building Control, or by other means, to encourage the re-use or redevelopment of local derelict buildings to provide new business opportunities or homes. Consideration would also be given to what limitations can be placed on public and private property owners who are not willing to work in partnership for regeneration and the public good.</p>	<p>Council March 2023</p> <p>Place & Prosperity Committee June 2023 13 June 2024</p>	<p>Further report to be brought back to Committee</p>	
575	Community & Wellbeing	31.07.23	Councillor Creighton & Councillor Moore	<p>That this council notes that the number of households with homelessness status on the social housing waiting list across NI has increased from 12,431 to 26,310 households between 31 March 2013 and 31 March 2023, an increase of 111.7%; notes the enormous strain the homelessness system is under with the number of households in temporary accommodation at unprecedented levels; agrees that this council has a role to play in</p>	<p>Council August 2023</p> <p>Community & Wellbeing Committee September 2023</p> <p>Community & Wellbeing Committee September 2024</p>	<p>Report to September 2024 C&W Committee. NoM will be removed once ratified at September Council.</p>	

	Environment		Alderman Adair, Councillor Edmund & Councillor Kerr	That Council task officers to bring back a report on the costing to install signage identifying the townlands of Ballyblack and Kirkistown and that officers are tasked to bring forward proposals to incorporate townland signage across our Borough.	Council August 2023 Environment Committee September 2023		
585	Community & Wellbeing		Alderman Adair, Councillor Edmund & Councillor Kerr	That Council recognise the value of our Beaches and coastal environment to our residents and tourists alike note the new DEARA regulations for the cleaning and maintenance of our beaches and task officers to bring forward a report on cleaning and maintaining our beaches on a proactive basis in line with the new DEARA regulations to ensure our beaches continue to be a clean, safe, attractive and well-managed coastal environments.	Council October 2023 Environment Committee November 2023 Community & Wellbeing Committee January 2024	Officers working on report to C&W Committee in January 2025. Further report requested being considered by officers with a report to future C&W Committee	
588	Environment		Councillor Wray & Alderman Smith	That this council asks officers to include the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter (owned by Council), located in Main Street, Greyabbey in the 2024/25 maintenance budget. Furthermore Council seeks an officer's report on the feasibility of Council painting the decorative Greyabbey lamp posts (in the ownership of DFI). This is a feature of the historic village, and we understand the current	Council October 2023 Environment Committee November 2023	Amendment Agreed at Environment Committee. That Council welcomes the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter located on Main Street, Greyabbey and tasks officers to ensure it is maintained to a high standard going forward. Furthermore, Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to ask for the decorative lamp posts on Main	
586	Corporate Services	16.10.23	Councillor Cathcart & Councillor Martin	That this Council, further to recent positive discussions with landowners, agrees to reexamine the April 2014 decision of North Down Borough Council to accept a gift of open space at Ambleside, Bangor, which was never completed and tasks Council Officers to bring back a report looking at (i) acquiring the land and (ii) options around future uses for the land.	Council October 2023 Corporate Services Committee November 2023 Corporate Services Committee September 2024	Report to CSC. Agreed to proceed to acquisition subject to terms & discussions with vendor. July 2024 - Letter now sent to vendor. Report to Corporate Committee in September 2024 awaiting ratification .	

595	Community & Wellbeing	16.11.23	Councillor McCracken & Councillor Blaney	<p>This Council recognises the importance of Bangor’s early Christian heritage in the story of our city, and its role in local tourism strategies. This Council requests that officers bring back a report which evaluates how the physical link between two main sites, Bangor Abbey and the North Down Museum, could be improved, to include the renovation and potential remodelling of Bell’s Walk, with consideration for improved wayfinding and lighting. The</p>	Council 29.11.2023	<p>Initial report to November 2024 C&W Committee. Second report to March 2025 C&W Committee</p>	
598	Community & Wellbeing	20.11.23	Alderman Adair & Councillor Edmund	<p>That this Council continues discussions with the Education Authority concerning the redevelopment of the play area fronting Victoria Primary School, Ballyhalbert (which is a shared facility between the school and public) and tasks officers to source external funding streams to enhance recreation & sports facilities for the village and surrounding area. Further, Council notes the poor condition of Ballyhalbert children’s play park and tasks</p>	<p>Council 29.11.23 Community & Wellbeing January 2024</p>	<p>Report to January 2025 C&W Committee. Officers continue to work with DfC application for external funding.</p>	
599	Community & Wellbeing	21.11.23	Councillor Cathcart & Councillor Gilmour	<p>That this Council recognises the invaluable work undertaken by community/voluntary groups and organisations in this Borough in identifying and tackling the needs of communities and residents. The Council therefore, commits to undertaking a root and branch review of community development funding, arts and heritage, sports development and all other funding streams to ensure that it provides the most efficient, effective and responsive service to our community, thus maximising impact.</p>	<p>Council 20.12.23 Community & Wellbeing Committee January 2024 and April 2024 and June 2024 and September 2024. Corporate Committee September 2024</p>	<p>Project ongoing for 24 months with reports brought to C&W Committee as necessary. First working group was on 10th May 2024. Grants transformation project already underway.</p>	

607	Corporate Services	13.01.24	Councillor Wray & Alderman Smith	<p>That this Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to once again express our deep concern at the poor state of roads across Ards and North Down.</p> <p>Council further requests that DfI changes their policy in relation to the depth of potholes that are required to be repaired back to 20ml from the current 50ml in order to improve the quality and safety of our roads network.</p>	<p>Council 31.01.24 Corporate Services Committee June 2024. Corporate Services Committee September 2024</p>	<p>Update report to Corporate Services Committee in June 2024. Letter to DfI re 'weighted indicators' used to allocate funds. Report to Corporate Committee September 2024. Further letter to be sent following Corporate September.</p>	
610	Community & Wellbeing	19.02.24	Alderman Adair & Councillor Edmund	<p>That Council note the increasing growing population in the village of Ballyhalbert and the current lack of public open spaces in the village and task officers to bring forward a report on options to provide a public green open space to promote health and wellbeing of the local community and further tasks officers to engage with developer to ensure the new play park planned for Saint Andrews is delivered in line with our Council play strategy.</p>	<p>Council 26.03.24 Community & Wellbeing Committee March 2024</p>	<p>Officers working on a Business Case. Report to January 2025 C&W Committee</p>	

<p>613</p>	<p>Community & Wellbeing</p>	<p>04.03.24</p>	<p>Councillors Wray, Kerr, Boyle, Edmund, Aldermen Adair and McAlpine</p>	<p>Rescinding Notice of Motion - Playpark, Parsonage Road, Kircubbin</p>	<p>Council March 2024</p>	<p>Report to November 2024 C&W Committee. To be combined with play strategy future recommendations following Council decision in June 2024.</p>	
<p>616</p>	<p>Environment</p>	<p>19.03.24</p>	<p>Councillor McCollum & Councillor Irwin</p>	<p>That this Council recognises the significant opportunities which the redevelopment of Donaghadee Harbour could bring to the local economy in terms of leisure sailing and tourism and thus instructs officers to work with local groups to scope potential operational facilities which could enhance the offering in the Harbour and further brings back a feasibility report on the various options, including costings and possible funding streams. Further, that this Council recognises the issues</p>	<p>Council 26.03.24 Environment Committee 03.04.24 Item 14</p>	<p>Agreed that Council proceeds as proposed in section 4 of the report, with the outcome of engagement outlined being reported back to Environment Committee by January 2025. April 2024 - Agreed, officers to bring back a report to Committee.</p>	

619	Community & Wellbeing	30.04.24	Councillor Cochrane and Councillor Thompson	<p>That this Council notes with concern the temporary closure of Groomsport Tennis Courts due to issues around the safety of the playing surface. Further to this Council tasks officers to bring back a report on Tennis Court maintenance throughout the Borough and will commit to ensuring all our Tennis Court facilities are properly maintained and are fully accessible to all. Council will also promote the use of Tennis facilities in the Borough as we approach the spring/summer season.</p>	<p>Council 29.05.24 Community & Wellbeing Committee June 2024</p>	<p>Report to October C&W Committee.</p>	
620	Community & Wellbeing	05.03.24	Councillor Ashe & Councillor Morgan	<p>That this council recognises the importance of ensuring that our parks and open spaces are inclusive and accessible to those with speech, language, and communication needs and that it recognises the positive role of communication boards in achieving this. That it commits to working with relevant organisations to bring back a report regarding communication boards considering, but not limited to, the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How communication boards would integrate with the required existing signage; • Identifying possible locations for the 	<p>Council 29.05.24 Community & Wellbeing Committee June 2024</p>	<p>Report to November C&W Committee</p>	

623	Corporate Services	14.5.24	Councillor Gilmour & Councillor Martin	<p>8th May 2025 will be 80 years since VE Day- the official end of the Second World War in Europe. This council recognises the significance of this occasion and tasks officers to bring forward a report outlining potential ways this historic anniversary can be commemorated. Including any national plans for beacon lighting and with the council working with local people and local community groups to look at holding fitting events to mark this occasion so that a budget can be included in the next rate setting process.</p>	<p>Council 29.05.24 Corporate Services Committee 18.06.24 Item 17.2</p>	<p>June 2024 - Agreed, officers to bring back a report to Committee. Further Report to follow.</p>	
624	Corporate Services	20.05.24	Councillor Kendal, Councillor McRandal and Alderman Graham	<p>This Council notes that, subsequent to submission of a Notice of Motion in 2017, Council agreed to provide funding to assist in the building of a new war memorial in Conlig village; and to liaise with, and assist, the Conlig War Memorial Project Group in their efforts to build a monument to the seventeen men who are known to have lost their lives in World War I. This Council also notes that a proposal and draft design is to be submitted by The Conlig War Memorial Group, and that the group have raised funds via donations and fundraising events, to the value of £8,000 towards this project.</p> <p>This Council therefore reiterates its commitment to financial and practical support for the Conlig war memorial project, tasking</p>	<p>Council 29.05.24 Corporate Services Committee 18.06.24 Item 17.1</p>	<p>June 2024 - Agreed, officers to bring back a report to Committee. Report at August Council. Remove after ratification</p>	<p>Work commenced to work with NDCP on installation of this memorial.</p>

625	Environment	21.05.24	Alderman Adair and Councillor Edmund	That Council tasks Officers to bring forward urgent proposals for ground maintenance to address the poor and unkept condition of Millisle Beach Park in order to ensure the area is clean today and well kept to welcome visitors to the Kite Festival to be hosted in Millisle by the Ards Peninsula village partnership on August 26th. Further Council bring forward in report on actioning repairs to disability access to Millisle and Portavogie Beaches following recent storm damage.	Council 26.06.24 Item 15.1 Council 31.07.24 Item 15	Amended and agreed at July Council that Council proceed with the above-mentioned works at a cost of approximately £13,000 and further Council write to NIEA to request a site meeting to discuss the need to repair access to beaches at Cloughey, Millisle and Portavogie. Heard and Agreed to adopt Notice of Motion at Council meeting 26.06.24	
626	Corporate Services	13.06.24	Alderman Brooks and Councillor Chambers	That the Council, following the 80th anniversary of D-Day, recognises the service of US regiment(s) stationed in Donaghadee and our Borough prior to D-Day and tasks officers to bring a report back looking at ways in which our Borough could provide a lasting memory to them.	Council 26.06.24 Item 15.2	Referred to Corporate Services Committee for hearing at September 2024 committee. Agreed that report brought back to relevant committee.	

627	Community & Wellbeing	01.08.24	Councillor Creighton & Councillor Moore	<p>This Council notes the importance of organ donation in saving lives and improving the quality of life of residents of this Borough.</p> <p>This Council further notes that there are plans for the production and installation in the Borough, of a bench celebrating organ donation. This project began in 2013 and is supported by a number of organ transplant charities. Council resolves to work with the charities involved to finalise the detailed design and expedite installation of this bench in a prominent place in the Borough. A fund to cover all the manufacturing costs and any necessary support structures has already been raised. The hope is that this will be a place for people to engage in conversations about and spark interest in this important issue and somewhere to reflect and remember loved ones.</p>	<p>Council 28 August 2024 (Item 25.1)</p> <p>September 2024 C&W</p>	<p>Report to November 2024 C&W Committee</p>	
628		18.08.24	Alderman Brooks and Councillor Chambers	<p>That Council Officers be instructed to consider options for appropriate signage to direct the public to the Camera Obscura in Donaghadee.</p> <p>That Council Officers should explore and consider opportunities for securing sponsorship for the signage from local businesses and organisations</p>	<p>Council 28 August 2024 (Item 25.2) referred to Place & Prosperity Ctte- September</p>		

629	Community & Wellbeing	19.08.24	Councillors Gilmour, Hollywood, McClean and McKee	<p>That this council notes that significant investment was previously made to deliver a play park, MUGA and amateur league sized football pitch on the Clandeboye road. Notes with regret there have been ongoing issues with the pitch. Instructs officers to reinstate the goalposts and mark out the pitch so that it can be played on by the local community. Furthermore, following consultation with the local community, that a report is brought back regarding the longer term maintenance and enhancement of the site, to ensure any necessary provisions can be considered during the rate setting process to ensure that the football pitch is fit for purpose and can be used as previously agreed.”</p>	<p>Council 28 August 2024 (Item 25.3) September C&W Committee</p>	<p>Report to January 2025 C&W Committee</p>	
630	Community & Wellbeing	19.08.24	Alderman Adair and Councillor Edmund	<p>That Council notes the increasing complaints from local sports clubs regarding the poor annual summer maintenance of football pitches across the Borough and tasks officers to bring forward a report on options to improve the maintenance of our football pitches to ensure our pitches are maintained to a high standard to meet the sporting needs of local clubs and league requirements</p>	<p>Council August 2024 (Item 25.4) September C&W Committee</p>	<p>Report to November C&W Committee</p>	