

Agenda

Agenda

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1. Apologies

2. Declarations of interest

Reports for Approval

3. Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme

Report attached

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4. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

Report attached

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Reports for Noting

5. Queen's Parade Development - Car Parking

Report attached

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6. TAG Minutes

6.1 Comber TAG - 15.8.24

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6.2 Donaghadee TAG - 12.08.24

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6.3 Hollywood TAG - 13.08.24

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

Reports for Noting (In Confidence)

7. Exploris Quarter 1 Report - April - June 2024-2025

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

Report attached

 [7.0 Exploris Q1 Report Apr - June 2024.docx.pdf](#)

Not included

8. Pickie Fun Park - Quarter 1 Report April - June 2024

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

Report attached

 [8.0 Pickie Q1 Report Apr - June 24.pdf](#)

Not included

9. CAG and TAG Minutes (include 'in confidence' information)

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

Copies attached

9.1 Bangor CAG - 5.08.24

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

Copy attached

 [9.1 Bangor CAG Minutes 05.08.2024.pdf](#)

Not included

9.2 Newtownards TAG - 7.08.24

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

Copy attached

 [9.2 Newtownards TAG minutes 07.08.24.pdf](#)

Not included

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

26 September 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Place and Prosperity Committee of the Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards, on **Thursday 03 October** commencing at **7.00pm**.

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough
Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest

Reports for Approval

3. Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme (Report attached)
4. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) (Report attached)

Reports for Noting

5. Queen's Parade Development – Car Parking (Report attached)
6. TAG Minutes (Copy attached)
 - 6.1 Comber TAG – 15.8.24
 - 6.2 Donaghadee TAG – 12.8.24
 - 6.3 Holywood TAG – 13.8.24

ITEMS 7 - 9 *IN CONFIDENCE*******Reports for Noting (In Confidence)**

7. Exploris Quarter 1 Report - Apr-June 2024-25 (Report attached)
8. Pickie Fun Park - Quarter 1 Report Apr-June 2024 (Report attached)

9. CAG and TAG Minutes which include 'in confidence' information (Copies attached)

9.1 Bangor CAG – 5.8.24

9.2 Newtownards TAG – 7.8.24

MEMBERSHIP OF PLACE AND PROSPERITY COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)

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

Unclassified

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ITEM 3

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	03 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	16 September 2024
File Reference	RDP236
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Reference No: 349
Subject	Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme
Attachments	

Background

Members will be aware that a report was presented to Council in June 2024 providing an update on the progress of the Covid Recovery Small Settlements Programme (CRSSP).

This report provides an update and includes a request for approval to submit a variance request for the funding allocation, as well as an extension of the project's completion date.

Project Update**1. School Lane, Ballywalter**

Members will be aware concerns around this project have primarily been linked to the Education Authority requirements surrounding liability. Officers, however, are hopeful about reaching a resolution, aided by communications received from the Department of Education which is liaising with their

Not Applicable

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counterparts in the Education Authority to identify an appropriate way forward on this issue.

In response to the communications received from the Department, a subsequent letter has been sent to hopefully progress this matter. An alternative project in Ballywalter is being considered as a reserve in the eventuality that a way forward on this issue is unattainable. An update will follow in due course.

2. Ballygowan Walking Trail

The design of the walking trail is currently in progress, with officers actively collaborating with the local community group, departmental officials, and internal departments, aiming to finalise an agreed upon design following a period public engagement.

Officers will organise public engagement to present the design to residents, businesses and visitors in October/November 2024, allowing them to provide input. However, it should be noted this is not a consultation but rather an opportunity to refine the design.

3. Greyabbey Community Park

The Greyabbey Community Park includes a pathway to a natural play area providing a range of natural play equipment complimented with picnic tables and seating.

Officers have finalised options and costings for the drainage works to the green space, and the necessary arrangements are in place for the appointed contractor to begin the works. It is proposed that a herringbone system is used which is a common method for ponding issues such as this site.

In addition to the Community Park and proposed drainage works, the cycle rack located within the village will be relocated to the site following a request from the community group. Directional and informational signage will also be installed to promote connectivity between the park and the village and other places of interest within the village.

The allocated budget for this project is £120,000. The revised estimated total costs of the project stand at approx. £65,000. It is proposed the underspend, £55,000, resulting from the changes to this project (removal of viewing platform and pathway) should be returned to the programme pot for reallocation to other initiatives/projects.

4. Kircubbin Coastal Path

Planning approval for this project has been received and the measured term contractor has been engaged.

Due to the recent cost submission from the contractor, it has become clear that the available budget falls short of what is required to execute the project in its entirety. This has delayed the anticipated timeline that was hoped to

Not Applicable

commence in early Summer and conclude by the end of August, as per the HRA requirements.

The total estimated costs for the entirety of the project are approx. £110,000 (to include planting at the water treatment, lighting, picnic benches, seating, and tree planting). The allocated budget is £60,000. A shortfall of £50,000.

The options to be considered:

1. Reduce the scope of the scheme to align with the available budget, £60,000 – this will see the delivery of the lighting element only.
2. Increase the allocated budget to deliver the scheme in its entirety at a cost of approx. £110,000. The additional budget can be met from underspend identified elsewhere within the programme.
3. Reduce the scope of the scheme ie. reduced number of benches and picnic tables and removal of planting at a cost of approx. £90,000. The additional budget can be met from underspend identified elsewhere within the programme.

Officers recommend moving forward with Option 2 as it aligns with the available budget (due to underspend identified elsewhere) and ensures the complete and successful implementation of the scheme, ultimately benefiting the village, its residents and the peninsula.

It should be noted that work cannot commence until April 2025, in accordance with the conditions set by the HRA.

5. Groomsport Harbour Environmental Improvement Scheme – Design Only

This is now complete, and no further action is required.

Officers will actively seek funding opportunities to deliver this project.

6. Millisle Lagoon Environmental Improvement Scheme – Design Only

This is now complete, and a planning application has been lodged.

Officers will actively seek funding opportunities to deliver this project following planning approval.\

7. Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme, Portaferry

The Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme is designed to empower local businesses within the Portaferry public realm scheme's boundary to enhance their shop fronts, thereby creating a visually appealing and cohesive public space that compliments the public realm enhancements.

The scheme will provide financial assistance to businesses by offering a grant of up to £2,500, enabling businesses to invest in exterior improvements to their premises, such as façade renovations and signage.

The scheme opened for applications on Thursday 8 August 2024 for a period of three weeks. An application pack was delivered to all eligible applicants.

Not Applicable

An information session was held on Tuesday 6 August 2024 from 6pm-8pm in the Market House, in advance of the scheme opening to allow businesses to engage directly with officers regarding the scheme processes and application requirements.

The scheme closed for applications at 12noon on Thursday 29 August 2024. A total of 10 applications were received. An assessment panel convened Wednesday 4 September, however, most applications had missing information. The applicants have been provided an extension of five working days to provide the required information. The assessment panel is scheduled to reconvene mid-September to review the updated submissions.

Given the £75,000 budget allocated to this scheme and the receipt of only 10 applications totalling a maximum allocation of £25,000, it is proposed to reissue the scheme to increase participation. Direct engagement with businesses that did not apply will be initiated to encourage their involvement and maximise the use of the allocated funds.

8. Animation Grant Scheme

The Animation Grant Scheme aims to empower local community groups to take an active role in animating and promoting the Small Settlements Programme capital projects, providing a grant of up to £2,500 per village to support their efforts and enhance community engagement, celebration, and awareness.

The Animation Grant Scheme will be rolled out following the completion of the capital projects.

Programme Timeline

In light of the necessary adjustments to the project budgets, and timescales, it is proposed to extend the programme by one year resulting in the completion of all elements no later than 31 March 2026. Officers have consulted with Department officials, who have confirmed that this extension will not pose any issues.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the proposed variances as outlined in Option 2 of the Kircubbin Coastal Path Scheme and officers proceed to submit a formal variance request to the Department for Communities as outlined in the report.

Unclassified

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ITEM 4

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	03 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	16 September 2024
File Reference	RDP164
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Reference No: 350
Subject	Business Improvement Districts (BID)
Attachments	None

Background

Members may be aware that the Department for Communities (DfC) has policy and legislative responsibilities for Business Improvement Districts (BID). The Council has recently been requested by DfC to assist in gaining an understanding of the level of interest in BID within the Borough. This will enable DfC to assess the likely resource requirements to support potential BID within the Ards and North Down area.

Additionally, this research presents an opportunity to assess the likely resource requirements from the Council, by way of matched funding, that would be required in support of potential BID proposals.

BID context

Within Northern Ireland several successful BID have been established with positive results. Examples of successful BID include Belfast's Cathedral Quarter, Ballymena, Newry, and Strabane. Some examples of business improvement objectives from these BID included, 'Boost Business', 'Improving Safety and Security', 'Innovation', 'Accessibility', and 'Supporting Businesses'.

Not Applicable

A constraint of proposed BID is the budget required to complete the multi-faceted process to get the proposal to the ballot stage. If the proposal is approved at the ballot stage, the BID then becomes self-funded for the duration of the 5-year lifecycle of the BID.

DfC requires the Council to work collaboratively with any BID proposer to provide support and potentially match fund the DfC amount provided to enable the necessary resources to get the proposal to the ballot stage.

The potential to provide economic stability and grow the non-domestic rate base as a result of a BID strongly correlates to the 'Economic' priority detailed in the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028. Additionally, it is anticipated that successful BID within the Borough will positively contribute to the achievement of other Council objectives, for example the outcomes from The Big Plan 2017 - 2032:

Outcome 3: 'we have a thriving and sustainable economy'

Outcome 4: 'we have a vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors'

At a Service level, the positive impact BID can enable align with Regeneration's aspiration of improved and empowered high streets. Various completed, current, and future Regeneration projects within the Borough delivered through Covid Recovery, Public Realm, and Urban Regeneration projects have evidenced based data on their positive impact. It is therefore anticipated that any successful BID will suitably complement the existing benefits of Regeneration, or wider Council projects. Furthermore, BID research suggests that economic, social, and wellbeing benefits can also be achieved.

Next Steps

Through engagement between Regeneration officers and the Borough's C/TAGs and Chambers of Commerce, two information sessions have been scheduled for Chamber, DfC, and Council representatives to attend. These sessions, aimed at following up from initial discussions, are scheduled for dates at the end of September, so a short verbal update from these meetings will be provided at the October Committee meeting.

In Bangor, a BID steering group has been established consisting of businesses from arts, leisure, transport, retail, and hospitality sectors. The steering group has been working towards getting their proposal to the ballot stage and have engaged with the Council and DfC to discuss the potential next steps in the process. It should be noted that currently no Bangor Chamber of Commerce Board representatives are part of this steering group.

Concurrently, the Council has been contacted by the Bangor Chamber of Commerce about their interest in a BID proposal from their membership base that also covers various sectors within the same area.

In contrast, the Chamber does not agree that this is the best time to establish a BID given the early stages of the Bangor Waterfront and Queen's Parade projects.

Not Applicable

However, they have advised that they are still keen to engage further on the BID process.

DfC and Council officers welcome the intention by both groups to initiate a BID in Bangor. However, both DfC and the Council's officers deem it unfeasible to support two separate BID proposals within the same areas of the city. Additionally, for the businesses within the BID boundary it would be impractical to be part of two separate BID and could also be potentially contrary to legislation.

If these two potential BID proposers can agree a way forward and subject to feasibility and budget availability, DfC and Council could consider supporting the development of the BID to the ballot stage.

Funding amounts would need to be considered in line with the proposed BID timelines and requirements. As an example, funding for previous BID Steering Groups was £30K from DfC, and £30K from the Council per BID, delivered over two financial years.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council agrees that Officers should contact both potential proposers and encourage them to reconsider their steering group representation as it is believed to be unrealistic to seek budget to support two BID. Additionally, it would be unfair to ask for Council to choose between one proposer and the other.

Unclassified

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ITEM 5

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	03 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	16 September 2024
File Reference	RDP63
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Reference No: 351
Subject	Queen's Parade Development - Car Parking
Attachments	

Background

As Members will be aware, Bangor Marine is expected to commence work onsite on the Queen's Parade Redevelopment in the Autumn. The scheme will be implemented in four phases, with the first phase being Marine Gardens – a 56-week programme of works.

City Centre Car Parking

The first phase of the scheme will result in the loss of 200 free city centre car parking spaces due to the closure of the existing Marine Gardens car park. However it should be noted that the city currently offers 1,300 alternative car parking spaces within close proximity to Marine Gardens.

A recent study confirms that car parking facilities in the city are not currently at full capacity throughout the day on weekdays or at weekends. However, it is anticipated that free car parks will reach capacity more rapidly following the closure of the Marine Gardens car park, prompting a need for strategic planning to accommodate visitors and residents.

Not Applicable

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In particular, it is anticipated that the free car park at Eisenhower Pier will reach capacity in the early afternoon (the busiest period on weekdays). It is also anticipated that this car park will then be used by many who work in the City centre.

Public perception may be that there is a lack of available car parking, particularly since the most visible and free parking sites in the city centre will tend to reach full capacity during peak midday hours.

Upon completion of the Queen's Parade redevelopment, it is anticipated that there will be approximately 255 car parking spaces made available to Queen's Parade users, primarily residents, office staff, and hotel visitors.

Proposal

Whilst the development works at Queen's Parade are the responsibility of the developer, Bangor Marine, which will have a visible presence on site throughout the build, the Council needs to proactively try to assist with the challenges associated with this loss of free car parking.

Officers will:

- create additional temporary parking facilities
- introduce measures to manage the movement of the public between car parks
- deliver a communications and awareness campaign to help residents and business prepare for the changes

Additional Temporary Parking Facilities

As Members will be aware, the Council has received funding of £335,000 from the Department for Communities for the delivery of an Urban Regeneration Programme, which includes the creation of a new temporary car park at The Vennel, Queen's Parade.

Following further investigation of possible options at this site, Officers propose creating a temporary car park at the former Project 24 area instead. Reusing this vacant land in the interim will provide an effective solution to any potential parking challenges in this immediate area as it will optimise existing resources and provide approximately 80 additional city centre car parking spaces.

The site is owned by the Department for Communities and Council will be required to enter into a one-year licence agreement for its use.

As a result of the requirement to submit a planning application, the site will not be operational as a car park until Spring 2025. In the interim, communication and awareness activities will be implemented.

Communication and Awareness Campaign

The Communication and Awareness Campaign will include clear messaging about the car park closure, provide information on the timeline and direct the public to alternative car parks to ensure convenience and accessibility during this period.

The campaign will reference public transport options and encourage active travel.

Not Applicable

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Public messaging will begin in advance of the closure and will emphasise that despite the closure, the city offers 1,300 alternative car parking spaces. Messaging will be disseminated through various channels including direct marketing, social media, signage and web updates.

Messaging will be continually refreshed and adjusted as necessary.

A range of stakeholders will be impacted by the car park closure including car park users, local businesses, Bangor Chamber of Commerce, members of the Bangor City Advisory Group and elected representatives.

Officers will proactively engage with car park users ahead of the closure to provide essential information; this outreach will be conducted through direct communication methods such as notices, flyers, signage and personal interactions; ensuring users are well-informed and can plan accordingly to minimise disruption.

Officers will visit local businesses to notify them of the car park closure and ensure they receive timely communications regarding alternative parking options and any changes that may affect their operations. This proactive approach aims to facilitate understanding and minimise disruption for businesses and customers.

The Bangor Chamber of Commerce, members of the Bangor City Advisory Group and elected representatives will be fully briefed, enabling them to effectively share public communications with their members, constituents, and the broader community.

Managing Movement between Car Parks

As the car parks within the city centre will inevitably experience more pressure due to the car park closure, it is important that city centre parking and Council car parks are managed effectively. To help direct users to car parks that they may not routinely use, it is proposed that double sided signage is placed at the entrance/exit of each Council managed car park within Bangor city centre.

These signs will include a map of the nearest car parks to the location – both Council car parks and those that are available to the public but managed by other organisations or businesses.

Signs will be placed in Council managed car parks at Newtownards Road/Church Street, Abbey Street West, Abbey Street East, Central Avenue, The Vennel, Holborn Avenue, Mills Road, Castle Street, Bingham Lane, Clifton Road and Eisenhower Pier and will be visible on entrance and exit of the car park, where practicable.

It is also proposed that a larger sign detailing all city centre car parks is placed in the vicinity of the existing Marine Gardens car park to redirect users.

Officers have been working with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to identify necessary updates to the road signage relating to car parking throughout the City centre. It is important to note that DfI has criteria that must be fulfilled for the addition of road signs, however, a need has been identified for the addition, removal and

Not Applicable

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replacement of some car park signs and officers are continuing to liaise with DfI to implement these.

It should be noted that officers engaged with a consultant to explore the feasibility and potential advantages of installing digital informational and directional signage rather than the traditional forms of signage. After a cost benefit analysis, operational and strategic considerations, and lack of budget, it was decided not to proceed with this option.

Budget

The additional car park and directional/information signage have been approved under the DfC Urban Regeneration Programme budget.

The additional activity can be met from the existing Regeneration Unit budgets.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council notes this report.

Minutes of the Comber Town Advisory Meeting	
<p>Date: 15th August 2024 Time: 4pm Location: Comber Leisure Centre</p>	
Attendees	<p>Chair, Alderman Trevor Cummings – Ards and North Down Borough Council Alderman Philip Smith – Ards and North Down Borough Council Councillor Libby Douglas, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Anton Cozzo – Interim Head of Regeneration, Ards and North Down Borough Council Sonia Logan – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council Glynis Poots – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Niall McVitty – Deputy Director, Department for Communities</p> <p>Iris McBride – Chamber of Trade Representative Liz Hamilton – Faith Representative Roy Murray – Community Representative</p>
Item 1	Welcome
	Chair, Alderman T Cummings welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Item 2	Apologies
	<p>Apologies were received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councillor Patricia Morgan – Ards and North Down Borough Council - Councillor Rachel Ashe, Ards and North Down Borough Council - Ryan O'Neill, Department for Communities - Stephen Gardiner – Section Engineer for Ards and North Down, Department for Infrastructure
Item 3	Declarations of Interest

	No Declarations of Interest were received.
Item 4	Minutes of previous meeting
	The minutes of the previous meeting, 20 March 2024, were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting content.
Item 5	Review of Actions from previous meeting
	<p>G Poots provided an update on the actions from the previous meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft Wayfinding Strategy Circulated to Advisory Group with meeting documents – this has been added to today’s agenda – please see item 10. 2. I McBride liaised with Comber Historical Society ref photos for gap site and provided the images to the Regeneration team – please see item 7. 3. Advisory group to have a dedicated area within Council website. S Logan confirmed that she spoke with the Communications team and there is a designated page for the new Advisory Group and once the review is complete Officers will report back on this.
Item 6	Update and information from Dfl – Stephen Gardiner, Section engineer, Dfl
	Apologies received from S Gardiner. An update will be provided at the next meeting.
Item 7	Update on Gap sites
	<p>A Cozzo provided an update on the Comber Gap Sites Project.</p> <p>Castle Street: Officers and DfC worked together to get the artwork for the gap sites. As agreed, it was readied for print however Council was unable to get agreement from the owner to accept liability. Other locations were considered by Regeneration and DfC however no other sites could be identified that met the funders objectives. Comber Regeneration have been informed that officers can provide the artwork to the group.</p> <p>Chair asked who owned the fencing over the site.</p>

	<p>Alderman P Smith said he believed it had been installed by Council and traders were concerned about the condition of the fencing and safety aspect.</p> <p>R Murray explained that Comber Regeneration would apply to Live Here Love Here for a grant to replace fence and covering. R Murray explained he had spoke to Norman Russell and if it went ahead Comber Regenerations Public Liability insurance would cover it.</p> <p>Chair noted that the group should go back to the owner to see if they still have agreement.</p> <p>N McVitty said that funding is tied to 31st March and the project is now closed from the Department's point of view.</p> <p>Alderman P Smith enquired if the Council could make the fencing safe. Officers to find out and come back to the group.</p> <p>I McBride noted that The Chronicle, the Chamber and the Historical Society had put a lot of time and work into the original design and pointed out that if people do give their time a project should be pushed forward.</p> <p>The Group discussed the images in the design and the verbal approval to use the images and N McVitty advised the group to be aware of permissions required to use the images in a public setting.</p> <p>A Cozzo informed the Group that Bridge Street is going ahead, and work should commence within the coming weeks.</p> <p>Chair thanked Comber Regeneration and the Chamber for working together on the gap sites.</p>
Item 8	Local Action Group Proposal
	<p>A Cozzo provided an update on the Local Action Group Proposal and thanked the Group for their participation in this process</p> <p>A Cozzo noted that the aim of this process was to maximise the value in the Town Advisory Group by reviewing the current model, its effectiveness, and opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>This review aspect of the process is now complete with 2 recommendations, in summary –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advisory Groups to transform to Local Action Groups.

	<p>To enable to make the change from advisory to action Regeneration believe budget is a key resource that is required (a recommendation from the review). The Regeneration team are seeking approval for each advisory group to be given a budget. Governance, processes etc are to be confirmed. The intention is to make the change from advisory to action and encourage ownership, empowerment, and hopefully participation.</p> <p>2. Support Unit created to assist An aim of this is to redefine the role and remit of Town Advisory Group ensuring alignment between suggestions, plans, actions, frameworks used, with the masterplans and council's aspirations for the towns and city. To enable the additional unit to be created Council will engage and encourage participation with key stakeholders including the chair of each Action Group and officers from Regeneration, Tourism, Economic Development etc, to be part of this unit.</p> <p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping exercise to be conducted for each town/city to make sure the structure of the Action Group and Support unit has good representation • Regeneration to consider potential budget, the process, governance, and terms of reference are adequate. It is hoped this will be available for the next meeting of the Town Advisory Group in November and if agreed, proceed with report to Council. <p>The Group discussed the proposal and mentioned that if a budget was in place, it should be used for a value-added piece and not for work that Council would be doing.</p> <p>I McBride asked if the group could choose projects from their wish list, A Cozzo confirmed that they could if it aligns with key objectives and the Masterplan.</p>
Item 9	Any Other Business
	<p>Urban Regeneration Programme 2024-2025 A Cozzo explained that the Council were recently given an opportunity to apply for DfC Urban Regeneration funding. Application was approved by Council on 31st July. Officers in a timely fashion were able to produce an action plan which meets the challenges and priorities of each town and city which are unique to each of them.</p> <p>Two elements of the action plan relate to Comber:</p>

Animation - window dressing and banners
Placemaking –footfall counters strategically placed to give an evidenced based approach to regeneration or chamber initiatives.

The Group discussed the footfall counters, location and how they work. A Cozzo explained they collected data based on activity and identified hotspots within the town.

The projects align within the masterplan goals to drive continued growth, development, and revitalisation of the urban areas.

The Programme must be delivered no later by 31st March 2025 as per the Contract for Funding.

Town Centre On-street Parking Restrictions

A Cozzo discussed with Dfl the process / possibility of parking restrictions. A Cozzo explained that Newtownards had raised this previously and the Council would be keen to progress, enquiring if Comber want to discuss this further internally or with Regeneration/Dfl.

The Group discussed this topic and decided to proceed.

Parklet

A Cozzo informed the Group that planning permission expires on the parklets early next year. The Group discussed the positive feedback and confirmed they would like officers to apply to extend the planning consent.

R Murray pointed out that the planting needs replaced, and officers will report back to the Group.

Wayfinding Strategy (copy circulated)

A Cozzo thanked the Group for the valuable input into the Wayfinding Strategy.

Chair emphasised the importance of communicating the proposed spend to the public and a phased approach would be advisable.

I McBride drew attention that the current town signage at the entrance to Comber is hidden behind trees.

Officers to contact Dfl to look at improving the visibility of the signage.



	<p>Business Improvements Districts (BIDs)</p> <p>A Cozzo discussed the BIDs initiative and advised that DfC have recently contacted Council to enquire if any town in the Borough would be interested in working up a BIDs proposal. N McVitty gave some details of other BIDs within NI. A Cozzo will bring a report on BIDs to Committee in October and therefore is asking if Comber Town Advisory group and Chamber would be potentially interested in further discussions.</p> <p>Response: TAG and Chamber would discuss further and advise A Cozzo and DfC a meeting would be helpful in the decision-making process.</p> <p>Laurelbank</p> <p>R Murray discussed the issues of Laurelbank with the Group. S Logan read an update from the previous minutes and officers are to bring a further update to the Group at the next meeting.</p> <p>Weeds in Carpark</p> <p>R Murray explained that the carpark is full of weeds and the grass has only been cut in Comber once this year. Officers will report this back to the Parks department.</p>
Item 10	Date and Time of Next Meeting
	<p>The date of the next meeting was set to be arranged for November 2024.</p> <p>Meeting finished 17:30</p>

Minutes of the Donaghadee Town Advisory Meeting	
<p>Date: 12th August 2024 Time: 4pm Location: Donaghadee Community Centre</p>	
Attendees	<p>Alderman Mark Brooks – Ards and North Down Borough Council Councillor Eddie Thompson - Ards and North Down Borough Council Councillor James Cochrane - Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Anton Cozzo – Interim Head of Regeneration, Ards and North Down Borough Council Sonia Logan – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council Calum Symington – Administration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>(Chair) Adrian Kerr – Donaghadee Community & District Association John Caldwell – Donaghadee Community & District Association</p>
Item 1	Welcome
	Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting
Item 2	Apologies
	<p>Apologies were received from</p> <p>Councillor Hannah Irwin - Ards and North Down Borough Council Councillor David Chambers - Ards and North Down Borough Council Stephen Gardiner – Department for Infrastructure Niall McVitty – Department for Communities Kate Boyd – Donaghadee Community & District Association Alan Johnson - Ards and North Down Borough Council</p>
Item 3	Declarations of Interest
	No Declarations of Interest were received at this time.

Item 4	Sports Hub Update - Alan Johnson, ANDBC
	<p>Apologies were received from A Johnston Alderman M Brooks provided an update in the absence of A Johnston:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Original plans were to create a sports hub in Donaghadee - This remains a project within the capital programme - Includes pitches for hockey, football, rugby and cricket - The local clubs decided they did not wish to go ahead due to costs involved - Project is currently with the council to move forward in terms of potential delivery models - Moved from Priority 6 to Priority 19 on the list of 22 projects - Rugby and Football clubs are looking at new leases for their current grounds - There is a programme coming to council to curtail the capital programme as it automatically adds 1.45% to the rates every year - Lots of hurdles to overcome <p>A Cozzo thanked Alderman M Brooks for the update.</p> <p>Action: Regeneration to request an update from Leisure Services in relation to the Sports Hub</p> <p>J Caldwell noted his bitter disappointment that A Johnson had not attended or deputised another officer to attend in several meetings. Further stated that it was not expected for the sports hub project to drop to 9th place on capital list.</p> <p>Chair suggested a special meeting for A Johnson to attend and update the group.</p> <p>J Caldwell queried that if the football club lease both pitches in Donaghadee, where would the public be able to play football in the area? Northfield is not fit for cricket as balls are exiting the field onto Killaughey Road and presenting a serious safety issue. The new link road being created will push more traffic onto the road and stated that Leisure Services are not taking a wide enough view in the matter.</p> <p>Action: Regeneration to arrange a special meeting of the TAG for Leisure/A Johnson to attend and provide an update.</p>
12Item 5	Minutes of previous meeting

	The minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the previous meeting. Proposed by Councillor J Cochrane and seconded by J Caldwell.
Item 6	Review of actions from previous meeting
	<p>S Logan provided an update on the actions from the previous meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Constable S Eccles (PSNI) to be invited to next meeting to provide an update on anti-social behaviour in Donaghadee - Rolled over to next meeting due to extensive agenda 2. S Gardiner to contact Translink in relation to bus stop relocation to relieve traffic congestion - Roll over to next meeting – Apologies received from S Gardiner 3. Councillor G McCollum to provide update to members with information from meeting with Graeme Bannister RE The development of sports facilities in Donaghadee - Email update provided, Alderman M Brooks to provide in person update at this meeting 4. S Logan to keep Advisory Group updated with any developments in relation to the wheel/skate park – No update at present 5. Regeneration to request information regarding wardens, shifts and fines for dog fouling in the Donaghadee area. The number of fixed penalty notices issued within the borough 2022 = 41 2023 = 19 January-June 2024 = 11
Item 7	Update and Information from Dfl – Stephen Gardiner, Dfl
	Apologies were received from S Gardiner
Item 8	DCDA Progress Report – John Caldwell, DCDA
	<p>J Caldwell provided a progress report on behalf of DCDA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Car parking is the key issue in the town - New businesses have opened on Bridge Street - Can't get people to walk to that part of the town - Two derelict addresses as well - Suggest a review of business rates for derelict properties - Increase rates to encourage investment

Item 9	Town Centre Signage
	<p>Alderman M Brooks advised that the camera obscura located at the Moat is the only one of its type in Ireland but there are no signs to direct people to it or other information points. Work is ongoing with the Rotary Club to create directional signage to the camera.</p> <p>Councillor E Thompson advised that the only sign to the camera is located in Lemon's Wharf car park.</p> <p>A conversation has been had with DfI regarding signage for Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat, DfI have no issues and are very keen to progress it as the location is hard to find without direction</p> <p>A Cozzo advised that regeneration have met with members from the Sir Samuel Kelly group who appear very proactive. Regeneration received several additional signage requests and will be taking a more strategic approach to maximise coverage with less signs leading to street clutter etc.</p> <p>A Cozzo further suggested a sub-group to be set up to look at the signage in Donaghadee.</p> <p>Action: Regeneration to set up Signage Sub-Group to discuss additional signage requests for Donaghadee. Sub-group will then produce a report to go to Council</p> <p>The members suggested tying in the Donaghadee signage with the wayfinding strategy. The members enquired the costs of wayfinding strategy.</p> <p>A Cozzo responded that costs are expected of over £1 million across the Borough.</p> <p>J Caldwell noted the costs for the wayfinding seemed excessive. A Cozzo replied that included a higher spec of signage.</p>
Item 10	Local Action Group Proposal
	<p>A Cozzo thanked everyone for help in completing the review of the advisory group.</p> <p>A Cozzo advised a draft report had been received from the Consultants which Council Officers were currently reviewing. A Cozzo provided a summary:</p>

- Advisory Group to become a Local Action Group
- The main aim is to maximise the benefit of the group
- There is a real appetite for more input
- Want to see more action
- Budget required for the delivery of the masterplan (Regeneration will support a budget request to Council)
- Local Action Group to be supported by a Support Unit comprising of representation from all Actions Groups across the towns and city
- Next step is a group mapping exercise in each of the towns and city to identify key stakeholders and ensure the correct representation for each group

Chair stated that the support unit was long overdue and asked for examples of what the group would be responsible for.

A Cozzo replied that part of the rationale would be giving more power to the group to carry out feasibility studies etc. The group could carry out any work as they see fit with officers from different departments able to provide advice.

Alderman M Brooks noted that feasibility studies usually don't go anywhere.

J Caldwell asked what way the budget would be allocated i.e. a five way split.

Alderman M Brooks noted that Donaghadee had one of the most effective public realm schemes.

A Cozzo stated that Donaghadee is the fastest growing town in the Borough and he would like to see more representation in the group with the mapping exercise.

J Caldwell asked if other councils had used this approach.

A Cozzo advised that the Council sees it as a way of empowering the group and they are able to give support.

Councillor J Cochrane suggested there should be consequences for non-attendance of members and suggested it should be after three missed meetings.

Chair suggested it would be good to bring groups together to share ideas and stories.

	<p>A Cozzo advised that he is trying to move away from silo groups and his intention is to take a report to Council in early 2025 for launch in April 2025.</p>
Item 11	Any Other Business
	<p>Urban Regeneration Programme 2024-2025 A Cozzo explained that DfC have made Regeneration aware of a new funding opportunity. Regeneration have made an application for funding and secured £373,000 which includes a 10% contribution from Council. There were three main elements included in the application. Animation to include lamppost banners and window dressing. Connectivity including directional signage. Finally, Placemaking to include laneway enhancements and footfall counters. The money has come from a de-commitment of funds from another area and will include £60,000 for improvement works to Crommelin Car Park</p> <p>J Caldwell stated that David Lindsay had advised Sir Samuel Kelly car park would be getting marked out for spaces.</p> <p>J Caldwell also noted that Portrush has allowed parking of campervans and charges 50p per hour. Alderman M Brooks noted that the car park would have to comply with Caravan Park legislation to do this and it would be monitored very closely by other caravan parks on the peninsula.</p> <p>A Cozzo also raised the plans to bring footfall counters into the town. J Caldwell replied that DCDA worked with the Royal Statistical Society to produce a 36-page report of evidence for investment, it highlighted the need for more arts and culture focus so DCDA have set up a creative hub.</p> <p>Town Centre On-Street Car Parking Restrictions A Cozzo advised some of the other towns within the Borough are considering requesting DfI to extend the 1-hour parking restriction to 2-hours. A Cozzo requested feedback from the group as a consideration for Donaghadee.</p> <p>The Chair and J Caldwell replied that it was not wanted in Donaghadee. Car parking is at a premium and 1-hour is plenty.</p> <p>Risks to Shore from Rising Sea Levels and Storm Surges-John Caldwell DCDA J Caldwell advised that DfI regard this as a matter for the Council. MLA, Connie Egan is arranging to meet the Minister of Agriculture, Andrew Muir,</p>



	<p>and DAERA officials. Peter Caldwell, Head of Assets and Property Services is also reviewing costs for a natural reef.</p> <p>Alderman M Brooks noted at a Council meeting it was agreed the Chief Executive would engage DfI re Millisle Car park, Alderman M Brooks queried why this was not the case for the harbour as it continues to deteriorate.</p> <p>The Chair stated that Council had taken ownership of the harbour with no condition report completed.</p> <p>J Caldwell noted that DfI can make grants and loans available to local Councils.</p> <p>Action: Regeneration to follow up with Assets and Property Services regarding natural reef</p> <p>Proposed Sensory Walk-John Caldwell DCDA J Caldwell advised this project had been costed at £20,000 and would be in conjunction with Clifton School and Killard School. It needs to be wheelchair friendly; the parks department are agreeable to the project and Groundworks would fund 50% of the project costs. Location would be at the side of the Parish Church.</p> <p>A Cozzo noted that this could be something that suits the new Local Action Group.</p> <p>Chair added that it is also to have the projects shovel ready.</p> <p>Any Other Business Alderman M Brooks stated that recently there had been a classic car night, benches at the harbour were removed to accommodate but they have not been replaced.</p> <p>J Caldwell asked how the town promotes recycling involving school children with competitions etc.</p> <p>Action: Regeneration to speak to sustainability officer about a school visit</p>
<p>Item 12</p>	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p>
	<p>The date of the next meeting is to be set for November Meeting finished 17:14</p>

Minutes of the Holywood Town Advisory Meeting	
Date: 13th August 2024 Time: 4pm Location: Queens Leisure Complex, Holywood	
Attendees	<p>Alderman Alan Graham – Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Anton Cozzo – Interim Head of Regeneration, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Sonia Logan – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Calum Symington – Administration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Niall McVitty – Deputy Director, Department for Communities</p> <p>Nadia Dornan – Youth Representative</p> <p>Marilyn Toogood – Faith Representative</p> <p>Christine Layton – Community Representative</p> <p>Rachel Woods – Holywood Shared Town</p>
Item 1	Welcome
	<p>A Cozzo welcomed everyone.</p> <p>A Cozzo assumed role of chair in Councillor L McLarens absence.</p>
Item 2	Apologies
	<p>Apologies were received from:</p> <p>Alderman Martin McRandal - Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Stephen Gardiner – Department for Infrastructure</p>
Item 3	Declarations of Interest
	No Declarations of Interest were received at this time.
Item 4	Minutes of previous meeting
	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Item 5	Review of actions from previous meeting
	<p>S Logan provided an update on the actions from the previous meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wayfinding Strategy to be distributed to Advisory Group members – Complete 2. W Smith to contact contractor reference Hibernia Street car park – Complete (contractors were very cooperative and supported the event) 3. Alderman M McRandal to contact NCLT re Queen's Leisure Complex community use – covered in agenda.
Item 6	Update and information from Dfl
	<p>Apologies were received from S Gardiner</p> <p>Alderman A Graham raised an ongoing issue with bins being left on footpaths blocking pedestrians. One particular premise has a van parked outside.</p> <p>C Layton advised that the chamber is dealing with the issue as well.</p> <p>Alderman A Graham advised that he has asked the traffic wardens and was told that they have certain areas they cannot interfere with.</p> <p>M Toogood stated that S Gardiner has organised a meeting with traffic enforcement in September to discuss.</p> <p>Action: Regeneration to follow up obstruction issue with Dfl</p>
Item 7	Local Action Group Proposal
	<p>A Cozzo provided an update on the review of the Advisory Group and the proposals received from the consultant, Paul Hogarth Company and Place Solutions -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advisory Group to become a Local Action Group - The main aim is to maximise the benefit of the group - There is a real appetite for more input - Want to see more action - Budget required for the delivery of the Masterplan (Regeneration will support a budget request to Council) - Local Action Group to be supported by a Support Unit comprising of representation from all Action Groups across the towns and city

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Next step is a group mapping exercise in each of the towns and city to identify key stakeholders and ensure the correct representation for each group <p>N Dornan advised that it would be nice to have a budget but queried that if budget doesn't come will that stop the action group.</p> <p>A Cozzo responded that we wanted the independent review to give stronger evidence to go to Council with. Regeneration would still be keen even in the absence of budget as it would push for more support from other Council departments and maximise the groups impact.</p> <p>M Toogood stated it would be good to have the power for suggestions.</p> <p>N McVitty advised that members can contact the Regeneration Team to add items to the agenda. There was a discussion regarding preparing the items for the agendas for the meetings in future, and it was suggested that there would be a more collaborative approach with the members.</p> <p>M Toogood stated that there can be a feeling of "What are we doing here" and that there are issues out there that people are not aware of.</p> <p>N McVitty advised that the structure of the group is important, it was originally based on the focus of delivering the public realm scheme and follow up revitalisation programme. It can now be more regeneration focused and could be so much larger and further reaching. Any individuals in the local community can bring issues to the group</p> <p>A Cozzo advised that the next steps were a mapping exercise to determine good representation for the group with a wide range of views. A report will be brought to the next meeting of the Advisory Group, followed by a report to Council early 2025, with the aim of the Action Group commencing in April 2025.</p> <p>R Woods asked how many other recommendations had been made. A Cozzo replied the two recommendations (Local Action Group and creation of a Support Unit) are the focus, but broader collaboration mentioned in the review will be taken forward as an additional internal recommendation.</p> <p>R Woods asked if the proposed budget would need to be considered under the rates setting process. A Cozzo confirmed.</p> <p>R Woods stated that she thought wider representation was good and asked if there had been discussion with other departments.</p>
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	<p>A Cozzo replied yes and that they want to get people in place who can give answers on the day. S Logan added that there was internal consultation throughout the process.</p>
<p>Item 8</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p>
	<p>Urban Regeneration Programme 2024/25 A Cozzo explained that the DfC informed the Council of a potential funding opportunity. The Council submitted an application for a range of urban regeneration projects at a total value of £373K (£335,700 funding and £37,200 Council contribution)</p> <p>N McVitty advised that the application has been approved.</p> <p>A Cozzo stated that there were three main elements included in the application.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Animation 2. Connectivity 3. Place Making <p>A range of projects were proposed for Holywood to include window dressing of vacant business units, footfall counters, directional signage to/from the coast etc.</p> <p>C Layton asked if it would tie in with the wayfinding strategy. N McVitty stated that the window vinyls could be used to direct people to places of interest.</p> <p>R Woods stated that there was lots of work on historical Holywood going on around the town.</p> <p>N McVitty advised that he is keen on trying things out, value can be had in lessons learned and if there is any thoughts or ideas to let the team know.</p> <p>M Toogood stated that there had been lots of talk of encouraging people up and around the town.</p> <p>The members discussed the poor state of the beach area at Seapark. It's overgrown with barely any sand left. M Toogood went on to state that the locals are dissatisfied and fully understands that the area maybe overgrown due to protected species, Council have yet to issue a response to any queries. Alderman A Graham advised that the explanation given to him was there was lots of regulations about protecting beaches.</p>

M Toogood praised the playpark facilities but noted that there was an abundance of weeds.

Action: Comments to be passed to relevant department

Town Centre On-Street Car Parking Restrictions

A Cozzo stated that Council and DfI have been working together on a strategy to change parking restrictions on streets from 1-hour to 2-hours.

R Woods questioned what the rationale behind the strategy was.

A Cozzo replied that Newtownards Advisory Group see value in increasing the length of time, allowing people to shop and get coffee, however the 1-hour restriction does allow rotation of cars. The outcome will depend on the feedback from chambers and the towns.

Alderman A Graham stated that it would depend on the availability of off-street car parking.

N Dornan stated that she can see some benefit, but residents may find it annoying.

C Kayton added that it ties in with the Wayfinding Strategy and walking but need to change people's mentality.

Wayfinding Strategy (*copy circulated*)

A Cozzo stated that Regeneration is content with the strategy proposed but reminded the group that there is no available budget for delivery. Regeneration can take the report to Council to ask for budget. Trying to make it more strategic/accessible but there are significant costs involved (Approx. £1million across the borough)

Alderman A Graham asked if there were costs per town available.

A Cozzo stated rough costs had been provided.

Alderman A Graham stated that the public can sometimes have a perception of these costs, they need to be taken in context.

A Cozzo stated that there was a sound rationale for the scheme.



	<p>Update on Community use of Queen’s Leisure Complex (Queen’s Hall)</p> <p>A Cozzo advised that as part of the Masterplan was the repurposing of Queens Leisure Complex and advised SERCO have a contract in place until 2028. Regeneration thought it was too early to engage in any repurposing now given the contract period. There is a community event planned for 24th September to commence early engagement, this will be led by the Community & Culture Unit.</p> <p>M Toogood stated that it might give people hope that something is being done. Queen’s Leisure Complex is not in the best condition and the council should have been monitoring the condition. The kitchen has been condemned and anything that can be done to bring it back would be good.</p> <p>R Woods asked who was invited to the September event and noted that she was here as Robin Maysfield replacement. Holywood Shared Town had not been invited and it was unrealistic to invite people now. A revised proposal would be brought to the event. The SERCO contract does include a clause to support arts and culture which they are not doing.</p> <p>A Cozzo noted that invites had not been sent out yet</p> <p>Action: Nicola Dorrian, Head of Community & Culture to be contacted RE invitation</p> <p>Alderman A Graham questioned if availability of community facilities was the issue or was it more to do with the management of them. Council halls in Bangor are reasonable to rent.</p> <p>M Toogood noted that the room being used could be 2.5x the cost of council facilities.</p> <p>A Cozzo added that Regeneration can be the conduit and are open to discussions.</p>
Item 9	Date and Time of Next Meeting
	<p>The date and time of the next meeting to be issued (October/November).</p> <p>Meeting concluded 16:59</p>