

October 23rd, 2024

**Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 30th October 2024** at **7:00 pm** in **Hybrid - City Hall, Bangor & via Zoom**.

# Agenda

## Agenda

[C 30.10.2024 Agenda.pdf](#)

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1. **Prayer**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Mayor's Business**
5. **Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the Month (Copy attached)**

[Mayoral Engagements October 2024.pdf](#)

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6. **Minutes of Council Meeting held on 25 September 2024 (Copy attached)**

[C.25.09.2024 Minutes.pdf](#)

Not included

[C.25.09.2024 MinutesPM.pdf](#)

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7. **Minutes of Committees**

- 7.1. **Audit Committee dated 23 September 2024 (Copy attached)**

[AC 23.09.2024 Minutes.pdf](#)

Not included

[AC 23.09.24 Minutes PM.pdf](#)

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- 7.2. **Planning Committee dated 1 October 2024 (Copy attached)**

[PC.01.10.2024 Minutes.pdf](#)

Not included

[PC.01.10.2024 Minutes PM.pdf](#)

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- 7.3. **Environment Committee dated 2 October 2024 (Copy attached)**

[EC 02.10.24 Minutes.pdf](#)

Not included

#### **7.4. Place and Prosperity dated 3 October 2024 (Copy attached)**

PP 03.10.24 Minutes.pdf

Not included

PP 03.10.24 Minutes PM.pdf

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#### **7.5. Corporate Services Committee dated 8 October 2024 (Copy attached)**

CS.08.10.24 Minutes.pdf

Not included

CS.08.10.24 Minutes PM.pdf

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#### **7.6. Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 9 October 2024 (Copy attached)**

CWB 09.10.2024 Minutes.pdf

Not included

CWB 09.10.2024 MinutesPM.pdf

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### **8. Consultations**

#### **8.1. The Executive Office – Consultation on the Draft Report for Government 2024-2027**

The Executive Office – Consultation on the Draft Report for Government 2024-2027 – Consultation responses to be submitted by 4 November 2024

Item 8.1 - Programme for Government Response.pdf

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8.1. Consultation - Programme for Government 2024 - 2027.pdf

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#### **8.2. DEARA – Environmental Principles Policy Statement**

DEARA – Environmental Principles Policy Statement – Consultation responses to be submitted by 9 December 2024

8.2. DAERA Environmental Principles.pdf

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### **9. Deputation Requests**

#### **9.1. Request from Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service**

Report attached

[Item 9.1 - Deputation Request - NIFRS.pdf](#)

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[Item 9.1 Appendix I - Deputation form - NIFRS.pdf](#)

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## **9.2. Request from Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Company – Kelly Centre**

Report attached

[Item 9.2 Request for Deputation.pdf](#)

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## **10. Nomination to Outside Bodies**

Report attached

[Item 10 - Nominations to Outside Bodies.pdf](#)

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## **11. Residual Waste Disposal Tender - Delegated Authority Request for November Environment Committee**

Report attached

[Item 11 - Residual Waste Treatment Tender.pdf](#)

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## **12. Nominations to Capital Strategy Working Group**

Report attached

[Item 12 - Nominations to Capital Strategy Working Group.pdf](#)

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[Item 12 - Appendix 1 - Capital Strategy Working Group ToR.pdf](#)

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## **13. Local Government Representatives to the Area of Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs) - Update on Appointment process**

Report attached

[Item 13 - Local Government Representatives to the Area of Integrated Partnership Boards \(AIPBs\).pdf](#)

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[Item 13 - Appendix.pdf](#)

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## **14. Care Day Request**

Report attached

📎 *Item 14 - Care Day Request.pdf* *Page 184*

📎 *Item 14 - Appendix 1 - Care Day Request - AND.pdf* *Page 185*

## **15. Schedule of Meetings 2025**

Report attached

📎 *Item 15 - Schedule of Meetings 2025.pdf* *Page 187*

📎 *Item 15 - Appendix.pdf* *Page 188*

## **16. Launch Event for the DFI Active Travel Delivery Plan**

Report attached

📎 *Item 16 Launch Event for the Dfi Active Travel Delivery Plan.pdf* *Page 192*

📎 *Item 16 - Appendix.pdf* *Page 194*

## **17. Coronavirus Act 2020-Registration of Deaths and Still-Births**

Report attached

📎 *Item 17 - Coronavirus Act 2020-Registration of Deaths and Still-Births.pdf* *Page 196*

📎 *Item 17 - Appendix Coronavirus.pdf* *Page 198*

## **18. Event Locations 2025**

Report attached

📎 *Item 18 - Event Locations 2025.pdf* *Page 199*

## **19. Resloution**

### **19.1. Letter from the Chief Executive of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council on Racism**

Correspondence attached

📎 *Item 19.1. - 241021 Ards and North Down Council - Motion - Racism - Sept R&C 8.1.pdf* *Page 204*

## **20. Sealing Documents**

## **21. Transfer of Rights of Burial**

## **22. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)**

Report attached

📎 *Item 22 - NoM status report.pdf*

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📎 *Item 22 - NoM Tracker.pdf*

*Page 206*

## **23. Notices of Motion**

### **23.1. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Blaney and Hollywood**

This Council notes with deep concern the fraudulent activity impacting local businesses through the manipulation of bank account information on Just Eat partner centre accounts, resulting in substantial financial losses; recognises the critical role these businesses play in supporting the local economy and acknowledges the severe impact these losses have on their ability to operate and resolves to write to Just Eat, expressing our deep concern over the financial harm caused to local businesses and calling on the company to urgently engage with affected businesses to resolve this devastating issue and prevent further incidents.

### **23.2. Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Douglas**

That this Council notes the 70% recycling target set out in the Climate Change Act 2022 and that the current household recycling average is 50.7%.

Further notes the aims and intentions around the consultation on “Rethinking our resources: measures for climate action and a circular economy in NI” includes the reduction in grey bin capacity by either volume of bin or three weekly collections;

Further notes that nappy collection scheme was not referred to in Rethinking our resources: measures for climate action and a circular economy in NI” despite around 4% of residual waste being made up of disposable nappies and other absorbent hygiene

products;

Further notes with concern the impact reduced grey bin capacity will have on those households disposing of nappies and/or other absorbent hygiene products as well as the amount of recyclable materials such products contain;

This Council writes to the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs expressing its view that there is a need for a nappy collection scheme in Northern Ireland in order to meet recycling targets and to support households if grey bin capacity is reduced as a result of any future Departmental strategy and, further, that this Council would be happy to engage with the Department on how to best deliver such a scheme.

And that a copy of this motion is sent to other Councils in Northern Ireland to encourage them to write to the Minister on similar terms.

### **23.3. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Boyle and Wray**

That officers bring back a detailed report surrounding options to celebrate the huge success of the Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex. Options would include a Civic Reception to celebrate 6 years of the huge success of the facility in 2025.

### **23.4. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S Irvine and Councillor W Irvine**

This Council agrees to consider as part of the upcoming rates setting process sufficient support to the cultural expression programme. Subject to this process, consideration should be given to committing funds from Council which are sufficient to meet the costs of planning activities without the uncertainty of funding coming from other sources, as has been the case for the last two years. Should din year funding become available from other sources, Councils contribution would be adjusted accordingly. This commitment reflects the Council's support for local cultural initiatives in an attempt to ensure that groups can prepare for their events.

This will guarantee that each group agreeing to abide by the cultural expression agreement will receive a letter of offer in advance of 31st May, regardless of whether

external funding is available via the Good Relations Action Plan, or any other third-party source.

This commitment reflects the Council's support for local cultural initiatives, ensuring that all the participating community groups can prepare for their activities without uncertainty regarding funding.

### **23.5. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Harbinson and McCracken**

That this Council should:

1. Prepare a visual map for all public sector land in Bangor City Centre and Ards Town Centre and colour code holdings that are potentially connected with future developments (even if not yet fully agreed), including Bangor Waterfront, Queen's Parade, Newtownards Citizen's Hub and the Council's Car Park Strategy. This includes public land belonging to the Council and NI Executive Departments.
1. To further identify public sector land that is currently unproductive and outside the scope of wider strategies, which could be made available for future private sector development. This includes land that is either vacant, contains empty or derelict buildings, or contains buildings that are under-utilised or dated to the point that redevelopment is required. The map should also include land that is facilitating meanwhile use.
1. Prepare a summary report to highlight how unproductive public sector land could be re-purposed and how such a process could be progressed within the bounds of current planning considerations and Council/Executive disposal policies.



## **Circulated for Information**

-

- a) Invest NI - Policy and Programme Screening Report (Correspondence attached)
  
- b) Department of Education - Section 75 Screening Report July - September 2024 (Correspondence attached)

📎 *a) INI Business Strategy2024-2027.pdf*

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📎 *b) Dept of Education Section 75 Report.pdf*

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

### **24. Contract award for the provision of a Managed Sentinel and Extended Detection and Response (XDR) Service**

Report attached

📎 *Item 24 - Contract award for XDR Service.pdf*

*Not included*

### **25. Communities and Place Funding Application Outcome**

Report attached

📎 *Item 25 - Communities and Place Funding Application Outcome.pdf*

*Not included*

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

23 October 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 30 October 2024 at 7.00pm.**

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

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

1. Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Mayor's Business
5. Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the Month of October 2024 (Copy to follow)
6. Minutes of Council meeting dated 25 September 2024 (Copy attached)
7. Minutes of Committees (Minutes attached)
  - 7.1 Audit Committee dated 23 September 2024
  - 7.2. Planning Committee dated 1 October 2024
  - 7.3. Environment Committee dated 2 October 2024
  - 7.4. Place and Prosperity Committee dated 3 October 2024
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17. Coronavirus Act 2020-Registration of Deaths and Still-Births (Report attached)
18. Event Locations 2025 (Report attached)
19. Resolutions
  - 19.1 Letter from the Chief Executive of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council on Racism (Copy correspondence attached)
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#### **\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

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

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

**LIST OF MAYOR'S/DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS  
FOR OCTOBER 2024**

**Thursday 3rd October 2024**

- 10:30 Receiving Line for Prince Edward, Crawfordsburn Scout Centre  
18:30 Paris Celebration Event, SSE Arena, Belfast

**Saturday 5th October 2024**

- 10:00 Ards Community Hospital Ladies Committee Coffee Morning,  
Streaton Presbyterian Church  
12:00 Shorelife Castle Espie followed by Mount Stewart  
19:00 North Down Athletic Club 50th Gala, Clondeboy Lodge Hotel

**Sunday 6th October 2024**

- 13:30 Veterans Day Event, Conway Square, Newtownards

**Monday 7th October 2024**

- 10:30 Ulster Scots Festival PR Photo, Ards Arts Centre

**Wednesday 9th October 2024**

- 18:00 St Vincent De Paul 180th Reception, Bangor Castle

**Thursday 10th October 2024**

- 11:00 Libraries NI Digital Detox, Bangor Library  
13:00 Four G Visit, Bangor Castle

**Friday 11th October 2024**

- 19:00 Heart of Peninsula Care Awards, La Mon Hotel & Country Club

**Saturday 12th October 2024**

- 09:30 Business Breakfast, Clondeboy Estate  
10:15 Bryansburn Allotments Celebration, Bryansburn Allotments  
15:00 NIFRS Firefighting Skill, Bangor Castle  
18:00 NIFRS Freedom of the Borough, Bangor Castle

**Sunday 13th October 2024**

- 15:10 Ards BB Annual Church Service & Parade, 1st Newtownards  
Presbyterian Church, 66 Frances St, Newtownards

**Monday 14th October 2024**

18:30 Khulula Choir NI Tour Dinner & Auction, Harrisons, Greyabbey

**Wednesday 16th October 2024**

15:30 Photo Op, Balloo HRC

16:30 Freddie McMonagle Visit, Mayor's Parlour, Bangor Castle

19:00 North Down Museum 40th Anniversary, North Down Museum, Bangor Castle

**Thursday 17th October 2024**

10:45 Positive Aging Roadshow, Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre

11:30 Eswatinin Ladies Choir Visit, Bangor Castle

12:30 Mayor's Poppy Launch Photo Op, Bangor Castle

14:30 Bobbio/Brescia/Bangor Academy Visit, Bangor Castle

**Friday 18th October 2024**

12:15 Ballygowan Seniors 40th Anniversary, Ballygowan Village Hall

19:30 Hollywood Music Festival Young Musicians' Showcase Concert, St Philip and St James Parish Church, Hollywood

**Saturday 19th October 2024**

10:30 J Wright Butchers 100 years, J Wright Butchers, 13 High Street, Donaghadee

19:00 NI Children to Lapland Trust Gala Ball, Clandeboye Lodge Hotel

19:30 Eve Williams Music 10th Anniversary Invitation Studio 1A, Hamilton Road, Bangor

**Tuesday 22nd October 2024**

14:00 Ulster In Bloom Results, Old Market House, Main Street, Bangor

**Wednesday 23rd October 2024**

07:00 Bangor Rotary Club Charity Breakfast for RNLI, Bangor Golf Club, Broadway, Bangor

**Wednesday 23rd October 2024**

14:00 PR photo for November's Jobs, Support and Training Fair, Bangor Aurora



**Thursday 24th October 2024**

12:45 Glenlola Collegiate School Annual Prize Distribution, Glenlola Collegiate, Valentine Road, Bangor

**Thursday 24th October 2024**

19:00 Bangor Business Awards Evening, Clandeboye Lodge Hotel

**Friday 25th October 2024**

12:00 Maritime Power to Project X Meeting, Bangor Castle

**Saturday 26th October 2024**

12:30 Ardnacashel Horseriding Event, 51 Tullynagee Road, Comber

## 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 25 September 2024 commencing at 7.00pm.

<b>In the Chair:</b>	The Mayor (Councillor Cathcart)	
<b>Aldermen:</b>	Adair Armstrong-Cotter Brooks Cummings Graham (7.16pm)	McAlpine McDowell McIlveen McRandal Smith
<b>Councillors:</b>	Ashe Blaney Boyle Creighton Cochrane Chambers Douglas Edmund Gilmour (7.04 pm) Harbinson Hollywood S Irvine W Irvine Irwin	Kennedy Kendall Kerr (7.25pm - Zoom) McClellan McCollum McCracken McKee (Zoom) McKimm McLaren Moore Morgan Smart Thompson 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), Director of Environment (D Lindsay), Interim Director of Place (B Dorrian), Head of Communications and Marketing (C Jackson), Democratic Services Manager (J Wilson) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

### 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 lateness were received from Alderman Graham and Councillors Gilmour and Kerr.

**NOTED.**

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

The Mayor sought Declarations of Interest from Members at this stage and none were declared.

Later in the meeting Councillor W Irvine and Councillor Chambers declared an interest in Item 7.5.1 - Leisure Transformation Response to Notice of Motion.

**NOTED.**

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

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor began by thanking a former Member, Councillor Rossiter, for his time and service to Ards and North Down Borough Council and wished him every success on his move to Dublin to take up new employment.

He reminded Members of the Shorelife celebration which was due to take place on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October and the Veterans Day Parade which was planned for Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October. He advised that Members should inform Democratic Services of their wish to attend Veterans Day.

**NOTED.**

#### **4.1 Veteran Awards Invitation**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing that the Mayor's Office had received an invitation, inviting the Mayor (Councillor Cathcart), and the Veterans Champion (Alderman Cummings) to attend the Northern Irish Veteran Awards which was due to take place on 23 October 2024 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast. The cost of attendance was £90 per person which could be covered by existing budgets.

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

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

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

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

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

(Appendix I)

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

The Mayor referred to the Tide and Turf event which had taken place in Portavogie on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September and the enormous success it had been in showcasing the area's seafood and fishing industry. He had particularly enjoyed being involved in the preparation of some squid during a cookery demonstration. Another event that he had attended in Portavogie had been the reopening of the playpark there.

The Mayor had attended the opening of the Action Cancer pop up shop on Main Street, Bangor, which he said was well worth a visit and reminded them that the Mayor's Charities were also giving support to Action Cancer.

The Homecoming welcome at Aurora for Jack McMillan, Olympic Gold Medallist, had been a very special occasion and Jack's visit to his swimming club had been inspiring and had fully engaged every child and young person who had been present on the day. The Mayor offered his thanks to Jack for his continuing commitment to Bangor.

The previous Saturday the Mayor had attended a beach clean at Bangor Bay with the 9<sup>th</sup> Bangor Scouts and the Ards and North Down Beach cleaners. He thought that it had been inspiring to see the amount of people involved in the clean-up but disappointing to note that there was a lot of debris and litter discarded. He hoped that in the future fewer beach cleans would be necessary but for the moment it was encouraging to see the commitment from so many people to make a difference to the local environment.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Wray, that the information be noted.**

## **6. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING DATED 28 AUGUST 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the minutes be approved and adopted.**

## **7. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

### **7.1. Planning Committee dated 3 September 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

## **7.2. Environment Committee dated 4 September 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Alderman McAlpine, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that the minutes be approved and adopted.

### **In respect of Item 9 – NI Municipal Waste Management Statistics January to March 2024**

Alderman Adair took the opportunity to put on record his thanks to those who carried out the refuse collections throughout the Borough, they worked hard through every season and provided the one service that every ratepayer felt that they benefited from. He was aware that these employees also went the extra mile for many people, particularly the elderly and vulnerable. The Mayor agreed and reported that he had recently had breakfast with the staff at North Road Depot and the Balloo site and had passed on the Council's thanks then but Alderman Adair's comments could also be added to that. He added that in all his time as a local councillor he had never once received a complaint about the staff carrying out refuse collections.

Alderman W Irvine referred to the decrease in the amount of waste collected at the Household Recycling Centres and if that was expected to continue and was the booking system proving to be a deterrent. In response the Director of Environment stated that this decrease was not in itself a bad thing adding that the amount of landfilled residual waste had fallen by 21% and so the net position was extremely positive for the Council. It had long been established that the Council was taking in too much waste into its Household Recycling Centres and some of that was recyclable material but that was far outweighed by the massive drop in landfill waste.

The Director went on to explain that it was believed that the Council had been taking in waste from various sources such as from outside the Borough and had also been taking in business waste. He presumed that that waste was now being disposed of elsewhere but the net position for Ards and North Down was grossly positive for the period and this was the first time the Council had ever had a recycling rate above the average for Northern Ireland.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McAlpine, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that the minutes be approved and adopted.**

## **7.3 Place and Prosperity dated 5 September 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

### **In respect of Item 5 – Ards and Bangor Business Awards 2024-2025**

Councillor Gilmour asked to make a slight amendment to add Councillor W Irvine as a reserve to the Ards and Bangor Business Awards nominees if another Member could not attend and that was supported by Alderman McIlveen.

**AGREED.**In respect of Item 8 – Update on Village Plan Engagement Process

Councillor McCollum referred to an inaccuracy in the minutes on page 30 where she was quoted as saying that people wished these to be talking shops rather than stressing that people did not wish to see these as merely talking shops.

**NOTED.**

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the minutes be approved and adopted subject to the amendments.**

(Alderman Graham entered the meeting at 7.16 pm)

**7.4 Corporate Committee dated 10 September 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

**7.5 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 11 September 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

The Mayor asked if the minutes could be agreed apart from Item 33 which would be heard later in the meeting in confidence.

Proposed by Alderman Brooks, seconded by Councillor Hollywood that the minutes be approved and adopted.

In respect of Item 26 – Portavogie and Portaferry 3G Pitches and Portaferry Sport Centre Floor Bi-Monthly Update

Alderman Adair referred to the impact of the EU ban on single use plastics which had led to the difficulty proceeding with the Portavogie 3G Pitch and asked if the Council was now clearer on the way forward in light of that ban. He went on to say that the Head of Leisure had informed the Community and Wellbeing Committee that there was a natural compound that could replace plastic and it would also work well in this climate. The Alderman had been disappointed that slow progress had been made despite the Council having known of this ban for some months. He felt that was having a detrimental impact on the project and he hoped to see progress soon for a facility that he believed was so desperately needed.

Alderman Adair asked a further question about Portaferry Sports Centre and the progress of investigating the ownership there and also the request for an onsite meeting. The Director confirmed that ownership had been established with the St Ignatius Trust who owned the building and the Council had seen documentation that

it had been opened in 2008, with Council having a five-year term license to use the premises, and that Council hoped to renew the license and a meeting had been arranged to discuss this. The Alderman appreciated the clarity and hoped that an onsite meeting would take place soon.

Councillor Boyle stressed that it would be important to have all stakeholders represented at a meeting and he had heard conflicting reports and information around the ownership, but he looked forward to that taking place.

### **NOTED.**

#### In respect of Item 6 - Consultation Response to Public Health Act 2024

Alderman McIlveen asked to make a proposal which was seconded by Alderman Adair;

That Council agrees to the completed consultation response form except in relation to the following questions:

Q13 - should be undecided given the reasons outlined in the officer's response.

Q15 - should be undecided as officers are looking for further information.

Q26(a) - should be undecided as there is a request for clarity.

Q27 - undecided as lacking in detail.

Q28 - disagree due to concerns regarding impacts on the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Q32a and b – disagree due to concerns regarding impacts on the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Q43 - disagree as there are concerns regarding the impact on the rights and freedoms of individuals. It is Council's view that this document should have been subject to impact assessments before consultation.

Furthermore, that the Council writes to the Minister who should withdraw this consultation given the vagueness in the language used and the lack of impact assessment of what is proposed and expresses its concern that it contains proposals which adversely impact on the rights and freedoms of individuals which are excessive in a democratic society.

Alderman McIlveen recognised that the Public Health Act officers had made a fantastic response with a full rationale, and he saw the need for an updated Public Health Bill. However, the powers needed to be proportionate, and he felt that what was being presented would not look out of place in North Korea or the darkest days of the former East Germany. The Health Minister also had concerns about ideas such as mandatory vaccination and if he had reservations surely the Council should be concerned. The Alderman also considered that what was set out was vague in its language and clarity and it would be remiss of the Council not to set out its concerns.

Seconding the amendment Alderman Adair concurred with the comments of his colleague and expressed the concerns of constituents, and that the Democratic Unionist Party which opposed anything that limited personal freedom. In his view, this should be taken very seriously and he therefore asked Members to support the

proposal of Alderman McIlveen and call on the Minister to withdraw the consultation and express the concerns of constituents.

Councillor Irwin spoke for the Alliance Party and did not think she could support the amendment since it was detailed, and she had not received advance sight of it. She did have severe reservations about the language in the Bill and noted that the consultation period had now been extended. She thought that given the sensitivities it might be more appropriate for each political party to make its own response.

Councillor P Smith concurred with Councillor Irwin and thought that the detail would have been better discussed at the Community and Wellbeing Committee. He said he would not support the amendment on the basis he had outlined but did support the comments of Alderman McIlveen in respect of the limits to personal freedom.

Councillor W Irvine stated that he would support Alderman McIlveen and that any legislation that went against personal freedom was not something that he could support.

Councillor Kennedy considered that this particular issue cut to the heart of the legitimacy of this Chamber and the authority and rights to support people. He stressed that the issue was far too important for individual parties to comment on. He thought there should be extreme concern and fear in relation to this piece of legislation as it was framed, as it could be viewed as a roadmap to tyranny. The main issue was one of fundamental rights to freedom and personal autonomy and the obscenity of government and state in attempting to reach into the way people could live their lives. He thought that it was perfectly reasonable to seek clarity and supported the proposal made by Alderman McIlveen.

Councillor Kendall thought it was difficult to come to a decision since she had been unable to consider all the points and believed that there should be a balance between personal freedom and health protection. She invited Alderman McIlveen to bring the matter back to the Committee for closer consideration and hoped he would agree.

The Mayor invited Alderman McIlveen to do that and it was agreed to reconsider the matter at the next meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee particularly in light of what the Minister had come back with. The Director of Community and Wellbeing agreed to the decision of the Members that the matter be deferred to the Committee which would have delegated powers to respond within the time limit.

**AGREED.**

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Brooks, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the minutes be approved and adopted apart from Item 33 and that Item 6 be referred back to the Community and Wellbeing Committee for further discussion, with the Committee given delegated powers to agree the response.**



## 8. DEPUTATIONS

### 8.1 Deputation from NILGA – Leadership Programme for Elected Member Development (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Chief Executive detailing that a deputation request had been received from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (appendix attached).

RECOMMENDED that the Council accepts the request for a deputation from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association and refers it to the next Council meeting or the appropriate Committee.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted, and that the Deputation be referred to the Corporate Services Committee.**

## 9. ITEM WITHDRAWN

## 10. SEALING DOCUMENTS

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

- (a) Grants of Rights of Burials: D40496, D40499, D40591-D40629
- (b) Transfer deed – ANDBC to NI Water – land at Newtown Bridge, Comber.
- (c) Tender for Pickie Fun Park Redevelopment.

## 11. TRANSFER OF RIGHTS OF BURIAL

Transfers received as detailed below:

William McNeill to Roger Moore

Ballyvester section C grave D1

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Harbinson, that the transfers be approved.**

## 12. NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS REPORT

(Appendix IV)

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

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

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

### **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 this outstanding achievements in sport.

The Mayor informed Members that the Motion would be heard at the full Council meeting this evening and had a minimum of six signatures.

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

Proposing the Notice of Motion Alderman McIlveen stated that a Freedom of the Borough was the highest honour the Council could bestow on an individual or organisation. An individual must be a person of distinction or have rendered eminent service by way of an exceptional contribution to the Borough or whose achievements brought additional recognition to the Borough. One of the criteria to be met was to have achieved sustained international recognition in the arts, sports or business.

It gave him enormous pleasure to nominate Rhys McClenaghan to be awarded the Freedom of Ards and North Down Borough and was delighted to have been supported in this nomination by Councillor S Irvine, who had seconded the Motion and the other Members who had signed it on a cross-party basis.

Rhys' ties to the Borough were well known. He had been born and raised in Newtownards and had attended Regent House School in the town. Initially he had trained at Rathgaele Gymnastics Club, then for a period at his own home, then in Dublin and ultimately, in his hometown at the Ards Blair Mayne Complex. Rhys had been awarded the British Empire Medal in recognition of his services to gymnastics.

The Alderman described Rhys as a precocious gymnastic talent at only 6 years old. He and his coach, Luke Carson, later plotted a ten-year plan to conquer the world on the pommel horse and win Olympic Gold at Paris. Rhys had probably first come to the world's wider attention when he qualified for the final of the pommel horse at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in 2018. At the time all eyes had been on the reigning World and Olympic Champion, Max Whitlock. However, here was a young lad from Newtownards in a major international multi-sport event competing in the

final on the other side of the world. Rhys had stunned everyone (except maybe himself and his coach) by beating Max Whitlock. It was an amazing statement of arrival on the world stage.

Since then, Rhys had performed at an exceptionally consistent level winning the European Championships a few months later in 2018, then again in 2023 and 2024, and the World Championships in 2022 and 2023, as well as Silver at the 2022 Commonwealth Games and Bronze at the 2019 World Championships.

He went on to say that hopes were high for the Olympic Games in Tokyo but frustratingly Rhys fell short of his own exacting standards. Looking back, he said we had all felt his pain as he was interviewed afterwards but at the same time there was a steely determination in his words and an unflappable confidence in his own abilities. It perhaps made what unfolded in Paris sweeter.

Qualifying in first place to reach the final, Rhys was among the favourites to win Gold in what was an incredibly strong field of gymnasts once again up against two-time Olympic Gold Medallist Max Whitlock. In the end, Rhys fought off the challenges of Kurbanov and Kazakhstan and Nedoroscik of the USA to secure gold.

Alderman McIlveen stated that Rhys was more than just the achievements that were seen on the television screen. He was also an incredible ambassador for the Borough and the town of Newtownards. There was barely a time that Rhys was interviewed that he did not speak about his hometown and we knew about the ambition that was realised to be able to train in Newtownards. It was truly an honour for us to have a European, Commonwealth, World and Olympic Champion to live here, train here and inspire us all.

He thought Rhys was an inspiration, he was a young boy who had a dream, he worked hard and trained hard and was incredibly focused and his failures were only additional steps to his success. Alderman McIlveen said that the palpable excitement of his three children gathered round the television to watch the pommel horse final was only matched by them waiting with the crowds to catch a glimpse of Rhys at Conway Square during the homecoming and he could still hear his five year old son saying, "I can see Rhys".

That sort of thing was just priceless, and it meant the world to young people to have someone they could look up to and aspire to be like living on their doorstep. He acknowledged that Rhys was still so young but had achieved so much and was the only gymnast to have won the European, Commonwealth, World and Olympic titles.

He paraphrased the words of the commentator Sid Waddell about Eric Bristow: "When Alexander of Macedonia was 33, he cried salt tears because there were no more worlds to conquer...[McClenaghan's only 25]".

Finishing he said that the Town Hall in Newtownards had been lit up gold and civic events and homecomings had been planned but, in his mind, and in the mind of those who had co-signed this Motion, Rhys was worthy of the Council's highest honour. The honour was rarely given to an individual and it was statement of what he had achieved and the high regard in which he was held by the Council and the

wider Borough. Alderman McIlveen looked forward to the support of Members for the Motion.

Seconding the Motion Councillor S Irvine said he was very proud to support the Notice of Motion with his fellow Ards Councillors and the outgoing Sports Forum Chair. He said that Rhys was a globally recognized athlete and an exemplary figure in the world of gymnastics. Rhys had not only brought immense pride to his hometown of Newtownards but also the Borough and had made history on the world stage as one of the most successful pommel horse specialists of his generation.

Rhys's journey to international stardom began at the age of 18, when he made headlines by defeating the reigning Olympic Champion at the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

Within weeks, he followed that remarkable achievement by claiming the European title, setting a precedent for his incredible career. Rhys was now a three-time European Champion and a two-time, back-to-back World Champion on the pommel horse.

Moreover, his extraordinary achievement of becoming the only gymnast to hold Commonwealth, European, World, and Olympic titles on a single apparatus solidified his position as a trailblazer in his sport.

Born and raised in Newtownards, Rhys was not only a global athlete but a local hero. Unlike many Olympians who trained abroad, Rhys had remained committed to his roots, choosing to train in his hometown. His pride in representing Northern Ireland on the international stage, particularly at the Commonwealth Games, had endeared him even further to the people of this Borough.

Rhys's global success was complemented by his influence beyond the gymnastics arena. He recently became the face of a major advertising campaign for G-Star Jeans, with his image adorning billboards across Japan, Asia, and the Netherlands.

While we might be slightly biased in our admiration, it was undeniable that Rhys was a global sporting superstar, recognized and respected across the world for his achievements.

Councillor S Irvine stated that it was with great pride that he stood before the Council to talk about Rhys, who would be an outstanding ambassador for Ards and North Down. This was a young man whose achievements had not only placed him on the world stage but had brought unprecedented recognition to the community.

With a world-class gym based right here in the Borough, alongside the incredible coach, Luke Carson, this athlete had shown dedication, resilience, and passion in gymnastics. He was not only an Olympic gold medallist but also a global figure with two World Championship titles and three European gold medals to his name. His accomplishments marked him as the first-ever Olympic Gold medallist from our borough, a true pioneer.

As an ambassador, Rhys would inspire future generations, showing them that greatness was possible starting right here in Ards and North Down.

Councillor S Irvine said that Rhys' influence reached far beyond sports - his journey embodied discipline, commitment, and the power of a local dream to shine on the world stage. There was no doubt that Rhys would represent the Borough with pride and distinction, serving as a role model for everyone.

He concluded by saying that Rhys McClenaghan's commitment to excellence, his love for his hometown, and his groundbreaking success in sport made him a truly deserving recipient of the highest honour that the Borough could bestow. By awarding him the Freedom of the Borough, the Council were not only celebrating his past achievements but also acknowledged his continuing role as an ambassador for Newtownards, the Borough and Northern Ireland on the world stage.

As a Councillor for Newtownards Councillor Smart spoke stating that he was delighted to support the Motion for Rhys. Much had rightly been said about his achievements at the Homecoming in Conway Square a few short weeks ago inspiring people near and far. Rhys had great personal tenacity with determination and the ability to work hard. He viewed failure as being a natural step on the ladder to success and had encouraged others to overcome challenges and adversaries.

It was clear that despite his success Rhys had never forgotten where he came from and had the spirit of giving back by encouraging and inspiring others in equal measure. At the Blair Mayne Bursary Awards he had never seen such a group of young people more captivated with a speaker. He described Rhys's journey and the challenges of training on pommel during the Covid pandemic. His success could only be achieved with the support of his parents, wider family circle, his coach Luke Carson and the support of the people of Newtownards.

Councillor Smart explained that the Council had always endeavoured to support Rhys and the honour would be richly deserved and Rhys would inspire and achieve for many years to come. The whole Borough and wider community had embraced Rhys and he was pleased that the Council had also supported with quality facilities that had a strong impact on health and wellbeing.

Councillor Boyle knew that the Motion had Council wide support. He spoke as a past Chair and a current Vice Chair of the Ards and North Down Sports Council which had regularly had Rhys at sports awards and the Member had witnessed and supported his journey. At only 24 years of age he had achieved every honour and award and this was a good news story and it was right that Rhys should be honoured for his amazing achievement. Indeed, Councillor Boyle himself felt honoured to have his name on the Motion which would bestow the Freedom of the Borough on Rhys.

Alderman McDowell said that his fellow Councillors had already described Rhys in detail, highlighting his achievements and he thought that Rhys had put Newtownards on the map for all the right reasons and the town itself was very proud of him as a local son. The Alderman witnessed the crowds in Conway Square and noticed that Rhys had taken a good deal of time to sign autographs, and he thought that it was fitting that the Council had decided to honour him in this way. Rhys was a great role

model as a local lad who had a dream and a vision and was prepared to put in the work to achieve that despite the obstacles that stood in his way. He had come through and was young enough to continue to have a positive impact on his sport.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter agreed with everything that had been said and Rhys had reminded us of how it felt to be proud of the Borough and Newtownards and where we came from and what could be achieved through hard work and dedication. The message was that if you achieved the Borough would be behind you and she thought that Rhys truly deserved such a high honour. While the Council offered small grants to those participating in sport, she knew those were limited but they were a token of the Council's support.

The Mayor said it was abundantly clear how commendable this award was given Rhys' age and that he would have many more years left to achieve in his sport. Rhys' Homecoming Parade would be one of the highlights of his Mayoral year and had been a joyful occasion which was full of local pride. This Olympic success had not been seen in Northern Ireland since Mary Peters had achieved her Gold Medal. It was hoped that this local success would be a lasting legacy in the Borough and he was in no doubt that Rhys truly deserved this honour.

Councillor Kennedy thought that Members had laid out in beautiful detail the size of the achievement so he thought he should focus on the personality and character of Rhys and what it took to be an Olympian, mental toughness and resilience, intelligence to analyse his own regime and learn from it and the ability to block out distractions. A strong work ethic was essential setting goals and doing whatever was needed to achieve those, he needed to be coachable, willing to learn while being hopeful and optimistic in the aim for perfection. That was an example for everyone and he was pleased to support the Motion for the colossus that Rhys was.

Councillor Moore and Alderman Graham added their support to the Motion referring to the delight and pride Rhys had brought to the Borough and praising him for his success on the world stage and bringing the Gold Medal back to the Borough.

Alderman McIlveen thanked Members for all for the words of support and he repeated that Rhys McClenaghan was an incredibly worthy recipient of this award. He also recommended that Members view the True North documentary which showed some of the background to the journey that Rhys had taken and was a fascinating insight into his life. A poem had also been written for Rhys by Rosemary Jenkinson entitled Pommel Horse which he said was excellent.

It was agreed that a report be brought to the Corporate Services Committee outlining the initial timescales for the Freedom of the Borough event.

**AGREED.**

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.**

### **13.2 Notice of Motion from 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 in Northern Ireland.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Irwin, seconded by Councillor McRandal, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Environment Committee.**

### **13.3 Notice of Motion from 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 resolve 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.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman P Smith, seconded by Councillor Wray, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Community and Wellbeing Committee.**

(Councillor McKimm left the meeting at 8.18 pm)

## **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

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

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

(Councillor W Irvine and Councillor Chambers declared an interest in Item 7.5.1 and left the meeting at 8.20 pm)

### **7.5.1 Matter Arising from Item 33 – Leisure Transformation Response to Notice of Motion (Appendix II)**

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

An alternative proposal was made in relation to the future operating model for leisure. That fell and the officers' original recommendation was agreed.

**14. RENEWAL OF CROWN ESTATE RECREATIONAL LEASE, BANGOR**

(Appendices V & VI)

**\*\*\*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)**

The Council was asked to approve the Heads of Terms and instruct the Council's solicitor to proceed with finalising the Lease. It was recommended that the Council acceded to the requests.

The recommendation was agreed.

**14.1 RENEWAL OF CROWN ESTATE RECREATIONAL LEASE BANGOR – ADDENDUM – BANGOR MARINE REQUEST FOR A LICENCE FOR SITE HOARDING** (Appendix VII)

**\*\*\*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)**

The Council was asked to approve the granting of a licence for site hoardings subject to a number of terms and conditions. It was recommended that the Council acceded to the request.

The recommendation was agreed.

**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)**

**\*\*\*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 a 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).

The Report recommended that Council agreed to award the tender in accordance with the procurement process.



The recommendation was agreed

## **16. LMP TENDER FOR A TRANSPORT ACADEMY**

**\*\*\*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**

A report updating Members on the outcome of the Transport Academy Tender. The report included details of the tender award.

The report recommended that the Council award the contract for the provision of a Transport Academy to DFPF Ltd.

## **17. LMP TENDER FOR ACADEMY FOR PEOPLE OF DISABILITIES**

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

**TITLE OF REPORT:** LMP Tender for Academy for People with Disabilities

**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**

A report updating Members on the outcome of the Academy for People with Disabilities Tender. The report included details of the tender award.

The report recommended that the Council award the contract for the provision of an Academy for People with Disabilities in the Ards and North Down area to NOW Project.

### **RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

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

### **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 9.02 pm.

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

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Audit Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards, on Monday 23 September 2024 at 7.00pm.

### **PRESENT: -**

**In the Chair:** Councillor Hollywood

**Councillors:** Harbinson  
Ashe 7.01pm (Zoom) McLaren  
Cochrane (Zoom) Thompson 7.41pm (Zoom)  
McCollum Wray

**Independent Member:** P Cummings

**In Attendance:** NIAO – Brian O’Neill  
NIAO – Richard Ross 7.09pm (Zoom)  
Deloitte – Camille McDermott

**Officers:** Chief Executive (S McCullough), Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Head of Finance (S Grieve) and Democratic Services Officer (P Foster)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

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

Apologies had been received from Councillor McKee.

**NOTED.**

(Councillor Ashe joined the meeting at this stage via Zoom – 7.01pm)

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman sought Declarations of Interest at this stage.

No Declarations of Interest were declared. Members were reminded that they could declare throughout the meeting.

**NOTED.**

### **3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

#### **(a) Audit Committee Minutes from 24 June 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McLaren, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the minutes be noted.**

#### **(b) Follow-Up Actions**

(File ref: AUD02)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services stating that in line with best practice, the purpose of this report was to make the Audit Committee aware of the status of outstanding recommendations or any outstanding actions from the previous Audit Committee meetings.

Item	Title	Action	Officer	Status
<b>September 2023</b>				
6b	Report to those charged with governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on progress in respect of compensation for the vesting of William Street site</li> </ul>	Director of Corporate Services	Verbal update at Committee
<b>December 2023</b>				
6b	Audit and Assessment Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drafting of formal communications strategy</li> </ul>	Head of Communications and Marketing	Due December 2024
<b>June 2024</b>				
11	Draft Financial Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of Scheme of Allowances to remove the need for Members to claim SRA.</li> </ul>	Head of Finance	In progress
12	Private Meeting with Auditors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need for progress with regard to Governance and Internal Audit issues</li> </ul>	Director of Corporate Services	In progress – see item 6a
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members requested earlier release date of draft financial statements</li> </ul>	Head of Finance	Due June 2025
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need for additional meeting to be considered during Annual Meeting</li> </ul>	Director of Corporate Services	June 2025

RECOMMENDED that Committee notes the report.

The Head of Finance provided members with a brief overview of the report highlighting the salient points within it.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McCollum, seconded by Councillor Harbinson, that the recommendation be adopted.**

#### **4. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

##### **(A) Policy Register Status**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Corporate Services which explained that as members would be aware, the Council operated in compliance with many internal/external facing policies which had been developed by officers.

A register of all live policies had now been established to ensure that all policies could be located with ease and to ensure that the correct version was being used. The register could be found on ANDi (Publications/Policies) and contained the following details for each policy:

- Policy / Decision / Strategy / Plan
- Screening Number
- Policy name
- Description
- Relevant Service
- Current Status
- Date of issue
- Latest version
- Date of review
- Owner/Job Title
- Policy format
- Link
- Notes (if applicable)

The ANDi site also contained the Policy Development Process which was a step-by-step guide for creating a policy. To ensure consistency there was also a template front page for each policy going forward.

This would be communicated to all HOST and SUMs through the Governance Briefings (The Role of Heads of Service and Service Unit Managers) that were taking place in September and October 2024.

RECOMMENDED that Council note this report.

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

## **5. EXTERNAL AUDIT**

### **(a) Draft Report to those Charged with Governance**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above report from Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO).

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

At this stage the Chairman welcomed Mr Brian O'Neill to the meeting and invited him to make comment on the report.

Mr O'Neill guided members through the Draft Report to those charged with Governance, highlighting the salient points within it, noting that the Local Government Auditor had reported on the 2023-24 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification.

(Richard Ross, NIAO joined the meeting at this stage via Zoom – 7.09pm)

Councillor McCollum proposed, seconded by Councillor Wray, to note the report.

Councillor McCollum welcomed the report tabled before them from the NIAO commenting that it was well laid out and user friendly. Referring to Finding 1 – Energy Costs pertaining to the Serco Contract on Page 11, Councillor McCollum noted that £600,000 was a significant amount of money and as such she asked at what stage that could have been brought to the attention of elected members. She also asked if it was likely that a similar situation could arise again.

In response, the Head of Finance advised that at the outset the contract was made available to all perspective bidders and that detail had been included as part of the overall procurement process. He stated that a variation had been put in place during the 2023-24 year adding that the overall contract itself was over 200 pages. The Head of Finance stated that he believed the Council had received value for money on this occasion due to the competitive process that had been run in 2012.

In relation to the recommendation that incentives had capped limits put onto them, Councillor McCollum asked if that had of been in place in this case was that something which would have reduced the amount of windfall payable to Serco.

The Head of Finance indicated that it was difficult to know as the limits set on it would need to have been known. He advised that while he had been involved with the management of the Contract over the past ten years he had not been part of the initial procurement panel and as such he was unsure what other way the contract could have been constructed.

In relation to Finding 2 – Procurement of Bangor Art Regeneration Project, Councillor McCollum noted that the NIAO had endorsed the approach adding that she was aware of the amount of work which had been undertaken during the summer by the Chief Executive along with Council officers. As such she hoped the general public would be reassured by this. Continuing Councillor McCollum then referred to Page 29, Recommendation 1 – Disposal of Ards Leisure Centre and the outstanding compensation of £1.8M. She asked if that valuation still remained current and sought an overall update on the matter.

The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the Council had provided the DSO with two additional Supplementary Statutory Declarations and the Council's solicitor was feeling more confident about bringing the matter to a conclusion. He added that the matter was now at the discretion of the DSO noting that both Dfl and Translink were to progress the matter.

Referring to the Finding 1 – Energy Costs pertaining to the Serco Contract on page 11, Councillor Wray voiced major concern with this matter. He noted that Serco had been given the £600,000 for the period between 2014 to 2023, adding that he was amazed by that figure. He expressed the view that a contract drawn up in that manner was disingenuous and added that this was ultimately ratepayers money. Continuing he noted that the Auditor had indicated that should not have taken place and recommended that it did not happen again and as such he did not believe that did represent good value for money. Finally he acknowledged that while the matter was complex it was half a million pounds which could have been invested in the Borough.

The Head of Finance indicated that he understood members concern particularly as £600,000 was a large amount of money. This was a recommendation based upon one element of the entire Management Fee and when the contract was taken as a whole what was being focused on was five to six pages of the overall 200 page document. He reiterated that it was believed that Council had received value for money based on the process followed at the outset.

Councillor Wray referred to the target which had been set by the Council and asked if Council believed at the time that this would happen.

The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that Council would have gone out with a Tender for which there would have been many bidders and within that a number of assumptions would have been made. One of those assumptions would have been around energy consumption being fixed and bidders would have responded on the basis. If they were of the view that they could do better than that, it would have been reflected in the totality of the price which they were willing to offer as part of a competitive process. If the energy responsibilities had been set up differently it was officers view that the Council would not necessarily be any better off as a result of this.

At this stage Councillor Wray asked if there was an issue which elected members had a concern about what the process was to bring it to the attention of the Audit Committee. Also in terms of matters such as this he asked if it was possible for members to receive the totality of such issues.

Members were advised of the procedures and Standing Order around matters of Any Other Notified Business. The Director of Corporate Services reminded members that the report before them had been produced by the NIAO within which it had articulated its findings and recommendations. Management responses were sought as part of the report and as the report was only received by Council last Thursday, management had not yet had the opportunity to make those responses. As such those responses would be brought to the next meeting of the Audit Committee and would largely be based upon the comments made by both him and the Head of Finance.

At this stage Councillor McLaren commented that the sum of half a million pounds was quite eye watering and she asked if it was normal practice.

In response the Head of Finance stated that he had not been involved in the procurement of this contract which had been undertaken by the legacy Council. However he indicated that he was aware through a level of understanding of such matters that this was a model contract which had been supplied by legal advisers at that time. He added that as far as he was aware it had been based upon similar contracts in use throughout Great Britain.

Councillor McLaren asked if the Council had any contracts currently in place which were similar to this one.

The Head of Finance advised that as far as he was aware this was unique for Council largely due to the size of the facility and the contract.

Continuing Councillor McLaren asked if the figure of £600,000 had been given out as a lump sum or a yearly sum in addition to their management fees.

In response the Head of Finance confirmed that this was not in addition to the management fee but instead was part of the overall price paid and was dependent upon consumption and the price, therefore the sums varied from year to year.

From an outsider perspective Councillor McLaren commented that this did not look good and as such she questioned why the Serco contract had not been provided in its totality.

The Head of Finance indicated that was the way the contract had been constructed and why the recommendation had focused on just one element of the management fee was really a question for the Auditor.

At this stage Councillor Harbinson noted the Auditor's comments at the bottom of Page 11 which detailed that:

"We do however note that a contract variation was put in place in the 2023-24 year and the Council now pay the actual energy costs on behalf of Serco".

As such he asked if the Council would see a slight revision downwards in respect of the Management Fee in that case.

In response the Head of Finance advised that another element of the management fee was a surplus in the Council's favour and the Council had always benefited from that. As such he stated that this underlined the importance of looking at the payment mechanism in its entirety.

At this stage Mr Cummings indicated that he was not as concerned as many of the elected members were as he was aware of how complex and difficult contracts of this nature were to understand and administer. He expressed the view that everyone would greatly benefit from understanding the entire contract, as one little bit of the contract had been extracted for consideration where it was clear profit was being made. As such he believed that to be an unfair way to look at the contract and instead what needed to be considered was how it had been set up at the outset. He asked officers to bring back a wider paper which would allow elected members to consider it in its entirety. He added that it would appear to be the case that Management's response would take a different view from the Auditor and the Committee would be asked if it was content with the Management response or not.

The Head of Finance indicated that he would be able to provide that.

Thanking Mr Cummings for his comments, Councillor McCollum indicated that she felt more assured adding that members of the Audit Committee needed to have a greater understanding of what was included in contracts such as this. She also added that when the papers had initially been circulated to members of the Committee the report from the NIAO had not been included. As such she presumed that it had come in late and management had not had the opportunity to formulate its response.

The Director confirmed that the report had been finalised last Thursday evening and in order to get it to members in a timely manner it had been circulated without a management response.

Councillor McCollum indicated that it would be very beneficial for members to have sight of such weighty documents as soon as possible in advance of any meeting.

At this stage Mr O'Neill welcomed the comments which had been made and informed the Committee that the Audit remained ongoing and was a time consuming process. He added that it was not unusual for a draft report to be circulated without management comments and continuing he stated that it was a tight timeframe for the Audit Office and as such he asked members to bear with them every year.

(Councillor Thompson joined the meeting at this stage via Zoom – 7.41pm)

Mr Cummings asked about process at this stage noting that management responses would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee, thereby meaning it would be six months before the Council received the Final Report to those charged with Governance.

The Head of Finance confirmed that it would be the December meeting of the Audit Committee.



Mr Cummings questioned how a final report could be agreed without the Committee having agreed the management response.

At this stage Mr O'Neill reminded members that the Final report would be between the NIAO and Council officers. Additionally an Annual Audit Letter would be produced by the end of November and there could be a knock on effect on that if there were delays to finalising the report to those charged with governance.

A discussion ensued on the best way forward and a single item agenda meeting was suggested.

Councillor Wray proposed, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that a further meeting of the Audit Committee with a Single Item Agenda was held in advance of the next scheduled meeting in December 2024.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that a further meeting of the Audit Committee with a Single Item Agenda was held in advance of the next scheduled meeting in December 2024.**

## **6. INTERNAL AUDIT**

### **(a) Progress Report 2024/25 Deloitte**

- i. Park and Cemeteries Service Review**
- ii. Economic Development Service Review**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above reports from Deloitte.

The Chairman invited Camille McDermott, Deloitte to present her report.

Ms McDermott advised that this was a quarterly progress report for the conclusion of the first quarter of 2024/25. Two reports had been completed and brought to the Committee for consideration and field work had also been completed on a further two service areas. Members were advised that Service Reviews took into consideration Service Planning, Budgetary Control, Risk Management and Performance Monitoring and Reporting, in essence a more strategic approach was adopted.

The first report was the Parks and Cemeteries Review which received a Satisfactory Assurance with no Priority 1 Findings, 1 Priority 2 Finding and 1 Priority 3 Finding.

The second report was the Economic Development Service Review which received a Satisfactory Assurance with no Priority 1 or 2 Findings and 2 Priority 3 Findings.

For both reports Ms McDermott commented that while they were pleased to see fewer recommendations coming through the consistent which was coming through across all of the Service Reviews had been how those services were looking at their

Risk Registers, how they were discussing Risk and how they proposed to make it more than just a once a year exercise.

Questions were sought from members of the Committee at this stage.

Thanking Ms McDermott for the very helpful reports which had been circulated, Councillor McCollum expressed the view that it was preferable that Risk was a standing item of consideration by all services and she could not understand why that was not already embedded and in place. Continuing she specifically referred to the Economic Development report where risk was looked at bi-annually and quarterly and in her opinion quarterly would be the preferred option to provide a more fluid and regular update.

Ms McDermott indicated that while Services were managing Risk currently, they would like to see a more strategic view of Risk being undertaken by them. It was also noted that further recommendations had been made in relation to updating the Risk Strategy including training.

At this stage the Head of Finance advised that as part of the Budget Setting Process this year the Finance Team were working with Strategic Transformation and Performance to encourage teams to consider actions from their risk registers to assist in informing the budget setting considerations. He added that they needed to be considered as tools to assist officers to run their business rather than administrative exercises. It was further noted that Governance Workshops were being held for Heads of Service and Service Unit Managers to illustrate how those interact with each other and how they could assist them to carry out their role.

Councillor McCollum proposed, seconded by Councillor McLaren that the reports be noted.

Ms McDermott drew members attention to Appendix 2 of the Progress Report which detailed Outstanding Recommendations highlighting that at the last Audit Committee meeting there were 50 Recommendations outstanding. Since then a number of those had been closed and that figure had subsequently reduced to 42, with six of those not yet due. The team would encourage the Council to continue to progress through those issues and they were hopeful that figure would continue to reduce.

Councillor McCollum referred to Page 14 of the Progress Report which detailed the Outstanding Recommendations welcoming that eight had been closed off but also asked if members should be concerned that 42 still remained outstanding.

In response Ms McDermott noted that some had been outstanding for a while now however she was aware that Council was actively working through them. She suggested that the focus should be those Priority 1 Recommendations of which there were two and from a Committee perspective she believed that the focus should be on those Priority 1 and 2 Recommendations.

Continuing Councillor McCollum referred to Page 22 noting that particular recommendation in relation to Overtime, Flexi and TOIL had been ongoing now for quite some time, with a fifth target date now being worked towards. Similarly targets

for Procurement had been ongoing since April 2022 along with Absence Management. She believed that this one was vague and could be tightened up in a number of ways.

To highlight the point noted on Page 22 by Councillor McCollum, Ms McDermott suggested that where there had been a number of different target dates it may have been the case that for some of those recommendations the planned management action may not proceed due to cost implications. As such the Auditors would encourage the Council to consider what alternative measures could be considered to deal with that risk.

At this stage the Head of Finance referred to Page 22 and the cost of £5,000 associated with the implementation adding that it had been hoped to recruit an officer to carry out that work as was the case with the implementation of the recommendation on Page 32. Unfortunately recruitment exercises had been unsuccessful and as such considerations remained ongoing with HR colleagues to see if that was something which could be taken forward internally. In respect of the outstanding recommendation for Procurement he advised that similarly there were recruitment issues and as such other options were being considered at this stage. He added that undoubtedly the organisation as a whole was currently experiencing difficulties with recruitment.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McCollum, seconded by Councillor McLaren, that the reports be noted.**

## **7. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

The Chairman advised that there were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

**NOTED.**

## **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McCollum, seconded by Councillor Harbinson, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business.**

## **8. SINGLE TENDER ACTIONS UPDATE**

(File Ref: 231329)

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

Item 8 – Single Tender Action Update

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

The Committee were asked to consider a report detailing an update on single tender actions since the last update was provided in June 2024.

The recommendation was adopted.

**9. FRAUD, WHISTLEBLOWING AND DATA PROTECTION MATTERS**

**\*\*\*IN COMMITTEE\*\*\***

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6:3- INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDNG THAT INFORMATION)**

**10. MEETING WITH NI AUDIT OFFICE AND INTERNAL AUDIT OFFICE IN THE ABSENCE OF MANAGEMENT**

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

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

**RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McLaren, seconded by Councillor Harbinson, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.**

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 8.52pm.

**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Planning Committee was held in the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 at 7.00 pm.

**PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Alderman McIlveen

**Aldermen:** Graham  
McDowell  
Smith

**Councillors:** Cathcart Morgan  
Creighton McCollum  
Kerr (Zoom) McClean  
McKee (Zoom) Wray

**Officers:** Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Principal Planners (C Blair & L Maginn), Senior Planner (C Rodgers) and Democratic Services Officer (S McCrea)

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Councillors Harbinson, Kendall and McLaren.

**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 03 SEPTEMBER 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

**NOTED.**

**4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**4.1 LA06/2023/2248/F - New residential neighbourhood comprising mix of detached, semi-detached, townhouses and apartments, open space, landscaping, pedestrian/cycle paths, distributor road from signalised junction on Bangor Road to roundabout on Donaghadee Road and associated ancillary works. Variation of condition 23 and non-compliance with condition 22 of approval LA06/2020/0333/F relating to wildlife corridor and road crossing stream respectively. Land North of 262 Bangor Road, Beverley Way/Walk, Newtown Vale/Park/Crescent, 214 Donaghadee Road and 8-9 Ballyharry Heights, West of 171 Donaghadee Road, South/East of 272 Bangor Road and West of 250 Donaghadee Road, Newtownards**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Case Officer's report.

**DEA:** Ards Peninsula

**Committee Interest:** Major Application

**Proposal:** New Residential Neighbourhood, distributor road from Bangor Road to Donaghadee Road Roundabout. Variation of Condition 23 of approval LA06/2020/0333/F re Wildlife Corridor along Ballyharry Stream with proposed corridor being a minimum of 10 metres wide except where otherwise approved by the Local Planning Authority. Non-Compliance with Condition 22 of approval LA06/2020/0333/F re the distributor road crossing of Ballyharry Stream being by open span bridge of sufficient width to allow the underpass to accommodate the 10-metre wide wildlife corridor.

**Site Location:** Land North of 262 Bangor Road, Beverley Way/Walk, Newtown Vale/Park/Crescent, 214 Donaghadee Road and 8-9 Ballyharry Heights, West of 171 Donaghadee Road, South/East of 272 Bangor Road and West of 250 Donaghadee Road, Newtownards

**Recommendation:** Approval

The application was made under Section 54 of the Planning Act to amend conditions associated with the extant outline Planning Permission to develop the NS21 Housing Zone in Eastern Newtownards which included the construction of a distributor road from a signalised junction on the Bangor Road to a roundabout on the Donaghadee Road. The application sought non-compliance with condition 22 and a variation of condition 23 which required the distributor road crossing of the Ballyharry stream to be via an open-span bridge with a ten metre wide wildlife corridor passing under. The application was before Committee as it was a major application with a recommendation to grant planning permission. The application site was located at the northeastern edge of the Newtownards settlement and was zoned for housing. It was not protected by any nature conservation designations.

The site comprised of land between the Bangor Road to the west and the Donaghadee Road to the southeast. Construction was ongoing on the western side of the site at the time of writing and the development was known as Beverley Garden Village. It was important to highlight that a Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development demonstrated that NS 21 planning permission had lawfully commenced and the principle of development had therefore been established. An Environmental Statement was submitted in support of the original outline planning application. The original environmental statement, together with an addendum had

been submitted with the current Section 54 application therefore the application had been processed under the requirements of the 2017 EIA regulations. The background of the application had been laid out in detail in the Case Officer's report. In summary, the Planning Committee voted to approve an application for a greenway to connect Newtownards with the Somme Heritage Centre through the NS 21 zoning at its meeting in August 2022. This decision postdated the outlining planning permission and reserved matters approval on NS 21 lands. Therefore, no formal account of the greenway connection was factored into the original design of Beverley Garden Village.

Slide 3 showed the location of the approved distributor road where it crossed the Ballyharry stream as well as the wildlife corridor and the open space approved as part of Beverley Garden Village. Slide 5 showed the route of the proposed greenway through the open space and across the distributor road. The application sought an amendment to conditions of the outline planning permission to allow for an alternative bridge design to facilitate both the delivery of the distributor road and a vehicle-free greenway operating as an underpass to the road. Preconstruction and ground preparation works had already taken place at Ballyharry Stream in association with the extant planning permission.

The alternative engineering solution was the subject of a separate full planning application under consideration, reference LA06/2023/2249/F. This application remained delegated. The project description in the environmental statement had been updated to reflect the alternative bridge design and the effects on ecology, hydrology and drainage had been considered. Slide 7 showed detailed engineering designs involving the construction of a bridge over Ballyharry Stream providing a box-culvert underpass for pedestrians, two wildlife corridors and a water culvert. The total width was 6.9 metres consisting of a 3.9 metre wide box for the greenway, a 1.8 metre wide water culvert and two 0.9 metre wide by 35 metre long wildlife underpasses. The slide also provided example of a recently constructed pedestrian underpass in Lisburn for informational purposes.

The planning conditions, subject to this Section 54 application were intended to safeguard the biodiversity of the site including protected species. The design of the alternative engineering solution incorporated two wildlife underpasses which would ensure the safe and continued passage of mammals. NIEA Natural Environment Division had reviewed the application, associated environmental statement and the alternative wildlife mitigation and had no objection to the proposed noncompliance with the conditions. Two letters of objection had been received with matters primarily relating to the principle of the greenway and housing development. The principle of development had clearly already been established. In considering an application under Section 54, the Council must only have considered the question of all the conditions subject to which planning permission should be granted. Consequently, the overall principle of development could not be revisited. Having considered the detailed alternative design together with the environmental information and views of expert consultees, the Planning Department was satisfied that the noncompliance of Condition 22 and proposed variation of Condition 23 would not result in any unacceptable harm to biodiversity or other natural heritage interests. Furthermore, it was considered that the alternative design would not result in any other unacceptable environmental harm in terms of drainage and flood risk, contamination

during construction and impact on designated sites. This was subject to negative conditions being attached to any approval of the associated application for the culvert bridge requiring the agreement and implementation of a final drainage assessment and the construction environmental management plan in line with the advice of statutory consultees. It was recommended therefore, that planning permission was granted. A Section 54 application consultation constituted a new grant of planning permission and it was recommended that all other conditions were maintained to ensure works were kept as agreed and remain enforceable.

Members were invited to discuss the matter with Alderman Smith querying the 10 metre wide tunnel being reduced down to 2.09 metres without impact. The Senior Planner explained that NIEA was satisfied with the proposed mitigation and the standard of road crossings in similar scenarios for wildlife and water culverts. Standard mitigation had been applied in other, similar applications. The previous proposal included a wildlife corridor in an area of open space which was considered and accepted. This was merely an alternative but was also acceptable by NIEA.

Speaking in support of the application, Mr Gary Dodds was invited to speak and reminded that he had five minutes to do so. Mr Dodds thanked the chair and committee for the opportunity to speak to in support of this application. Turley welcomed the officer's recommendation to grant planning permission and wished to place on record their thanks to the Council's Planning Team for their assistance and communication throughout the application process. The officers had set out in detail in their Committee Report and presentation how they considered the development satisfied planning policy requirements, and all other relevant material considerations. All statutory consultees had responded with no objections.

This application site was situated within the Beverley Garden Village residential development which at the time of writing, was under construction. Planning permission had also been granted for a 3 kilometre Greenway from Belvedere Road, Newtownards, to the Somme Heritage Centre, following the route of the former railway line which insects the site running north to south. This permission followed the grant of outline planning permission and a number of Reserved Matters approvals at Beverley Garden Village. The proposed non-compliance with Condition 22 and variation of Condition 23, had been brought forward following discussions between the applicant and Council to achieve a solution to facilitate the delivery of an unimpeded car free greenway connection consisting of an underpass to the distributor road through Beverley Garden Village which connected Bangor Road to Donaghadee Road. In order to accommodate the greenway connection, a redesign of the Ballyharry Stream crossing was required. Rather than an open span bridge as originally conditioned, a box culvert design had been proposed to achieve a continuous car free greenway connection. The arrangement would also provide a water culvert following the route of the existing Ballyharry Stream in the form of a 1.8m diameter pipe and two 0.9m diameter wildlife passes, located at each side of the culvert, to ensure safe passage for wildlife. This arrangement had been agreed with NIEA Natural Environment Division. While the application related specifically to the conditions attached to the previous permission, a corresponding application for the culvert detail, was also under consideration by the Planning Authority and securing both permissions was necessary to regularise the proposed revisions. In conclusion, the changes had been sought to facilitate the delivery of this section of



the Council's Newtownards to Green Road Greenway – which the Council had planning permission for, and which the applicant was working alongside the Council to facilitate. Mr Dodds welcomed the Officer's recommendation and on the merits of the proposal that had been set out today and respectfully requested that the Committee ratify the Planning Team's recommendation to approve planning permission.

Councillor Cathcart asked if other applications had been delegated to which the Senior Planner explained that this had been an outline planning application for the entire NS 21 zoning area. Other applications sought full, detailed planning permission for a small part of that zoning with the site area falling below the threshold for a major development. It was also not on Council land.

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

**4.2 LA06/2024/0197/F – 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR EXTENSION TO REAR TO PROVIDE 3 TREATMENT ROOMS, THE OLD INN, 15-25 MAIN ST, CRAWFORDSBURN**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Case Officer's report.

**DEA:** Bangor West

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

**Proposal:** 1st floor extension to rear to provide three treatment rooms

**Site Location:** Rear of the Old Inn, 15-25 Main Street, Crawfordsburn

**Recommendation:** Approval

The Principal Planner explained to Members that this was an application for a first floor extension to the building's rear which would provide three treatment rooms at The Old Inn, Main Street, Crawfordsburn.

This application was before Members as a local development application which had attracted six or more separate individual objections that were contrary to Officers' recommendation.

This was an application for the development of three spa treatment rooms to be erected on stilts, with proposed parking beneath, located on land to the rear of the existing hotel.

The site was located within the Crawfordsburn Settlement Limit and formed part of the existing Old Inn hotel complex. The site was within the North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995 and draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015. The site itself was not zoned for a particular use and was located within a proposed Area of Village Character.

Members were asked to note that 26 letters of support, and 28 letters of objection from 24 separate address had been received.

The main points of objection primarily related to a stated lack of car parking for the use of the hotel site in its entirety taking account of all ongoing elements, with it considered by objectors that the site required more spaces than was available and therefore pushing parking onto the Main Street and surrounding roads, impacting the free flow of traffic and raising concerns of road safety. Objectors also raised concerns regarding delivery vehicles being unable to access the site and unloading on the street with the proposed location of the spa treatment rooms removing the existing turning area and thus preventing delivery vehicles from turning within the site and exiting in a forward gear.

Members were asked to note that DfI Roads had been consulted and did not object to the proposal, as it did not result in an intensification of use of the access from or on to Main Street.

Parking Standards, which was supplementary planning guidance and not policy, outlined that the planning authority was to have regard to the standards which indicated 1 space per 3 staff on duty.

This application proposal included the provision of three spaces with a fourth retained. It was noteworthy to mention that Planning Service could only assess the proposal applied for within the red line boundary. This was an existing hotel site, which had been in operation for many years. The Planning Service could not make a determination on matters beyond the application proposal.

The planning agent had advised during this application process that it had become clear from the previous application for the self-catering cottages the number of spaces shown on the approved plans indicated an availability of 13 spaces in the lower car parking area. The agent outlined that this was incorrect as it should have shown 16 spaces with three existing parking spaces on the application site land already in use.

The agent stated that these were accidentally missed and discounted under the previous application. These were formally in place now under this proposal. As could be seen from slides, there were four spaces proposed (space No.10 as indicated on slide 5 was being retained). The agent stated that this land was not being presently used to enable delivery vehicles etc to turn in this lower area but had always been in use for parking.

As indicated, DfI Roads had offered no objections to the proposed development. They were content that there was existing space within the hotel curtilage for delivery vehicles to turn and exit in a forward gear.

The proposed development did not cause any adverse visual impact on neighbouring uses with no public views from Main Street. The development was located to the rear of the existing building and did not impact any of the trees along the rear northern boundary, which provided continued screening nor did it cause any adverse visual impact on the proposed Area of Village Character.

The proposed development was subordinate to the existing hotel building and was of a high-quality design and finish. It was in keeping with the surrounding area and

respected the site context in terms of scale, size and design. The proposal was in keeping with Policy TSM 1 of PPS 16 for Tourism Development in Settlements. The Planning Service had fully considered all concerns raised by objectors which could only be taken to be considered against this proposed development only, which was for three spa treatment rooms to be used by overnight hotel guests only. The Principal Planner recommended that planning permission was granted subject to a condition restricting use to overnight guests only.

In Members being invited to speak on the matter, Councillor McCollum, in relation to the proposed area of village character asked if traditional forms of construction should be used with regard to replacement and repair works as the proposed structures being timber slated and on stilts did not appear to be in keeping with the rest of the structures on the street, despite there being no views of it from the main thoroughfare. Furthermore, Councillor McCollum was curious if the lack of line of sight meant a new build could take on any form and how a resident-only basis for using the treatment rooms could be policed. The Principal Planner explained that there was no visual impact from the main street as the proposed buildings were obscured completely by the Old Inn. This did not mean that developments could take on any design. This one in particular was of high quality and respected the character of Crawfordsburn as a whole. As such, it did not conflict with policy. Four parking spaces also met with Parking standards guidance of one space per three staff. The wording of the condition also provided an enforceable nature to those that could frequent the treatment rooms.

Alderman Smith understood the difficulties of parking in the general vicinity and asked if the decision being based within the red line only meant that Members were unable to consider wider implications of the whole site. The Principal Planner confirmed that planning determination could only be made on the proposal whilst the Director of Prosperity added that the Planners did take a holistic approach. The previous application had investigated parking being sufficient which was approved by not only the Council, but the Department for Infrastructure as well. That report also went into significant detail on how parking spaces had been calculated whilst taking into consideration the cessation of the large function room which was also conditioned. In the event that the function room was used for its initial purpose, it would be a breach of condition which meant there was no right to appeal.

Councillor Cathcart asked if the proposed spaces and treatments rooms meant that three additional staff would be hired and why the maps shown on current and proposed spaces appeared the same. The Director of Prosperity advised that spaces had been calculated on an additional three staff but that may not necessarily come to pass. The car parking spaces were not marked as available yet to which the Principal Planner added that the spaces hadn't been included in the original calculations of the previous application despite already being present on site due to an error by the applicant. These spaces would be formalised under this application and the Department for Infrastructure had already approved the previous application based on spaces.

Alderman Graham suggested that there was a difference in talking about the theory of required spaces versus its reality. The area was already very busy from a traffic point of view with significant congestion and asked if Officers agreed that the site

was over-intensified. The Principal Planner advised that the previous application was granted in relation to parking spaces and that the hotel had existed on site for many years. With the addition of three spaces that weren't formalised previously, this application was positive. Though congestion did exist on the roads within the general area, determination this evening could only be based on the application alone.

Speaking in support of the application, Mr Colin Johnston and Mr David Mountstephen were invited to speak.

Mr Mountstephen thanked the Chair and Committee for the opportunity to speak in support of the recommendation to approve. The application was for three treatment rooms to the rear of the hotel and was compliant with planning policy. The SPPS established a presumption in favour of development and facilitated tourism development. Policy TSM 1 of PPS 16 was a permissive policy which supported the granting of planning approval for tourism development such as that proposed. The proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character of the area or residential amenity and three car parking spaces were to be provided. He commended the recommendation to approve to the Committee, advising that both he and Colin Johnston (Managing Director of the Galgorm Collection) were happy to answer any questions.

Councillor McCollum asked for more information on how customers would access the treatment rooms from the main Inn facility. Mr Johnston explained that access was internal from the main spa, but there was an external fire exit. As for Christmas, the plan would remain the same as before; that the celebrations would continue as they always had.

Councillor Wray asked of the maximum Inn capacity and why the treatment room proposal was only for guests of the Crawfordsburn Inn. In addition, Councillor Wray was curious about the pressures of car parking for staff, especially if three staff were to start working on top of current staffing levels at the Inn. Mr Johnston explained that the Old Inn plan was to make it a premium facility with five stars, and hopefully a Michelin ranked restaurant meaning high spend with an international customer base. Not all staff travelled by car. There were 360 staff at Galgorm for which the company supplied bus services whilst it was a regular occurrence that some staff car shared as well. The three treatment rooms did not mean three staff would be present at all times as it was plausible for there to be quiet days. Mr Mountstephen added that numbers were based on averages as sometimes three staff could be present but at other times there may only be one staff.

Councillor Morgan asked what the company was doing and what it could do to mitigate congestion issues such as encouraging staff or guests to use alternative forms of transport. Mr Mountstephen advised that they had supplied the required amount of car parking as per the Parking standards whilst Mr Johnston explained that they had continued to engage with any and all agencies as well as residents right up to the most recent meeting with the Road Service, feedback from which stated that there was no need for consignments to be delivered to the back of the business, but that the decision had been made to do so anyway to help with any congestion issues. The company did encourage their guests to use their private car

park and if any residents of the area had issues, the company would use as much persuasion as possible to its customers and would be happy to work on new schemes. However, it was noteworthy to mention that the Old Inn was not the only business to attract traffic to the area.

Councillor Cathcart asked that, if there was such contention over car parking spaces during the last application, how could the spaces in this application have been missed and if it was because of delivery vehicles using the area. He also queried if any works were being carried out into alternative options given that restaurant users would also add to congestion of the area by possibly parking on the main street. Mr Johnston agreed that additional spaces are required for growing businesses and that the village itself was in need of a public car park. At the last meeting, Mr Johnston had agreed to be part of the solution from a financial point of view as a facilitator. The village needed a solution too and it could not fall solely to the company as other businesses existed in the area as well. The Crawfordsburn Old Inn was bought over at a time when it was a high-volume business with the intention of switching to a premium model that meant least customers to achieve the desired business model.

Councillor Creighton pointed out that the village was not well supplied with public transport with an hourly bus and that three staff would likely drive. Mr Johnston referred to the Helen's Bay train station as a local transport option as well as those that came by taxis which the company paid for.

Councillor McClean believed local residents were perhaps not aware that the treatment rooms would be for customers residing at the hotel. He asked for clarification on the different elements that had led to the current car parking provision. Mr Mountstephen confirmed that there had been a betterment of 23 car parking spaces due to the cessation of the large function room and offices having been moved off-site and, contrary to Councillor McClean's belief, advised that those who planned to use the restaurant could make use of the car park with the barriers opening for cars that approached them.

Alderman Graham was concerned that the stilts of the treatment rooms would have a negative effect on delivery vehicles especially if one accidentally backed into the stilts whilst turning and asked if the proposed buildings enhanced the overall appearance of the area. Mr Johnston advised that vehicles reversed down the ramp so were already facing the right direction whilst the design of the pods was subjective; they were of high quality design that both complimented and contrasted.

Mr Johnston and Mr Mountstephen returned to the public gallery.

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

Alderman Smith acknowledged issues of congestion and parking in the village but was encouraged to hear of enthusiasm from Mr Johnston that they took a proactive approach. Ultimately, the decision had to be based solely on the application before Members, though he did understand there were wider issues around parking. Councillor McCollum agreed, noting that since new management stopped the Inn being used for wedding venues, there had been some improvement to the flow of

traffic in the area but understood residents' concerns. Assurance was also given due to the condition of the treatment rooms only being available to those staying at the Inn.

Alderman Graham asked that his opposition to the decision be noted, citing that traffic was all based on theory.

Councillor Cathcart understood the frustrations of local residents but noted with the condition of the treatment rooms being usable only by those staying at the hotel, as well as the previous application's removal of the larger function had fed into his decision to agree with the decision. However, he urged the applicants to continue finding appropriate solutions.

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

**4.3 LA06/2023/2363/O – 2 NO. DWELLINGS AND GARAGES. LAND BETWEEN 47 AND 47A BALLYVESTER ROAD, DONAGHADEE**

**ITEM 4.3 WAS DEFERRED.**

**4.4 LA06/2024/0260/F – ONE 32' X 10' (9.7M X 3M) CUSTOMISED CONTAINER TO PROVIDE STORAGE AND MEETING PLACE/WORKSHOP – VARIATION OF CONDITION 1 OF PLANNING APPROVAL LA06/2019/0493/F REGARDING TIME LIMIT. APPROX 30M SOUTH OF 27 SPRINGFIELD ROAD (ANCHOR CAR PARK), PORTAVOGIE**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Case Officer's report.

**DEA:** Ards Peninsula

**Committee Interest:** Application relates to land in which the Council has an interest

**Proposal:** One 32' x 10' (9.7m x 3m) customized container to provide storage and meeting place/workshop – Variation of Condition 1 of planning approval LA06/2019/0493/F to extend the permission for a further period

**Site Location:** Approx 30m South of 27 Springfield Road (Anchor Car Park), Portavogie

**Recommendation:** Approval

The Principal Planner explained that the application was before members as it related to land on which the Council had an interest. The application sought to extend the temporary permission for the siting of a 9.7m by 3m wide container used for storage purposes and a meeting place/workshop at Anchor Car Park, Portavogie. The application site was located in the countryside outside Portavogie Settlement Limits. The site comprised of an existing car park which served a play park area and no letters of representation had been received and no consultations issued.

The container had achieved planning approval previously and had been on site since. There was to be no change to its siting or design. The container was sited adjacent to a second Council container. Whilst the Planning Service accepted the

need for the container to be located in the car park for a further five years, this would not achieve a long-term sustainable development of high standard design quality and therefore a condition was attached requiring its removal in November 2029.

The Principal Planner recommended that temporary planning permission be granted until November 2029 after which the container was to be removed from the site.

Councillor Morgan asked what would happen in 2029 if an extension was once again required. The Principal Planner agreed that a container was not a long-term solution for the site but that it was presently needed which the Council supported. From a planning perspective, ten years was a considerable period of time but it could certainly not go beyond 2029 as it was still deemed a temporary structure located in the countryside. The Directory of Prosperity asked Members to be mindful that Village Plans were forthcoming and there was potential for a solution to arise from it but agreed on the unattractive qualities of the container hence its agreed removal in 2029.

Alderman McIlveen asked if the applicants had needed to satisfy planners by showing that they had looked for alternative solutions before the extension was granted. The Director of Prosperity explained that they had not needed to satisfy the Planning Department as the request to utilise council land had come through a different committee.

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

Councillor Wray explained that the club had only been in existence for five years and needed some time to build reserves for an alternative.

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

**4.5 LA06/2024/0157/F – ALTERATIONS TO CAR PARK, INC. IMPROVED LAYOUT TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES FROM 9 TO 23, HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING, DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS AND RESURFACING. MOAT ENTRY CAR PARK, 4M SOUTH OF 9 KNOCK EDEN PARK, DONAGHADEE**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Case Officer's report.

**DEA:** Bangor East & Donaghadee

**Committee Interest:** Council Application

**Proposal:** Alterations to car park, inc. improved layout to increase the number of parking spaces from 9 to 23, hard and soft landscaping, drainage improvements and resurfacing

**Site Location:** Moat Entry Car Park, 4m south of 9 Knock Eden Park, Donaghadee

**Recommendation:** Approval

The Principal Planned explained that this item was before members as it was a Council planning application. Members were asked to note that three letters of

objection had been received with the primary thrust relating to the lack of need for the additional spaces, increased traffic movement in the area especially from beyond the local residential community and increased anti-social behaviour. Members were also asked to note that the Department for Infrastructure Roads had no objection to the proposal. The use of the site was not changing with the application making better use of the site available.

The application site was within the urban area and also Donaghadee Conservation Area. This application was submitted by the Regeneration Service Unit with an aim to help address the wider parking issues in Donaghadee rather than directly solely servicing The Moat.

The proposed design and reconfiguration of the car park from 9 to 23 spaces did not result in a detrimental visual impact to the surrounding area. Proposed hard and soft landscaping features softened the overall impact. Whilst the proposal resulted in the removal of boundary walls, Conservation Area Consent was not required as the walls were beneath the required thresholds. HED was consulted on the proposal given the proximity to the Moat however no objections had been received from them. Finally, the proposed development complied with PPS 15 regarding flooding and surface water run-off with NI Water content.

Councillor Wray asked if this application had been part of the village plan or who had identified the need. The Principal Planner explained that the Regeneration unit had identified a need through information garnered by Town Advisory Groups which considered the wider need for parking in the Donaghadee area. There would also be an update for Crommelin Park and it was hoped this would alleviate overall parking issues in the town.

Councillor Morgan believed that the more car parking spaces made available, the more congested an area would become and asked if bicycle racks had been investigated whilst referencing the plans and asking if footpaths were due to be lost with the proposal. The Director of Prosperity explained that the department could not comment on that matter, as the application had come from another department. The, 'footpath,' that Councillor Morgan had referenced was in fact not considered such, but instead a middle bed section with a partial resin consistency and was not adjoining the public road. The Planning Committee could only determine based on the information before Members this evening and were not in a position to change or amend the proposal.

Councillor McCollum was curious if the proposal would have any impact on the pending Public Realm application and if concerns that had been raised through objections were with regard to additional spaces not alleviating parking problems. She was also unconvinced that Crommelin Park would provide a solution in the future. The Directory of Prosperity advised that this application was complimentary to the Public Realm application but was separate from it as the Department for Communities had said the application fell outside of town centre boundaries and was thusly being funded from Regeneration's Assets and Properties department. The Principal Planner explained that of objections received, there had been issues on visibility displays at the car parks for which the Department for Infrastructure Roads had been consulted, though they were content with the proposal. The remaining



objections concerned noise. All objections had been considered by Officers. The Principal Planner added that mention made of Crommelin Park earlier had been advice from the Regeneration Service Unit.

Councillor McCollum asked that, with the demolishing of part of the stone wall, if there would be any salvage works to reuse materials and clarification on whether the footpath was part of landscape design and not used for access. The Director of Prosperity advised that English Heritage Practical Conservation works would be carried out and that salvage and use would occur where possible whilst the Principal Planner confirmed that the existing pavement would be retained outside the site with the defunct landscaping feature within the car park being removed which did not play any role in access.

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

Alderman Smith was happy to propose given the need to alleviate parking issues within the town and noted the fact that the adjacent Camera Obscura in the Moat had received an investment for which this application would also assist with access to.

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

**5. UPDATE ON PLANNING APPEALS**

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

**Appeal Decisions**

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

PAC Ref	2024/A0001
Council Ref	LA06/2021/1493/O
Appellant	Mr Peter Knight
Subject of Appeal	Refusal of outline planning permission for a detached dwelling and associated siteworks.
Location	Lands approximately 40m north of 194 Church Road, Hollywood

The Council refused the above application on 21 December 2023 for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposal was contrary to the SPPS and Policy CTY1 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that there were no overriding reasons why this development was essential in this rural location and could not be located within a settlement.

2. The proposal was contrary to the SPPS and Policy CTY6 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that the applicant had not provided satisfactory long-term evidence that a new dwelling was a necessary response to the particular circumstances of the case and that genuine hardship would be caused if planning permission were refused and it had not been demonstrated that there were no alternative solutions to meet the particular circumstances of the case.
3. The proposal was contrary to the SPPS and Policy CTY8 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the proposal did not constitute a small gap sufficient only to accommodate a maximum of two houses within an otherwise substantial and continuously built-up frontage, and would, if permitted result in the creation of ribbon development along Church Road.
4. The proposal was contrary to the SPPS and Policy CTY13 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the proposed site lacked long established natural boundaries, would be unable to provide a suitable degree of enclosure for any building to integrate into the landscape and relied upon the use of new landscaping for integration.
5. The proposal was contrary to the SPPS and Policy CTY14 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the proposal would, if permitted further erode the character of the area due to a build-up of development and create a ribbon of development.

In terms of the appeal there were two preliminary matters dealt with, one relating to the landownership certificate, the other an incorrect scale on the Site Location Plan. The Commissioner was satisfied that following the service of the correct certificate post hearing no prejudice had been caused to the landowner, who is the applicant's mother, to invalidate the appeal. Secondly, the Site Location Plan met the legislative requirements in line with the Planning (General Development Procedures) Order (NI) 2015

This application for a dwelling had been sought under Policy CTY 6 for personal and domestic circumstances. The applicant put forward that the daily and long terms needs to assist with his daughter's health conditions that she has had since birth required the construction of a new dwelling at this location. The Council did not dispute the medical information supplied, and nor did the Commission.

The central issue in this case was whether this was an exceptional case and there were no alternate solutions open to the applicant to accommodate his daughter when required. The appellant's daughter lived with her mother (appellant's ex-wife) in her family home from Monday to Wednesday and was in a care home Thursday to Saturday. The appellant took care of his daughter across one or two nights at weekends (depending on daughter's routine). The appellant hoped to spend more time with his daughter in retirement which was approximately two years away at the time of writing.

The site-specific reasons put forward were that adaptations to the appellant’s mother’s house, which was adjacent to the site, and the appellant’s rented home were not possible due to ownership issues.

The Commissioner agreed with the Council that the appellant had failed to properly consider alternative solutions including adapting/extending the adjacent mother’s dwelling or an outbuilding within that curtilage. The Commissioner concluded that there was no persuasive evidence submitted to support the site-specific need for a dwelling at this location and as such the proposed failed to meet the policy requirements of policy CTY 6 of PPS 21. The appellant’s daughter, at the time of writing, lived in an adapted home in a nearby settlement. The Commissioner further concluded that the appellant could purchase or rent a dwelling in a nearby settlement with adaptations in place. The Commissioner acknowledged the appellant’s situation; however, commented that the policy test was stringent with the daughter’s needs currently catered for and which are unlikely to change.

The appellant had also forwarded a case at the hearing of the need to care for his mother, following the recent death of his father; however, no persuasive evidence was presented to demonstrate an on-site need and it was noted at the hearing that the appellant’s sister lives nearby and assists with caring needs.

In terms of policy CTY 8 of PPS 21 the Commissioner found that the appeal site did not represent an exception and was not considered a small gap site capable of accommodating a maximum of two dwellings. The Commissioner concluded that the site would add to a ribbon of development along Church Road, Hollywood, failing to meet the requirements of policies CTY 8 (ribbon development) and CTY 14 (adversely impacting the rural character of the area).

In terms of policy CTY 13 of PPS 21 the Commissioner found that the site was exposed with no backdrop and lacked long established boundaries, therefore would rely on new landscaping for integration. It was concluded that the appeal site failed to meet the policy requirement.

**New Appeals Lodged**

- 2. The following appeal was lodged on 20 August 2024.

PAC Ref	2024/A0057
Council Ref	LA06/2022/1258/F
Appellant	Peter Kelly
Subject of Appeal	Refusal of planning permission for ‘Farm shed for storage of fodder and machinery (Retrospective)’
Location	2b Ballyblack Road, Portaferry

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

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report and attachment

The Principal Planner (C Blair) summarised the above report to Members.

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

## **6. DFI STATUTORY CONSULTEES ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from Director of Prosperity detailing the undernoted:

1. The purpose of this was to inform members of the annual performance report prepared by the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) which sets out the performance of statutory consultees in the planning process. The report detailed a list of statutory consultees at the end on page 19.
2. Members should note that Council also on occasion consults with non-statutory consultees, for example Environmental Health, the Council's Tree Officer or Conservation Area Officer, which are not bound by any statutory response time.
3. Relevant legislation was set out in The Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 (as amended) ("the GDPO") which provides instruction regarding statutory consultations on applications for planning permission. The structure/names of Departments were amended in 2016.
4. The requirement for Dfi to provide an annual report is set out in Article 16 of the GDPO. Each statutory consultee was required, by legislation, to provide details to Dfi of how it has purportedly met its statutory requirements (in respect of providing a substantive response within the timeframe or other timeframe as agreed between the council and the consultee). Such a report was required to relate to the period of 12 months commencing on 1st April in the preceding year.
5. The report detailed of the volume of statutory consultation that had taken place during 2023/24 with comparative information for earlier years. This was the first annual report to be produced for statutory consultation since introduction of both Planning Portals (that was for Mid Ulster, and that was for the remaining 11 planning authorities, which includes DFI).
6. Members were asked to note that the figures contained in the report were extracted from each respective Planning Portal, reflect management information and should not be considered as official statistics and therefore should not be quoted as such.
7. Regionally significant applications were dealt with by Dfi with Councils dealing with applications in the category of 'major' and 'local' development. Major developments were those developments which had the potential to be of significance and interest to communities and would be subject to processes such as Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC), the submission of a Design and Access Statement (D&AS) and determination by Planning Committee. They

were likely to be developments that have important economic, social and environmental implications for a council area.

8. For Ards and North Down, the statutory consultee response rate for major applications was 37% within the statutory target, the lowest of any of the 11 Council areas, (Table 4e, page 11 of the report), with a figure of 72% for local applications (only DFI Planning had a lower response rate).
9. Tables 4c and 4f did not break down DFI Roads into Divisional Offices and members would have been aware that it was acknowledged by DFI Roads that Southern Division, serving Ards and North Down and Newry Mourne and Down Council areas, had been and continued to experience resourcing issues, which was more borne out in Table 4e in respect of 'On Time' for AND at the aforementioned 37% for major applications.
10. In terms of consultations on applications in the local category of development, this Council fared slightly better in respect of 72% of its consultee responses being returned 'On Time'; however, there was no breakdown in respect of the different consultees by Council area in this regard, where we had been aware that particular consultees are experiencing resource issues.
11. It was assumed that the reference to 'No response' relates to those consultation responses which were not received in that particular year and would therefore appear as 'Late' in the following year.
12. Members were asked to note that although the Planning Act placed a duty to respond to consultation within a period of 21 days beginning with the day on which the Council ... "is satisfied that it has supplied the statutory consultee with the information it believes necessary for the consultee to make a substantive response", consultees were entitled to request a longer period of time to respond, which the Council could determine whether it agrees. It was an ongoing issue whereby some consultees do not engage this process.
13. It was also worth noting that while a consultee may have responded within the 21-day target date, the Council may deem the response insufficient and have to reconsult requesting additional consideration which inevitably would have an impact on response times. Conversely, a consultee may request additional information in order to be able to provide a 'substantive response' as detailed in legislation.
14. Members would also have been aware that throughout the processing of an application there may be various amendments which materially changed the proposal to the extent that further consultation is required by Council. Council also occasionally sought consultees to comment on representations made which may seem to contradict consultee findings which was achieved via further formal consultation.
15. Members were asked to note that with the proposed introduction of statutory validation checklists (as part of the Planning Improvement Programme), 'frontloading' of applications would seek to reduce the requirement for additional

time to be afforded to consultees to comment as applicants would be required to submit a full suite of required studies relevant to their proposal at the outset of the processing period. This, however, would not address the ongoing resourcing issue in some departments.

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

The Director of Prosperity summarised the report to Members, explaining that it provided some salient points of the results of the performance report. It had been the first since both planning portals were introduced and adopted by Mid-Ulster and shortly thereafter by the remaining ten Councils and the Department for Infrastructure. It highlighted issues that had been discussed at the previous Committee regarding the lack of meeting targets by some statutory consultees like the Department for Infrastructure Roads. A, 'no-response,' was assumed to relate to consultations within that year whilst twenty-one day targets fell into the next year. Also, it was possible for a consultee to request addition information which in turn may lead to amendments that required re-consultation.

Initially, this had been proposed by Alderman Smith, and seconded by Councillor Morgan for the report to be noted, however, the following discussion led to Alderman Smith agreeing to withdraw his proposal to note.

Alderman Smith agreed that the figure for major applications being 37% had great impact on the Council's performance and asked if there was any reason why Ards and North Down Borough Council had fared so badly. The Director of Prosperity explained that there had been resourcing issues for some consultees, especially the Department for Infrastructure Roads. It had been acknowledged at a high level by Roads that the issue lay with the Southern Division which covered this Borough as well as Newry, Mourne and Down. In addition, major applications covered the most substantial and complex applications and of that which was required of those, it was either not submitted on time or took longer to review for flood or drainage assessments.

Councillor Morgan welcomed the report's transparency, noting that it appeared all consultees were public offices who found it acceptable to only respond 75% on-time; a figure that had been consistent despite the reasonable twenty-one day response time. Given the disappointing figures, Councillor Morgan asked if it was possible to note the report and add to the recommendation as follows:

*In addition, write to the DFI to ask for a breakdown of the consultations issued on major applications in 23/24 for Ards and North Down (table 4e – 37% on time) and request an explanation from the consultees on what can be done to improve the situation alongside a breakdown of performance of the DFI divisions*

The Chair, Alderman McIlveen queried if the proposer, Alderman Smith would be minded to withdraw his proposal in order for the amendment to be made, which was agreed.

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

Councillor Creighton added that this amendment was in support of the Council’s Planning Department who had so regularly dealt with external delays and commended them for their continued efforts.

Councillor Cathcart agreed that it had been welcome to see a report that showed the problems that Planning Officers faced and exemplified the former Royal Hotel where statutory consultee responses had been abysmal which led to reputational damage of the Council despite such issues being outside their control. There was a legal requirement for them to respond and in effect, they were breaking their own laws in terms of the Planning Act and response times.

Alderman Smith reminded Members that DfI Roads would be present at the upcoming Corporate Committee which may prove advantageous in providing the opportunity to ask questions relating to these issues.

**RESOLVED on the proposal of Councillor Morgan, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that the report be noted. In addition, the Council would write to the DFI to ask for a breakdown of the consultations issued on major applications in 23/24 for Ards and North Down (table 4e – 37% on time) and request an explanation from the consultees on what can be done to improve the situation alongside a breakdown of performance of the DfI divisions.**

**EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

**AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business.**

**7. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) – UPDATED APPROACH TO DRAFT HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT POLICIES**

:

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

**In Confidence Explanation**

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

A report from the Director of Prosperity setting out ‘policy in development’ pertaining to options for Members’ consideration and agreement in respect of a draft policy relating to the Historic Environment within the future Local Development Plan (LDP).

**8. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) – UPDATED APPROACH TO DRAFT COASTAL POLICIES**

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

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

**SUMMARY**

A report from the Director of Prosperity setting out 'policy in development' pertaining to options for Members' consideration and agreement in respect of a draft policy relating to the Coast within the future Local Development Plan (LDP).

**RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor McClean, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that the public/press be re-admitted.**

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 21:33.



## **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, 2 October 2024 at 7.00 pm.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** McAlpine

**Aldermen:** Armstrong-Cotter  
Cummings

**Councillors:** Blaney  
Boyle  
Cathcart  
Douglas  
Edmund  
Irwin

Kerr  
McKee (Zoom)  
Morgan  
Smart  
Wray

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

**Also in Attendance:** Alderman McRandal

### **1. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies.

**NOTED.**

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**NOTED.**

### **3. RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION ON LITTER STRATEGY – FOLLOW UP (FILE 92017)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing the undernoted:-

Members would recall that a Notice of Motion was agreed by the Council in August 2020, as follows:

*“That this Council agrees to write to the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs to request a Litter Strategy is drawn up which should include a regional multi-media campaign to tackle litter, including dog fouling, in a bid to deal with the ever increasing public and environmental health issues which littering presents to our society.”*

The Council subsequently wrote to the then DAERA Minister accordingly, and a response received from him at that time advised it was the intention to take this forward as part of the first ever NI Environment Strategy which the Department was working upon.

A Draft Environment Strategy was published in 2022, and that included a commitment to publishing NI’s first Litter Strategy by 2024. Officers were not aware of any steps taken to deliver upon this proposal.

Members would be aware that this Council proactively engaged both locally and regionally in campaigns to promote environmentally responsible behaviours, not least in respect of littering. We deploy significant resources to enforcement activities, as well as education campaigns - including partnership in the regional Live Here Love Here initiative co-ordinated by Keep NI Beautiful. Notwithstanding this, the Notice of Motion that was passed by Council in 2020, recognises that much more needs to be done through the development of a multi-faceted NI Litter Strategy, led by the Department with input and support from all relevant stakeholders, including all NI Councils.

Given the ongoing prevalence of littering across Northern Ireland, and the significant adverse social, economic and environmental impacts of this problem, it was proposed that the Council writes to the new DAERA Minister to request an update in relation to the proposal for the production of a NI Litter Strategy as was set out in the Draft Environment Strategy and to press for this issue to be treated as a matter of urgency.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council writes to the DAERA Minister as outlined in this report.

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

Proposing the recommendation Councillor Cathcart thought that it was clear that the Council should write to the Minister and that a Litter Strategy was desperately needed for Northern Ireland. Indeed, it was unfortunate that to date that had not been progressed by the Assembly. In his view the Council also needed the powers to tackle litter in terms of its costs both in terms of enforcement and cleaning up and he thought that offenders should contribute towards those costs. He hoped that the matter would be progressed soon.

Councillor Morgan was happy to second the recommendation and while everyone could agree that litter looked terrible, she queried its true cost to the Council in terms of cleaning up, removing graffiti, emptying bins and providing educational

programmes. The Director did not have those figures to hand but recalled that that piece of work had been done previously and he could bring it back to the Committee.

Alderman McRandal thanked the Chair for granting him speaking rights to address the Environment Committee. He explained that he and former Councillor, Karen Douglas, had brought a Notice of Motion in 2020 in respect of litter and he had been following this up recently with the Director about what the Council was doing in terms of education and changing attitudes and behaviour.

The Council was directly responsible for litter, waste management and disposal and that was costly. It remained a fact that as a society there was still much progress to be made in terms of changing attitudes to littering and dog fouling. Failure to address that would be an ongoing increasing cost to the Council.

He referred to the implementation of Project ELLA as a positive step however there was little or no uptake of the littering presentations element of that project. He supported the proposal as something that was urgently needed for Northern Ireland, and which would provide direction to all interested parties as to what was required of them. He thought that it was unfortunate that Northern Ireland was the only nation of the United Kingdom not to have a Litter Strategy in place and thought that should now be a prioritised and progressed. He was encouraged that following recent agreement of the Programme for Government by the Stormont Executive the Environmental Improvement Plan had been published last week and that included a commitment to publish a Litter Strategy for Northern Ireland by 2027.

Councillor Irwin asked about the action the Council was taking already and an overview of the services it was providing. The Director explained that there were two broad strands including an active partnership with the Eco Schools project and the Neighbourhood Environment Team worked through Project Ella within schools and community groups.

The Director viewed the challenge of litter being a trans boundary matter and even if local people were educated consistently the Council was aware that a significant proportion of the litter dropped within the Borough was often by commuters or those visiting the area, so it was imperative to have a joined-up regional approach to the matter. His personal view was that it was a tragedy that Northern Ireland had never had a Litter Strategy.

Councillor McKee thanked officers for pressing for improvements and hoped that pressure could be placed on the Department to make the necessary changes quickly to have a Litter Strategy published along with appropriate funding assigned to Councils.

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

**4. STREET NAMING – MERCHANTS MEWS, COMBER (FILE FP/2024/2052/MAST /91200)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that a development comprising of six dwellings, was currently under construction on lands at 189 Killinchy Road, Comber.

The developer had requested the name Merchants Mews for the new development. The site was directly adjacent to the Old Post Office in Lisbane, Comber, and the developer requests the name Merchants Mews as the original postmaster at Lisbane was also a general merchant. The developer wished to maintain this link for the development and the name was also in keeping with the general neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDED that the Council adopt the street name of Merchants Mews for this development.

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

**5. STREET NAMING – BAILEY AVENUE, BAILEY LINK, BAILEY MEWS AND BAILEY ROAD, CONLIG (FILE FP/2024/1786/MAST /91200)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that a large development of 176 dwellings was planned for construction on lands at 62 Green Road, Conlig. The first phase of the site had commenced and initially comprises of 25 dwellings.

The developer had requested the names Bailey Avenue, Bailey Link, Bailey Mews and Bailey Road, Conlig for the new development. The developer researched the site's location and the new development would be built in the townland of Balloo. The Irish name for Balloo was Baile Aodha (anglicised to Bailey). That was in keeping with the general neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDED that the Council adopt the street names of Bailey Avenue, Bailey Link, Bailey Mews and Bailey Road, Conlig for this development.

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

**6. CAR PARKING PROMOTIONAL TARIFF CHANGE (FILE 90303)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that a five-hour parking for £1 promotional tariff was first introduced 11 years ago, in December 2013 by the then Minister for Regional Development, and subsequently extended in April 2014 for an initial 6-month pilot period. This applied to car parks in 25 towns and cities, excluding Belfast, which had an ordinary tariff of 30p or more per hour and were owned and operated at the time by the Department for Regional Development.

The status of the reduced tariff was not reviewed by the Department before RPA and was inherited by Councils when ownership of these car parks transferred in April 2015. Most Councils had now removed the tariff; however, it remained in use in Ards and North Down.

Our Car Park Strategy stated that the removal of the £1.00 for five hours tariff would help to:

- improve space turnover
- reduce long stay parking associated with commuters and local workers at key town / city centre car parks; and
- better reflect the value of these town centre car parks.

Removal of this tariff positively impacts turnover resulting in increased footfall in the city /towns and allows the generation of additional income for the Council to assist with operation and maintenance costs.

The Council had already approved removal of this tariff as part of its agreed Car Parking Strategy. Implementation of this decision had not yet taken place, as it had been considered that the legislative issues surrounding the change of tariffs would prevent such action. However, upon review of the legal situation on this matter and following consultation with other Councils, officers were now satisfied that this change could go ahead without amendments to legislation.

Removal of the £1 for 5 hours promotional tariff, as already agreed through the adoption of Council's Car Park Strategy in June 2021, will therefore be implemented from 2 December 2024. Tariffs would revert to the standard hourly rate tariffs that are stipulated for each charged car park in the Borough under The Off-Street Parking Order (NI) 2000 (as amended) and advertised accordingly in those car parks. Information for car park users, informing them of this change, would be made available in the applicable car parks for a three-week period prior to this change.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council notes this report.

Before proposing the recommendation Councillor Cathcart asked for clarification on the car park charges proposal and if the Council was making a decision to remove the £1 charge for five hours parking and revert to the original tariffs and was informed that that was correct.

In that case Councillor Cathcart proposed an alternative which was seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter;

That this Council does not remove the £1 for 5 hours promotional tariff until the new tariffs as agreed in the car parking strategy are introduced.

Councillor Cathcart believed that the Council had agreed that and had examined the issue in detail some years ago. He did not believe it had been agreed to remove the £1 for 5 hours without introducing the agreed new tariffs in the strategy.

Councillor Boyle had not been expecting the discussion and asked the Director for clarification. The Director explained that the charge of £1 for 5 hours was a promotional cheap rate which although intended originally as a short-term measure by the Department, had now been in place for eleven years. In the agreed strategy, it was proposed to have a charge of 50p per hour for the first two hours and then £1 per hour thereafter for town centre car parks. He clarified that it had always been the Council's intention to proceed as quickly as possible with all elements of that strategy, but officers were now aware that the £1 for 5 hours promotional rate was not included in the existing Car Park Order covering the legacy DfI car parks and therefore could be discontinued without further legislation. He recalled debates at recent Committee meetings about pressures on car park income and the poor state of some car parks, therefore a pressing need to address the issue of tariffs. He advised of his understanding that all other Councils had now discontinued the £1 for 5 hours rate.

The Director respected the point being made by Councillor Cathcart that the package of changes should be made altogether at one time rather than being implemented incrementally.

As someone who worked in a town centre shop Councillor Edmund was happy to support Councillor Cathcart's amendment and would not be happy to see increased car parking charges in town centres in December, one of retail's busiest times.

Councillor Blaney said he was more than happy to support this amendment, and increases could be a disincentive to people who might wish to park and shop. He thought that the Council should implement the policy that the Members had agreed and make the change at one time and together which would be a better option for everyone.

Concluding the discussion Alderman Armstrong-Cotter repeated that the existing charges should remain in place until the Council was in a better position to implement the full new agreed tariffs.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that this Council does not remove the £1 for 5 hours promotional tariff until the new tariffs as agreed in the car parking strategy are introduced.**

## **7. HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES ESTATE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY 2024 (FILE 47049)**

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment attaching draft strategy. The report detailed that Members would be aware that there was a pressing need for review of our Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), leading to development and implementation of an improvement programme that allowed Council to maximise the social, economic and environmental value of this key aspect of the estate.

The document attached to the report set out the background, strategic intent, and primary aims of the strategy as well as the proposed approach to meeting those aims and implementing the strategy.

Following agreement of the strategy, the first key task would be to engage appropriate professional support. Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), which was currently assisting with the ongoing review of our kerbside waste collections model, had indicated that it may also be able to provide support to the Council in this aspect of the waste management transformation programme.

It was proposed that further reports would be brought back to Committee at various key stages of the strategy implementation process, for consideration and approval as required.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council agrees to the adoption of the attached Household Waste Recycling Centres Estate Improvement Strategy and engagement with WRAP to assist with the strategy implementation process where possible.

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

Councillor Wray said that he was very happy to propose the recommendation and was aware that there had been rumours regarding potential HRC site closures, and he wanted to make it clear that that was not what the Council would be agreeing by approving this recommendation. He thought it important to stress to the public that the plan was not to close sites but rather to improve them and the contribution they made to the circular economy. He said that there was nothing in the report that he had not been pleased to read.

Councillor Morgan had been happy to second the recommendation and thought that improving HRCs was very important in encouraging further recycling. She thought that WRAP's role had been useful for reviewing kerbside recycling and encouraged the Council to learn all it could from good practice in other places. She also referred to the work of charity shops in reusing and recycling items and hoped the Council would not be competing for that market. She looked forward to the development of an Action Plan.

The Director reiterated that this was starting point for the development of a strategy if Members were in agreement to give the recommendation their support. Engagement would take place with WRAP and a blueprint would be developed which would be subject to Council scrutiny and approval.

Following a question about the individual sites from Councillor Douglas, the limitations on some of the sites were discussed including those which had a small footprint and some which had not been upgraded in many years and were not deemed fit for modern requirements. Further details of the individual sites would be brought back in due course as part of the work.

Councillor Cathcart was supportive of the work proposed and thought it was right that the Council reviewed its services periodically to make sure they were best

placed to serve the people of the Borough. New requirements for recycling and waste collection and the circular economy also justified the changes necessary.

Councillor Cathcart asked to make a small amendment to the recommendation which was seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter;

On page 6 of the report 'Implementation of the Strategy' between point d and e, he proposed that the following be added;

'Consult with the public and achieve Council approval.'

Councillor Cathcart thought that a group similar to the Kerbside Recycling Group with all parties represented was viewed as a useful mechanism, with developments brought back to the Committee. The Director agreed that sounded sensible and agreed to note it.

Seconding that amendment Alderman Armstrong-Cotter thought that without it there could appear to be a lack of accountability and transparency by the Council. She added that it was important that people understood that the process was being carried out correctly.

Councillor McKee shared the view that the amendment would indicate that there was nothing underhand going on and that was reflected in the report. He supported the report generally and hoped that it would help the Council reach its targets and make savings financially by supporting the circular economy.

The Member went on to ask the Director about the current state of play in respect of government strategies that would affect this. The Director was not aware of anything specific but there was certainly a strong lobby and push from the government for all players to do their part in promoting the circular economy, and this work would put the Council in a strong strategic position to do that. The outworkings of this process would not happen immediately, but it was important to get started and it would be important to send a message to the Department that the Council would want to see necessary capital works well supported by grant funding.

Councillor Boyle stated that he had been on this journey with the Environment Committee for many years and stressed the need to get the message out that this was not about closing HRCs and what the Council wished to achieve was the best outcome for local ratepayers.

Following a question about possible closures from Councillor Edmund the Director strongly stressed that the reason the work was being carried out was because generally the existing sites were unfit for purpose and were not designed as the Council would want them at the current time. The Council hoped to achieve a holistic, joined up strategic review of the entire HRC estate and it would be unhelpful to single out particular site locations at this point in the process.

Councillor Irwin was happy to support Councillor Cathcart's amendment and described how the Kerbside Recycling Group worked well in getting into greater



detail than the Environment Committee could, and she hoped that Members would show leadership and work cooperatively.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the recommendation be adopted with an amendment under Implementation of the Strategy between d and e to add consult with the public and achieve Council approval.**

## **8. ROADMAP TO GREEN FLEET (FILE 79001)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that in January 2024 Council agreed that following on from an Alternate Fuel feasibility study commissioned by East Border Region group of Councils, Officers would use that as a basis for development of Council's "Roadmap to a Green Fleet" document.

The feasibility study determined that the most viable fuel for our smaller vehicles was battery electric (BEV) and the most viable fuel for our heavier fleet was hydrogen. That contributed to the Councils Roadmap to Sustainability, Action 16 on the delivery of a Carbon Reduction Strategy and was a key activity in relation to our declaration of a Climate Emergency.

Members would be aware that the first milestone under the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 was to have a 48% reduction in greenhouse gases (GHGs) by 2030 with a 100% reduction being in place by 2050.

### **Landscape**

Members should note that was a hugely complex subject with much uncertainty and constantly changing factors that affect the viability of alternate fuels and the ability to transition toward them in an efficient and effective way. Those factors included:

#### Refuelling Infrastructure

The first stage of the Council's green fleet plan would involve transition of 49 lighter vehicles to BEVs. The power requirement to keep the proposed 49 electric vehicles charged was considerable and would require a significant upgrade to the electrical infrastructure at the Depot. NIE had estimated this upgrade to cost approximately £140k, in addition to the charging infrastructure itself which could cost a further £102k. However, the existing NIE supply was sufficient to charge a number of electric vehicles and should be ample for the vehicles scheduled for replacement over the next 2 years according to our programmed replacement schedule, with an investment of around £50k for charging infrastructure (funding for that had been applied for via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Northern Ireland).

Similarly, hydrogen refuelling currently presented significant challenges in terms of both infrastructure and security of supply of renewable hydrogen. There may be scope in the future to enter into Hydrogen Partnerships with other public sector organisations however it would be challenging to align needs and would require considerable time to set up. Officers would continue to keep this option under review.

### Technological Uncertainty

Both BEV and hydrogen powered vehicles involved relatively new and constantly developing technology. From 2035, the sale of new liquid petroleum gas, petrol, and diesel cars, as well as hybrid vehicles, would be banned across the UK and by 2036 all new HGV's up to 26 tonnes must be zero emission from the tail pipe (2040 for +26T). This legislative requirement would prompt the manufacturers to make significant changes to their vehicles and rapidly develop new technologies. What was cutting edge today could be obsolete next year. Any vehicles that Council did change to an alternate fuel now, could be better suited to a future technology when it became available at a later date.

It was also worth noting that grid electricity was currently not 100% renewable, so BEVs still result in carbon emissions associated with power station electricity supply. That said, grid electricity produced 19% less gCO<sub>2</sub> per kW than fossil fuel powered internal combustion engines. In addition, the Climate Change Act set a target stating that 80% of electricity within the distribution network must come from renewables by 2030, so in the longer term much of this carbon should be removed at source.

### Operational Suitability

Currently it was only feasible to change the small vans to electric power. The larger vans and small lorries were not suited due to BEV's reduced payload and towing capacity (due to the weight of the batteries). The technological uncertainty of the industry meant that whilst some vehicles were not currently viable to run on electric or hydrogen, they could be viable in the near future.

### Costs

Currently, electric vans were typically 30% more expensive than their internal combustion engine (ICE) equivalent and hydrogen powered refuse vehicles were also significantly more expensive. It was envisaged that as the 2035 ban on ICE vehicles approaches, manufacturers would need to make the alternate fuel vehicles more appealing to consumers and this along with greatly increased scale of production of such vehicles, should lead to reduced pricing.

### Depot Suitability

As noted above, the refuelling infrastructure required for a green fleet required significant investment. In addition, some insurers specify that BEVs must be charged outdoors for fire safety reasons - Balloo Depot had limited suitable outside space. Due to those and several other factors, the long-term suitability of the Depots needed to be explored and that should ideally be done in advance of any significant investment in infrastructure. A review of the depots was being considered and would be reported to Council in due course.

### Skills & Equipment

A technologically advanced fleet would require our existing vehicle maintenance staff to retrain in alternate fuel vehicles and the purchase of appropriate vehicle maintenance equipment. That change would take time and money to implement. Any alternate fuel vehicles bought prior to the implementation of those changes would need to be maintained by contractor on an interim basis, at additional cost.

## **Use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO)**

### What is HVO

HVO was a synthetic, premium quality biofuel made from 100% raw materials. HVO was both renewable and sustainable.

- It was considered renewable because it was manufactured from plant and animal oils/fats, which could be regrown when new feedstock was needed.
- It was considered sustainable because the crops used to manufacture HVO do not damage the environment, do not use land which has been claimed from other use (rainforest etc) and does not displace animals or other key aspects of the natural ecosystem.

The HVO production process removed unsaturation and contaminants, resulting in a pure hydrocarbon fuel. It was much more stable and likely to last longer in the tank than conventional biodiesel and gas oil. It was classified as a “drop-in replacement” for fossil fuels, meaning no physical changes to the vehicles were needed.

HVO manufacturers claimed it could reduce emissions by up to 90%. Therefore, for example, in the case of an average vehicle mileage of 12,000 miles a year, the use of HVO would mean that up to 10,800 of those miles would in effect be emission free.

### How can HVO help us achieve our Net Zero Targets

In theory it would be possible to move all Council vehicles to HVO in/before 2030 and achieve a 90% reduction in GHG's to exceed the target under the Act. However, that would reduce the amount of time Council had to phase-in zero-emission vehicles, making the capital replacement less affordable (it was easier to financially plan for replacing 200 vehicles over 26 years, than 200 vehicles over 20 years). It would also result in significantly increased costs, as currently HVO was 40% more expensive than diesel. That would mean annual fuel costs rising by £440k per year at current prices.

In addition, when considering manufacturers' requirement to have zero emissions from the tailpipe by 2036, HVO was unlikely to play a long-term role. HVO was therefore seen as a stop-gap measure rather than a long-term solution. However, this stop-gap measure may be vital if we need to boost our carbon reduction as the 2030 deadline approaches. For example, if we achieve a 20% reduction by 2029 through use of other measures and need a further 28% reduction to meet the requirements of the Act, we can switch a part of the remaining fleet to HVO to achieve this.

### **A Phased Approach**

Given this turbulent landscape it may be unwise to move hastily toward alternate fuel vehicles. To do so would present risks of excess costs and wasted money on infrastructure and sub-optimal vehicles.

With the first milestone under the Climate Change Act being a 48% reduction in greenhouse gasses by 2030, this first target needed to be the immediate priority.

A phased approach would therefore seem to be appropriate, with Phase 1 focusing on 2024 to 2030 and achieving the 48% reduction necessary to comply with the Act. This phase would focus on our smaller vehicles which would be battery electric vehicles (BEV's), as determined by the Alternate Fuel feasibility study.

Phase 2 could be confirmed closer to 2030 when, it was anticipated, much of the uncertainty in the landscape had been addressed. This phase would focus on the rest of the fleet and the expected move toward hydrogen powered heavier vehicles.

### Phase 1 of Green Fleet Roadmap

Phase 1 would include the following:

- Install charging infrastructure at North Road Depot, to maximise use of the current NIE transformer, without needing to upgrade it currently.
- Ensure the staff and resources were in place to maintain the new renewables powered fleet.
- Replace all suitable vehicles with battery equivalent (see schedule attached).
- Explore hydrogen power and the potential for hydrogen sharing agreements with suitable public sector organisations.
- Review the suitability of the depots, ensuring they could meet the organisation's needs to deliver phase 2 of this strategy.
- Utilise HVO to achieve additional carbon savings, if required, to meet the 2030 target of 48% reduction.

### Costs

The following were the high-level estimated total lifecycle costs for the 49 vehicles included in Phase 1 of the green fleet plan, based on 8k miles per annum (current average).

A lease option had been costed and may be worth considering due to certainty of costs and flexibility in the rapidly changing technological environment.

Cost Description	Diesel Vehicles (purchased)	BEV (purchased)	BEV (leased)
Infrastructure costs	£0	£50,000	£50,000
Purchase/Lease Cost (based on current typical costs)	£1,258,124	£1,663,403	£1,705,200
Fuel Cost	£436,541	£274,400	£274,400
Maintenance (incl. Batteries)	£82,320	£79,380	£54,880
Tax	£82,230	£65,170	£65,170
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,859,215</b>	<b>£2,132,353</b>	<b>£2,149,650</b>

Net additional financial costs	n/a	£273,138	£290,435
Carbon emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	1108	250	250
Net Carbon savings (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	n/a	858	858

Whilst the life-cycle costs of both BEV options were more expensive than the diesel equivalents (largely due to the relatively low annual mileage of the fleet) they were achieving a significant saving of 858 tCO<sub>2</sub>e and making a significant contribution to Councils obligations under the 2022 Climate Change Act (NI).

The report displayed a diagram showing the anticipated journey to a green fleet.

RECOMMENDED that the Council agrees the approach outlined above, subject to preparation of further business cases as required during the rates setting process.

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

Proposing the recommendation Councillor Morgan thanked officers for the report and recognised the expense in terms of capital investment and felt that the Council would need to manage that as well as it could.

Alderman Cummings rose to second the recommendation and also saw the complications that would be faced into the future. He was delighted to note that the report included infrastructure and was not simply about purchasing a fleet of vehicles.

Councillor Blaney explained that he could not support the recommendation at the current time and did not have the information to hand that would allow him to. This was a significant decision and while he accepted that it would be subject to further business cases in terms of the vehicles purchased, he wondered if the proposals were worth it in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> savings. He questioned if purchasing a few vehicles at a time was value for money in procurement terms and referred to technological advances which would be expected over the coming years. He was also of the opinion that the resale value of electric vehicles was not good at present and due to the insufficient detail on that felt that he could not give the recommendation his support.

The Head of Assets and Property Services pointed out that this was the direction of travel and there would be so many variables and that future decisions would be subject to business cases. The Council was currently at a fork in the road and would need to start replacing its full fleet with low emission vehicles. He indicated that not every vehicle was currently at the end of its useful life, so the purchase of new low emission vehicles could be straddled out over a number of years. While the CO<sub>2</sub> saving per pound might not appear attractive the bottom line was that the Council needed to comply with government legislation and work to reduce its carbon footprint.

Councillor Cathcart gave the recommendation his support and believed that the Council needed to look at its long-term strategy and the reality was that it did not have millions of pounds to spend on replacing the whole fleet of vehicles at one time.

Councillor McKee was of the same opinion and agreed that decarbonisation was not progressing as quickly as everyone would like, but this was a step forward in the right direction.

Members were in agreement with the exception of Councillor Blaney.

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

**9. BUILDING CONTROL ACTIVITY REPORT Q4 (JAN TO MAR 2024) (FILE BC01 / 91000)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment that the information provided in this report covered, unless otherwise stated, the period; 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024. The aim of the report was to provide members with details of some of the key activities of Building Control, the range of services it provides along with details of level of performance. This report format had been introduced across Regulatory Services.

**Applications**

Full Plan applications were made to Building Control for building works to any commercial building, or for larger schemes in relation to residential dwellings.

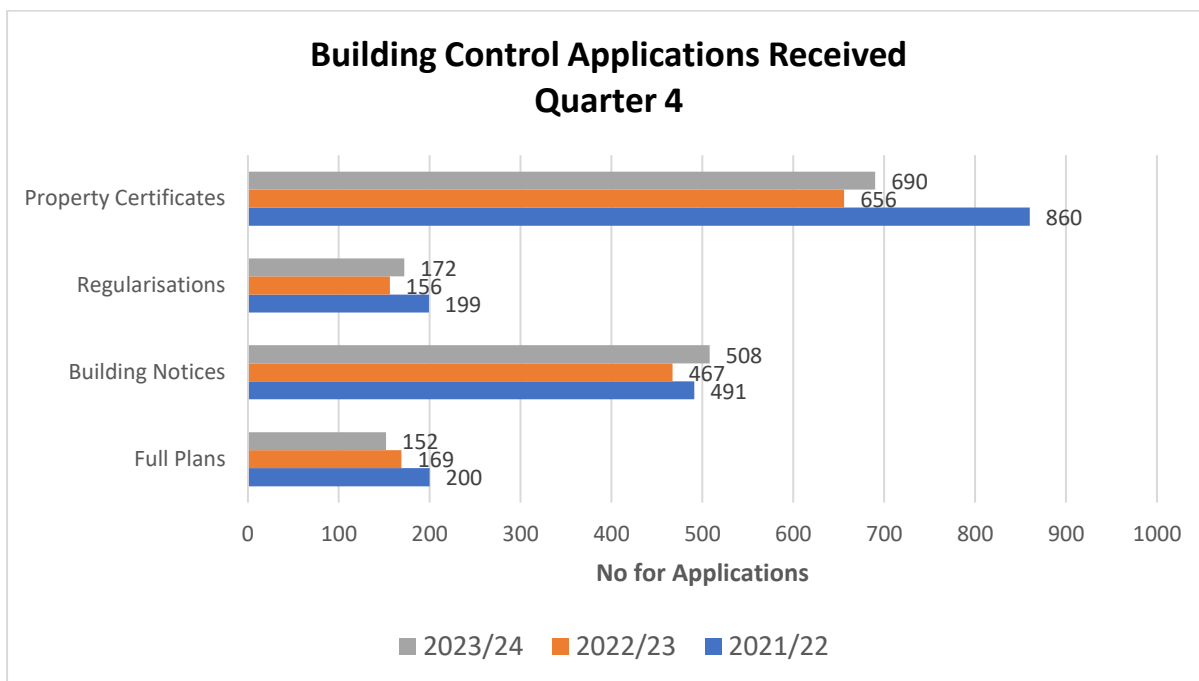
Building Notice applications were submitted for minor alternations such as internal wall removal, installation of heating boilers or systems, installation of all types of insulation and must be made before work commences. Those applications were for residential properties only.

Regularisation applications consider all works carried out illegally without a previous Building Control application in both commercial and residential properties. A regularisation application considered all types of work retrospectively and under the Building Regulations in force at the time the works were carried out.

Property Certificate applications were essential to the conveyancing process in the sale of any property, residential or commercial, and provide information on Building Control history and Council held data.

<b>QUARTER 4</b>	<b>Period of Report</b> 01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024	<b>01/01/2023-31/03/2023</b>	<b>01/01/2022 – 31/03/2022</b>
<b>Full Plan Applications</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>200</b>

<b>Building Notice Applications</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>491</b>
<b>Regularisation Applications</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>Property Certificate Applications</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>860</b>



The number of full Plan applications received was very much influenced by the economic climate, and any changes in bank lending or uncertainty in the marketplace may cause a reduction in Full Plan applications.

**Regulatory Full Plan Turnaround Times**

Turnaround times for full plan applications were measured in calendar days from the day of receipt within the council, to day of posting (inclusive).

Inspections must be carried out on the day requested due to commercial pressures on the developer/builder/householder, and as such any pressures on that end of the business reflects on the turnaround of plans timescale.

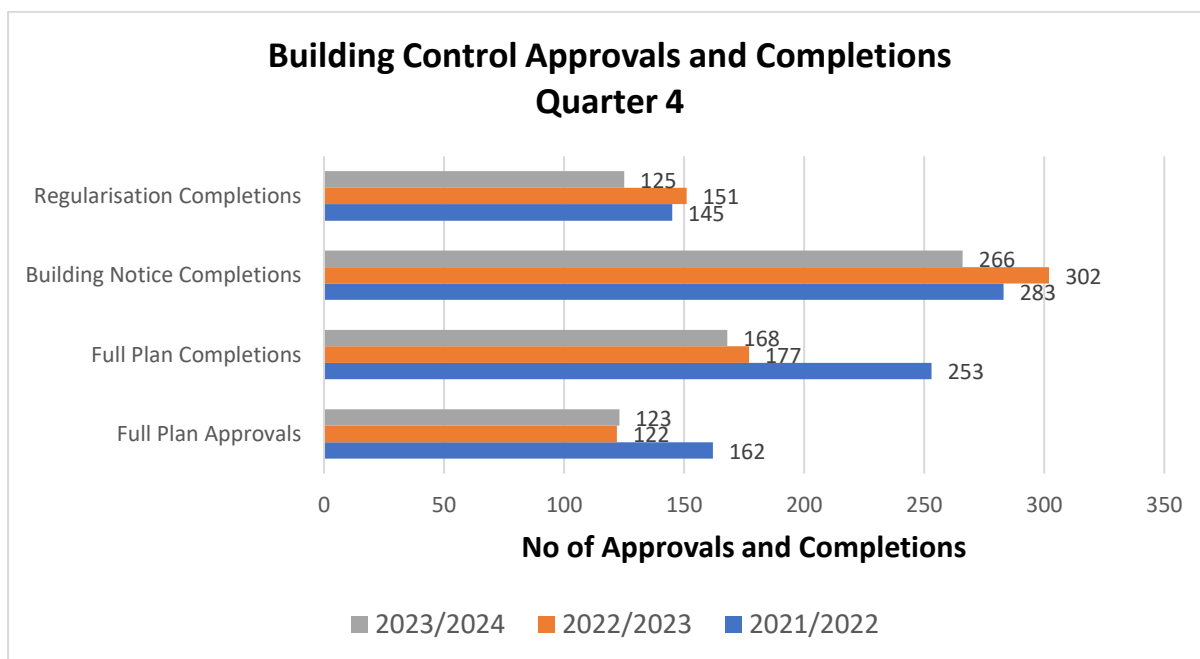
<b>QUARTER 4</b>	<b>Period of Report 01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024</b>	<b>Same quarter last year</b>	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Average number of days to turnaround plan</b>
<b>Domestic Full Plan Turnarounds within target (21 calendar days)</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>↓</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Non-Domestic Full Plan Turnarounds within target (35 calendar days)</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>↓</b>	<b>51</b>

### Regulatory Approvals and Completions

The issuing of Building Control Completion Certificates indicated that works were carried out to a satisfactory level and meet the current Building Regulations.

Building Control Full Plan Approval indicated that the information and drawings submitted as part of an application meet current Building Regulations and works could commence on site.

<b>QUARTER 4</b>	<b>Period of Report</b> 01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024	<b>01/01/2023 –</b> <b>31/03/2023</b>	<b>01/01/2022 –</b> <b>31/03/2022</b>
<b>Full Plan Approvals</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>Full Plan Completions</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>253</b>
<b>Building Notice Completions</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>Regularisation Completions</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>145</b>



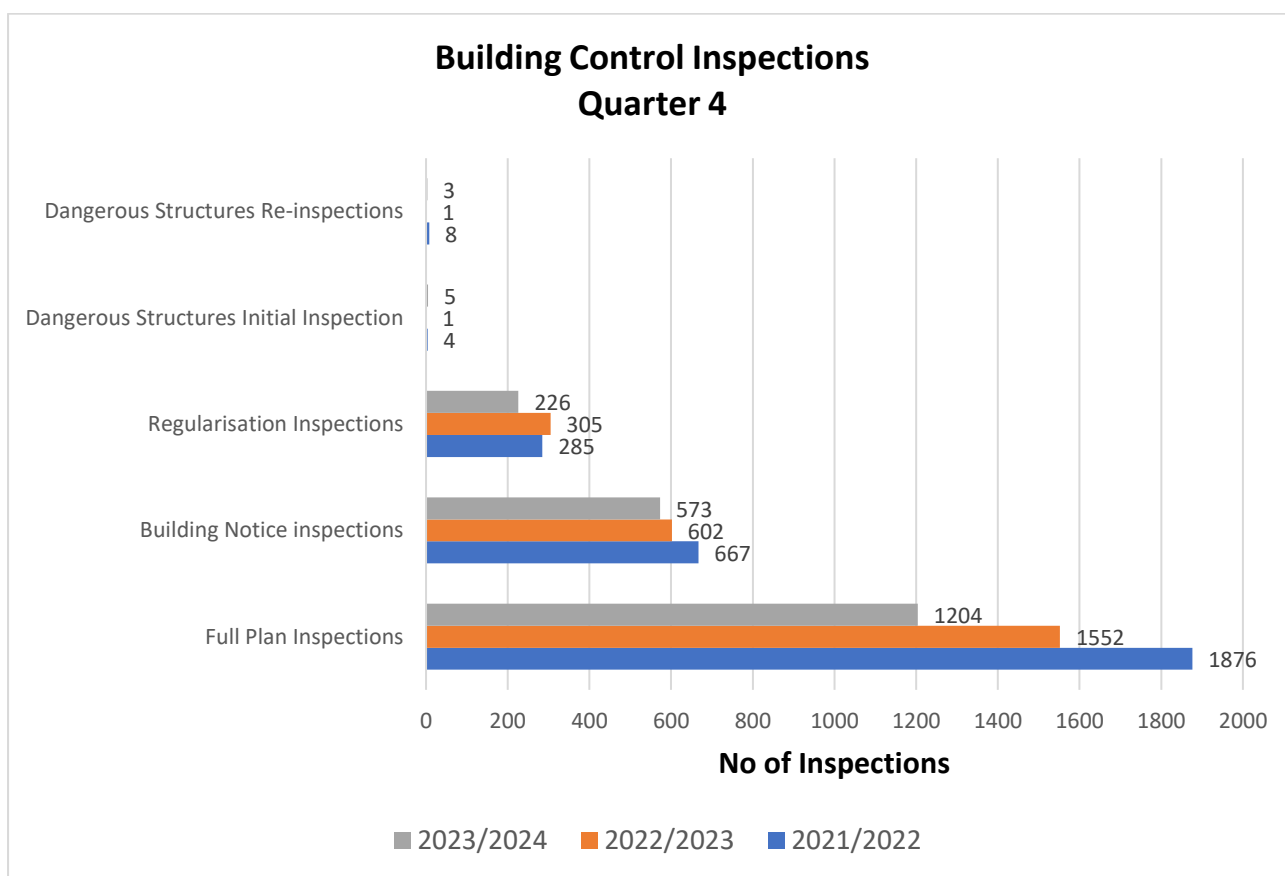
### Inspections

Under the Building Regulations applicants were required to give notice at specific points in the building process to allow inspections. The inspections were used to determine compliance and to all for improvement or enforcement.

<b>QUARTER 4</b>	<b>Period of Report</b> 01/01/2024 - 31/03/2024	<b>01/01/2023 –</b> <b>31/03/2023</b>	<b>01/01/2022 –</b> <b>31/03/2022</b>
<b>Full Plan Inspections</b>	<b>1204</b>	<b>1552</b>	<b>1876</b>
<b>Building Notice Inspections</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>667</b>



<b>Regularisation Inspections</b>	226	305	285
<b>Dangerous structures initial inspection</b>	5	1	4
<b>Dangerous structure re-inspections</b>	3	1	8
<b>Total inspections</b>	2011	2461	2840

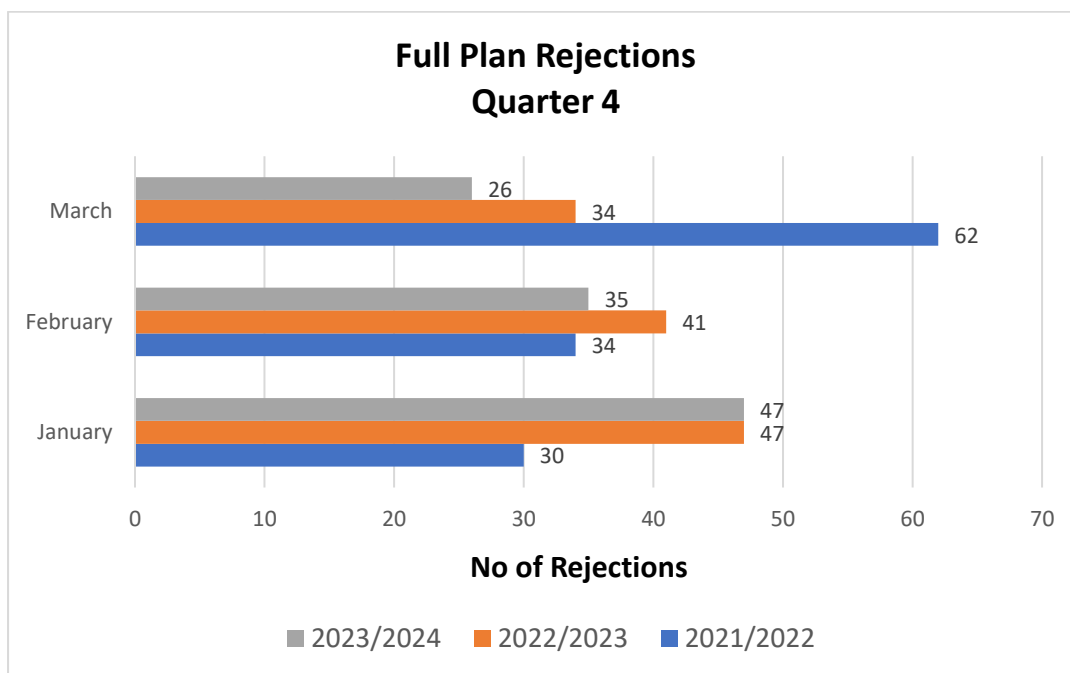


**Non-Compliance**

Where it was not possible to Approve full plan applications they were required to be rejected. Building Control Full Plan Rejection Notices indicated that after assessment there were aspects of the drawings provided that do not meet current Building Regulations. A Building Control Rejection Notice sets out the changes or aspects of the drawings provided that need to be amended. After those amendments were completed, the amended drawings should be submitted to Building Control for further assessment and approval.

<b>QUARTER 4</b>	<b>Period of Report</b> 01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024	<b>01/01/2023 –</b> <b>31/03/2023</b>	<b>01/01/2022 –</b> <b>31/03/2022</b>
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<b>Full Plan Rejection Notice</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Dangerous Structure Recommended for legal action</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Court Cases</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

**10. BUILDING CONTROL ACTIVITY REPORT Q1 (APR TO JUN 2024) (FILE BC1 / 91000)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment covering, unless otherwise stated, the period; 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024. The aim of the report was to provide Members with details of some of the key activities of Building Control, the range of services it provided along with details of level of performance. This report format had been introduced across Regulatory Services.

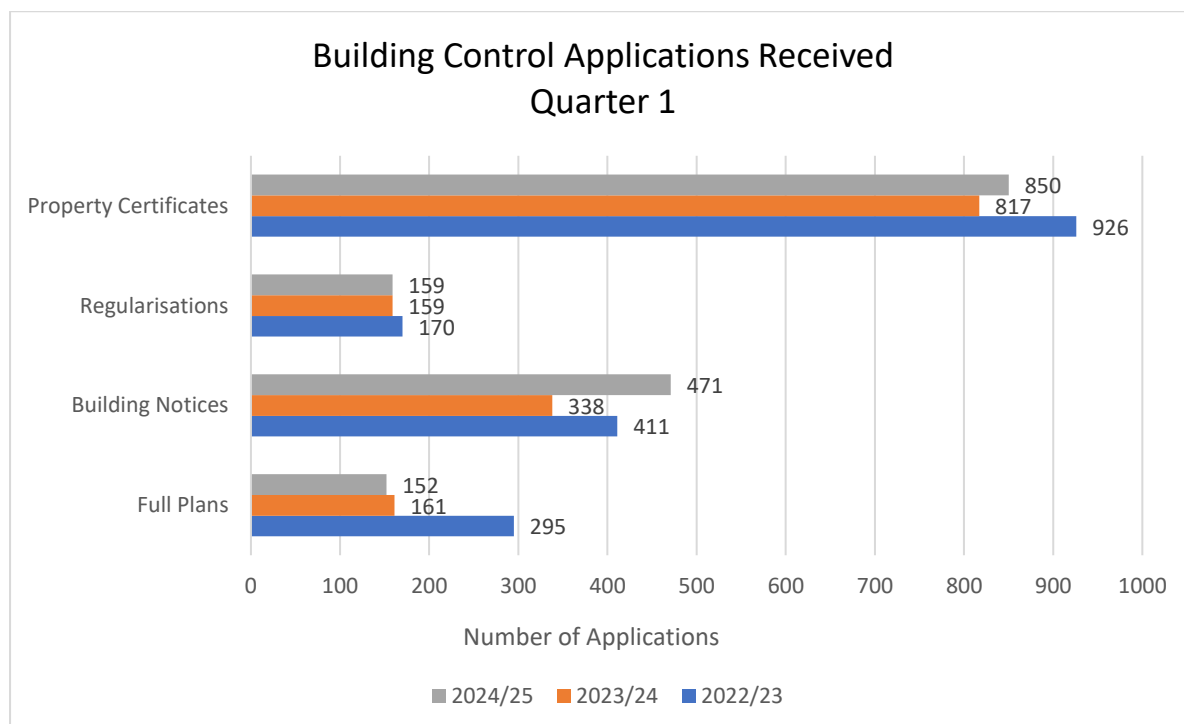
Full Plan applications were made to Building Control for building works to any commercial building, or for larger schemes in relation to residential dwellings.

Building Notice applications were submitted for minor alternations such as internal wall removal, installation of heating boilers or systems, installation of all types of insulation and must be made before work commences. Those applications were for residential properties only.

Regularisation applications considered all works carried out illegally without a previous Building Control application in both commercial and residential properties. A regularisation application considered all types of work retrospectively and under the Building Regulations in force at the time the works were carried out.

Property Certificate applications were essential to the conveyancing process in the sale of any property, residential or commercial, and provided information on Building Control history and Council held data.

<b>QUARTER 1</b>	<b>Period of Report</b> 01/04/2024 – 30/06/2024	<b>01/04/2023-30/06/2023</b>	<b>01/04/2022 – 30/06/2022</b>
<b>Full Plan Applications</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>Building Notice Applications</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>411</b>
<b>Regularisation Applications</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Property Certificate Applications</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>926</b>





The number of Full Plan applications received was very much influenced by the economic climate, and any changes in bank lending or uncertainty in the marketplace may cause a reduction in Full Plan applications.

### Regulatory Full Plan Turnaround Times

Turnaround times for full plan applications were measured in calendar days from the day of receipt within the council, to the day of posting (inclusive).

Inspections must be carried out on the day requested due to commercial pressures on the developer/builder/householder, and as such any pressures on that end of the business reflects on the turnaround of plans timescale.

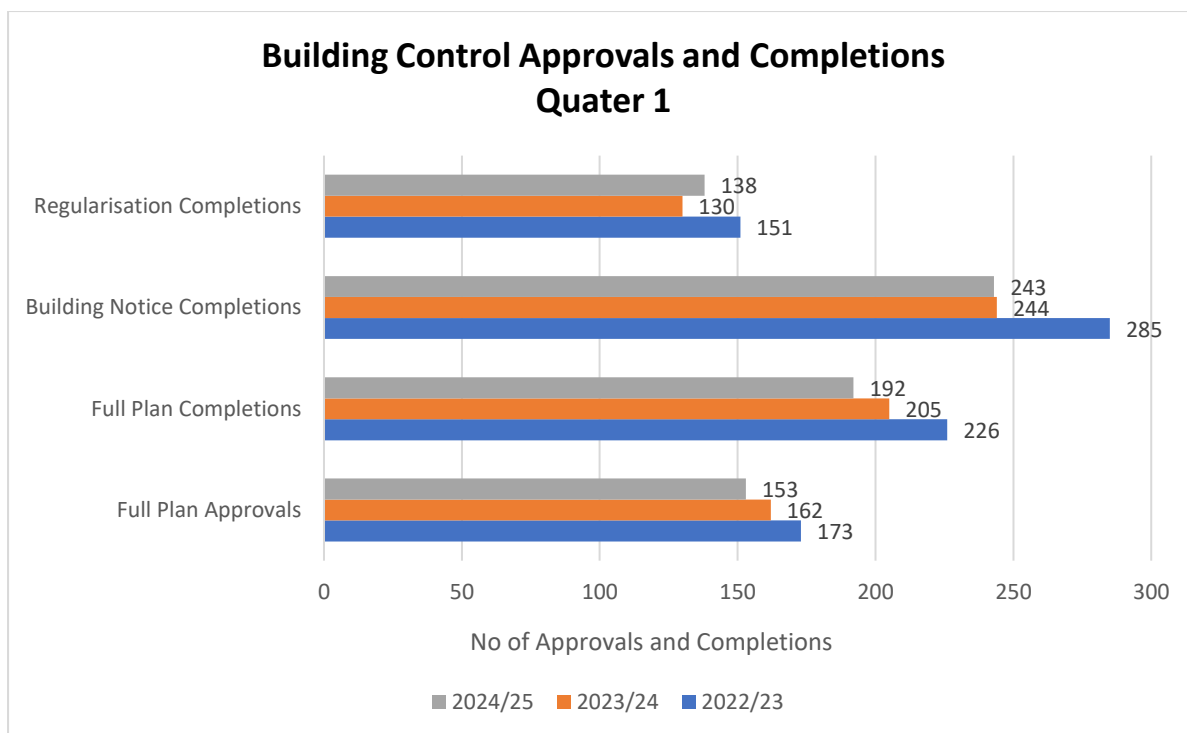
<b>QUARTER</b>	<b>Period of Report</b> 01/04/2024 – 30/06/2024	<b>Same quarter last year</b>	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Average number of days to turnaround plan</b>
<b>Domestic Full Plan Turnarounds within target (21 calendar days)</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>57%</b>		<b>18</b>
<b>Non-Domestic Full Plan Turnarounds within target (35 calendar days)</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>67%</b>		<b>24</b>

### Regulatory Approvals and Completions

The issuing of Building Control Completion Certificates indicated that works were carried out to a satisfactory level and meet the current Building Regulations.

Building Control Full Plan Approval indicated that the information and drawings submitted as part of an application meet current Building Regulations and works could commence on site.

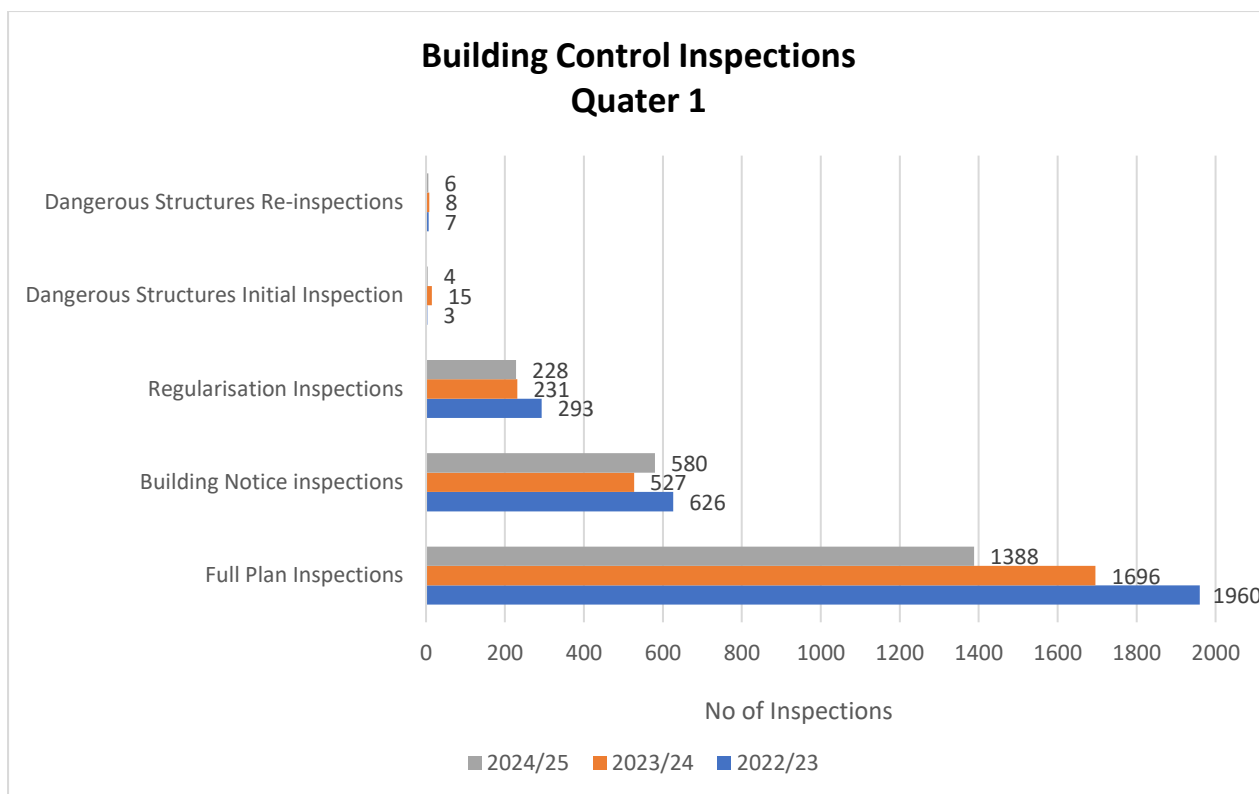
<b>QUARTER 1</b>	<b>Period of Report</b> 01/04/2024 – 30/06/2024	<b>01/04/2023 – 30/06/2023</b>	<b>01/04/2022 – 30/06/2022</b>
<b>Full Plan Approvals</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>Full Plan Completions</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>Building Notice Completions</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>285</b>
<b>Regularisation Completions</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>151</b>



### Inspections

Under the Building Regulations applicants were required to give notice at specific points in the building process to allow inspections. The inspections were used to determine compliance and to all for improvement or enforcement.

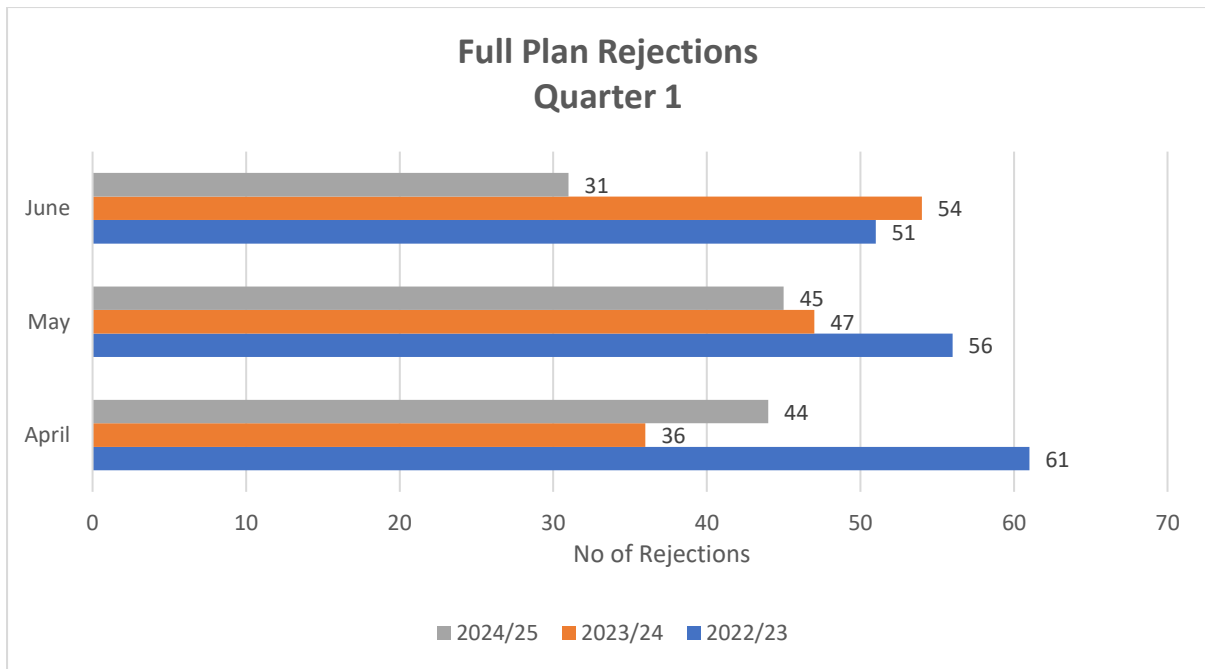
<b>QUARTER</b>	<b>Period of Report</b> 01/04/2024 - 30/06/2024	<b>01/04/2023 –</b> <b>30/06/2023</b>	<b>01/04/2022 –</b> <b>30/06/2022</b>
<b>Full Plan Inspections</b>	1388	1696	1960
<b>Building Notice Inspections</b>	580	527	626
<b>Regularisation Inspections</b>	228	231	293
<b>Dangerous structures initial inspection</b>	4	15	3
<b>Dangerous structure re-inspections</b>	6	8	7
<b>Total inspections</b>	2206	2477	2889



### Non-Compliance

Where it was not possible to Approve full plan applications they were required to be rejected. Building Control Full Plan Rejection Notices indicated that after assessment there were aspects of the drawings provided that did not meet current Building Regulations. A Building Control Rejection Notice set out the changes or aspects of the drawings provided that need to be amended. After those amendments were completed, the amended drawings should be submitted to Building Control for further assessment and approval.

<b>QUARTER 1</b>	<b>Period of Report 01/04/2024 – 30/06/2024</b>	<b>01/04/2023 – 30/06/2023</b>	<b>01/04/2022 – 30/06/2022</b>
<b>Full Plan Rejection Notice</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>Dangerous Structure Recommended for legal action</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Court Cases</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

**11. NOTICES OF MOTION**

**11.1 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 in Northern Ireland.

Proposed by Councillor Irwin, seconded by Alderman McRandal, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Proposing the Motion Councillor Irwin thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address the meeting and knew they would be aware of the discussions around this matter which had taken place previously at the Environment Committee.

Previously the barrier to pedestrian access at HRCs was for health and safety reasons but more recently the landscape of the discussion had changed. Other Councils had made progress on the matter, and she thought that with the introduction of the booking system pedestrian access could be reconsidered.

Taking Belfast City Council as an example Councillor Irwin explained that there were now two HRCs with pedestrian access; Alexandra Park and Ormeau. She had paid a visit to the site at Alexandra Park, which was a small site, and had described the

simple system there which had a separate pedestrian access with a designated walk-way and zebra crossing. She thought that lessons could be learned from the experience in Belfast and how it had managed to balance health and safety with enabling pedestrian access.

She went on to refer to the newly introduced booking system and considered that one option was to designate specific time windows for pedestrian access and although she was unsure how that would work in practice at this point, it was obvious that there would be a need to balance proportionality of response with the need or demand for it.

Councillor Irwin said that she was simply asking for a report and further exploration or discussion of the options given the changed landscape of HRC use both in Ards and North Down and other Council areas.

Alderman McRandal was happy to second the Motion and began by stating that stopping pedestrian access to Holywood Recycling Centre had been an issue for some residents of the town because they could have previously walked or cycled to the facility. The facility in Holywood was unusual in that it was located in the centre of the town, next to Queens Leisure Complex. Many people living in the Kinnegar, Strand, Church View, Spencer Street, Downshire Road, Trevor Street, Park Lane, Ian Hill and their various offshoots were within an easy 10 minute walk of the centre.

He was aware that health and safety reasons had been used as a reason previously to discontinue pedestrian access however he referred to Belfast which was able to open a few centres to pedestrians and therefore questioned why that could not be extended safely to sites within Ards and North Down.

Some of his constituents in Holywood who had complained to him about pedestrian access being stopped did not own a car. For others it was difficult to articulate what health and safety reasons could prevent them from using a pedestrian access. Those people had heard the Council rhetoric of the need to recycle and it did not make sense to them that they were expected to get into their car to travel to their Recycling Centre when they could easily walk.

He went on to say that in certain town centre residential planning applications Planners were taking the view that a shortfall in car parking spaces when assessed against the Creating Places standards was acceptable, due to the fact that amenities and public transport were within easy walking distance and he viewed Recycling Centres as an amenity. He suggested that it appeared, in respect of town centre or near town centre living, that Planners took an opposing view to officers in the Environment Directorate regarding the need for car usage. He hoped that Members would consider the Notice of Motion favourably.

Councillor McKee wholeheartedly supported the Motion and believed that the Environment Committee had not been found wanting in trying to bring in pedestrian access to HRCs. Recently some changes had been made and the introduction of the booking system had given a renewed opportunity to re-examine. He held the strong belief that people who did not have cars should have the same rights as those



who did. He was confident that something could be achieved keeping the focus on the roadmap to sustainability.

Councillor Cathcart suggested that the Council consult with the Health and Safety Executive to see if a positive outcome for pedestrians could be achieved since it was an ongoing question addressed to some Members.

Councillor Wray supported the Notice of Motion especially since as a Borough the aim was to encourage active travel and thought that pedestrians could be accommodated on at least a few sites without the requirement for significant financial investment. While he accepted the argument that if someone could walk into an HRC carrying items they could equally use a kerbside bin for those, he also suggested that if people needed to use these sites they had a right to do so without the need to have access to a vehicle. He looked forward to a report being brought back to the Committee.

Councillor Boyle rose to support the report being brought back which should inform Members on the options available. Most of the concerns to date had been in respect of health and safety but there may be some sites where this arrangement would be suitable and could be accommodated safely.

Councillor Irwin appreciated the support of Members and hoped to see as much detail as possible on what could be done practically. She finished by repeating that she did not feel a ratepayer should need to have a car to access the services that they had paid for.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Irwin, seconded by Alderman McRandal, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.**

## **12. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

There were no items of any other notified business.

(Councillor Morgan left the meeting at 8.37 pm).

## **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

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

## **13. EXTENSION OF MARINE SERVICES CONTRACT (FILE 77001)**

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

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

A report on extension of the Marine Services Contract, was considered.

It was agreed to extend the Marine Services contract until October 2025, in line with the terms set out in the original tender and subject to the increase indicated.

**14. TENDERS FOR THE PROVISION OF ELECTRICAL SERVICES (FILE 77001)**

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

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

A report on tenders for the Provision of Electrical Services, was considered.

It was agreed to award contracts for the Provision of Electrical Works to the following contractors:

Lot 1 Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) (Including: Emergency Lighting Inspection and Fixed Electrical Installations).  
**CTS Tech Services Ltd**

Lot 2 General Electrical Works and Services.  
**AJC Group Limited**

Lot 3 External lighting inspection and repair (Including: Festive lighting inspection, repair, PAT, and installation)  
**No award**

**RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Edmund, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.**

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 8.40 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 3 October 2024 at 7.00pm.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Councillor Gilmour

**Aldermen:** Adair  
Armstrong-Cotter

**Councillors:** Ashe           McKimm (zoom)  
Blaney           McLaren (zoom)  
Edmund        McCracken  
Hollywood     Smart  
Kennedy       Thompson  
McCollum

**Officers in Attendance:** Interim Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Interim Director of Place (B Dorrian), Interim Head of Regeneration (A Cozzo) and Democratic Services Officer (J Glasgow).

### **1. APOLOGIES**

An apology for inability to attend was received from Councillor Creighton.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor McCracken declared an interest in Item 4 – Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

**NOTED.**

### **3. COVID RECOVERY SMALL SETTLEMENTS REGENERATION PROGRAMME (RDP236)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place detailing that Members would be aware that a report was presented to the Council in June 2024 providing an update on the progress of the Covid Recovery Small Settlements Programme (CRSSP).

This report provided an update and included 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**

### **School Lane, Ballywalter**

Members would be aware concerns around this project had primarily been linked to the Education Authority requirements surrounding liability. Officers, however, were hopeful about reaching a resolution, aided by communications received from the Department of Education which was liaising with their 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 had been sent to hopefully progress this matter. An alternative project in Ballywalter was being considered as a reserve in the eventuality that a way forward on this issue was unattainable. An update would follow in due course.

### **Ballygowan Walking Trail**

The design of the walking trail was 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 would 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 that was not a consultation but rather an opportunity to refine the design.

### **Greyabbey Community Park**

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

Officers had finalised options and costings for the drainage works to the green space, and the necessary arrangements were in place for the appointed contractor to begin the works. It was proposed that a herringbone system was used which was 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 would be relocated to the site following a request from the community group. Directional and informational signage would also be installed to promote connectivity between the park and the village and other places of interest within the village.

The allocated budget for the project was £120,000. The revised estimated total costs of the project stand at approx. £65,000. It was 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.

### **Kircubbin Coastal Path**

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

Due to the recent cost submission from the contractor, it had become clear that the available budget falls short of what was required to execute the project in its entirety. That had delayed the anticipated timeline that was hoped to 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 were approx. £110,000 (to include planting at the water treatment, lighting, picnic benches, seating, and tree planting). The allocated budget was £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 – that would 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 could 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 aligned 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.

### **Groomsport Harbour Environmental Improvement Scheme – Design Only**

That was now complete, and no further action was required.

Officers would actively seek funding opportunities to deliver this project.

### **Millisle Lagoon Environmental Improvement Scheme – Design Only**

That was now complete, and a planning application had been lodged.

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

### **Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme, Portaferry**

The Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme was 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 would 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.

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 was 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 was proposed to reissue the scheme to increase participation. Direct engagement with businesses that did not apply would be initiated to encourage their involvement and maximise the use of the allocated funds.

### **Animation Grant Scheme**

The Animation Grant Scheme aimed 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 would 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 was proposed to extend the programme by one year resulting in the completion of all elements no later than 31 March 2026. Officers had consulted with Department officials, who had confirmed that this extension would not pose any issues.

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.

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

Alderman Adair viewed the report as fantastic news for the rural community on the Ards Peninsula, and he thanked the Rural Development team for the work they had

undertaken. He wished to touch on a number of projects, Kircubbin Promenade had come in over budget however he welcomed that the project would be able to go ahead as lighting would be of great benefit to that promenade. Alderman Adair asked if there was a timescale of when that project would commence. The Head of Regeneration advised that talks would occur with funders, there was no definitive timescale available yet; however, he undertook to update Members when that was available.

Alderman Adair was delighted that Greyabbey Parklands was progressing and asked if there was a start date. The Head of Regeneration advised that the start date would be after March 2025, and it was hoped that scheme could be completed by March 2026.

In respect of the shop frontage improvement scheme at Portaferry, Alderman Adair welcomed that scheme and its extension to enable as many traders as possible to benefit from it. The public realm scheme in Portaferry was nearly complete and that scheme had totally transformed the town. He asked if there were any surplus monies available if other public realm areas could be considered. The Head of Regeneration advised that the underspend was to be confirmed and consideration was being given to other work within the Peninsula.

Alderman Adair noted that Millisle and Ballywalter needed investment.

In respect of School Lane, Ballywalter, Alderman Adair asked if any further progress had been made in respect of that matter. The Head of Regeneration advised that he had contacted the Head of Assets and Property within the Authority and had no response to date.

Alderman Adair advised the Committee that he represented the Council on the Partnership Panel, and they had met recently for the first time since devolution had been restored. He had raised several issues at that meeting and Department officials had advised that they were working up a similar scheme to the small settlements fund.

Councillor Edmund welcomed rural investment in the villages.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.**

(Having previously declared an interest in the item, Councillor McCracken withdrew from the meeting – 7.07 pm)

#### **4. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (BIDS) (FILE RDP164)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place detailing Members may be aware that the Department for Communities (DfC) has policy and legislative responsibilities for Business Improvement Districts (BID). The Council had recently been requested by DfC to assist in gaining an understanding of the level of interest in BID within the Borough. That would 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 had 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'.

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

DfC required 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 was anticipated that successful BID within the Borough would 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 could 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 had evidenced based data on their positive impact. It was therefore anticipated that any successful BID would suitably complement the existing benefits of Regeneration, or wider Council projects. Furthermore, BID research suggested that economic, social, and wellbeing benefits could 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. Those sessions, aimed at following up from initial discussions, were scheduled for dates at the end of September, so a short verbal update from those meetings would be provided at the October Committee meeting.

In Bangor, a BID steering group had been established consisting of businesses from arts, leisure, transport, retail, and hospitality sectors. The steering group had been



working towards getting their proposal to the ballot stage and had 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 had been contacted by the Bangor Chamber of Commerce about their interest in a BID proposal from their membership base that also covered various sectors within the same area.

In contrast, the Chamber did not agree that was the best time to establish a BID given the early stages of the Bangor Waterfront and Queen's Parade projects. However, they have advised that they were 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 deemed 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 could 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.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council agrees that Officers should contact both potential proposers and encourage them to reconsider their steering group representation as it was 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.

The Head of Regeneration provided a verbal update in respect of the matter. Engagement had occurred among DfC, Regeneration Officers, Comber Chamber and Donaghadee Community Development Association. The meeting provided an update on the BIDs process. The Newry BID Manager had been in attendance who provided a good context. Since that meeting, it had been advised that Donaghadee and Comber would not be proceeding with their BID proposal. Communication had occurred with Holywood however unfortunately they had not communicated any further and officers would reach out again. A meeting was to be held with Bangor and Newtownards Chambers the previous week but unfortunately had been cancelled at relatively short notice; however, that had been rescheduled to Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October and he would be happy to provide an update after that meeting.

Proposed by Councillor McCollum, seconded by Councillor McKimm, that this Committee supports a Business Improvement District for Bangor. It was recommended that the two groups interested in forming a BID were invited to the next feasible Place & Prosperity Committee, to present their vision for a Bangor BID

and proposed way forward. Following those presentations officers would be asked to draft a policy paper on how a Bangor BID should be supported, for approval at the subsequent Committee.

Councillor McCollum highlighted that Business Improvement Districts were good news, it could be seen that they worked, all the data and research since their inception in 2004 pointed to their success as a proven regeneration tool and stimulus for investment. There were now over 330 BID in the UK. BID legislation was introduced in Northern Ireland in 2013 and there were now eight BID across the region. She had attended a presentation by Enniskillen BID last year and viewed that as inspiring. Council and the BID had spoken, on the importance of BID as a resource for regeneration and sustainability in the town and they had become self-funding providing them with opportunities for cohesion and marketing for investment. The Council was keen to work with any BID proposer to provide support and potentially match fund the resources required to bring a proposal to ballot stage. Councillor McCollum highlighted the potential to boost the local business economy and grow the non-domestic rate base which aligned with the objectives outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan.

In terms of the next steps, there were two organisations that were interested in forming a BID, both already established and both keen to be part of the process. A significant amount of work had already been undertaken by the BID steering group to prepare their proposal including forming a BID Company, engaging local businesses, setting up a website and a newsletter, preparing a draft list of potential projects, holding several consultation events, engaging with Council and DfC and presenting to a previous meeting of this Committee.

Councillor McCollum agreed that it would be unfeasible and undesirable to support two BID and noted the importance of Members and Council Officers not becoming involved in the representation of the groups as that would be contrary to the regulations and against the spirit of the scheme.

Given the importance to Bangor to the success of the BID proposal and the tremendous benefits which undoubtedly would accrue to the Borough she did not wish to see this matter delayed any further and she felt that was entirely possible with the recommendation.

The success of the BID was dependent on the quality of the BID and the commitment behind it. The issue should not be allowed to stagnate, and opportunity seized to galvanise the momentum that had gathered particularly with the Bangor Marine now imminently underway. Councillor McCollum urged the Committee to hear from the two Groups on their vision for Bangor and outline their proposals to invigorate the local business economy and support the realisation of the Council's priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan. She remained hopeful that the two organisations would find a meaningful way forward to work together and she believed her proposal would not hinder that objective rather it would keep the proposal live and vibrant. She asked Officers that following hearing from the organisations, they would draft a policy to support a Bangor BID for approval at the next meeting of the Place and Prosperity Committee.

Councillor McKimm spoke in concurrence with the comments made by Councillor McCollum and asked Members to support the proposal. He recalled some months ago those people working on a BID for Bangor attended a meeting of the Place and Prosperity Committee to present with Alison Gordon and Jonny Fusco providing an update on the work. He advised that further developments and work was ongoing and as had already been alluded to a not-for-profit limited company had been set up and 60 businesses had been engaged with that. Councillor McKimm felt the Committee would benefit from hearing from the Groups to allow them to make a fully informed decision. Bangor was the only major city in Northern Ireland that did not to have a Town Centre Manager or have a BID in place. Everyone was deeply aware of the ongoing challenges faced by businesses in Bangor with many businesses at or facing breaking point with reduced footfall and lack of an overall strategy to support those businesses. Adding to that, Bangor would also see significant upheaval as work commenced on Queen's Parade and following that the Bangor Waterfront project. Councillor McKimm stated that there was deep concern regarding the doubling of size of Bloomfield Shopping Centre. If the proposal was passed, he looked forward to hearing the detailed plans to address the crisis on the High Street which many businesses were facing. Councillor McKimm called on Members to support the proposal.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, as an amendment, that the recommendation be adopted, and that Officers will bring back a report to the Place and Prosperity Committee following that contact to update on the situation.

The Chair did not accept that proposal as she viewed the proposal as a direct negative.

Alderman Adair was excited by the opportunity of a Bangor BID and had seen the difference BID had made across Northern Ireland referring to Ballymena as an example. However, speaking on behalf of the DUP he stated that he would like to see the BID from Bangor made in a unified approach and he felt that BID would be stronger if the Groups worked together. He felt it was unfair as a Council to pick one Group over the other and would rather see one Bangor BID. Bangor would see major redevelopment and investment over the coming years with Queen's Parade and the Regional City Deal projects, the BID would be a great addition and would bring economic prosperity. Working together would achieve so much more and would provide the maximum opportunity. Alderman Adair highlighted his support for the BID but stated he could not support the proposal.

Councillor Ashe recognised all the work done by the two groups so far, who had put a considerable amount of time and energy into their proposals. Working together was the best option, BID by nature should not be party political. She could not see why the Groups could not come and speak to the Committee, hearing first hand from the two groups would be beneficial. Councillor Ashe was pleased to hear areas of consensus but felt there was nothing to lose from hearing from the two Groups.

Councillor Blaney stated that he could not support the proposal. There was consensus on the benefits of BID. However, he felt it was important the BID went forward as one for Bangor and was taken forward as amicable and in a united a manner as possible. Councillor Blaney did not feel the proposal was conducive to

that and instead drew battle lines between the two sides, with two rival pitches. It detailed in the motion that it would be unfair to ask for the Council to choose between one proposal and the other. Accepting the proposal would mean that an arbitrary choice would have to be made. Passing the proposal would mean the two groups would work on their separate pitches, rather than working together on a united proposal for Bangor.

Councillor Thompson agreed with Councillor Blaney, he believed the best way forward was to have a united BID. He felt there would be a better opportunity to get the BID through if it was made in a united approach.

Councillor Gilmour stated that she would have difficulty supporting the proposal, she recognised the drive behind the proposal however highlighted the need to have the best BID as possible for Bangor.

To sum up, Councillor McCollum recognised that the Committee wanted the best BID for Bangor and acknowledged that there could only be one BID. Nothing within her proposal inhibited there being only one BID. She was concerned regarding the lack of consensus between the two groups, and that the matter would stagnate to the prejudice of Bangor. It was against the regulations for Council to become involved in the representation or formation of the BID and cautioned Members in that regard.

The proposal was put to the meeting and was declared lost with 4 voting for and 10 against.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted, and that Officers will bring back a report to the Place and Prosperity Committee following that contact to update on the situation.

Alderman Adair noted the passion that existed to have a BID for Bangor. He felt the only way for the BID to move forward was to have one BID. Both BIDs had unique talents and abilities however it could be so much better if they came together. A unified BID would have more potential to receive the funding and make Bangor a Business Improvement District which would transform the city. He felt the Council's role in that regard was an enabler and there was much merit in the two groups coming together.

Councillor Thompson reemphasised the need to come together to move forward. He hoped that officers could liaise with the groups involved and come back to the Committee as soon as possible.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted, and that officers will bring back a report to the Place and Prosperity Committee following that contact to update on the situation.**

(Councillor McCracken re-entered the meeting – 7.31 pm)

## **5. QUEEN'S PARADE DEVELOPMENT – CAR PARKING (FILE RDP63)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Place detailing that as Members would be aware, Bangor Marine was expected to commence work onsite on the Queen's Parade Redevelopment in the Autumn. The scheme would 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 would 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 offered 1,300 alternative car parking spaces within close proximity to Marine Gardens.

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

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

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

Upon completion of the Queen's Parade redevelopment, it was anticipated that there would 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 were the responsibility of the developer, Bangor Marine, which would 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 would:

- 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 would be aware, the Council had received funding of £335,000 from the Department for Communities for the delivery of an Urban Regeneration Programme,

which included 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 would provide an effective solution to any potential parking challenges in this immediate area as it would optimise existing resources and provide approximately 80 additional city centre car parking spaces.

The site was owned by the Department for Communities and Council would 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 would not be operational as a car park until Spring 2025. In the interim, communication and awareness activities would be implemented.

#### Communication and Awareness Campaign

The Communication and Awareness Campaign would 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 would reference public transport options and encourage active travel.

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

Messaging would be continually refreshed and adjusted as necessary.

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

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

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

Signs would 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 would be visible on entrance and exit of the car park, where practicable.

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

Officers had 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 was important to note that DfI had criteria that must be fulfilled for the addition of road signs, however, a need had been identified for the addition, removal and replacement of some car park signs and officers were continuing to liaise with DfI to implement those.

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 had been approved under the DfC Urban Regeneration Programme budget.

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

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council notes this report.

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

Councillor Hollywood welcomed that Council officers would proactively assist with the challenges of the loss of free car parking with the creation of additional temporary car parking facilities. He asked if those temporary car parking facilities would be free.

The Head of Regeneration clarified that the temporary car park at the old Project 24 site would be free to use.

Councillor Thompson was pleased to see preparations were being undertaken and hoped that it would not be too long to see work on the site progress. He encouraged the use of extra signage and extra communications on the changes to ensure minimal disruption.

Councillor Blaney asked if Spring 2025 was the most likely completion date. The Head of Regeneration advised that was the timescale that was being worked to and officers would rather enter meaningful timescales rather than being too aspirational. He reassured the Members that officers would make any effort to expedite that timescale if possible.

Councillor McCracken noted that while car parking remained very important for Bangor City Centre and was the dominant form of transport for the foreseeable future he asked if officers had considered the modal shift as he saw this as an opportunity to change how we transport between places of work and shopping destinations. He referred to the recent rail investment, Bangor had a very fine train station offering a great service. Likewise, cycling was important and many residents within Bangor would choose cycling as their mode of transport if the infrastructure could be improved. He outlined that Queen's University had recently opened a cycling hub and he questioned the opportunities for such covered parking for cyclists within the car parks.

The Director of Prosperity outlined that there was a requirement under the legal agreement between the Council and the developer for the Queen's Parade development that travel cards were required for the residents within the apartments for that scheme. It was therefore the thrust of planning policy, it recognised the modal shift, with the development being in close proximity to the bus and train station. It was also an area of parking restraint within the area plan.

The Head of Regeneration stated that the Council was actively promoting active travel through some of its regeneration projects and cycling infrastructure had been installed as part of some projects. Officers were aiming to take a broad approach and had that in mind for the future.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal Councillor Hollywood, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**6. TAG MINUTES**  
(Appendices I – III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copies of the undernoted minutes.

- 6.1 Comber TAG – 15.8.24**
- 6.2 Donaghadee TAG – 12.8.24**
- 6.3 Hollywood TAG – 13.8.24**

Proposed by Councillor McCollum, seconded by Councillor Ashe, that the minutes be noted.



In respect of Donaghadee TAG, Councillor McCollum advised that she had submitted her apologies twice for that meeting and she would like to see those recorded. She updated the Committee on various aspects of work that was being undertaken. She noted that there had been a tremendous amount of work done by Alderman Brooks, Councillors, officers and the sports clubs on trying to reinvigorate the Sports Hub. In that regard she was grateful to the Director of Community and Wellbeing for arranging a productive meeting with the Heads of Service and it had been agreed that a briefing document would be prepared for the economist who would report back to Council and the Clubs outlining the costings for facilities.

In relation to the signage, Councillor McCollum advised that Members were aware that Alderman Brooks had brought forward a motion in relation to the camera obscura. The signage sub group had met the previous week, that had been a super meeting and she thanked Head of Regeneration and Assistant Regeneration Officer for that work with an audit of the signage around the town being undertaken the following week.

In relation to the motion brought forward by Councillor Irwin and herself regarding the rising sea levels, a meeting had been held the previous week involving the DAERA Minister, Connie Egan MLA, Donaghadee Sailing Club and Donaghadee Community Development Association. That had been a positive meeting and liaison would now occur between Council Officers and DAERA Officials regarding the various proposals, statutory consents and questions would also be posed to the Executive Office in respect of responsibility around coastal management.

Councillor Thompson referred to the audit that would take place in Donaghadee town around signage, which was in need of improvement, following which the Group, DfI and Council would come together and look at the outworkings of that audit. He hoped the various aspects detailed within the minutes could be progressed to see to some improvements in the town.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McCollum, seconded by Councillor Ashe, that the minutes be noted.**

### **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

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

### **7. EXPLORIS QUARTER 1 REPORT - APR-JUNE 2024-25 (FILE DEVP3c)**

**\*\*\*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)**

This report details the performance of Exploris for the first quarter of the 2024-2025 financial year. This report contains commercially sensitive information on the operation of Exploris by a private operator (AEL) under an operating agreement with Council.

## **8. PICKIE FUN PARK - QUARTER 1 REPORT APRIL - JUNE 2024 (FILE 171006)**

**\*\*\*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)**

This report details the performance of Pickie Fun Park for the first quarter of the 2024/2025 financial year, as operated by Pickie Ltd on behalf of the Council, in respect of visitor numbers and financials.

## **9. CAG AND TAG MINUTES** (Appendices IV – V)

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

### **SCHEDULE 6:7 PREVENTION, INVESTIGATION, OR PROSECUTION OF CRIME.**

This report discusses includes an update by senior PSNI Officers an ongoing concern of protests and potential illegal activity within Bangor and the potential of similar activity taking place elsewhere within the Borough.

## **RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

**AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.**

## **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 7.56 pm.

## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via zoom) of the Corporate Services Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Tuesday 8 October 2024 at 7.00 pm.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Councillor Cochrane

**Aldermen:** Brooks                      McIlveen  
Graham                              McRandal  
McAlpine (7.55pm)      Smith

**Councillors:** Gilmour                      Moore (7.46pm)  
Irvine, S                              McCracken (7.41pm)  
Irvine, W                              Thompson  
Kennedy

**Officers:** Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Head of Administration (A Curtis), Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development (R McCullough), Head of Finance (S Grieve) and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

An apology was received from the Chair of the Committee, Councillor Irwin, and Councillor Chambers.

An apology for lateness was received from Alderman McAlpine, Councillor McCracken and Councillor Moore.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest notified.

### **3. PRESENTATION – DFI ROADS 2023/24 REPORT** (Appendix I)

The Chairman invited Mr Mark McPeak and Mr Steve Gardiner, representing DFI Roads, to make their presentation. Mr McPeak provided a verbal update to the committee, referring to his comments stated within the attached document (Appendix I).

Questions were invited from members and Alderman Smith appreciated the financial and staffing pressures but raised concerns about the allocation of the budget between the three Council districts in the Southern region. He noted that of the £89million capital investment budget, only £5million was allocated to the Southern region.

He referred to the reported proposals to resurface 0.73km of trunk road in year ahead and 2km of remaining road. Given that the lifespan of a road was 20 years, it was clear that 2.73km of resurfacing per year was not going to be sustainable.

He felt that the reported figures highlighted how Ards and North Down was receiving an unequal allocation of investment in its roads network. While it may have been geographically smaller with less road network than some other areas, its traffic volume and resulting road wear was greater, he argued.

Alderman Smith asked how DfI Roads could warrant such little investment and Mr McPeak explained the criteria for budget allocation which was based on considerations such as the length of road network, traffic usage and defects. He believed that Ards and North Down received a fair and equitable share based on those considerations.

Alderman McIlveen could not agree with that and provided figures from the last five years that he believed suggested otherwise. In terms of consultations for planning applications he queried the statutory consultee response rate for major applications within the Borough, noting the figure was at 37% within the statutory target, the lowest of any of the 11 Council areas.

Mr McPeak explained that he did not have the figures available but understood that the Department was providing a formal response to the Council in relation to that query.

Referring to concerns raised by local residents, Councillor W Irvine asked if traffic calming measures had been considered for Ballyree Drive, Bangor, and it was explained that Roads officers worked through a set of criteria which was based on the number of collisions and injuries in the area and not necessarily if it was felt to be a good idea. Mr McPeak would however raise it with the Traffic team.

In a further query, Councillor W Irvine pointed to difficulties with vehicles accessing Lisnabreen Crescent, Bangor, from the carriageway on Circular Road due to parked cars near the junction. Mr McPeak explained that parking was a widespread issue and drivers needed to be considerate of the needs of other road users and traffic progression.

Alderman McRandal raised two queries in relation to Kinnegar Drive, Holywood and Holywood High Street.

In relation to Kinnegar Drive, it was advised that the project was 'shelf ready' in terms of design but there had been delay due to a planning application. There had been efforts to improve parking in the area but it would only create 10 additional spaces which was not financially viable.

Responding to the query regarding Holywood High Street, Mr McPeak added that DfI Roads had consulted with Holywood Chamber of Commerce and agreed that traders would prefer a reduced scheme to be undertaken in mid-January to mid-February. This project was currently shelved until the confirmation of funding.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Chair thanked Mr McPeak and Mr Gardiner for attending before they left the meeting.

#### **4. MEMORIAL TO QUEEN ELIZABETH II – OPTIONS PAPER**

(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services detailing that in March 2024, Council agreed that ‘in recognition of the 70 years of service rendered by the late 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.’ A permanent memorial could come in multiple forms. It could be a landmark feature, a simple stonework sculpture, a garden of remembrance, a plaque or living sculpture. Samples of sculpture types were shown in the attached appendix.

The following high-level options had been presented for consideration:

Option 1 – A landmark sculpture – a major installation of significance and size. These could be lifelike or abstract. These could also be expensive – brief research online found the cost of the following:

- Statue of Queen Elizabeth II, Rutland, 2024 - £125k
- Statue of Prince Phillip, Cambridge University, 2014 - £150k
- Greta Thunberg, University of Winchester, 2021 - £24k

Landmark sculptures, whilst more impactful, carried reputational risk. Many sculptures of this nature attracted criticism for their perceived lack of likeness to the subject.

Council had agreed to a major art piece installation for Marine Gardens to be produced by internationally renowned artist Colin Davidson. There was the potential that a landmark memorial sculpture could clash with this art piece, or that the art piece could take away from the significance of the memorial sculpture given its size and scale at approximately 6m tall and 4m wide. It should also be noted that existing sculptures (the Pastie Man and the Voyager) were planned to return to the Marine Gardens post-redevelopment.

Option 2 – Simple stone sculpture – these could have commemorative inserts on the face. The Council had acquired these types of sculptures in the past (e.g. NI Centenary) at a cost of £4-6k.

Option 3 – A plaque with an inscription and picture made from materials sympathetic to the area in which it was placed. These could cost £2-3k. This option had the potential to be in keeping with the other Council notice of motion to rename Marine Gardens in memory of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

Option 4 – Horticultural installation – this could vary in size and scale from a commemorative tree to a garden of remembrance – this option was discounted based on the design plans for the gardens and planting already being finalised.

The selected option would be subject to detailed design which would be brought back to committee before finalisation, as well as the consideration of location on site.

RECOMMENDED that the Council considers Option 2 and Option 3 and gives direction on an indicative budget that it wishes to set, which will be subject to finalisation with the estimates process for 25/26 and will be subject to an EQIA and Cabinet Office approval.

Councillor W Irvine proposed, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that the Council proceeds with Option 1.

Outlining his alternative proposal, Councillor W Irvine felt that Options 2, 3 and 4 were not befitting to the memory of the late Queen and in relation to the officer's reasoning behind the recommendation, he argued that plans for a Bangor seafront art installation by artist, Colin Davidson, had not included any prior public consultation and he felt it was difficult to put a price on the project at this stage without knowing further details of the design.

The seconder, Councillor Gilmour, was supportive though was cautious around likeness issues and noted that other Council areas had hit the headlines in that regard with well-intentioned sculptures which was something that she did not want to see emulated. She referred to the significance of the late Queen in that particular area and she felt it would be fitting to have something artistic incorporating the Royal Cypher.

Continuing, Councillor Gilmour suggested a type of memorial that was more enhanced than the Northern Ireland Centenary Stones. In terms of the other options presented in the report, she felt that a plaque would be unfitting though she wondered if an information board or plaque could be installed alongside the sculpture to explain its significance in terms of Bangor being granted city status to mark the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee for example.

Alderman Smith felt that a plaque would not really hit the mark in terms of the size of tribute that the Council wanted to pay though he was unsure if a statue would hit the right mark either and felt that other options could be explored with local artists to find something more creative and impactful and appropriate to the area.

Should the Committee agree to the proposal, the Director explained in order to progress Option 1, officers would take time to consider how best to take this forward and would come back to the Committee with an update in due course.

Summing up, Councillor W Irvine was content with that approach and appreciated the need for Council to tease out those matters before taking this forward.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that the Council proceeds with Option 1.**

## 5. **CAPITAL STRATEGY WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE (FILE FINN 166)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services detailing that Council agreed last month, as part of the budget strategy, to establish a working group of a small number of Members and senior officers to provide strategic advice to the Corporate Services Committee.

Draft terms had now been prepared for Members consideration. In order to commence work as soon as possible. Nominations should be made by the date of Council meeting, 30 October, with a view to the first meeting being held in the first half of November.

This working group would be piloted for the estimates setting exercise for 25/26 and would be reviewed before further meetings were arranged for next year.

The proposed Terms of Reference were as follows:

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Background**

Council currently planned over a number of different timeframes:

- The Big Plan 15 years
- Capital Projects 10 years
- The Corporate Plan 4 years
- Medium Term Financial Plan 3 years
- Estimates 1 year

However, budgeting on an annual basis and needing to plan over a 10-year horizon for strategic capital projects gave opportunity for short-term considerations to override the need for a long-term strategic direction to be given to officers, to allow for working plans up and then delivering them all in as efficient a way as possible.

The current capital investment plan had gross expenditure of around £260M with the implication of increasing Council debt from £60M to £140M and current requirement of needing 1.45% to be added to the district rate for each of the next 9 years.

#### **Membership**

DUP	1 nomination
APNI	1 nomination
UUP	1 nomination
Independents/Small Parties	1 nomination

#### **Objectives**

1. Advise Corporate Services Committee and Council on an acceptable rate increase related to capital investment bearing in mind of the need for plans to be affordable, sustainable and prudent.
2. Make recommendations on the prioritisation of the Council's capital projects for consideration by the Corporate Services Committee.

3. Assess the Council's borrowing projections and other treasury management considerations linked to the Capital plan.

#### **Operational arrangements**

- a. Meetings to be scheduled as required, but mostly likely weighted to the period from November-January. Anticipated 2-3 meetings per year.
- b. Facilitated by Director of Corporate Services or Chief Executive.
- c. In person meeting (although hybrid is available if necessary).
- d. Informal format that will not be formally minuted although a summary of topics discussed and recommendations will be provided to the Corporate Services Committee.
- e. Advice to Committee will come format of report from Director of Corporate Services.
- f. Invitations will be issued via DecisionTime.

#### **Facilitators**

- Director of Corporate Services
- Chief Executive

#### **Technical Advisors**

- Head of Strategic Capital Development
- Head of Finance

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the Terms of Reference and that nominees are notified as soon as possible.

Proposed by Alderman McRandal, seconded by Alderman Smith, that the recommendation be adopted.

A discussion took place around nominations to the Working Group and the Chairman advised that those could be confirmed at the October Council meeting and a report would follow.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman McRandal, seconded by Alderman Smith, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **6. APSE CONFERENCE SUMMARY REPORT (FILE ST12757)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services detailed as follows:

### **APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) Conference**

Alderman Alan McDowell, the NI Regional Vice Chairman of APSE, and the Organisational Development Manager represented the Council at the conference.

The theme for the conference was A New Era for Frontline Services. It included the following sessions:

- a. Frontline Challenges
- b. How Councils Deliver (reports from regional LG Associations)
- c. Rising to the Challenges
- d. Adapting to the Future
- e. Arts, Culture and Local Economic Boosts



Significant points to highlight for the benefit of Council were the following:

### **1. Increasing APSE Engagement to Facilitate Continuous Improvement**

Briefings were made by a number of councils on improvement initiatives, for example digital transformation, participatory and multi-year budgeting, environmental improvements and mitigations against carbon emissions.

The conference programme also included the [Annual Service Awards](#), specific to frontline services. There were 17 categories, covering local services, as well as the Overall Council of the Year in Service Delivery Award.

APSE should be one of our main intermediaries in terms of purposeful benchmarking to ensure we do things better and more importantly, to prevent 'reinventing the wheel'.

I would draw Member's attention to the following upcoming events:

[APSE Waste and Recycling Seminar 2024](#)

[APSE Sports and Leisure Seminar](#)

[APSE Cemeteries and Crematorium Seminar 2024](#)

[APSE Performance Networks Seminar 2024](#)

### **2. Increasing Connections with (SOCITM) Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation and CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies)**

Insightful presentations were provided by SOCITM (harnessing new technologies and data to reform public services) and CLES (critical friend connecting economic partners to bring about progressive solutions to deliver change) as to how they have enabled innovation and creative solutions in partnership with local authorities.

Both organisations were a point of reference for learning and continuous improvement. I would point Members to 2 informative reports; [2024 Public Sector Digital Trends by SOCITM](#) and [Community Wealth Building by CLES](#)

RECOMMENDED that Council note this report.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman McRandal, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the recommendation be adopted.**

### **7. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

### **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business.**

**8. RENEWAL OF LICENCE - STORAGE CONTAINER AT ANCHOR CARPARK, PORTAVOGIE**

(Appendix III)

**\*\*\*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 the renewal of the Licence for a storage container at the Anchor Carpark in Portavogie. It was recommended that the Council renewed the Licence.

The recommendation was agreed.

(Councillor McCracken entered the meeting – 7.41pm)

**9. SIR SAMUEL KELLY LIFEBOAT - LEASE OF LAND AT THE COMMONS CARPARK, DONAGHADEE**

(Appendix IV - V)

**\*\*\*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 provide consent for an additional structure pursuant to an existing lease. It was recommended that the Council accedes to the request.

The recommendation was agreed.

**10. RENT REVIEW FORESHORE AT BANGOR BAY RECREATIONAL AREAS**

(Appendix VI)

**\*\*\*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)**

The Council leases the Foreshore at Bangor Bay. The Lease to the Council provides for five yearly rent reviews. The Council was asked to approve the new rent that has been revised and recommended by its independent valuer. It was recommended that the Council accedes to the request.

The recommendation was agreed.

## **11. EXTENSION OF CONTRACT FOR VALUATION SERVICES**

(Appendix VII)

**\*\*\*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)**

At Corporate Services Committee on 10 November 2020 the Council agreed to enter into a Service Level Agreement with Land and Property Services for a three period with an option to extend a further two 1-year periods.

The agreement has expired and the sign off for the SLA took longer than expected, therefore the contract was extended for a further year and had not been reported due to an oversight. LPS had indicated that it was content to enter into a new agreement on similar terms. The final option to extend for a further 1-year period has now also been considered and it is recommended that this extension be granted.

The recommendation was that Council retrospectively notes the 23-24 extension and notes the 24-25 extension and agrees to continue working under the existing Service Level Agreement with Land and Property Services.

## **12. TENDER FOR SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION OF SIGNAGE AND FIXINGS**

**\*\*\*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)**

A tender opportunity was advertised for the supply, delivery and installation of signage and fixings for sites and locations throughout the Borough and was split into two lots as detailed below:

Lot 1

- Supply and Installation of Corporate Assets signage and interpretative panels
- Supply only of Generic (Everyday) Signage

Lot 2

- Supply only of Street Naming Signage

There was an officer's recommendation that the Council award the contract for the tender for the supply, delivery and installation of signage and fixings to the top scoring companies.

The recommendation was agreed.

### **13. EXTENSION OF TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF ADVERTISING SERVICES**

**\*\*\*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)**

A tender for the Provision of Advertising Services was awarded at Council in October 2020 for an initial period of three years with an option to extend for a further two periods of one year to be reviewed annually. There was an officer's recommendation to extend this for a further year.

The recommendation was agreed.

### **14. TENDER FOR EVENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

**\*\*\*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)**

A tender opportunity was advertised for the delivery of support services, staging, lighting and equipment hire for Council events throughout the Borough. The contract would initially be awarded for a period of two years with an option to extend for a further 3 x 12-month periods, subject to review and by written agreement of both parties.

There was an officer's recommendation to award the tender.

The recommendation was agreed.

### **15. SPFG UPDATE - PROPOSED CHANGE TO GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES**

**\*\*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)**

There was an officer's recommendation to disband the Strategic Policy and Finance Group following a review of governance structures.

The recommendation was agreed.

(Councillor Moore joined the meeting – 7.46pm)

### **16. ESTIMATES UPDATE (FILE FINN 166) (Appendix VIII)**

**\*\*\*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)**

The report provided an update to the committee on the work completed to date as part of the budget setting process. This considered initial identification of cost pressures, additional income, savings proposals. In addition, possible first cut estimates were provided on significant areas of expenditure in connection with payroll, waste disposal, energy and maintenance.

Finally, the report highlighted the challenges in achieving the target rate increase.

A recommendation to note the report was agreed.

**17. ABSENCE UPDATE**  
(Appendix IX - X)

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – EXPEMPTION 4: CONSULTATIONS OR NEGOTIATIONS**

The Council was asked to consider an update on the Council's Absence Management plans set against the recommendations of the APSE report which was presented to Committee in June 2023.

A recommendation to note the report was agreed.

**RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBIC/PRESS**

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

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 8.58pm.

## **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 9 October 2024 at 7.00 pm.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Alderman Brooks

**Alderman:** Adair  
McRandal

**Councillors:** Ashe                      Hollywood  
Boyle                                  S Irvine  
Chambers                              W Irvine  
Cochrane                               Kendall  
Douglas                                McClean  
Harbinson                              Moore

**Also in Attendance:** Alderman P Smith

**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 (H Loebnau)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Alderman Cummings.

**NOTED.**

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations of interest was notified:

Councillor Douglas – Item 10 - Arts and Heritage Annual Summary 2023-2024

**NOTED.**

### **3. CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT 2024 (FILE CW174)**

(Appendix I – II)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:-** Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that this report was originally considered by Community & Wellbeing in September. At the Council meeting in September, it was agreed to refer this matter back to the Community & Wellbeing Committee for reconsideration. The

amendments suggested at Council were attached for members information. The original proposed response was also attached.

Officers could confirm that the response date had been extended to the 14 October 2024, and Council had granted delegated authority to the Community & Wellbeing Committee to approve the final response on its behalf.

### **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 were 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 was the focus of the 1967 Act.

### **The draft response**

A draft response to the consultation has 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.

Members would wish to give consideration to the proposed changes outlined at September's Council meeting, attached.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees and approves the final proposed response.

The Director began by giving clarity to the decision before Members. He explained that there were two documents attached to the report, the first of which was the officers' original proposed response, and a second attachment (Appendix 2) suggested amendments which had been made at the Council meeting in September. At that meeting it was proposed to refer this discussion back to the October meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee for further consideration.

Proposed by Councillor McClean, seconded by Councillor Cochrane, that the recommendation be adopted and that the amendments in Appendix 2 be incorporated.

Councillor McClean thanked Councillor Irwin for suggesting that the matter should be discussed further by the Community and Wellbeing Committee and he thought that had been useful.

He considered that there were two parts to think about when the Council was making its response;

- The Council understood the need to protect the public in the present and for future pandemics and that the current law needed to be updated.
- At the previous Community and Wellbeing Committee the Consultation document had not been included. It was 79 pages in length and the Council had provided a response on those areas pertaining to its powers. It was only when the full Consultation was examined could the more alarming suggestions be noted such as those under restrictions and emergency powers which included mandatory vaccination and for the seizure and destruction of property.

On the point of mandatory vaccination, he agreed with the Health Minister that that was extreme and he did not think that the Council should consent to that.

Secondly, he thought the Council should also write to the Health Minister asking for the Consultation to be withdrawn. He thought it extraordinary to take as the lesson from the Covid pandemic and the global response that the public needed even more coercion. One outcome of the western governments' response was more distrust of those governments leading to reduced uptake of the vaccine and he thought it was harder to think of a better way to further erode the public's bottomed-out trust of their governments than by introducing such radical suggestions.

As a result of that he believed that the Consultation was now damaged and had further eroded public confidence to the point where it was unlikely to pass through the Assembly in its current form and should be withdrawn. That would allow a rework that was more precise with greater detail on suggested interventions and the specific circumstances in which they might be deployed. In this way civil liberties would be protected and for now the Council needed to ensure that the Minister was mindful of the Council's position.

Seconding the recommendation Councillor Cochrane thought that the Council should reflect the position of local constituents who were fearful of it. He viewed these as draconian measures, and he failed to see how the Consultation would benefit anyone and was further baffling when the Minister himself could not stand over aspects of the Consultation. He sought reassurance that the public would not be affected negatively by such extreme measures.

Councillor S Irvine shared that view and supported the proposal having been inundated with comments and words of concern at the extreme suggestions outlined in the Consultation.

Councillor McRandal thanked officers for the work which had gone in to compiling a response and while the Alliance Party also had some reservations about the freedoms of individuals, he could not agree with Councillor McClean's proposal. He thought that the response had been drafted according to how it affected the Council operationally but did not think a Council wide response was necessary and rather shared Councillor Irwin's comments at the September Council meeting that each Party should submit individual responses to the Consultation.



Councillor W Irvine rose to support the proposal that had been made by Councillor McClean. He too had concerns about the language and the possible wide-ranging effects of the Consultation and thought it was important that the Council make its position clear to ensure that people's rights and freedoms were protected against overreaching control by government which he believed would negatively impact on wider society.

Councillor Kendall appreciated the opportunity to discuss this matter further and stressed the need for public health and information to be open, transparent and evidence based and if vaccinations were required evidence was needed. She agreed absolutely with the need to protect vulnerable people but expressed some concern about the Consultation as it was presented. What worried her was that there were a lot of things which were not fully explained even if they may be well meant and throughout the pandemic the public had showed a willingness to comply with restrictions to their lives in the interests of wider society and to protect the most vulnerable. She agreed to support the amendment and thought that there was a need to lead people and provide more evidence and for that reason she suggested that the Consultation go back to the drawing board.

Councillor Boyle referred to the mix of views within the Chamber and that the proposed Bill was intended to update the current dated legislation to allow for the better response to public health emergencies. However, everyone was aware that there were elements of the proposed Bill that were a cause for concern, particularly in relation to its potential impact on personal freedoms.

His Party's Health spokesperson, Colin McGrath, had already raised concerns to that effect, particularly around the proposed scope of powers that would be given to individual Ministers. The Bill had not been published yet but he would expect its passage to be at least six months through the Assembly. He said that his Party would engage at every step to ensure that any forthcoming public health legislation enabled an effective response to help protect people against public health emergencies while upholding important personal freedoms. Referring back to Alderman McRandal's point he shared the view that it was for Parties to make their own decisions and was aware that local Councillors were not the ultimate decision makers anyway. He said he would not support the recommendation but would abstain at this time and see what came further down the line.

Councillor Chambers expressed some concern in respect of the over-reaching into people's liberties, but leaned towards Alderman McRandal and Councillor Boyle that Parties should make their own responses rather than as a Council attempt to collapse the process. He knew that decisions would have strong scrutiny within the Executive and Assembly and thought it was always important to consider wider public protection. He gave the example of a person with a highly infectious disease being given the freedom to walk freely among a local population and that was in no one's best interest.

Alderman Adair supported the proposal and thought for the future it would be good practice to have Consultation documents attached for the information of Members. He believed that what was under discussion was an issue bigger than politics and

affected every single person within Northern Ireland and that was why as a local Elected Member he wished to speak up for those within his constituency. Elected Members were the face of local government and heard the views, issues and concerns directly from those within their communities. At the time of the election, he had promised a strong constituent representation for all the people who lived on the Peninsula so he intended to speak up within the Council Chamber and not leave decisions up to MLAs at Stormont. He pointed to the fact that the Health Minister himself could not stand over the Consultation so asked why the Council sat silently when it could defend freedom and liberty for all. He stated that he might only be a humble Alderman but he would never shy away from using his voice to represent those who had elected him to represent them.

He read out a statement from the Democratic Unionist Party calling for balance and objecting to sweeping powers being handed to the Health Minister when those could lead to social and economic destruction. The Party also rejected any form of mandatory vaccination and believed that decisions should always be underpinned by the principle of consent. He called for a recorded vote.

Councillor Moore pointed out that the Consultation was still at a very early stage and gave options within it so it was important to encourage people and Parties to make their responses. It was the view of the Alliance Party that the Council should make operational responses and that MLAs respond appropriately to the Bill. As had been stated earlier in the debate the Alliance Party also had concerns but was reassured that there would be no fast track into law without proper scrutiny by all Parties who would be judged on their responses.

Councillor McClean thanked Members for what had been a reasonable and fair debate over an issue about life and death. He stressed this was not a request to kill the Bill but it was a fact that government had squandered public goodwill so the Consultation should be withdrawn. He thought that all sorts of replies were appropriate to the regional government, from Councils and individuals and that this was not a political issue.

He clarified that the Council should seek to withdraw the Consultation since it had damaged public confidence, created alarm and hostility to any future necessary legislation. Referring to those who had suggested that individual Parties respond the Member considered that it would be extraordinary for the Council to adopt a policy of avoiding issues with a moral element and to pass those higher up the Parties. He also reminded Members that the Council had been asked to respond directly and it would be a partner to the Department of Health during any future pandemic so in his view it would be remiss not to respond on operational matters and defer decisions and views upward. He put on record his view that mandatory vaccination would be an appalling and counterproductive measure and that he was utterly opposed to it.

Before taking a vote the Director reminded Members that this decision had been delegated to the Committee by the full Council and would therefore not be a recommendation that would go to Council for consideration.

On the proposal being put to the meeting with 7 voting For, 6 voting Against, 2 Abstained and 1 Absent it was declared CARRIED.

**FOR (7)**  
Alderman  
Adair

**AGAINST (6)**  
Aldermen  
McRandal

**ABSTAINING (2)**  
Alderman  
Brooks  
Boyle

**ABSENT (1)**  
Alderman  
Cummings

**Councillors**  
Cochrane  
Douglas  
S Irvine  
W Irvine  
Kendall  
McClellan

**Councillors**  
Ashe  
Chambers  
Harbinson  
Hollywood  
Moore

**AGREED**, on the proposal of Councillor McClellan, seconded by Councillor Cochrane, that the recommendation be adopted (with delegated authority on behalf of the Council), to the completed consultation response form except in relation to the following questions:

**Q13 - should be undecided given the reasons outlined in the officer's response.**

**Q15 - should be undecided as officer are looking for further information.**

**Q26 - should be undecided as there is a request for clarity.**

**Q27 - undecided as lacking in detail.**

**Q28 - disagree due to concerns regarding impacts on the rights and freedoms of individuals.**

**Q32a and b – disagree due to concerns regarding impacts on the rights and freedoms of individuals.**

**Q43 – disagreed as there are concerns regarding the impact on the rights and freedoms of individuals. It is the Council's view that this document should have been subject to impact assessments before consultation.**

**Furthermore, that the Council writes to the Minister to withdraw this consultation given the vagueness in the language used and the lack of impact assessment of what is proposed and expresses its concern that it contains proposals which adversely impact on the rights and freedoms of individuals which are excessive in a democratic society.**

#### **4. HARDSHIP FUNDING 2024/25 (FILE CW159)**

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:-** Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Ards and North Down Borough Council had an underspend of **£47,000** of Hardship Funding from the 2023/24 DfC allocated funding.

The purpose of this 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 existed for the community.

The call for applications was launched on 9 September 2024, with a deadline of 24 September 2024 at 12 noon for grants up to a maximum of £3,000 per group/organisation. The call was advertised on Council grants webpage, Council social media, sent to all contacts on the Community Development Database and also in the Chronicle and Spectator Newspapers.

**31 applications** were received by the deadline, totalling to a value of **£92,751.00**. The application and scoring process for this funding stream had been administered in accordance with the previous grants policy, as the new policy wasn't approved by Council until 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

The scoring panel consisted of the Community Development Manager, Assistant Regeneration Officer and Community Grants and Funding Co-ordinator.

The assessment panel met on 25 and 26 September 2024 to score the applications. The pass mark was agreed by the panel as 60%. 22 applications met the pass mark which equated to the total value of £64,751.00. As the successful applications were more than the overall budget of £47,000, it was recommended that the total remaining budget was proportionally allocated at 73% of the eligible awarded amount across all 22 of the successful applications, as detailed in table 1. Applications that did not reach the pass mark of 60% were detailed in table 2. There were 6 Applications that were not scored as they were deemed as ineligible.

TABLE 1 - Successful Hardship Fund Breakdown - Pass mark 60%				
#	Name Of Group	Score	Eligible Amount	Amount Awarded @ 73%
1	Ards Community Wellbeing Association	64%	£2,000.00	£1,460.00
2	Bangor Foodbank and Community Support	76%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
3	Bowtown Community Development Group	80%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
4	Carrowdore & District Community Association	68%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
5	Clandeboyne Village Community Association	84%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
6	Conlig Community Regeneration Group	84%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
7	Glenward Community Development Association	96%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
8	Hollywood Family Trust	60%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
9	Kilcooley Women's Centre	88%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
10	Ladybirds Childcare	92%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
11	Millisle & District Community Association	60%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
12	Newtownards Foodbank	60%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
13	North Down Community Network	84%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
14	North Down Community Works	60%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
15	Orchardville - North Down Service	72%	£2,800.00	£2,044.00
16	Portaferry Community Collective	88%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
17	St Marys Primary School PSG	92%	£2,951.00	£2,154.23
18	St Vincent de Paul - Portaferry	68%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00

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19	West Winds Development Association	100%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
20	Whitehill Community Association	92%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
21	Women's Aid North Down & Ards	80%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
22	YMCA North Down & Ards	72%	£3,000.00	£2,190.00
<b>Totals:</b>			<b>£64,751.00</b>	<b>£47,268.23</b>

**TABLE 2 - Applications that didn't meet the 60% Pass Mark**

#	Name Of Group	Score	Reason for Unsuccessful Application
23	Hollywood Community Network	28%	Didn't reach the 60% pass mark
24	St Columbas College Portaferry	56%	Didn't reach the 60% pass mark
25	The Hygiene Bank	48%	Didn't reach the 60% pass mark

**TABLE 3 - Applications not scored as deemed ineligible**

#	Name Of Group	Score	Reason for Unsuccessful Application
26	Donaghadee Community Development Association	0%	Capital equipment items not eligible
27	St Vincent de Paul - Ballyholme/Donaghadee	0%	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation
28	St Vincent de Paul - Bangor	0%	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation
29	St Vincent de Paul - Hollywood	0%	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation
30	St Vincent de Paul - Kircubbin	0%	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation
31	St Vincent de Paul - Newtownards	0%	As per guidance only 1 application per organisation

Application and guidance notes stated that only one application would be allowed per group/organisation. St Vincent de Paul NDA (SVP) submitted 6 separate applications for different areas in ANDBC. The scoring panel therefore only scored the first application to be received from SVP.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the 22 successful applications and award funding as detailed in table 1.

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

Councillor Kendall was encouraged to see the successful applications but was disappointed to note as detailed in another report that night the lack of a hardship budget coming from the Department for Communities. That combined with the reductions to winter fuel allowance would leave many more homes facing very tough circumstances. She asked if there was room in the Council's budget to provide more help and was advised that there was no such budget for the 2024-25 year.

Seconding the recommendation Councillor W Irvine welcomed the number of applications received and he knew the small amount of funding would be put to good use.

An amendment was proposed by Alderman Adair and seconded by Councillor Cochrane;

That the Council defer the decision to full Council to give further consideration to the applications received from St Vincent de Paul.

Alderman Adair explained that the reason he disagreed with the officers' recommendation was that in St Vincent de Paul each was a separate organisation with its own bank account and if this was passed those others would be excluded while Portaferry could go ahead. He stated that St Vincent de Paul did fantastic work, they were professional and effective at reaching out to people in need so he asked that further consideration be given to this charity which was at the heart of the community. If the decision could be referred to the full Council meeting at the end of the month other applications would not be delayed.

Seconding that alternative recommendation Councillor Cochrane thought that it was fair that everyone got a fair share and agreed with the points that his party colleague had made in respect of each having a different bank account.

Councillor Boyle stated that he was in regular contact with St Vincent de Paul and the reality was that it traded under one banner. He questioned why this was being raised when it had been tested the year previously and also went against the Council policy. Last year the questions had been answered and accepted as such and while many would have great sympathy for the work of the charity he feared opening up the issue again. He stressed that either the Council had policies or it did not and if it did they should be adhered to.

Councillor S Irvine stated that there was no doubt that St Vincent de Paul did great work but the guidance had been tightened up the previous year to have only one application per organisation so he was in agreement with Councillor Boyle and did not think there was a question to be asked.

Councillor McRandal and Councillor Kendall also supported the view of Councillor Boyle and it was confirmed by the officer that each of the separate branches had the same constitution included so while there was a degree of sympathy the Council could not change its rules to accommodate the alternative recommendation.

There was dissent within the Committee so the amendment was put to a vote with a show of hands 4 voted FOR, 10 voted AGAINST, 1 ABSTAINED so the amendment FELL.

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

**5. BEACH OF DREAMS OUR SIREN SONG UPDATE (FILE ART 18-10/24)**  
(Appendix III – V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would recall that an initial report on the 'Beach of Dreams' event was brought to Council through the Community and Wellbeing Committee in June 2024. As a reminder, it was a coastline-communities creativity

and climate action programme 2024 - 2025 and UK-wide walking arts festival, 1 May–1 June 2025.

Beach of Dreams was an exploration of the UK Coastline and its environment which began in June 2024 and will culminate in a UK wide walking arts festival from 1 May to 1 June 2025. It was an opportunity for ANDBC to be a part of a spectacular international movement, that re-imagines our relationship with the coast and inspired positive climate action. Belfast-based Beat Carnival, the Northern Ireland partner in Beach of Dreams, would deliver local activity under the title 'Our Siren Song' including artistic commissions with communities. A budget was required in order for the Council to participate fully as follows.

A workshop programme would engage local people in creation of new artworks in response to the coastal environment and climate emergency.

The project would culminate in Our Siren Song – a festival that would take place at Millisle Beach on 17 May 2025 with smaller scale activity taking place in coastal communities Ballywalter, Ballyhalbert, Portavogie, Cloughey and Portaferry.

Community research and consultation began at the end of August with beach walks and talks at Cloughey, Ballywalter, Kearney and Millisle and a visit to Beat Carnival Centre. An information evening and consultation took place at Millisle Community Hub on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September and was attended by representatives from the Peninsula villages, Millisle Community Association and several interested local individuals. This was the beginning a number of planned opportunities for engagement. Creatively connecting with the coastline would enable all of us to understand it better, empowering people and their communities to take care of themselves, each other, and the local environment.

The Objectives of this project were to:

- explore how we take care of the coastal environment, communities, and ourselves
- grow creative capacity in communities and support health, wellbeing, and happiness
- build stronger connections between participants, communities and with nature
- celebrate lives along our coast, life and culture that exists because of the coast activate climate awareness through shared creativity, ideas, inspiration and pledges.

The project had 3 key strands:

1: Workshops Programme - January to May 2025

The programme would be co-designed, directed and delivered with participating community groups with activity in keeping with the demographic and interests in each village. Inter-community sessions would address rural isolation and foster good relationships between villages in the borough. Access and isolation issues would be addressed throughout, including beach / coast access. Online seminars would also be provided, and all local education establishments would be engaged.

Local artists would be engaged to provide high-quality experience for participants and audiences and the programme would have an environmentally sensitive message.

Workshop activities would include carnival, storytelling and song writing (Our Siren Song), exploring our cultural heritage, pennant design & creation, beach site dressing, fabric painting and natural dyeing, construction with willow and other natural materials, puppet making, carnival drumming and dance, coastal ecology and climate awareness, place names and cultural connections and video, photography and documentation.

## 2: Our Siren Song Festival - Tuesday 13 to Friday 16 May 2025

A series of smaller-scale community events in villages along the peninsula would take place to celebrate achievements of participating groups and build awareness and anticipation for the finale event at Millisle on 17 May 2025. These village events built their sense of importance and inclusion in the overall festival production and communities would organise walks along their sections of the coast.

Tuesday 13 May:	Portaferry - Our Siren Song evening, outdoor event. The Siren sets off to journey through the villages to the Millisle finale event.
Wednesday 14 May:	Kearney, Cloughey and Portavogie - connecting coastal walk / row, beach activities and photoshoot.
Thursday 15 May:	Ballyhalbert and Ballywalter - connecting coastal walk / row, beach dressing and performance, photoshoot.
Friday 16 May:	Millisle site preparation, willow Sirens installation and rehearsal.

## 3: Our Siren Song Festival Finale - Saturday 17 May 2025

Millisle festival site would include the beach, lagoon, field and park.

### **Daytime Entertainment**

Including but not limited to 500 decorated pennants displayed on beach; Sand art activities; Face painting; Drum and Dance workshops; Storytelling; Sea-themed dress competition, Pennant making; Photo boards; Ecology stalls; Food vendors and traders; Beach clean; Marine touch-tank; Lagoon Mermaid and other performance entertainers.

### **Procession**

6.30pm carnival procession through Millisle to the shore, as the Siren finished her journey to the sea. The Siren Song would ring out, voiced by the accumulated choirs from along the peninsula. She would be accompanied by drummers, dancers and artists, showcasing skills they learned through the workshops programme.

### **Finale performance**

The Siren would convey her message to the gathered audience through song, music and dance. She would call out across the waves, as we sent pennants and messages on their way to the next Beach of Dreams location in Scotland.



### Partnerships

Beat Carnival was a Regional Partner in Beach of Dreams with 12 others from England, Scotland and Wales. The Siren Song core partners were the Council, Millisle Community Association; Ards Rural Project, Education Authority NI; Friends of the Earth NI; Climate Craic Festival; Queens University of Belfast, Sustainability, Equality & Climate Action department.

### Budget and Funding

Beat Carnival's budget target for the project was £100,000. £20,000 had been achieved initially, which enables the project to get underway. An application had been submitted to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Rural Funding Programme and other sources of support continued to be explored.

RECOMMENDED that Council agree to participate in the above as described, subject to approval of the attached draft programme of activity and budget up to £40k being made available subject to the 2025/2026 rates setting process.

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

Alderman Adair said it gave him great pleasure to propose this recommendation and he had attended an information evening in Millisle outlining plans for it. This was a UK wide event which would be exciting to have locally in the Borough and referred to the anticipation building locally. With the Borough's beautiful beaches and long coastline it was only fitting that the event came to these shores.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Ashe, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **6. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS FORUM GRANTS (WG SEPTEMBER 2024) (FILE SD 151)**

(Appendix VI - X)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that on the 26 August 2015, Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £45,000 had been allocated within the 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 required Council approval. In addition, the Council requested that regular updates are reported to members.

During August 2024, the Forum received a total of 22 applications: 1 Anniversary, 1 Coach Education, 1 Equipment, 7 Goldcard and 12 Individual Travel/Accommodation Grants. A summary of the **21** successful applications are detailed in the attached Successful Coach Education, Successful Equipment, Successful Goldcard and Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation Appendices.

<b>2024/25 Budget £45,000</b>	Annual Budget	Proposed Funding Awarded August 2024	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	<b>-£2,749.90</b>
Coach Education	£3,000	*£500	<b>£1,638.75</b>
Equipment	£14,000	*£999.98	<b>£2,120.74</b>
Events	£6,000	£0	<b>£1,649.46</b>
Seeding	£500	£0	<b>£500</b>
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£1,790	<b>-£4,489.57</b>
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	<b>£1,000</b>
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	<b>£5,000</b>
<b>7 Goldcards Awarded in August (33 Goldcards in total during 2024/25)</b>			

\*The proposed remaining budget for Coach Education of **£1,638.75** was based on a proposed award this month of £500 and withdrawn costs of **£500**.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **£2,120.74** was based on a proposed award this month of **£999.98**.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **-£4,489.57** was based on a proposed award this month of **£1,790** and withdrawn costs of **£350**.

The proposed remaining budget for 2024/25 was **£4,669.48** (90% of the 2024/25 budget spent).

Noting the high volume of grant applications thus far in 2024/25, with 90% of budget proposed for approval in the first half of the financial year, officers carried out a forecasting exercise utilising expenditure to date in 2024/25 and expenditure in the last financial year, 2023/24. Resulting from this, officers estimate if the current trend persists, it was possible that an additional sum of circa £11,000 could be required above the £45,000 budget agreed for 2024/25 to meet the expected level of applications.

It was proposed that this funding was financed from within the 24/25 leisure budgets to ensure Council continues to support the success and work of our sporting sector. The leisure team were confident that sufficient additional income to cover all predicted applications would be available at year end based on the current income figures from ABMWLC in order to fund this.

The alternative was that grants would not be available for the remainder of the year once the remaining 10% of funding was awarded. A business case would be brought forward on next year's AND Sports Forum Grants as part of the 2025/26 rate setting process to ensure that Council continue to provide assistance to our sporting community for club development as they represented the Borough on the sporting stage.

RECOMMENDED that Council:

- (a) notes the attached applications for financial assistance for sporting purposes; and
- (b) approves the allocation of funding to facilitate all eligible requests for the remainder of the year as described in this report.

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

Councillor Boyle knew that Members were used to him speaking on this subject and Ards and North Down Sports Forum was producing results and he put on record his thanks to the Head of Leisure and hoped he would be able to source more funding in the future. He made a case for that within the Rate striking process in the coming year and congratulated the Forum for what it did to promote and support sporting activity across the Borough.

Councillor S Irvine echoed those comments and hoped that more funding could be provided for the Sports Forum and the award of grants to groups and individuals. He had received good news earlier in the day from Hayleigh Miskimmon who, with the help of Council, had been awarded a substantial amount through the Mary Peters King George VI Fund. He remarked that this was the first time a Special Olympian had been awarded such funding.

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

**7. NORTH DOWN COASTAL PATH WORKING GROUP (FILE CW30)**  
(Appendix XI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the third meeting of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group was held on 17 July 2024 and the attached minutes of that meeting were approved by the Working Group at its September meeting

RECOMMENDED that Council note the attached minutes.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Hollywood, seconded by Councillor McClean, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**8. SCHOOLS GROWING CLUBS UPDATE (FILE PCA 111)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailed as follows:

**Background**

The purpose of this report was to provide an update to Council on the Schools Growing Clubs 2024/2025, the recent developments in the program, including the selection process, its potential contributions to the curriculum, and the positive impact it would have on students' growth. School's Growing Clubs was an initiative

aimed at enhancing the educational experience, health, and wellbeing of children in the Borough.

### **Selection Process and Participants**

Primary schools across the Borough were once again offered the opportunity to apply to join the initiative and Council received a total of eleven applications from various schools that expressed interest in becoming a Growing Club. As per the agreed process, a selection panel comprised of Parks and Cemeteries Officers evaluated the applications and chose the most suitable schools to participate. After thorough review and consideration, the panel selected four schools to be part of the program.

The selection criteria included factors such as the school's commitment to sustainability and environmental education, the availability of space and existing infrastructure for gardening activities, the engagement level of teachers, PTA, and the potential for community involvement. The panel's objective assessment ensured a fair and transparent selection process, resulting in the choice of schools that were best aligned with the goals of the Growing Club initiative.

The four new schools selected were:

- Kircubbin Integrated Primary School
- Alexander Dixson Primary School, Ballygowan
- Killard Primary School, Donaghadee
- St Patricks Primary School, Holywood

The Development Officer (Engagement) would continue to support schools from the 2023/2024 cohort below:

- Towerview PS, Bangor
- Andrews Memorial PS, Comber
- Loughries PS, Newtownards
- Holywood PS, Holywood
- St Patricks PS, Portaferry
- St Marys PS, Kircubbin

### **Contributions to Curriculum and Development**

The School's Growing Club had immense potential to enrich our children's learning experiences and holistic development. By integrating gardening and horticultural activities into the curriculum, students would gain hands-on knowledge about plant life cycles, nutrition, ecology, and sustainability.

Furthermore, the Growing Club offered an avenue for interdisciplinary learning, connecting subjects such as science, mathematics, and even art. Students would be encouraged to observe, measure, and analyse various aspects of plant growth, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In addition, the club would promote teamwork, responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment as students worked together to tend to the garden and observe the fruits of their labour.

### **Health and Well-being Impact**

Engaging in gardening activities had been proven to have positive effects on mental and physical well-being. The act of nurturing plants and being in nature could reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance concentration. The pupils would have the opportunity to disconnect from screens and engage in a more active and hands-on form of recreation, fostering a healthier lifestyle. Children would also have the chance to learn where their food came from and appreciate the process of growing your own food and how they could contribute to sustainable food production in their communities for the future.

### **Community Engagement and Education**

The Growing Club would not only benefit the students directly involved but would also extend its impact to the broader community. As the garden flourishes, it could serve as a hub for workshops, events, and educational sessions, involving parents, community members, and other schools. This would promote a sense of unity and shared responsibility for environmental stewardship, further strengthening the tied between the school and the community.

In conclusion, the School's Growing Club was a valuable addition to our educational offerings, with the potential to enhance the curriculum and promote health and well-being. We were excited about the positive impact this initiative would have on the children and the community at large. Your continued support was instrumental in ensuring the success of this endeavour.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the above and continue to support the Schools Growing Club initiative.

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

Councillor Kendall had been pleased to see St Patricks Primary School, Holywood, and many others participating in this initiative. She stressed the importance of engaging children with the environment through the growing of food and play and was happy to propose.

Councillor Douglas seconded the recommendation and was encouraged to see the growing number of schools participating. She pointed to a spelling mistake in the report which should be Alexander Dickson Primary School and asked for that to be amended.

Councillor Boyle thought the schools in his area should be St Patrick's Primary School, Ballygalget, and St Mary's Primary School, Portaferry.

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

## **9. HARDSHIP FUNDING 2024/25 (FILE CW 159)** (Appendix XII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that at the Council meeting held on 28 August 2024 it was

CW.09.10.2024PM

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agreed that this Council writes to the Department for Communities to highlight its disappointment at its 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 2024-2025. A letter was sent to that effect on 17 September. 2024,

A response dated 24 September 2024 had been received from Colum Boyle, Permanent Secretary of Department for Communities, stating that due to the financial constraints on the Department's budget the Department was currently unable to provide any Hardship Funding for 2024-2025, and due to the continuing uncertainty in funding, it would not be possible to consider a recurrent funding model at this time.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

Alderman McRandal asked to make an alternative proposal which was seconded by Councillor Moore.

That Council write to the DfC Minister expressing disappointment to the response received to our letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> September. That Council make clear our ask is that DfC commits to seek funding in future monitoring rounds, should funding become available during 2024-25, to provide hardship funding.

Alderman McRandal explained that the Minister had been asked to commit to funding this year and in future monitoring rounds but instead had answered a different question. The Member said that some of the most vulnerable in society benefitted from this funding and there was real need in the community which would be discussed later in the Notice of Motion about winter fuel payments. He felt that the matter was too important to let slide.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman McRandal, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the recommendation be adopted and that the Council write to the DfC Minister expressing disappointment to the response received to our letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> September. That Council make clear our ask is that DfC commits to seek funding in future monitoring rounds, should funding become available during 2024-25, to provide hardship funding.**

(Having declared an interest in Item 10 Councillor Douglas left the meeting at 8.05 pm)

**10. ARTS & HERITAGE ANNUAL SUMMARY 2023-2024**  
(Appendix XIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Arts and Heritage Service had prepared an Annual Summary for 2023-2024 that offered a comprehensive overview of all the activity that took place and highlighted key successes throughout the year.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

Proposed by Councillor Harbinson, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Harbinson was proud of the Borough's artistic and cultural output and hoped that people would continue to be involved this year.

Councillor Hollywood had enjoyed reading the report and the reminder of the benefits that this Council could deliver. He noted some areas of concern in respect of both long and short-term staffing and asked for an update on that.

The Head of Community and Culture explained that the position was fine at the moment and funding had provided increased hours at the North Down Museum which had improved the access for more school groups.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Harbinson, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the recommendation be adopted.**

(Councillor Douglas entered the meeting at 8.07 pm)

## **11. SUMMER SCHEME UPDATE 2024**

(Appendix XIV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that in 2024 the Council led summer schemes were delivered by the Community Development Team in the following locations across a 2-week period:

- Alderman George Green Community Centre
- Ballygowan Village Hall
- Bowtown Estate: Movilla Abbey Church Buildings
- Donaghadee Community Centre
- Portavogie Community Centre
- Redburn Community Centre
- Westwind's Community Centre

At 6 of these locations, there were 48 places provided per week, with one smaller centre (Westwind's) having 32 places available per week. That was a total of 640 places over two weeks.

Three Community Led Summer Schemes were delivered by Community Partners in the following areas:

- Bangor, Kilcooley Community Centre – Kilcooley Women's Centre
- Millisle, Millisle Community Hub - Millisle Youth Forum
- Portaferry, Steel Dickson Avenue - Ballyphilip Youth Club

Kilcooley Women's Centre attracted additional funding which allowed them to deliver across 4 weeks. They provided 65 places per week, which was a total of 260 places over 4 weeks.

Millisle Youth Forum provided 34 places for Seniors in week one and 60 places for Juniors (2 groups of 30 children at 2.5 days for each group) in week 2. They provided a total of 94 places over two weeks.

Ballyphilip Youth Club provided 53 places in week one for Juniors and 34 places in week two for Seniors. They provided a total of 87 places over two weeks.

**Table 1**

<b>Council Led locations per week</b>	<b>Number of children 2023</b>	<b>Number of children 2024</b>
Ards/Bowtown	24	48
Ards/Westwinds	24	32
Ballygowan	24	48
Bangor/George Green	48	48
Hollywood/Redburn	48	48
Portavogie	48	48
Donaghadee	48	48
<b>Total Per Week</b>	264	320
<b>Total number for the full scheme (2 weeks)</b>	528	640

<b>Community Partner location Per week</b>	<b>Number of children 2023</b>	<b>Number of children 2024</b>
Kilcooley x 4 weeks	52	65 x four weeks
Millisle x 2 weeks	29	60 x week one, 34 x week two
Portaferry x 2 weeks	40	53 x week one 34 x week two
<b>Total Per Week</b>	121	Week one = 178 Week two = 133 Week three = 65 Week four = 65
		<b>441</b>

<b>Total Number of places in the 2024 summer schemes</b>	<b>1081</b>
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**Council Led Schemes:** Numbers increased this year due to the Covid restrictions being totally withdrawn and allowing maximum capacity for staff: child ratios. The only exception to that was the Westwind's location, due to the smaller floor space available within the centre. Demand for Summer Scheme remained high, even with increased numbers across the board. Overall, increased staff enabled teams to return to a more manageable breakdown of age groups and a higher quality play product in each centre's bespoke programme. That had an increase of 112 places.



**Community Partner Led Schemes:** There was also an increase of 199 places across all community partner led schemes. Kilcooley accounted for 130 of those places as they secured funding from another source.

Capacity was the crucial factor for both Council and Community led schemes. Good Practice dictated that all should meet minimum adult:child ratios when working with children (**1 adult to 8 children**). The Council employed agency staff for the two-week duration delivering all 7 schemes at the same time. The Council staff compliment increased this year to ensure the higher number of spaces available, however, that had placed a strain on the budget.

Capacity for Community Led Partner colleagues was even more difficult, as they relied entirely on volunteer power to ensure delivery. That was a crucial baseline for each Partner organisation and determined how many children each could register. Demand remained high every year. Both Council and Community Partner Led Summer Schemes did their utmost, within both budgetary and people power constraints, to meet those demands.

### **Enrolment Process**

An online registration process was maintained this year. The verification process for proof of address and Free School Meals (FSM) for concession rate worked well, for those who produced their documents. For those parents/guardians who did not, the Community Development Team had to collect that information, which was very time consuming. Not all the information was made available before the scheme started, which resulted in Summer Scheme staff collecting it on the first day. The Community Development Team were considering options to streamline the process.

### **Staffing**

The Council Led Schemes employed 56 agency staff. This represented an increase of 11 staff, providing an enhanced adult:child ratio and had enabled the Council to provide more child places.

### **Summer Scheme Promotion**

Registration for both Council and Community Partner schemes was advertised through the Council's website, Council Facebook and sent out to Community Development Database.

### **Programme Delivery**

The Programme delivered diverse activities. Dividing children into 2 age groups and devising programmes reflecting age, stage of development and ability to engage with play activities. Part of the rationale was to sustain the Borough's economy by utilising as many venues as possible. Understandably there were certain activities children love, and which were outside the Borough. Council destinations were: North Down Museum, Killinchy Play Park/MUGA, Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing & Leisure Centre, Exploris, Seapark, Groomsport Beach and Cockle Row, Millisle Beach, and Portavogie Beach. Summer Schemes also visited Airtastic, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Mount Stewart, Ark Farm, Happytown, Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat and Castle Espie. Visits beyond the Borough included W5 and Indiana Land. The onsite programme was equally exciting, with facilitators and artists visiting children at community centre settings. Those included: First Aid by Red Cross, Multi Sports

Joe, Claire Leathem Music Bloom, Ulster Scots drummers and dancers, Eastwell Farm Alpacas, Puppet Show and Clayfull Minds.

This year summer schemes offered every child a breakfast in partnership with **The Warehouse** in Newtownards and **Bangor Foodbank Community Support**, which provided cereals, bread, fruit and yoghurts. That worked well and was a good support and helped to tackle Holiday Hunger.

### **Cross Council Working**

Community Development worked closely with colleagues across the Council to deliver some educational input, which the Council ensured was different and more fun than school content. That helped inform future adult citizens of their responsibilities and helped to embed good habits early.

Cross Council partners included:

- Community Safety
- Community Arts
- Heritage Education
- Recycling
- Leisure
- Good Relations
- Community Halls

Summer Scheme programming relied heavily on colleagues to provide “free” activities to enhance the programme. Inflation and cost of living increases had shrunk the summer scheme budget, which although it had remained the same for several years, in real terms meant the programme similarly reduced year on year.

### **Volunteering**

This year 3 young volunteers supported Summer Scheme at Bowtown, which provided an excellent opportunity for young people to get involved with their community, learn new skills and build confidence.

### **Evaluations**

#### **Children’s Evaluation**

The children’s evaluations were conducted daily. That involved asking children about their views on activities, programme, breakfast offering and their ideas for the future. Although entirely qualitative data was collected, most children enjoyed the activities.

**Table 3**

Question	Yes	No
Did you have fun?	88%	11%
Were the activities good?	81%	19%
Did you like breakfast?	74.5%	25.5%
Did you make new friends?	70.5%	29.5%

Where there were any deviations or negative comments it was generally linked to one of several “uncontrollable”: “it was too rainy”, “I was very tired walking around so much”.

### Parent/Guardian’s Evaluation

There was a high response rate of 49% from parent/guardian’s evaluation. Areas reviewed included: registration process, new location suggestions for Summer Scheme delivery, programme content, programme improvements, staff/volunteer rating, communication, value for money and further suggestions.

### How did you find the online registration?

Table 4

Option	Total	Percent
Very Easy	67	40.85%
Easy	22	13.41%
Moderate	33	20.12%
Difficult	22	13.41%
Very Difficult	20	12.20%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

In terms of programme improvement, 84.76% said no improvement was necessary. Suggestions offered tended to be more of an organisational or structural nature, which would be considered going forward. Those who said there was room for improvement offered the following suggestions.

Table 5

Only permit one week per child to ensure everyone gets a chance.	Would pay extra for hot meal at lunchtime.
Good value for money.	Registration - very frustrating online – crash/lose place feels like potluck, go back to face to face.
No show caretaker led to working parents being late for work. Co-ordinator did not let parents know what was going on/given assurances.	Better prep with better comms between those running the scheme and those who organize it. Go back to face to face – perhaps at the weekend when less pressure on parents to get online. Stressful when site crashed.
More variety RNL trip was boring but liked making the craft boat.	Registration process, daily check in very slow.
Very good value for money.	Trips to places families find expensive to go to – Exploris, Airtastic, Belfast Zoo, cinema, rather than Bangor Museum, football pitch.
My work very strict with flexi – making it from 9.30-2.30 would be great.	Readable timetables 4 other P/G’s I asked couldn’t read them either. Pics of staff and their roles.
Somebody checked my docs which were emailed about 6 times.	Great scheme but years ago we had one age in one centre and another age group at a different one in Hollywood.

My children were very hungry at 1pm lunch slot- break with fruit and drink would be great. Felt A&Cs were a bit young for my daughter at WW. Overall, first week better than second in WW.	More places or run the entire summer.
Bus was late on last day; parents didn't know what was happening.	First day very disorganized – I had had problem with my child with severe allergies, which was concerning, but later rectified.
Disorganised last day.	Things went missing and never turned up again.
More people need to realise how hard it is looking after other people's kids, especially teenagers, need more help for communities doing this.	

New locations suggested for Summer Scheme delivery included locations listed in **Table 6**.

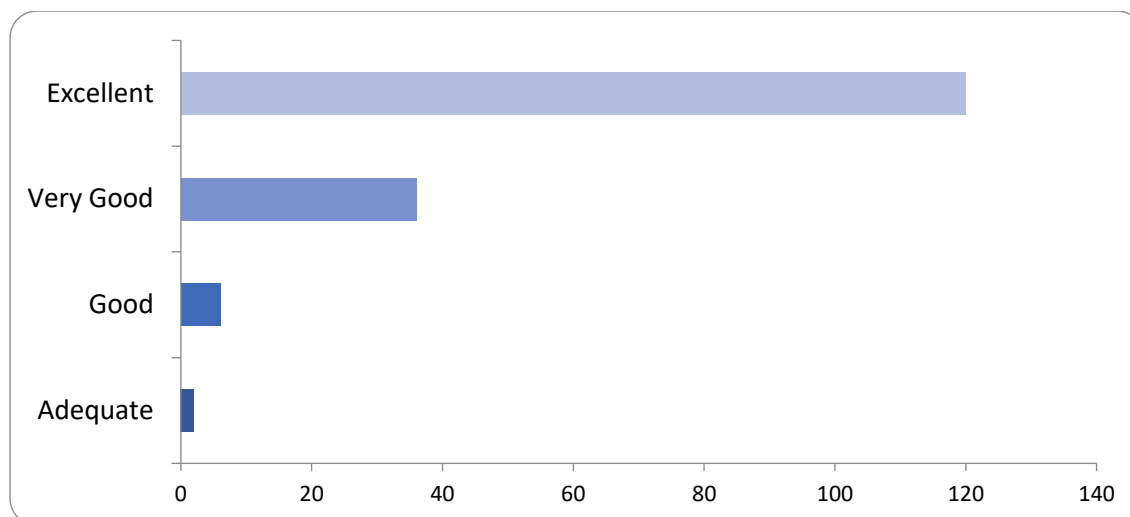
**Table 6**

Glen Estate	2	Groomspoint	1
Portaferry	4	Central Bangor/Conlig/Skip/Ballyholme/Ballycrochan	9
Cloughey	2	Ballywalter	3
Kircubbin	5	Millisle	1
Comber/Killinchy/Lisbane	5	SAINTFIELD*	1
Carrowdore	3	Seahill	1
Loughries	1	Newtownards town	1
KILLYLEAGH*	1	Ballyhalbert	1
All Villages	1	Rotate Portaferry and Portavogie	1
GLENGORMLEY*	1		

\*Highlighted areas suggested were not in Borough

### How do you rate the Summer Scheme programme content?

#### Programme content



**Community Partner Evaluation**

Community Partner Evaluation was conducted as a group exercise. A range of areas were reviewed: recruitment, training, venues and equipment, programme and programme delivery, food offering and evaluation.

**Recruitment** was crucial and provided the baseline from which Community Partners devised the numbers of child places they could provide. Community Partners relied solely on Volunteer support for this role. There were no issues this year, they met their adult: child ratios, however having a casual list of volunteers available as a backup remained difficult to achieve.

**Volunteers**

It was essential to recognise the value volunteers brought to the delivery of community partners contribution. Without their time and energy there would be no summer scheme in Kilcooley, Millisle and Portaferry. Using the minimum number of volunteers required across those three schemes (25) and calculating the National Minimum Wage of £11 per hour over 10 days it equated to a value of £16,500. It was important to recognise the contribution of volunteers through an event, certificates of achievement, volunteer expenses.

**Venues and equipment:** Millisle and Portaferry used their own premises which made it more cost effective.

**Programme and delivery:** programme content was well received by children and parents/ guardians alike. Maintaining an interesting and engaging programme from year to year was a challenge, inevitably impacted by increasing year on year increased costs of admission and transport.

**Food offering:** food offering to meet Holiday Hunger was well received and much needed. That was, in principle, what Partners wished to continue to offer, however, cost was the major factor in whether they could do that in the future.

**Evaluation:** Partners used the same processes as Council led schemes and with similar outcomes – children enjoyed the activities and wanted to come back,

parents/guardians had very high expectations regarding programme content and did not understand cost implications. Varying rates of response from parents/guardians.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

Councillor Cochrane thanked officers for bringing the report and appreciated the work of the section in the provision of summer schemes. However, he noted that there had been only one scheme in Bangor East covering the entire city and noted that Newtownards had had two. While he was happy for Newtownards he hoped that Bangor would be more fairly represented in the future.

Councillor Kendall had a question relating to registration and residents had expressed to her considerable frustration with the registration process and she queried if that was being considered. The Head of Community and Culture confirmed that that was being considered with perhaps the use of a different system or a staggered launch to make the process more user friendly.

Councillor Ashe welcomed the report and the spread but thought that the scheme in Comber was quite truncated and she asked if that could be improved in the future with more staff. She also asked that if changes were being made to a local summer scheme could Members be given advance notice so that they could respond appropriately to their constituents. The officer explained that for Comber there were discussions with leisure to get a joined-up approach using staff from both sections which was more efficient.

Following on from Councillor Ashe's comment Councillor Moore asked how broadly the Council was looking to address recruitment issues and pointed to the fact that the Council should be viewed as an employer of choice. Agency staff were more flexible and she referred to the Labour Market Partnership which was being considered to have students for example employed well before the summer arrived. The Head of Community and Culture explained that a review of the system was taking place between both her team and leisure services who provided schemes at the leisure centres and who also faced summertime temporary staffing challenges and would come before the Committee in due course.

Councillor Douglas gave some feedback from a family in Comber who had three children of varying ages attending the scheme there. The older child had not initially wanted to go alone but had been fully engaged by the programme and had thoroughly enjoyed the range of activities on offer. The family also thought the scheme was reasonably priced.

Councillor W Irvine welcomed the report and thought the schemes offered tremendous value for money and opened up attractions to young people that they may not have otherwise. He referred to the scheme at Breezemount and if there had been any ongoing discussions there and protecting that for future years. He was informed that that scheme was now community run and self-funding to a large extent with some support from Council which was positive and that the Council worked

closely to support the scheme in that area. It had been a community development success story.

Councillor Boyle congratulated the Head of Community and Culture and the team for the positive report and remarked on the proven benefits of the schemes. He asked if the scheme in Portaferry could be supported since it benefitted from volunteering but that had limits at times. He was particularly pleased to see that the Foodbanks had supported the schemes ensuring that each child received breakfast each day and he put on record the Council's thanks for that generosity.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cochrane, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **12. BOOKSTART UPDATE**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that at the Council meeting in March 2024 the Council agreed to fund Bookstart for every newborn in the Borough in 2024/2025 and agreed to include an additional £7,000 funding to the Community Development budget for 2024/2025.

The initiative was managed by the Community Development section and the books issued via the Registration section. Approximately 120 books were being issued per month and the full stock of books would be allocated by the end of March 2025.

Staff approached Bookstart for pricing for next year to include in the 2025/2026 budget estimates and were informed that the Bookstart baby packs would now be given out universally via Health Visitors to all new parents, including those in the Borough, during their initial visits. New funding was being made available from the Department of Education and therefore there was no longer any need for the Council to fund this initiative in the next financial year.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

Alderman Adair welcomed this valuable resource which was important to get children reading as early as possible in life. He was also pleased to hear that the Department for Education would now fund that and fully supported giving every child the opportunity to read and enjoy books.

Councillor Boyle was in agreement and thanked the former Councillor Peter Martin for bringing it forward. This was now a win/win position with the scheme in place and the Department funding it.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Ashe, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **13. HERBICIDE REDUCTION POLICY UPDATE**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the purpose of this report was to update Members on the Herbicide Reduction Policy previously agreed by the Council in October 2021.

The policy aimed to address the concerns and impact of herbicide use. The policy set out the basis for using alternative methods of vegetation management within the Parks and Cemeteries Service of the Borough.

Weed control within parks, cemeteries, play parks and other urban landscapes was currently achieved through a range of techniques which in most UK councils was based on the use of herbicide application, particularly glyphosate-based products. However, public and political interest in reducing weed control herbicides in amenity areas was increasing due to concerns about safety of those chemicals including glyphosate for human health and wider environmental safety.

The future of weed control should be based on weed prevention to enable in the long-term, fewer herbicide applications, and laborious weed control and surface repairs.

This policy aimed to reduce the reliance on herbicides by:

- Applying a proactive approach in the design of new projects and facilities to remove the need for herbicide use.
- Designating herbicide free zones.
- Implementing alternative control methods, that included, but was not limited to hand weeding, burning, steam treatments, grubbing etc.
- Creating 'wild' areas where appropriate.
- Developing a communication campaign to raise awareness and encourage acceptance of alternative management techniques.
- Supporting resident/community groups carrying out clean ups in local areas.
- Promoting of the importance of pollinator insects; developing and promoting pollinator friendly areas and maintenance techniques.

Where those alternative measures were adopted, they may not be as effective as conventional herbicide application therefore there would be a greater need to begin engaging with communities on acceptance of weed levels and a shift in perceived acceptability and weed control of the public realm.

In managing sites for Green Flag Awards and Ulster in Bloom, there was an emphasis on reduced herbicide usage. That had been reflected in the success this year in adding two additional sites to Councils Green Flag portfolio in 2024. Seven sites were now accredited with Green Flag status.

By working within this policy statement, the Council could demonstrate its commitment to a sustainable management approach. That approach was also supported within the Councils 'Roadmap to Sustainability' and agreed 'Local Biodiversity Action Plan'.

Upon the inception of the policy, there were two sites in the Borough which were managed herbicide free. Those were Kiltonga Wildlife Reserve and Hunts Park. In



adopting a management regime free from herbicide, the following techniques were trialled:

- Identify areas left uncut to encourage natural vegetation
- Reduced cutting frequencies
- The use of mechanical brushes
- Manual weed removal

Following the creation of a 'Herbicide Reduction Task and Finish Group' consisting of Parks and Cemeteries operational staff, the effectiveness of the above techniques on the herbicide free sites was evaluated in terms of control success and also public perception. Each site had differing levels of success. Kiltonga experienced no negative impact and indeed benefited greatly from that approach. In the case of Hunts Park, the ageing infrastructure reduced the effectiveness of the alternative methods. That was being reviewed and a project for path refurbishment was being implemented. That would enable a more sustainable herbicide free approach to the site. Funding had been secured for Hunts Park and concept plans had been developed for engagement and delivery, a future report would be brought to the Council for consideration on Hunts Park. Additional sites being managed herbicide free were Linear Park and Clandeboye Cemetery.

The Task and Finished Group identified several key areas for the further reduction in the use of herbicide. Those included:

- The cessation of treating kerb lines and greater use of mechanical cleaning.
- Not spraying mature tree bases as appropriate.
- Allowing boundary edges to naturalise.
- Increased used of weed suppressant mulching.
- Localised herbicide free zones within selected areas.

Overall, the above measures had led to a significantly reduced reliance on chemical weed control since 2021.

To achieve a further increase in the use of chemical weed control, Members were advised that funding had been secured for two mechanical sweeping units and a non-herbicide weed control system. The procurement for those items was currently underway and they would be deployed in the programmed maintenance for 2025.

Going forward and to reduce the use of herbicide further, the following techniques were being explored:

- Additional non-herbicide-based products trialled for use on hard surfaces.
- Electrical Weed Control - eWeeding

Where appropriate, and following further industry research, officers would be developing additional business cases for consideration in future budget rate setting process to further enhance the Council's commitment for become less herbicide reliant.

It was important to note that the Policy did not apply to the management of invasive species, sports pitches, or fine turf areas such as bowling greens where chemical control was the most appropriate control option currently available.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council note the progress achieved by the application of the Herbicide Reduction Policy as outlined in the report.

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

Councillor Kendall was happy to propose the recommendation and it was good to see a reduction of harmful chemicals being put in to the environment. She appreciated the efforts officers had made to look at alternatives.

Seconding the recommendation Alderman McRandal was supportive generally and was aware that it had taken a lot of resilience and he referred to boundary edges which if left could start to look untidy and begin to cause upset within communities. He asked how that could be balanced. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries said these areas were not treated with chemicals any longer, but not abandoned and strimmers were being used instead to keep areas tidy.

Councillor Boyle reported that he had regular complaints about weeds and wondered if what the Council was doing was beneficial in keeping the Borough as tidy as possible. The officer was confident that the Council could continue to improve on what it was doing and pointed to the balance that needed to be struck in keeping areas looking well maintained. He also pointed out that it was important to say that the Council was not reducing its maintenance programme and that the new policies if anything were slightly more labour intensive. An example of that would be more regular sweeping of paths and roads to reduce weeds forming in the first place. He was content with the resources to do the work that was needed and the workforce were behind the Council's goals.

Councillor W Irvine referred to the balance that was needed and the public engagement on what the Council was trying to do to reduce its use of chemicals within the environment.

Councillor McClean also referred to that and to the Bryansburn / Brunswick Road roundabout. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained that there had been perennial planting in that place for many years and those beds were removed every year at the end of the season so additional seed could be added. Peat was no longer added, and the area was planted with native seed which looked very attractive. It was simply a matter of changing the way the Council did such things in order to be more sustainable.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Kendall, seconded by Alderman McRandal, that the recommendation be adopted.**

#### **14. NOTICES OF MOTION**

#### **14.1 Notice of Motion received from Alderman Smith, Councillor Wray and Councillor W Irvine**

This Council strongly opposes the UK Government's recent Winter Fuel Payment policy change. We resolve 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.

Proposed by Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Smith began by stressing the need to send a strong message to the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He went on to say that on 29<sup>th</sup> July the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced significant changes to the Winter Fuel Payment Scheme, which would affect pensioners in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

Historically, the Winter Fuel Payment, valued up to £300 per annum, had been available to all individuals above State Pension age. That had recently included those born on or before 24th September 1957.

However, with this new Eligibility Criteria, starting from this winter, the payment would be restricted to those who were:

1. Over State Pension age; AND
2. Receiving one of the following benefits: - Income Support - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance - Pension Credit - Universal Credit (including joint claims)

While the United Kingdom government initially announced that this would apply in England and Wales, the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland and Scotland had also adopted those changes due to an inability to fund universal delivery.

The Department for Communities, Northern Ireland's responsible authority for social security, including the Winter Fuel Payment, had indicated that the estimated additional cost to the Block Grant of maintaining universal entitlement for winter 2024/25 was £44.3 million, which did not include any additional delivery or staffing costs.

The new restriction would exclude many pensioners who were not receiving the specific benefits listed but still needed help financially. Pensioners who narrowly missed qualifying for Pension Credit due to the current income thresholds were particularly concerned. As of now, the thresholds stood at:

- £218.15 per week for single pensioners.
- £332.95 per week for couples.

Estimates indicated that up to 40% of pensioners eligible for Pension Credit in England, Scotland, and Wales were not claiming it. In Northern Ireland, 28% of potentially eligible families were not receiving Pension Credit.

Alderman Smith urged anyone unsure about whether they qualified to contact 'Make the Call' on 0800 232 1271 to ensure they are getting all the support they were entitled to.

He thought that the exclusion of pensioners who narrowly missed out on Pension Credit could leave many financially vulnerable individuals without crucial support during the winter months. Adjusting the Pension Credit minimum income thresholds could help more low income households qualify for Winter Fuel Payments, thus protecting them from fuel poverty.

Enhancing awareness and encouraging take-up of Pension Credit could also mitigate some of the impact of those changes. Those actions could help ensure that vulnerable groups continued to receive the assistance they needed to stay warm during the winter.

He was aware that there were some who would argue that the universal distribution of the Winter Fuel Payment was unsustainable, as it has been provided to individuals who may not need it. However, the approach announced by the Chancellor, risks leaving many pensioner households— who relied on this payment to keep their homes warm—facing significant hardship.

From a public health standpoint, suddenly removing the assistance had the potential to worsen health inequalities and increase pressure on the NHS, as older people unable to afford sufficient heating faced greater health risks.

Such outcomes were both socially and economically detrimental, particularly when reducing health disparities should be a top priority.

He concluded by stating that it was unusual that a government policy could unite all parties in opposition. Especially so when even the Labour Party voted against their own government at their recent conference. He hoped that all Members would be able to support this Motion and send a message to Downing Street that the decision was opposed by Ards and North Down and that the Council urged action to mitigate its impact on the most vulnerable in society.

Seconding the Motion Councillor Hollywood agreed wholeheartedly with his party colleague stating that the cuts to the Winter Fuel Allowance were not just an economic or political issue as had been alluded to – they were also a matter of human dignity. The country's pensioners, who had contributed much to society throughout the course of their lives, deserved to live out their later years in warmth and comfort.

Northern Ireland's ageing population was growing - costs, rents, bills and even Rates were ever increasing and without proper support, many more pensioners would face similar hardships in the years to come. He noted there was growing demand for the Labour government to revisit its policy on the Winter Fuel Allowance. Many advocacy

groups and local political leaders across Northern Ireland were calling for the reinstatement of previous funding levels, as well as targeted support for those most in need. This was not just a financial issue in his opinion but a moral obligation to ensure that no elderly person had to suffer through another freezing winter without adequate support.

Councillor Hollywood went on to say that the issue had other far-reaching effects across communities within the Borough – charities would likely be inundated over the winter as financial struggles began to bite amongst the most vulnerable. Organisations like his own in CAAND, Agenda, KWC, Trussell Trust, Warehouse and many others may well struggle to cope with the scale of demand on their services. The winter months should not be a time of fear and uncertainty for pensioners so it was important to ensure that the most vulnerable citizens were protected.

Alderman Adair believed that this was a matter that the entire Council could support and particularly since it was brought in with no consultation and he thought that this Labour government was becoming more and more out of touch with the average person daily. He felt that it was important that the Council raise its voice for the oldest members of the population since the decision would affect many constituents. He also saw the benefit of writing to every other Council within Northern Ireland to lend a stronger voice of opposition and Alderman Smith said that he would be happy to include that in addition to the Motion.

Councillor Boyle stated that the two Members of Parliament from his Party had already spoken out against the decision, the consequences of which would be devastating for thousands of vulnerable households who had come to rely on the payment to cover heating costs during the winter months. It would lead to more pensioners experiencing health issues related to the cold, such as hypothermia and chronic illnesses, which would place further strain on our healthcare system. Every winter 290 people died across Northern Ireland due to cold homes and that number was likely to rise among the elderly population without access to fuel support.

He explained that individuals who received the full state pension worth £220.20 per week would not qualify for Pension Credit and therefore, under those changes would not be entitled to a winter fuel payment. It was ludicrous that a household entitled to a meagre yearly income of £11,450.50 was not deemed worthy of support. Many pensioners were already struggling to make ends meet, forced to choose between heating and other necessities and that was with the winter fuel payment.

For too long pensioners have been treated with flagrant disregard by government, left without the support and dignity they deserved to enjoy their golden years in relative comfort. They should not be facing a battle to keep their homes warm and food on the table. The move would have a disproportionate impact in Northern Ireland which had the highest rates of fuel poverty in the United Kingdom and would hit harder for pensioners living in areas of high deprivation so in his view it was clear that a separate approach to the winter fuel payment was required in Northern Ireland.

Councillor Kendall felt disgust at the governments decision and knew that most of the elderly population would be significantly affected. She said that the Labour

government appeared not to support those who had worked and paid taxes during their lives. She thought it a grim position that community groups would be relied upon to provide hot meals to the elderly during the winter where they would be given advice on how to apply for Pension Credits. She encouraged everyone to oppose the changes.

Alderman McRandal expressed his support for all the comments that had been made in the meeting and stated that Alderman Smith had called it correctly when he said there was unlikely to be dissention within the Chamber. His Alliance Member of Parliament had already spoken on the matter and that no one had voted for Austerity.

Councillor W Irvine had put his name to the Motion and was encouraged that there would be a collective voice in opposition to the proposal. There had not been an equality impact assessment carried out and if reform was needed why put the most vulnerable in society at risk. There was still uncertainty about energy prices as we went into the winter and the elderly were at home normally for the majority of the day and that is one reason that the payments had been given at the start. He called for this proposal to be withdrawn.

Alderman Smith in summing up all thanked Members for their support and contribution to the debate.

**RECESS 9.04 pm**

**RECOMMENCED 9.14 pm**

## **15. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

## **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

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

## **16. SOCIAL SUPERMARKET ARDS, COMBER, BALLYGOWAN, KILLINCHY AND PENINSULA**

**\*\*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 providing details of advice received from the Council's procurement service which stated that as the market had been tested, direct approaches could be made to potential suppliers of the Social

Supermarket service for the remaining part of the Borough. A number of suppliers have been approached over the last few months.

The report recommended Council approves the remaining allocation of funding to the approved supplier.

The recommendation was agreed.

## **17. SUPPLIER CONTRACT EXTENSION ARDS BLAIR MAYNE WELLBEING AND LEISURE COMPLEX**

**\*\*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 providing details of the Supplier contract currently in place for ABMWLC.

It was recommended that Council agreed to granting the second one-year extension to the current contract at the Council managed leisure facilities from April 2025 to March 2026.

The recommendation was agreed.

## **18. TENDER FOR PROVISION OF ARBORICULTURAL SERVICES**

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

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

In line with the ongoing service delivery model for Parks and Cemeteries, a report was presented to Community and Wellbeing providing details of how specialist services were procured to support the wider Parks and Cemeteries team. As such a tender procurement exercise was initiated for a framework for the provision of Arboriculture Services.

It was recommended that Council approved the appointment of the companies to the call off framework for the provision of Arboriculture Services as outlined in the report.

The recommendation was agreed.

## **19. COMBER GREENWAY ALTERNATIVE ROUTE** (Appendices XVI - XVII)

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

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

In May 2024, Council considered a report concerning the route of an extension to the Comber Greenway. The report submitted to Community and Wellbeing on 9 October 2024 dealt with the feedback from the engagement after the initial report and subsequently provided Members with options.

It was recommended that Council agrees to way forward and writes to the landowner.

The recommendation was agreed.

**20. COMBER GREENWAY A21 SECTION UPDATE**  
(Appendix XVII)

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 5 – EXEMPTION A CLAIM TO LEGAL PROFESSIONAL PRIVILEGE**

Members were made aware that a planning application for the second phase of its proposed Bangor to Comber Greenway, which ran from Newtownards to Comber, was subject to an ongoing discussion in order to reach an agreed route.

It was recommended that Council notes the report and attachment.

The recommendation was agreed.

**RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Cochrane, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.**

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 9.24 pm.



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	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance
Date of Report	14 October 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	ANDBC Consultation Response on the draft Programme for Government 2024-2027
Attachments	ANDBC Consultation Response on the draft Programme for Government 2024-2027

On 5 September 2024 the Executive agreed a draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'. An eight-week public consultation began on 9 September 2024 and will end on 4 November 2024. Feedback is sought on the following nine Priorities:

1. Growing a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy
2. Deliver More Affordable Childcare
3. Cut Health Waiting Times
4. Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
5. Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs
6. Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing
7. Safer Communities

Not Applicable

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8. Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment

9. Reform and Transformation of Public Services

Ards and North Down Borough Council welcome this step in recognising the need to move to proactive delivery of services which prioritises wellbeing and need for transformation of public services.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the attached ANDBC Consultation Response on the draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 is approved.

Not Applicable

1.	<b>Growing a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy</b>
Q.	<i>How much do you agree that the priority ‘Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy’ should be included in the Programme for Government?</i>
A.	<i>Strongly agree</i>
<p>It is noted that the PfG states:</p> <p><i>‘We also need the right infrastructure which will create the foundations for a more productive and prosperous economy; for better rural and urban communities; and for healthier and greener lives. To create an economy that works for everyone, we will address four key challenges: productivity, good jobs, decarbonisation, and regional balance’.</i></p> <p>The accompanying action to this priority refers:</p> <p><i>‘Through a series of multi-million-pound committed investments, we will make this a more vibrant and inclusive place to live, work, invest and visit’.</i></p> <p>ANDBC note that there are ongoing implications of the fitness of infrastructure in Northern Ireland and in turn this garners questions on the ability to deliver development proposals across the region. NI Water infrastructure is not coping with development commitments already approved through the planning process and there is a clear need to have a resourced infrastructure provider in NI Water. It is noted that the issue of working with NI Water to deliver homes as a priority appears later in the draft PfG, however this merits some form of recognition in action earlier to unlock barriers to growth in the economy while protecting the natural environment.</p> <p>The PfG priority and related actions also focuses on decarbonisation and a move to low carbon energy. The draft PfG is silent on the formulation of a regional strategic planning policy in relation to Renewable and Low Carbon Energy. The draft PfG is also silent on any actions forthcoming in a regional strategic direction for planning policy related to Climate Change.</p> <p>Local Councils are preparing strategies and policies to support growth and investment in LDPs and also in line with climate act obligations.</p> <p>In terms of productivity, it is understandable that the focus of the draft PfG should be on high productivity sectors, however, R&amp;D investment should also benefit smaller companies and micro companies in multiple sectors, not just those identified in the document. Northern Ireland’s business base is mainly made up of SMEs that have less than 50 employees and our companies all need to transform together to create an eco-system that can support future growth and underpin a varied but inter-related business community. It is therefore important that any fund/ support is open to all sectors and to companies of any size. The AI Collaboration Centre and City Growth Deals investment is highlighted on page 77 but its role and reach are unclear.</p> <p>It is good to see on page 77 of the document that the Executive intends to build capacity in the Social Enterprise sector. The Social Economy sector is continuously growing, however, it is clear that potential and existing social enterprises find it challenging to obtain the right support. This is something that we are providing in</p>	

Not Applicable

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Council with selected partners and it is clear that tailored support is necessary to develop the sector as its governance, management and growth ambitions are very challenging and complex. It is unclear in the document what support will be made available to support the sector.

The availability of skills has been an issue in the Borough for many years and more specifically since the COVID 19 pandemic. The New Skills fund is welcome, however, its details and its proposed implementation will be key to addressing the issues of skills shortages or future skills needed to support today's and tomorrow's economy. The Fund includes a new Tourism and Hospitality Careers Programme and a new Skills Academy for the Childcare sector. Both are very relevant as these sectors are currently struggling and generate interest. It would be useful to know what other sectors will be included in this fund. It must also be noted that such initiatives are currently being delivered by the Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs) (Childcare Academy and Tourism/ Hospitality academies) and Councils would like reassurance that such funds would be channelled through the LMPs which have a track record of delivering such projects efficiently and getting people into employment within a very short period of time. LMPs are also addressing the barriers into employment highlighted on page 17 and therefore are the most appropriate vehicles to manage these funds.

Although Childcare is not in this section of the consultation document, the Council welcomes the measures highlighted as it represents a very significant barrier for families to work, return to work and to contribute to the economy as well as to enjoy a good standard of living. Individuals with children should be able to access "good jobs" whilst getting support to raise the next generation of individuals who will constitute Northern Ireland's workforce.

The document only mentions very briefly "new ways of working" on page 16, however, flexibility is key to secure and keep a reliable workforce and the Executive should develop this further in the Draft Programme for Government. Flexible working or remote working allows individuals who live in remote and rural areas, facing transportation and infrastructure issues, caring issues, (amongst others), to contribute to the economy.

The document does not seem to underline the importance of self-employment and the creation of new businesses. The current Go-Succeed Service provides a full pipeline of opportunities from the Engage pillar right up to the Accelerated Scaling stage for aspiring and existing companies in Northern Ireland. This service, managed by Councils, is a key contributor to growth in each council area. This service contributes to meeting the statutory job creation target set by DfE. It is crucial that this service continues to be funded and supported as part of the Executive's proposals.

On page 19, the document states that the Executive will work with Councils and local partners to deliver a Sub-Regional Economic Action Plan. This will see the establishment of 11 Local Enterprise Partnerships bidding for money for their own area to support their local economy. This is a very welcome initiative that Councils are currently discussing with Invest NI to clarify their role, structure and the resources necessary to deliver this ambition.

The document mentions that the public sector will be a key enabler in this new programme and it is clear that more responsibilities are being given to Council as

Not Applicable

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they are best placed to address local issues and have a deep knowledge of their local economic dynamics. This contributes to Council being closer to its citizens and servicing their needs more effectively. It is imperative however that Council have the necessary resources to do so and that the executive takes this into consideration when developing further its proposals.

2. Deliver More Affordable Childcare	
Q.	<p><i>How much do you agree that the priority 'Deliver More Affordable Childcare' should be included in the Programme for Government?</i></p> <p><i>The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Deliver More Affordable Childcare'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?</i></p>
A.	<i>Strongly agree</i>
<p>Council welcomes all of the actions proposed in relation to delivering more affordable childcare. The rising cost of childcare is a major barrier in returning to work for many parents, impacting the rising numbers facing hardship in our Borough and having to turn to Social Supermarkets and Foodbanks for help and support.</p>	

3. Cut Health Waiting Times	
Q.	<p><i>How much do you agree that the priority 'Cut Health Waiting Times' should be included in the Programme for Government?</i></p> <p><i>The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Cut Health Waiting Times'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?</i></p>
A.	<i>Strongly agree</i>
<p>Council welcomes each of the actions proposed. It is well documented that the health service is no longer fit for purpose and that an emphasis on social and community care could assist hospitals to be more efficient and effective. With an aging population and Ards and North Down housing the largest percentage of older people in Northern Ireland urgent action it required to address the health crisis and support community care to ensure an increase in those who can be cared for at home, if they so wish.</p>	

Not Applicable

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4.	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
Q.	<p><i>How much do you agree that the priority 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' should be included in the Programme for Government?</i></p> <p><i>The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?</i></p>
A.	Strongly agree
<p>Council welcomes all of the proposed actions, particularly collaborative working across the public sector, to tackle violence against women and girls and alignment with other strategies, where there are clear shared outcomes. Early intervention education programmes in schools focusing on healthy relationships is essential to contributing towards stopping the cycle of increasing violence against women and girls. Organisations working to house and offer support to victims of violence require urgent long-term support to ensure the necessary resources are in place to offer the help and support required.</p>	

5.	Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs
Q.	<p><i>How much do you agree that the priority 'Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs' should be included in the Programme for Government?</i></p> <p><i>The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?</i></p>
A.	Strongly agree
<p>Council welcomes all of the actions listed.</p> <p>A number of schools within the Ards and North Down Borough require updated or new premises and investment in the school estate is urgently needed.</p> <p>Council is aware of the urgent need to streamline the statutory assessment, statementing and annual review process to meet statutory timeframes and ensure timely confirmation of school placements for children with SEN to ensure that all children in the borough are able to avail of the appropriate education provision for their specific needs.</p>	

Not Applicable

150

6.	Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing
Q.	<i>How much do you agree that the priority 'Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing' should be included in the Programme for Government?</i>
A.	<i>Strongly agree</i>
<p>Achieving balanced communities throughout Northern Ireland is a key aim of broader Government policy as reflected in the draft PfG and that of the previous draft document.</p> <p>It is noted that the PfG Action in relation to the priority refers that:</p> <p><i>We will ensure that the planning system supports the delivery of the appropriate supply of housing, creating sustainable and inclusive spaces, and work with NI Water to help facilitate housing growth.</i></p> <p>Council will have regard to specific policy in relation to affordable housing in the RDS under RG6 'Strengthen community cohesion' and RG8 'Managing housing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development'. RG6 seeks to encourage mixed housing development, with neighbourhoods containing homes in a range of sizes and tenures, to enable to stable communities and to reduce isolation. RG8 states that 'the varied housing needs of the whole community need to be met'.</p> <p>This includes affordable housing. Local development plans are required to identify housing land to ensure an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet needs of everyone and to include land for social and intermediate housing.</p> <p>The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) includes a core planning principle 'to improve health and wellbeing', an important element of which is to support the delivery of homes to meet the full range of housing needs. The SPPS acknowledges the role of the local development plan (LDP) as the primary vehicle for facilitating identified need for affordable housing. Key aims for housing development to be met through the local development plan, include achieving balanced communities, through the provision of housing in a variety of tenures and types.</p> <p>Given the complexities around the delivery of affordable housing it is welcome that the PfG highlights priority issues in delivery. The delivery of affordable housing requires a collaborative effort from a number of key stakeholders.</p> <p>Council acknowledges that the LDP will ensure the delivery of an appropriate range of house sizes, types and tenures to meet local needs.</p> <p>Again, the action about working with NI Water is not limited to housing growth.</p> <p>Council recognises that a fit for purpose infrastructure is essential to growth and environmental quality in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Whilst the amount of social, affordable housing sits outside Councils remit, there is a clear need for more housing to be provided by social landlords, priced at a level to allow everyone to have the ability to live in decent conditions. The provision of good quality social and affordable housing has many benefits and savings across health and welfare and should be viewed in that holistic manner.</p>	

Not Applicable

151

Sustainable housing should be a major priority across government, in order to reduce the percentage of income spent on heating etc, and to protect the environment. A high percentage of our dwellings are old and are not replaced at the end of their effective/ efficient life, often due to high values making demolition and modern replacements uneconomic. In order to help residents and to reduce damage to the environment it is imperative that we make major investment into energy efficient retrofit of older houses by legislation and regulation. Northern Ireland Building Standards need to develop and move ahead much quicker rather than lag behind the other areas of the UK.

Whilst the Council has no direct role in housing, officers from Environmental Health and home safety often observe the unfavourable environments and poverty that people are living with. We welcome the Fuel Poverty Strategy and we are keen on early engagement on any operational role for Councils.

Q.	<i>The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?</i>
----	--

A.	<i>Agree</i>
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The stock of social housing needs to be at least maintained at the appropriate level (much higher than currently). Whilst help is being provided to increase home ownership through shared ownership, this reduces social stock, and a suitable balance needs to be found.

## 7. Safer Communities

Q.	<i>How much do you agree that the priority 'Safer Communities' should be included in the Programme for Government?</i>  <i>The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Safer Communities'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?</i>
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A.	<i>Strongly agree</i>
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Council agrees with each of the proposed actions particularly in relation to an increase in police officer numbers, and a focus on tackling paramilitarism and organised crime as on early intervention, which are concerns consistently raised during local community consultation.

Hate crime has increased in the Borough in recent times as well as a feud between organised crime gangs. Many residents are living in fear of crime and suffering from coercive control. The harm inflicted on people and communities by gangs with paramilitary connections is complex and wide ranging. We are aware of widespread cruelty and harm including drug dealing, housing intimidation, illegal money lending, extortion, human trafficking, sexual exploitation (including of children), child abuse and other criminal activities ongoing in our borough to profit and exercise coercive control over communities.



Not Applicable

152

The need for an enhanced commitment to tackling paramilitarism and support for trauma-informed approaches is urgently required together with funding to ensure problems are tackled locally by those who are best placed to ensure the resources are directed according to local need i.e. increased funding to support Good Relations across the region.

## 8. Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment

Q. *How much do you agree that the priority 'Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment' should be included in the Programme for Government?*

*The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?*

A. *Agree*

Whilst Ards and North Down does not share a boundary with Lough Neagh there have been some local incidents of Blue-Green algae and the public have a heightened awareness around this considering the media coverage of Lough Neagh. We would welcome engagement on the Interagency Monitoring protocol and clarity on the Councils role in relation to cases of blue-green algae.

## 9. Reform and Transformation of Public Services

Q. *How much do you agree that the priority 'Reform and Transformation of Public Services' should be included in the Programme for Government?*

*The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Reform and Transformation of Public Services'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?*

A. *Agree*

While there is little mention of the role that local authorities play throughout this PfG, the Executive does recognise the urgent need for investment in public services and the need for a Transformation Board. Councils would welcome early engagement on this suggesting a co-creation/ design/ production approach.

The PfG has rightly identified the ageing population as a challenge in the future. In Ards and North Down we currently have the largest percentage of older people across the 11 Councils. Whilst age friendly projects are currently funded by PHA this is on an annual rolling basis. Linking in with the approach to sustainability a more long-term approach to funding would be welcomed to allow for longer planning and security of trained staff. An increase in investment would be welcomed and is evidenced though the delivery of the contracts including positive outcomes for the older people supported by age friendly. Furthermore, the need for more investment

Not Applicable

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in dementia services is evidenced as rates continue to increase and as the Alzheimer's Society recently released that the majority do not feel that the assembly considers dementia a priority. The Council is a key delivery partner working on a joint action plan with SEHSCT.

## 11. Building New Foundations

*We are committed to investing in our public infrastructure and reshaping how our services are delivered.*

*Together, we will work as hard as we can to continue taking care of your needs today while supporting your hopes and ambitions for tomorrow through the high-quality, sustainable public services you deserve. We will:*

- *Boost Housing Funds*
- *Improve the Planning System*
- *Deliver Better Public Services*
- *Support Our Net Zero Future*
- *Manage Our Water*
- *Upgrade Stadia and Support Local Sports*
- *Retrofit Homes*
- *Improve Our Transport Infrastructure for Safer Travel, Connected Communities and Sustainable Economic Growth*

*We are committed to investing £26 billion of public funding in the next decade. More detail on this will be provided in the upcoming Investment Strategy.*

Q. *How much do you agree that these are the right commitments in relation to the plans for investment in infrastructure?*

A. *Agree*

It is essential to invest in infrastructure, including water, power, transport and education, in order to allow the continuation of, and sustainability of construction and commerce.

It is essential to manage our water and particularly our wastewater through regulation and infrastructure investment.

Retrofitting of homes is the only way we can hope to reach targets for energy efficiency, and there needs to be legislation and regulation around that, and funding. Without the dual approach of legislation requiring works, and funding of the works (part or fully) the rate of change will be too slow.

The levels of funding indicated, whilst welcome are not adequate to achieve what needs to be done, and different funding models need to be explored.

Improvements in infrastructure are crucial to further enable the various social, physical, and mental wellbeing benefits associated with past, present, and future

Not Applicable

regeneration projects throughout urban and rural areas within the Borough. These improvements, if delivered, will assist in the ‘connectivity’ objective of some regeneration projects. For example, the recent investment in Central Station Belfast will positively impact Belfast City on a social and economic level.

The requirement for adequate infrastructure in relation to local and regional economic growth and sustainability is well documented. For example, improved infrastructure is evidenced as positively impacting businesses by enabling both traditional and ‘active’ travel methods, and therefore will sustain or grow the non-domestic rate base.

Regeneration have proactively encouraged ‘active travel’ via the placement of cycling infrastructure and environmental improvements to facilitate easier use of bicycles. If the improved infrastructure detailed within the draft programme included walking and cycling infrastructure, regeneration could seek to ensure these benefits were as accessible as possible to residents of the Borough.

**12. Shaping a Better Tomorrow**

While making things better today is important to us, we also need to look at long-term issues.

Our commitments are based on a recognition of our duty and drive to do better for you, your family, our communities, and this place we all call home, now and for generations to come. Our focus will centre on three long-term Missions: People, Planet and Prosperity, as well as a cross-cutting commitment to Peace.

**People:** Working to support everyone at all stages of their life to ensure they have the chance to succeed by improving life opportunities.

**Planet:** Harnessing the potential of a green growth economy while ensuring we provide an equitable transition to a sustainable and affordable society as we take responsibility for decarbonising our economy and society.

**Prosperity:** Improving our economic productivity while making sure that we have an economy that works for everyone, and our story continues to be an inspiration to others.

**Peace:** Our cross-cutting commitment to Peace will make sure that everyone feels the benefit of a growing economy, improved environment, and fairer society

Q. How much do you agree that these are the right Missions to focus on?

A. Agree

We welcome that the PfG prioritises sports and physical activity to tackle obesity and how this links into the increasingly diverse and ageing population.

We welcome the opportunity to train and equip our public sector staff to make smarter, greener spending decisions.

Resilience is not merely the ability to bounce back from adversity; it is about fostering a culture of preparedness and adaptability. By embedding resilience into the fabric of Northern Ireland’s Programme for Government, we can enhance

Not Applicable

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our capacity to respond effectively to emergencies, minimising disruption and ensuring the safety and well being of our citizens. We are cognisant of the expanding breadth of interrelated and complex risks that we face as a society, with particular note to climate and geo-political challenges, and how the consequences of these impact the most vulnerable in our society. It is essential there is adequate and sustainable resourcing to promote collaboration between central and local government, the business sector and the community and voluntary sector to not only protect lives and property, but also strengthen our economy and social fabric. A resilient society is one that can withstand shock and emerge stronger, ultimately benefiting all of our citizens.

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## **Consultation on the draft Programme for Government 2024-2027**

On **5 September 2024** the Executive agreed a **draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'**.

### **Help Us Shape the Programme for Government**

An eight-week public consultation began on **9 September 2024** and will end on **4 November 2024**.

Consultation on the accompanying impact assessments began on **9 September 2024** and will end on **2 December 2024**.

We value your contribution and look forward to hearing from you during this important period.

### **How to Take Part**

Visit our <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/PfG> website to access the draft Programme for Government: Our Plan document, and details on upcoming events.

The quickest and easiest way to voice your opinion on Our Plan is through our PfG Consultation Survey, available at:

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/teo/pfg-2024>

## **Every Voice Matters**

To ensure a wide range of voices are heard, we encourage you to share this opportunity with your friends and social networks.

## **Support**

Officials from our Programme for Government Team are here to help. You can contact the team by email: [pfgconsultation@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pfgconsultation@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk) or by telephone: 028 9052 3154.

We encourage you to share your thoughts before the consultation deadline on **4 November 2024**.

We look forward to hearing from you.

**Programme for Government Team**

**From:** DAERA Environmental Principles <[Environmental.Principles@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Environmental.Principles@daera-ni.gov.uk)>

**Sent:** Monday, September 30, 2024 9:01 AM

**Subject:** DAERA Consultation - Environmental Principles Policy Statement

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

Dear Stakeholder

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has today published a public consultation on the draft Environmental Principles Policy Statement (EPPS) for NI. The consultation will remain open for 10 weeks, closing at midnight on 9 December 2024.

### What is the EPPS?

Schedule 2 to the Environment Act 2021 (the Act) imposes a statutory duty on DAERA to prepare and lay an EPPS before the Assembly. The EPPS sets out how 5 principles, previously an integral part of all EU policy and legislation, should be interpreted, and proportionately applied by NI departments and UK Government Ministers, when making policy for NI. Although the principles are not new, embedding them in domestic law via the EPPS marks a change in the way they will be applied. Under the EPPS regime, policy makers will have to consider the principles in a more overt and conscious way, and be able to show evidence they have done so.

Apart from some limited exemptions (e.g. taxation, national security, defence and the allocation of central government funds) the EPPS will potentially affect the making of all policy, not just environmental policy. The EPPS provides more detail on the 5 principles and advice to policy makers on how to apply them.

Your views matter and we encourage participation from all interested parties. The consultation is hosted on the Citizen Space platform and can be accessed at:

<https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/daera/draft-environmental-principles-statement>

We look forward to receiving your feedback.

Kind Regards

Environmental Principles Team

**Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA)**



*Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*

Unclassified

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**ITEM 9.1****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	16 October 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 Fire and Rescue Service
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Deputation request form

A deputation request has been received from Mr Declan Rogers (Group Commander) Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, see appendix attached.

Council is asked to note that NIFRS intends to deliver this presentation to Ards and North Down PCSP.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council considers this request.



## 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](mailto: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.

<b>Name of person(s) making the deputation request:</b>	Declan Rogers Group Commander Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service
<b>Date of request:</b>	14/10/2024
<b>If making the deputation on behalf of an organisation or a group of individuals, name of the organisation / individuals:</b>	NIFRS
<b>Name of Committee (if known) to which you wish to make your deputation:</b>	Not known

**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.**

**Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024, presented to the cross council NILGA Executive Committee an overview of our current live public consultation on our 2025-2030 'Community Risk Management Plan' (CRMP).**

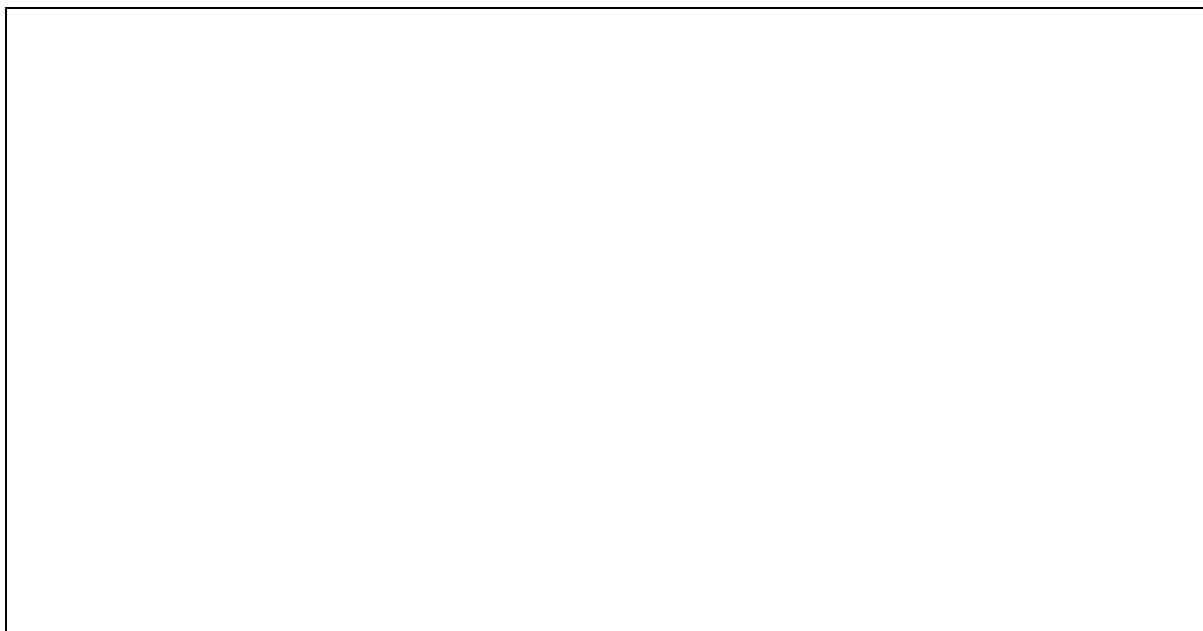
**It was requested by the Executive Committee at the Braid that NIFRS offer to present to each local council separately before the consultation expires on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025.**

**This is simply an overview / introduction to our CRMP consultation and I would like to offer my services as requested to deliver this short presentation to your council members as recommended last week.**

**For your information we intend to deliver same presentation to each council PCSP and Community planning Group before the 9<sup>th</sup> January.**

**Thank you**

**Declan Rogers**



## **Extract from Ards and North Down Borough Council's Standing Orders, Version 8, September 2021**

### **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](mailto:dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)  
Tel: 0300 013 3333

Unclassified

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**ITEM 9.2****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	15 October 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Request for Deputation - Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Society
Attachments	

Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Society is licensed by the Council to care for the historic Lifeboat Sir Samuel Kelly, which is housed in a temporary shelter on a site leased from the Council in the Copeland Marina car park, adjacent to Railway Street, Donaghadee. The current lease was for four years.

The company has plans to build a Heritage and Visitor Centre for Donaghadee which can provide a permanent home for the Lifeboat, but in order to progress those plans it will need to be assured of a longer tenure, either on the present site or on another suitable site.

Following discussion with Officers of the Council, the company wishes to put to the Place and Prosperity Committee the case for building a new 'Kelly Centre', to explain how it might be financed and made sustainable, and to ask the Council to determine where it should be located.

Not Applicable

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The Group have asked if they could present to the January meeting of the Place and Prosperity Committee.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council hears a deputation from Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Society at the January meeting of the Place and Prosperity Committee.

Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	16 October 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Nomination to Outside Bodies
Attachments	

Places on working groups are filled through nomination at the Council's Annual Meeting and are thus held by individual Members rather than Parties. When a position becomes vacant, it reverts back to Council to nominate a Member to fill the place rather than Party Nominating Officers.

Following the resignation of three members of Council, nominations are sought to fill each of the below positions for the remainder of the term as necessary.

Following the resignation of David Rossiter from Council, a place has become available on each of the following groups:

- North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 15 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Fair Trade Working Group – 4 Places (4 Year Appointment)
- Body: Belfast City Airport Forum – 1 Place + 1 Substitute (4 Year Appointment)
- Body: All Party Group on Climate Action – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Body: East Border Region Members Forum – 6 Places (4 Year Appointment)



Not Applicable

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

**North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 15 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	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	Councillor Martin
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

**Body: Fair Trade Working Group – 4 Places (4 Year Appointment)**

	2019/23	2023/27
1	Alderman Gibson	Councillor Gilmour
2	Councillor S Irvine	Councillor S Irvine
3	Alderman Keery	Councillor D Rossiter
4	Councillor Irwin	-

**Body: Belfast City Airport Forum – 1 Place + 1 Substitute (4 Year Appointment)**

	2019/23	2023/27
1	Alderman Keery	Alderman Graham
Sub	Councillor Greer (resigned 31.3.2023)	Councillor Rossiter

**Body: All Party Group on Climate Action – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	2023/24	2024/25
1	Councillor Rossiter	Councillor Rossiter
2	Councillor Woods (Replaced by Councillor Kendall)	Councillor Kendall

Not Applicable

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**Body: East Border Region Members Forum – 6 Places (4 Year Appointment)**

	2019/23	2023/27
1	Councillor Thompson	Councillor Cathcart
2	Alderman Keery	Alderman McDowell
3	Alderman McDowell	Councillor Rossiter
4	Councillor Morgan	Councillor Blaney
5	Alderman Carson	Councillor Boyle
6	Councillor Boyle	Councillor McKimm

Following the resignation of Christine Creighton from Council, a place is available on each of the following groups:

- Mental Health Champion – 2 Places (4 Year Appointment) –2026/27 year only
- North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 15 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Percy French Management Committee – 4 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Ards Community Hospital – Multi Agency Forum – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Community Resuscitation Group – 2 Places
- Northern Ireland Museums Council – 1 Place (4 Year Appointment)

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

**Body: Mental Health Champion – 2 Places (4 Year Appointment) –2026/27 year only**

	2022/23	Year 1 2023/24	Year 2 2024/25	Year 3 2025/26	Year 4 2026/27
1	Councillor Thompson	Alderman Armstrong Cotter	Councillor McLaren	Councillor McKimm	Councillor Creighton
2	Councillor Smart				

**Body: North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 15 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	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	Councillor Martin
8	Councillor W Irvine	Councillor W Irvine

Not Applicable

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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

**Body: Percy French Management Committee – 4 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	2023/24	2024/25
1	Councillor Creighton	Councillor Creighton
2	Councillor McCollum	Councillor McCollum
3	-	
4	-	

**Body: Ards Community Hospital – Multi Agency Forum – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	2023/24	2024/25
1	Councillor Smart	Councillor Smart
2	Councillor Creighton	Councillor Creighton

**Body: Community Resuscitation Group – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	2023/24	2024/25
1	Councillor Creighton	Councillor Creighton
2	Councillor McKimm	Councillor McKimm

**Body: Northern Ireland Museums Council – 1 Place (4 Year Appointment)**

1	Alderman K Douglas	Councillor Creighton ( <i>appointed at Council in October 2023</i> )
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Following the resignation of Gillian McCollum from Council, a place is available on each of the following groups:

- Elected Member Development Steering Group – 7 Places (4 Year Appointment)
- Diversity Champions – 3 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Parenting Champion – 1 Places (4 Year Appointment) – Year 3 only 25/26
- Community Development Grants Working Group – 5 Places (1 Year Appointment)

Not Applicable

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- North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 15 Places (1 Year Appointment) (First Meeting 23 January 2024)
- Percy French Management Committee – 4 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Community Advice Ards and North Down – 4 places (1 Year Appointment)

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

**Body: Elected Member Development Steering Group – 7 Places (4 Year Appointment)**

	2019/23	2023/27
1	Councillor McAlpine	Councillor McLaren
2	Councillor P Smith	Councillor Smart
3	Alderman Keery	Councillor Moore
4	Alderman Gibson	Councillor McCollum
5	Councillor Thompson	Alderman McIlveen
6	Alderman W Irvine	Alderman Graham
7	Councillor S Irvine	Councillor Cochrane

**Body: Diversity Champions – 3 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	2023/24	2024/25
1	Councillor Irwin	Councillor McCollum
2	Councillor Hollywood	Councillor Hollywood
3	Councillor McKimm	Councillor McKimm

**Body: Parenting Champion – 1 Places (4 Year Appointment) – Year 3 only 25/26**

	2019/23	2023/27
1	Councillor Greer (resigned 31.03.2023)	Councillor Gilmour (year 1)
2		Councillor Wray (Year 2)
3		Councillor McCollum (Year 3)
4		TBC – One of the above (Year 4)

**Body: Community Development Grants Working Group – 5 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	2023/24	2024/25
1	Councillor McCollum	Councillor McCollum
2	Alderman Cummings	Alderman Cummings
3	Councillor Smart	Councillor Smart
4	Councillor L Douglas	Councillor L Douglas
5	Councillor McKee	Councillor McKee

Not Applicable

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**Body: North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 15 Places (1 Year Appointment) (First Meeting 23 January 2024)**

	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	Councillor Martin
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

**Percy French Management Committee – 4 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	2023/24	2024/25
1	Councillor Creighton	Councillor Creighton
2	Councillor McCollum	Councillor McCollum
3	-	
4	-	

**Body: Community Advice Ards and North Down - 4 places (1 Year Appointment)**

	2023/24	2024/25
1	Councillor Moore	Councillor Moore
2	Councillor McKee	Councillor McKee
3	Councillor Hollywood	Councillor Smart
4	-	Councillor McCollum

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

Not Applicable

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**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council nominate a Member to the following groups, in place of:

(a) David Rossiter:

- North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 15 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Fair Trade Working Group – 4 Places (4 Year Appointment)
- Body: Belfast City Airport Forum – 1 Place + 1 Substitute (4 Year Appointment)
- Body: All Party Group on Climate Action – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Body: East Border Region Members Forum – 6 Places (4 Year Appointment)

(b) Christine Creighton:

- Mental Health Champion – 2 Places (4 Year Appointment) –2026/27 year only
- North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 15 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Percy French Management Committee – 4 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Ards Community Hospital – Multi Agency Forum – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Community Resuscitation Group – 2 Places
- Northern Ireland Museums Council – 1 Place (4 Year Appointment)

(c) Gillian McCollum:

- Elected Member Development Steering Group – 7 Places (4 Year Appointment)
- Diversity Champions – 3 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Parenting Champion – 1 Places (4 Year Appointment) – Year 3 only 25/26
- Community Development Grants Working Group – 5 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- North Down Coastal Path Working Group – 15 Places (1 Year Appointment) (First Meeting 23 January 2024)
- Percy French Management Committee – 4 Places (1 Year Appointment)
- Community Advice Ards and North Down – 4 places (1 Year Appointment)

Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Environment
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Waste and Cleansing Services
Date of Report	17 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	Residual Waste Disposal Tender - Delegated Authority Request for November Environment Committee
Attachments	

Officers are currently working with arc21 on the evaluation of tenders for a contract to deliver a new residual waste disposal service. There is a degree of urgency in relation to this matter, as Council is aiming to have a new contract in place before the expiry of our existing landfill disposal contract early in the New Year.

To expedite the matter in a timely fashion, it is requested that delegated authority be granted to the November meeting of the Environment Committee to agree the award of a contract.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that delegated authority be granted to the Environment Committee to approve the award of a residual waste disposal contract.

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	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	'-
Date of Report	16 October 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	Nominations to Capital Strategy Working Group
Attachments	Capital Strategy Working Group TOR

A report entitled Capital Strategy Working Group Terms of Reference was presented to the Corporate Services Committee on 8 October 2024. The report outlined the need for 4 nominations to take part in a Capital Strategy Working Group as outlined below:

**Membership**

DUP	1 nomination
APNI	1 nomination
UUP	1 nomination
Independents/Small Parties	1 nomination

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council agrees the necessary nominations.



Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	08 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Finance
Date of Report	01 October 2024
File Reference	FIN166
Legislation	Section 1 Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Terms of Reference for Capital Strategy Working Group
Attachments	

Council agreed last month, as part of the budget strategy, to establish a working group of a small number of Members and senior officers to provide strategic advice to the Corporate Services Committee.

Draft terms have now been prepared for Members consideration. In order to commence work as soon as possible. Nominations should be made by the date of Council meeting, 30 October, with a view to the first meeting being held in the first half of November.

This working group will be piloted for the estimates setting exercise for 25/26 and will be reviewed before further meetings are arranged for next year.

Not Applicable

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The proposed Terms of Reference are as follows:

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Background**

Council currently plans over a number of different timeframes:

- The Big Plan 15 years
- Capital Projects 10 years
- The Corporate Plan 4 years
- Medium Term Financial Plan 3 years
- Estimates 1 year

However, budgeting on an annual basis and needing to plan over a 10-year horizon for strategic capital projects gives opportunity for short-term considerations to override the need for a long-term strategic direction to be given to officers, to allow for working plans up and then delivering them all in as efficient a way as possible.

The current capital investment plan has gross expenditure of around £260M with the implication of increasing Council debt from £60M to £140M and current requirement of needing 1.45% to be added to the district rate for each of the next 9 years.

### **Membership**

DUP	1 nomination
APNI	1 nomination
UUP	1 nomination
Independents/Small Parties	1 nomination

### **Objectives**

1. Advise Corporate Services Committee and Council on an acceptable rate increase related to capital investment bearing in mind of the need for plans to be affordable, sustainable and prudent.
2. Make recommendations on the prioritisation of the Council's capital projects for consideration by the Corporate Services Committee.
3. Assess the Council's borrowing projections and other treasury management considerations linked to the Capital plan.

### **Operational arrangements**

- a. Meetings to be scheduled as required, but mostly likely weighted to the period from November-January. Anticipated 2-3 meetings per year.
- b. Facilitated by Director of Corporate Services or Chief Executive.
- c. In person meeting (although hybrid is available if necessary).
- d. Informal format that will not be formally minuted although a summary of topics discussed and recommendations will be provided to the Corporate Services Committee.
- e. Advice to Committee will come format of report from Director of Corporate Services.
- f. Invitations will be issued via DecisionTime.

Not Applicable

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**Facilitators**

- Director of Corporate Services
- Chief Executive

**Technical Advisors**

- Head of Strategic Capital Development
- Head of Finance

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council approves the Terms of Reference and that nominees are notified as soon as possible.

Not Applicable

Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	04 October 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	Local Government Representatives to the Area of Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs) - Update on Appointment process
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Letter to Councillor Smart from ICS NI Programme Director - Shadow Area Integrated Partnership Board (AIPB) Government Representative Expression of Interest

At the August meeting of the Council, Councillors were asked to consider whether they wish to individually submit an application to become a member of the South-Eastern Shadow Area of Integrated Partnership Board.

Following an appointment process, Councillor Smart has been appointed as the Ards and North Down Borough Council Local Government representative.

Enclosed is a copy of the letter received by Councillor Smart outlining his appointment and detailing a list of confirmed members of the Board.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council note the report.

*From the ICS NI Programme Director*



Cllr. Richard Smart  
Ards and North Down Borough Council  
councillorrichardsmart@gmail.com

Castle Buildings  
Stormont  
BELFAST  
BT4 3SQ

[martina.moore@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:martina.moore@health-ni.gov.uk)

2 October 2024

Dear Cllr Smart,

**ICS NI – SHADOW AREA INTEGRATED PARTNERSHIP BOARD (AIPB) LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a member of the Shadow Area Integrated Partnership Board of the Integrated Care System Northern Ireland (ICS NI).

I wish to advise that your application has been successful, and you will be nominated as the Ards and North Down Borough Council local Government representative on the South-Eastern shadow AIPB.

The South-Eastern shadow Area Integrated Partnership Board (AIPB) will commence with a one-day induction session on **Monday 28 October 2024**. The induction session will be delivered and facilitated by Conal Carty and Lindsay McKee from the HSC Leadership Centre, and held from **9.00am to 4.00pm** at the **Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn**.

The main objective of the day will first and foremost be meet the other members and strategic partners of the South-Eastern shadow AIPB, and undertake an induction programme centred around:

- relationship and rapport building

- individual roles and collective purpose
- collaborative ways of working

In order to assist with the finalisation of the programme, we would be grateful if you could fill in a short Training Needs Assessment survey at the following link:

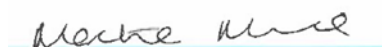
<https://forms.office.com/e/sehgN7UZb0>

Meanwhile, you will find the list of confirmed members of the South-Eastern shadow AIPB, as well as the contact details of your strategic partners, in **Annex A** of this letter.

The SPPG Corporate Support team will contact you with further details and relevant material ahead of the induction session, but should you have any queries in the meantime, feel free to contact them at the following email address: [aipb@hscni.net](mailto:aipb@hscni.net).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your involvement with the AIPB and your support in the roll-out of the new model.

Yours sincerely,



Martina Moore  
ICS NI Programme Director

## **Annex A – Confirmed South-Eastern Shadow AIPB Members\* and Strategic Partners**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
David Walter Archer	Carer
Gráinne Close	Mencap NI
Róisín Coulter	South-Eastern HSC Trust Chief Executive
Clare-Marie Dickson	South-Eastern HSC Trust Director
Suzy Hull	Diabetes UK
Gillian Lewis	Resurgam Trust
Dr Kirsty McArthur	General Practitioner
Nicholas McCrickard	County Down Rural Community Network
Ald. Aaron McIntyre	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
Helen Moore	South-Eastern HSC Trust Director
Louise Seymour	Community Pharmacist
Cllr. Richard Smart	Ards and North Down Borough Council
Joan Smith	Service User
	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

<b>Strategic Partner</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
Linda Doherty (SPPG)	<a href="mailto:linda.doherty@hscni.net">linda.doherty@hscni.net</a>
Diane McIntyre (PHA)	<a href="mailto:diane.mcintyre@hscni.net">diane.mcintyre@hscni.net</a>

*\*Note that the identification of some local Government representatives is still ongoing, and details will be provided in due time.*



# ITEM 14

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	22 October 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	Care Day Request
Attachments	Appendix - Letter of request from Voypic

Further to the attached letter received by the Mayor, on 11 October 2024 from Voypic, the Council have been asked to light up civic buildings on the 21 February 2025 to mark Care Day, a joint initiative across five children’s rights charities.

As members will be aware lighting up buildings was put on pause by the Council in January 2023 and following further consideration in March 2024, Council agreed, due to costs, not to replace the various lighting systems. Therefore, the option to light up Council buildings is no longer available.

A second request is to mark the tenth Care Day by planting a tree in a public place, in honour of the care experienced community. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries has confirmed that, subject to Council approval, this request could be accommodated.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council consider this request.



Celebrating and connecting the care experienced community

T: 028 9024 4888  
E: info@voypic.org

**MAIN OFFICE:**  
**BELFAST**  
100 Great Patrick Street  
Belfast  
BT1 2LU

Cllr Alistair Cathcart  
Mayor  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

**BALLYMENA**  
1st Floor, 6 Garfield Place  
Ballymena BT43 6EH

**CARE DAY 25 - Request**

Friday 11 October

**DERRY-LONDONDERRY**  
9 Queen Street  
Derry-Londonderry  
BT48 7EG

Dear Mayor

**LURGAN**  
Flat 12, Mount Zion House  
Edward Street  
Lurgan BT66 6DB

CARE DAY is the world’s biggest celebration of children and young people with care experience. This group includes children and young people who are or were cared for by foster carers, or other family members, and those who live in children’s homes. They deserve to be celebrated, on CARE DAY, and every day.

CARE DAY in the UK and Ireland is a joint initiative across five children’s rights charities, and led in Northern Ireland by VOYPIC – Voice of Young People in Care. CARE DAY 25 will take place on Friday 21 February, and will be the tenth CARE DAY in the UK and Ireland.

To celebrate this milestone, we are asking your council to mark the occasion with the following activities:

1. We would be grateful if your council would light civic buildings on the evening of Friday 21 February 2025. Where possible, we would ask it

to be multi-coloured, to reflect the Care Day halo. If this is not possible, we would ask it to be yellow, the main colour of the VOYPIC logo.

2. In recognition of this being the tenth CARE DAY, we are asking councils to plant a tree in a public space, in honour of the care experienced community. This includes those currently in care, those who have been in care, and those who will experience care in the future.

I would be grateful if these requests could be shared with members of your council at your meeting on 30 October, during Care Leavers' Week (23 October – 3 November 2024).

VOYPIC is the charity for children and young people with lived experience of care in Northern Ireland. Created in 1993 by a group of young people in care and the professionals that supported them, VOYPIC has over 30 years of experience promoting the rights and voice of children in care and care leavers.

We work to ensure every child in care feels safe, valued and loved, and that every young person leaving care does so with dignity and respect, and thrives into adulthood.

I would like to thank you for your consideration of our request, and for your support for our work and the young people we serve.

Yours sincerely



Lee Kane  
Engagement Manager  
[lee.kane@voypic.org](mailto:lee.kane@voypic.org) / 07808777970

cc: Ms Susie McCullough, Chief Executive  
All Elected Members

Unclassified

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**ITEM 15****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	15 October 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	Schedule of Meetings 2025
Attachments	Draft Schedule of Meetings 2025

A draft schedule of meetings for 2025 has been prepared and is attached to the report for Members consideration.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council approves the Schedule of Meetings for 2025.

**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL****SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FROM 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2025**

Please note that all Meetings will commence at 7.00pm unless otherwise stated.

<b>JANUARY 2025</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Wednesday 8 January	Environment Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Thursday 9 January	Place and Prosperity Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Tuesday 14 January	Corporate Services Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 15 January	Community and Wellbeing Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 29 January	Council Meeting	City Hall, Bangor
<b>FEBRUARY 2025</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Tuesday 4 February	Planning Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 5 February	Environment Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Thursday 6 February	Place and Prosperity Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Tuesday 11 February	Special Council Meeting	City Hall, Bangor
Tuesday 11 February	Corporate Services Committee	City Hall, Bangor
Wednesday 12 February	Community and Wellbeing Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 26 February	Council Meeting	City Hall, Bangor
<b>MARCH 2025</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Tuesday 4 March	Planning Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 5 March	Environment Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Thursday 6 March	Place and Prosperity Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Tuesday 11 March	Corporate Services Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 12 March	Community and Wellbeing Committee	Church Street, N'Ards

Monday 24 March	Audit Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 26 March	Council Meeting	City Hall, Bangor
<b>APRIL 2025</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Tuesday 1 April	Planning Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 2 April	Environment Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Thursday 3 April	Place and Prosperity Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Tuesday 8 April	Corporate Services Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 9 April	Community and Wellbeing Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 30 April	Council Meeting	City Hall, Bangor
<b>MAY 2025</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Tuesday 6 May	Planning Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 7 May	Environment Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Thursday 8 May	Place and Prosperity Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Tuesday 13 May	Corporate Services Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 14 May	Community and Wellbeing Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 28 May	Council Meeting	City Hall, Bangor
<b>JUNE 2025</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Wednesday 4 June	Annual Meeting	City Hall, Bangor
Tuesday 10 June	Planning Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 11 June	Environment Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Thursday 12 June	Place and Prosperity Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Tuesday 17 June	Corporate Services Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 18 June	Community and Wellbeing Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 25 June	Council	Church Street, N'Ards

<b>JULY 2025</b>		
Tuesday 1 July	Planning Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 30 July	Council Meeting	City Hall, Bangor
<b>AUGUST 2025</b>		
Tuesday 5 August	Planning Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 27 August	Council Meeting	City Hall, Bangor
<b>SEPTEMBER 2025</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Tuesday 2 September	Planning Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 3 September	Environment Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Thursday 4 September	Place and Prosperity Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Tuesday 9 September	Corporate Services Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 10 September	Community and Wellbeing Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 24 September	Council Meeting	City Hall, Bangor
<b>OCTOBER 2025</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Tuesday 7 October	Planning Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 8 October	Environment Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Thursday 9 October	Place and Prosperity Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Tuesday 14 October	Corporate Services Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 15 October	Community and Wellbeing Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 29 October	Council Meeting	City Hall, Bangor
<b>NOVEMBER 2025</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Tuesday 4 November	Planning Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 5 November	Environment Committee	Church Street, N'Ards

Thursday 6 November	Place and Prosperity Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Tuesday 11 November	Corporate Services Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 12 November	Community and Wellbeing Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 26 November	Council Meeting	City Hall, Bangor
<b>DECEMBER 2025</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Tuesday 2 December	Planning Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 3 December	Environment Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Thursday 4 December	Place and Prosperity Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Tuesday 9 December	Corporate Services Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 10 December	Community and Wellbeing Committee	Church Street, N'Ards
Wednesday 17 December	Council Meeting	City Hall, Bangor



Unclassified

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**ITEM 16****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries, Head of Strategic Capital Development, Head of Planning.
Date of Report	11 October 2024
File Reference	CW30
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Service Order 1986 Planning (NI) Order 1991
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Not applicable
Subject	Launch Event for the DFI Active Travel Delivery Plan
Attachments	Invite from DFI Active Travel

The Minister for Infrastructure has invited five representatives from Ards and North Down Borough Council to the launch of the consultation on the Departments Active Travel Delivery Plan. The event will take place at Craigavon Civic Centre on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024, from 9.30am to 3.30pm.

Officers would recommend that given the Councils ongoing work to deliver greenways in the Borough, its stated interest in promoting active travel through this and other initiatives such as its commitment to developing a cycling friendly Borough, and its statutory planning function, that both officers and elected members attend this event on behalf of Council.

The appropriate officers to attend are the Director of Community and Wellbeing, the Head of Strategic Capital Development and the Senior Planner, Local Development Plan Team

Not Applicable

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council appoint two elected Members to join the three officers to attend this event.

Susie McCullough  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

James House  
Gasworks Site  
2 – 4 Cromac Avenue  
BELFAST  
BT7 2JA

Via email:  
[susie.mccullough@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:susie.mccullough@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

Telephone (028) 9054 0540

Email: [activetravel@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:activetravel@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

Our Reference: IN1-24-13357

10 October 2024

Dear Susie

## **LAUNCH EVENT FOR THE CONSULTATION ON THE ACTIVE TRAVEL DELIVERY PLAN**

The Department for Infrastructure will be holding a launch event for the public consultation on the Active Travel Delivery Plan. We believe that this launch event will be of interest to you and your organisation.

The Department has been developing an Active Travel Delivery Plan which, when adopted, will mark a step change in the delivery of active travel infrastructure and will provide a firm basis for the prioritisation and delivery of active travel within our towns and cities for the next ten years and beyond. Work on the Active Travel Delivery Plan has included the development of design guidance for active travel infrastructure which has people centred, safe and inclusive design at its heart.

Developing a more comprehensive and connected network of active travel infrastructure that is accessible to all, will provide more choice for people making shorter everyday journeys. Choosing to walk, wheel or cycle can help people beat congestion, improve their health and wellbeing, and reduce their carbon footprint.

Minister O'Dowd MLA will launch the public consultation on the Active Travel Delivery Plan with a one-day event on 13 November 2024 in the Craigavon Civic and Conference Centre.

The event will bring together key stakeholder and delivery partners and will include presentations from a range of speakers with national and international experience in the areas of high-quality active travel design and the benefits it can bring.

An agenda for the event will issue nearer the time but it is planned to start at 9.30 a.m. with the opening remarks beginning at 10.00 a.m. Lunch will be provided. The event will close at 3.30 p.m.

Five places have been provisionally reserved for Councillors and staff from Ards and North Down Borough Council who may have an interest in active travel.

Please respond to [activetravel@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:activetravel@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk), by email before noon on Friday 18 October 2024, providing details (including e-mail address) of who will be attending.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



**COLIN HUTCHINSON**  
**DIRECTOR FOR A5 WTC AND ACTIVE TRAVEL**

Unclassified

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**ITEM 17****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	'-
Date of Report	16 October 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	Coronavirus Act 2020-Registration of Deaths and Still-Births
Attachments	Letter from DoF NIROS

Council were originally approached by the General Registrar Office (GRO) for Northern Ireland on 12 August 2024. They were seeking the views of stakeholders about putting forward legislation that would make the remote registration process of deaths and still-births permanent. Council provided a set of responses that went to Council on 28 August 2024 for consideration and submission.

A letter was received by the Chief Executive on 14 October 2024 from the Department of Finance and Personnel, General Registrar's Office explaining that the current temporary coronavirus provisions contained in the Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of deaths and still-births) (Extension) (No.3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 have been debated by the Assembly. The powers facilitate the remote registration of deaths and still-births. This extension will be until 24 March 2025. A copy of the letter is attached.

Not Applicable

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**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes the report.



GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE  
Colby House  
Stranmillis Court Belfast,  
BT9 5RR  
Telephone: 0300 200 7890

Email: [GRO\\_nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:GRO_nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.nidirect.gov.uk/gro](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/gro)

Council Chief Executive via email

Date: 14 October 2024

Dear Chief Executive,

**Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of Deaths and Still-Births) (Extension) (No.3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024**

I am writing to advise you that the current temporary coronavirus provisions contained in the Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of deaths and still-births) (Extension) (No.3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 have been debated in the Assembly today. As you will be aware, these powers facilitate the remote registration of deaths and still-births and the electronic exchange of documents between stakeholders in the registration process.

I am pleased to confirm that the Assembly has approved the continuation of the extension Order until 24 March 2025.

As stated previously, it is our intention to use this time to bring forward legislation which will make these temporary powers permanent – solidifying the current registration process.

I would be grateful if the Registrars could impart this information to any funeral director contacts.

If you have any specific questions, please contact [NIROS.Support@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:NIROS.Support@finance-ni.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Becci Riley", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Becci Riley  
Assistant Registrar General

cc  
Registrars' Line Management  
Registrars

Unclassified

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**ITEM 18****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	18 October 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	Event Locations 2025
Attachments	

**1. Background**

A number of events have been approved by Council, subject to the rates setting process for 2025/26. The forthcoming Queen's Parade development works will result in site limitations at Bangor Waterfront for direct Council events delivery during 2025. Thus a review of the programme is required, taking due consideration of existing resource. Officers have reviewed the summer programme, and in particular the events affected in this context.

**Armed Forces Day 2025** - At the Place and Prosperity Committee on 9 November 2023 it was agreed that *Council accepts the honour to host the main Armed Forces Day as part of Sea Bangor on 21 June 2025 with a musical event in Newtownards on 20 June, and approves officers to liaise with the RFCA to confirm programming opportunities and to budget accordingly, subject to lead in to Estimates process for 2025/26.*

**VE Day 80** – At the Corporate Committee in June 2024 it was agreed via Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Gilmour and Councillor Martin that:



Not Applicable

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*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.*

**Veterans' Day Parade 2025** - At the Corporate Committee in September 2017 it was agreed via Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors McIlveen, Armstrong-Cotter and Kennedy that *this Council proposes reviving the Veterans' Day event (which was previously hosted by Ards Borough Council) to recognise the invaluable contribution of men and women from this Borough who have served their country at home and abroad and tasks officers to begin conversations with the Royal British Legion, relevant regimental associations and other appropriate bodies with a view to hosting the first event in June 2018.*

**Pipe Bands 2025** - At the Place and Prosperity Committee in January 2023 it was agreed *that officers submit a bid for the Council's Pipe Band Championship 2023 to the RSPBANI at £14,000 with a total Council allocated budget to a maximum of £26,500, subject to the Rates Setting process and confirmation of bid by RSPBANI. It was further agreed that the Council proceeds with Option 3 to rotate the hosting of the event in Bangor and Newtownards Airfield, the event being at the Newtownards Airfield in 2023 and Bangor in 2024, subject to annual negotiations with the Ulster Flying Club and the bidding process.*

A further report was brought to Place and Prosperity Committee in February 2024 outlining the opportunity to host the UK Pipe Band Championships at Ward Park Arras, seeking an additional budget of £12,860 to deliver the event (total budget £34,360). Officers have been working on the premise that the rotation is implemented annually by Council going forward and have been scoping costs and delivery within Newtownards for the event in 2025 (as per previous further rotation arrangement approved at Regeneration and Development Committee, October 2018).

**Sea Bangor (annual)** - Sea Bangor is included in the annual tourism events programme as per Borough Events Strategic Direction. It is hosted annually at Eisenhower Car Park and Pier.

**Other Council Direct Delivered Annual Events include:**

- Holywood May Day
- Ards Guitar Festival - April
- Comber Earlies Food Festival - last Saturday in June
- Creative Peninsula – August
- Portavogie Tide & Turf – early September
- Aspects Literary Festival – September
- Ards Puppet Festival – October

Not Applicable

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- Shorelife Celebration Festival – early October
- Bangor and Newtownards Christmas Light Switch On – November

(note Council also deliver a range of other events and activities throughout the year.)

## 2. Proposed event locations

Given the limited availability of suitable event space in Bangor, as a result of the Queen's Parade development for the upcoming year, it is proposed that the following locations are agreed for each relevant event to allow necessary planning with external organisations.

Event	Date	Proposal	Notes	Comments
VE Day 80	Friday 9 May 2025	Castle Park, Bangor	Concert by the Band of the Royal Irish Regiment  Beacons will also be lit on 8 May in Bangor, Newtownards and Ballyhalbert	
Armed Forces Day (incorporating Veteran Parade)	Saturday 14 or 21 June (tbc) 2025	Ards Airfield/ Parade from Conway Square leading to Airfield	One day event (final date subject to ongoing liaison with RFCA)  Incorporate parade into AFD to maximise audience	This will require a new Council decision due to previously agreed location for AFD at Bangor (incorporated at Sea Bangor on the Saturday).  Parade subject to asking Market to relocate
Pipe Bands	Saturday 19 July 2025	Regent House, Newtownards.  Grounds at Comber Road/Castlebawn	New location due to request for alternative options in Newtownards	RSPBANI have been consulted and have confirmed this site is their preferred option

Not Applicable

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			from RSPBANI.	in Newtownards. Confirmation of the site is subject to approval by the school's Board of Governors.
NB **Comber Earlies Food Festival	Saturday 28 June 2025	Comber Leisure Centre Car Park	Part of Taste Summer Festival and annual programme	** for note only for planning/resource as event occurs in June.

The above table outlines how the events can be delivered due to the limitations of available event space at the Bangor Seafront in summer 2025. Due to the available staffing resource and other tourism events planned for June 2025 (Comber Earlies Food Festival – 28 June) Sea Bangor would be required to be paused for 2025.

Officers have considered how Bangor could be animated during June and are currently scoping an additional month of activity in Ward Park i.e. music/family activity in the Park at the weekend. The Music in Park event delivered by Open House at this venue, attracted an audience of 27,000 over an 8-week period in 2023.

It is anticipated that the additional activity of five extra weeks would be planned for Saturdays (to be confirmed) to encourage people to the city centre to eat, drink and shop. An additional passport scheme attracting footfall into local businesses could be extended to coincide with this entertainment. Offers and attractions in city centre businesses could attract families to spend the day.

Early officer discussions with Open House anticipate that Seaside Revival would take place at Ward Park and would be programmed as Summer Revival for 2025. Date and venue are to be confirmed by the organisers.

Open House Festival supported by Council would continue as normal animating key venues in the city throughout the month of August. Council has also approved the hosting of a concert in Bangor in June, subject to licence. It is anticipated this will attract a large footfall and business to the city.

### 3. Budgets

VE Day 80 will be funded through the Civic Events budget.

Armed Forces Day (AFD) 2025 incorporating Veteran Parade will be funded from a projected tourism budget of £115,000, subject to the rate setting process (an additional £10,000 is anticipated as a contribution from Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association) and the civic aspect from the Civic Events budget, subject to the rates setting process.

The AND Pipe Bands 2025 event has an early scoped budget of £34,000 to deliver at the new site, taking consideration of potential traffic management fees, stewarding

Not Applicable

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and a bid amount to Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association NI, subject to the rates setting process.

An additional budget of £10,000 is required to deliver the extra summer activity in Ward Park This would be included in projected tourism budgets as part of the rates setting process and would be subject to approval.

To deliver the reconfigured programme specific to VE Day 80, Armed Forces Day incorporating the Veterans' Day Parade and the Ards and North Down Pipe Band event the overall Tourism Events Budget requires an additional £50,000 in comparison to that approved in 2024. Costs to deliver events safely, aligned to corporate priorities while retaining quality programming, continues to be a challenge for Council and increases for the delivery of other tourism events will be further brought forward as part of the rates setting process.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the following:

1. **VE Day 80** - A concert is held in Castle Park, Bangor on Friday, 9 May 2025, with beacons lit in Bangor, Newtownards and Ballyhalbert on the 8 May 2025 to mark the anniversary.
2. **Armed Forces Day 2025** is held at Ards Airfield on either 14 or 21 June 2025, incorporating the Veterans' Parade from Conway Square and further approves a tourism budget of £115,000 towards its delivery, subject to the rates setting process.
3. **AND Pipe Bands event 2025** is held at Regent House School Grounds (Comber Road/Castlebawn), Newtownards on 19 July 2025, subject to approval by the Regent House School Board of Governors and further approves a tourism budget of £34,000 towards its delivery, subject to the rates setting process.
4. Sea Bangor does not take place in 2025 due to anticipated site limitations in Bangor and an additional series of 'Family/Music in the Park' type events are held each Saturday (tbc) during June 2025 with a tourism budget of £10,000, subject to the rates setting process.

Alison McCullagh  
Chief Executive



Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council  
Comhairle Ceantair  
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

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Our Ref: R&C/September 2024/8.1

Date: 21 October 2024

Email: [fiona.dillon@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:fiona.dillon@fermanaghomagh.com)

Ms Susie McCullough  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council  
Townhall  
The Castle  
Bangor  
BT20 4BT

Dear Chief Executive,

**Re: Racism**

At the Regeneration and Communities Committee meeting held on 10 September 2024, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council unanimously adopted the following Motion:

***That Fermanagh and Omagh District Council unreservedly condemns and deplores the racist attacks and intimidation that so many have experienced in recent times.***

***There is no place in our society for racism, intimidation, hatred and discrimination.***

***Therefore, this council will work together with all other councils, government departments, the executive and the PSNI to oppose racism and deliver a shared, peaceful and inclusive society.***

The Council looks forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alison McCullagh".

**Alison McCullagh**  
Chief Executive

Unclassified

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**ITEM 22****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	30 October 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	18 October 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)	Responsible Officer	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	Peter Caldwell	
370	Environment	13/09/2019	Councillor 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	Richard McCracken	
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		

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	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	<p>That this Council agrees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All pedestrians should feel safe on our pavements, yet street clutter can make walking and wheeling unsafe, forcing people onto the road which is dangerous;</li> <li>•Street furniture should be clean, have a purpose and be consistent; and</li> <li>•Street clutter should be removed.</li> </ul> <p>Therefore, Council tasks officers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Carry out an audit of street infrastructure including street signage, project information; posts, etc;</li> <li>•Remove historic street clutter which has no current purpose or future benefit;</li> <li>•Ensure relevant signage is cleaned and fit for purpose;</li> <li>•Ensure signs have the appropriately-named Council on it, where this applies;</li> <li>•Identify a nominated officer within the Council to lead on the audit to ensure items are listed and removed; and</li> <li>•Write to the Department for Infrastructure to request they complete a similar de-clutter across the Borough.</li> </ul>	Council September 2022 Environment Committee October 2022	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.	Peter Caldwell	

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 &amp; PSNI by CEx</p>	Nigel Martin	
555	Community & Wellbeing	08.12.22	Alderman Wilson & Councillor Douglas	<p>This Council acknowledges the environmental and health benefits associated with the recent increase in cycling and declares Ards &amp; North Down a cycling friendly borough. The Council also recognises that people who cycle are among the most vulnerable road users, and tasks officers with producing a report detailing ways in which we can help improve safety. The report should include possible sources of funding, potential partnerships, and ways in which we can promote good relations between users of different forms of transport</p>	<p>Council January 2023</p> <p>Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee February 2023 and June 2023</p>	<p>Officers working on business case and elements for cycle to work and infrastructure planning. Budget not secured for 2024/25. Further report to future C&amp;WC if budget made available in 2025/2026 including the report to recommend declaration</p>		

562	Environment	18.01.23	Councillor Morgan & Councillor McRandal	<p>The prolonged cold weather spells just before Christmas and last week resulted in icy, slippery, and dangerous footpaths and car parks in the Borough's City and town centres. It is not acceptable that in such circumstances the Council does not have a plan or the resources or facilities to grit these areas to enable residents to walk safely to and from the main shopping areas or fall when they step out of their cars onto ice. It is proposed that officers bring back a report with costs to outline what steps can be taken to ensure that Council car parks and footpaths in the City and town centres are gritted when the weather is forecast to have heavy snowfall or prolonged freezing weather conditions.</p>	<p>Council January 2023 Environment Committee February 2023 October 2023</p>	Supplementary report requested - TBC	Nigel Martin	
564	Community & Wellbeing	08.02.23	Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery	<p>That this Council tasks officers to begin discussions with the Education Authority with regards to the Future of Bloomfield playing fields, Bangor. This is to include the lease and the exploring of the possibility of bringing the facility up to intermediate level for football. A report to be brought back to Council following said discussions.</p>	<p>Council February 2023 Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee March 2023</p>	Officers awaiting response from EA in order for report to be brought back to future C&W Committee. EA has responded to say they '...would be in contact when they are ready to progress...'		
567	Corporate Services	14.02.23	Councillor Adair & Councillor Edmund	<p>This Council rename the square at Portavogie War Memorial Queen Elizabeth Square in memory of our late Sovereign Queen Elizabeth II.</p>	<p>Council February 2023 Corporate Services Committee March 2023</p>	<p>A response has been received from the Cabinet Office and a report went back to Committee 30/5/24 - follow up letter sent to Cabinet Office for update. Letters sent to the Cabinet Office requesting use of the Royal Name July 2024 - Advice now 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.</p>		

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 29 March 2023 (Item 22.1)</p> <p>Place &amp; Prosperity Committee 15 June 2023 (Item 28.1) 13 June 2024 (Item 15)</p>	Further report to be brought back to Committee		
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575	Community & Wellbeing	31.07.23	Councillor Creighton & Councillor Moore	<p>That this council notes that the number of households with homelessness status on the social housing waiting list across NI has increased from 12,431 to 26,310 households between 31 March 2013 and 31 March 2023, an increase of 111.7%; notes the enormous strain the homelessness system is under with the number of households in temporary accommodation at unprecedented levels; agrees that this council has a role to play in preventing homelessness in this borough alongside other organisations and bodies in the Public, Statutory and Voluntary sectors; calls on this Council to assess how it contributes to homelessness prevention through carrying out an audit of its services; and requests that Officers bring back a report detailing the homelessness prevention work currently supported as well as how the Council's community planning function can further support homelessness prevention work in the local area</p>	<p>Council August 2023</p> <p>Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee September 2023</p> <p>Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee September 2024</p>	<p>Report to September 2024 C&amp;W Committee.</p> <p>NoM will be removed once ratified at September Council.</p>		
	Environment		Alderman Adair, Councillor Edmund & Councillor Kerr	<p>That Council task officers to bring back a report on the costing to install signage identifying the townlands of Ballyblack and Kirkistown and that officers are tasked to bring forward proposals to incorporate townland signage across our Borough.</p>	<p>Council August 2023</p> <p>Environment Committee September 2023</p>		Peter Caldwell	

585	Community & Wellbeing		Alderman Adair, Councillor Edmund & Councillor Kerr	<p>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.</p>	<p>Council October 2023 Environment Committee November 2023 Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee January 2024</p>	<p>Officers working on report to C&amp;W Committee in January 2025. Further report requested being considered by officers with a report to future C&amp;W Committee</p>		
588	Environment		Councillor Wray & Alderman Smith	<p>That this council asks officers to include the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter (owned by Council), located in Main Street, Greyabbey in the 2024/25 maintenance budget.</p> <p>Furthermore Council seeks an officer's report on the feasibility of Council painting the decorative Greyabbey lamp posts (in the ownership of DFI). This is a feature of the historic village, and we understand the current shabby condition impacts not only residents of the village, but the wider tourism and regeneration potential of this scenic conservation area.</p> <p>Amendment: That Council welcomes the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter located on Main Street, Greyabbey and tasks officers to ensure it is maintained to a high standard going forward.</p> <p>Furthermore, Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to ask for the decorative lamp posts on Main Street, Greyabbey, to be repainted to ensure they are maintained as a feature of this historic village; and writes to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to seek funding to deliver a mini public realm or streetscape project in</p>	<p>Council October 2023 Environment Committee November 2023 Council August 2024 Item 20</p>	<p>Officers to liaise with Greyabbey Community Association. Amendment Agreed at Environment Committee. That Council welcomes the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter located on Main Street, Greyabbey and tasks officers to ensure it is maintained to a high standard going forward.</p> <p>Furthermore, Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to ask for the decorative lamp posts on Main Street, Greyabbey, to be repainted to ensure they are maintained as a feature of this historic village; and writes to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to seek funding to deliver a mini public realm or streetscape project in Greyabbey.</p>	Peter Caldwell	

586	Corporate Services	16.10.23	Councillor Cathcart & Councillor Martin	<p>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.</p>	<p>Council October 2023 Corporate Services Committee November 2023 Corporate Services Committee September 2024</p>	<p>Report to CSC. Agreed to proceed to acquisition subject to terms &amp; discussions with vendor. July 2024 - Letter now sent to vendor. Report to Corporate Committee in September 2024. Now proceeding through compliance team.</p>		
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 motion also requests that officers consider how Bangor Castle Gardens and The Walled Garden could be better incorporated into the walking route, and how the overall attraction could be packaged to create a more complete tourism and placemaking experience.</p>	<p>Council 29.11.2023</p>	<p>Initial report to November 2024 C&amp;W Committee. Second report to March 2025 C&amp;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 &amp; sports facilities for the village and surrounding area. Further, Council notes the poor condition of Ballyhalbert children's play park and tasks officers to bring forward a report on enhancing and improving the play park to meet the needs of local children.</p>	<p>Council 29.11.23 Community &amp; Wellbeing January 2024</p>	<p>Report to January 2025 C&amp;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, accessibility and equitable allocation of resources. The review should examine the following 4 categories: (see further wording on agenda)</p>	<p>Council 20.12.23 Community &amp; 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&amp;W Committee as necessary. First working group was on 10th May 2024. Grants transformation project already underway. Regular Updates will be brought.</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. 9.10.2024 further letter 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 &amp; Wellbeing Committee March 2024</p>	<p>Officers working on a Business Case. Report to January 2025 C&amp;W Committee</p>		
613	Community & Wellbeing	04.03.24	Councillors Wray, Kerr, Boyle, Edmund, Aldermen Adair and McAlpine	<p>Rescinding Notice of Motion - Playpark, Parsonage Road, Kircubbin</p>	<p>Council March 2024</p>	<p>Report to November 2024 C&amp;W Committee. To be combined with play strategy future recommendations following Council decision in June 2024.</p>		

616	Environment	19.03.24	Councillor McCollum & Councillor Irwin	<p>That this Council recognises the significant opportunities which the redevelopment of Donaghadee Harbour could bring to the local economy in terms of leisure sailing and tourism and thus instructs officers to work with local groups to scope potential operational facilities which could enhance the offering in the Harbour and further brings back a feasibility report on the various options, including costings and possible funding streams.</p> <p>Further, that this Council recognises the issues associated with high winds and coastal change and reviews the original 2020 Harbour Study conducted by RPS including the necessity for an offshore breakwater and agrees to bring back a report in time to be presented to Council in September 2024, outlining the budget required to undertake this work, any key considerations, next steps and identify which stakeholders would need to be involved.</p>	Council 26.03.24 Environment Committee 03.04.24 Item 14	<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.</p> <p>April 2024 - Agreed, officers to bring back a report to Committee.</p>	Peter Caldwell	
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>	Council 29.05.24 Community & Wellbeing Committee June 2024	Report to November C&W Committee.		

620	Community & Wellbeing	05.03.24	Councillor Ashe & Councillor Morgan	<p>That this council recognises the importance of ensuring that our parks and open spaces are inclusive and accessible to those with speech, language, and communication needs and that it recognises the positive role of communication boards in achieving this. That it commits to working with relevant organisations to bring back a report regarding communication boards considering, but not limited to, the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How communication boards would integrate with the required existing signage;</li> <li>• Identifying possible locations for the communication boards, such as a specific Tier of park; and</li> <li>• An indicative budget.</li> </ul>	<p>Council 29.05.24 Community &amp; Wellbeing Committee June 2024</p>	Report to November C&W Committee		
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>	June 2024 - Agreed, officers to bring back a report to Committee. Further Report to follow.		

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.</p> <p>This Council also notes that a proposal and draft design is to be submitted by The Conlig War Memorial Group, and that the group have raised funds via donations and fundraising events, to the value of £8,000 towards this project.</p> <p>This Council therefore reiterates its commitment to financial and practical support for the Conlig war memorial project, tasking Officers to bring back a report exploring costs of planning permission, site ownership transfer, and any associated legal fees, that will be required to enable the memorial to be completed and installed.</p> <p>Furthermore, Council agrees to add the Conlig Memorial to the existing list of war memorials across the Borough that are maintained by Ards and North Down Borough Council.</p>	Council 29.05.24 Corporate Services Committee 18.06.24 Item 17.1	June 2024 - Agreed, officers to bring back a report to Committee. Report at August Council. Further reports to follow during 2024.	Work commenced to work with NDCP on installation of this memorial. - Will be removed from NOM TRACKER after this Council meeting
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625	Environment	21.05.24	Alderman Adair and Councillor Edmund	<p>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.</p>	<p>Council 26.06.24 Item 15.1 Council 31.07.24 Item 15</p>	<p>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</p>		
626	Corporate Services	13.06.24	Alderman Brooks and Councillor Chambers	<p>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.</p>	<p>Council 26.06.24 Item 15.2</p>	<p>Referred to Corporate Services Committee for hearing at September 2024 committee. Agreed that report brought back to relevant committee.</p>		

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&amp;W</p>	<p>Report to November 2024 C&amp;W Committee</p>		
628	Place & Prosperity	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 &amp; Prosperity Cttee - 5 September 2024 (Item 14.1)</p>	<p>Donaghadee Signage Working Group established. Audit completed of existing signage to provide rationale for additional signage. Update report to future P&amp;P Committee</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.</p> <p>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)</p> <p>September C&amp;W Committee</p>	<p>Report to January 2025 C&amp;W Committee</p>		

630	Community & Wellbeing	19.08.24	Alderman Adair and Councillor Edmund	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	Council August 2024 (Item 25.4) September C&W Committee	Report to November C&W Committee		
631			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.	Council September 2024 (Item 13.1)	Agreed at Council September 2024		
632		21.08.24	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 in Northern Ireland.	Council September 2024 (Item 13.2) Environment October 2 October 2024 (Item 11.1)	Agreed at Environment Committee 2 October 2024	Nigel Martin	



633		05.09.24	Alderman P Smith and Councillor Wray, Councillor W Irvine	<p>That this Council strongly opposes the UK Government's recent Winter Fuel Payment policy change. We resolve 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.</p>	Council September 2024 (Item 13.3) Community and Wellbeing Committee			
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**Section 75 and Schedule 9  
The Northern Ireland Act 1998**

**DRAFT**

**‘Our Future in Focus’**

**Invest NI Business  
Strategy  
2024 - 2027**

# **Equality Impact Assessment**

## **Invest Northern Ireland**

### **2024**

**INVEST NI**  
**Business Strategy 2024 - 2027**  
**Equality Impact Assessment**  
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## PREFACE

Further to the statutory duties contained within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, Invest NI is committed to carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on each policy where screening has indicated that there may be significant implications in relation to one or more of the nine Section 75 grounds.

This draft report has been made available as part of the Formal Consultation stage of the EQIA relating to Invest NI's Business Strategy 2024-2027 and consolidates earlier EQIAs in relation to all programmes and schemes operating under the Accelerating Entrepreneurship Strategy (AES) and Business Development Solutions (BDS) together with the Recruitment and Selection EQIA and the Corporate Plan EQIAs for 2008-2011, 2012-2015 and 2017-2021.

As this is our first Business Strategy since 2017, we would welcome any comments that you may have in terms of this EQIA, including our preliminary recommendations with regard to processes to mitigate adverse impact, to ensure that we take these fully onboard within the implementation of our Strategy. Further copies of this EQIA report are available on Invest NI's website at [Equality commitment](#). If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk, large print and audio cassette, and in minority languages to meet the needs of those whose first language is not English) then please contact:

**The Equality Unit  
Invest Northern Ireland  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Bedford Square  
Bedford Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7ES**

Telephone: 028 9069 8273  
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Fax: 028 9043 6536  
Email: [equality@investni.com](mailto:equality@investni.com)

**Deadline for comments will be: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**

Following consultation the Final Decision Report will be made available.

## INTRODUCING INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND

Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) was established as a corporate body under the Industrial Development Act Northern Ireland 2002, to work in partnership with the Department for the Economy (formerly the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI)) in order to stimulate and encourage economic development in Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>.

We deliver our business within the economic policy context determined by the Minister for the Economy and the wider Government framework set by Northern Ireland's Executive.

Our Northern Ireland headquarters is located at:

- Bedford Square, Bedford Street, Belfast BT2 7ES

We also operate through five regional offices:

- *Belfast City*: Bedford Square, Bedford Street, Belfast BT2 7ES
- *Eastern*: ECOS Hubs, Kernohans Lane, Broughshane Rd, Ballymena, BT43 7QA.
- *North West*: 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Timber Quay, 100-114 Strand Road, Derry BT48 7NR; The Science Innovation Centre, Cromore Road, Coleraine BT52 1ST
- *Southern*: Drumalane Mill, The Quays, Newry BT35 8QF; Oracle Conference Centre, Upper Bann Institute, 36 Lurgan Road, Portadown BT63 5BL
- *Western*: Kevlin Buildings, 47 Kevlin Avenue, Omagh BT78 1ER; INTEC Centre, 36 East Bridge Street, Enniskillen BT74 7BT

And a number of international offices which are based around three international centres:

- *Europe* – London, Dublin, Brussels, Dusseldorf
- *North America* – Boston, New York, San Jose, Chicago, Toronto
- *Asia / Pacific* – Seoul, Tokyo, Taipei, Shanghai, Mumbai, Dubai, Jeddah

## INVEST NI and SECTION 75

Section 75 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires that Invest NI shall, “in carrying out its function relating to Northern Ireland, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity” between the following **nine Section 75** grounds:

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<sup>1</sup> Further details of founding legislation, roles, powers and responsibilities can be found in Invest NI's Partnership Agreement, issued by DfE (xx 2024) and available on request from the Equality Unit.

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

In addition, and without prejudice to these obligations, in carrying out our functions we are committed to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Invest NI's Revised Equality Scheme was approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2012. This scheme sets out arrangements as to how Invest NI proposes to fulfil its obligatory duties determined through Section 75 legislation and its implementation.

The Revised Equality Scheme also acknowledges the commitment to carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) and policy reviews on existing policies and to screen all new policies as required.

Invest NI screens all policies, written and unwritten, to assess which policies may potentially impact on equality of opportunity and / or good relations obligations.

Following this screening process, it was determined that Invest NI's new Business Strategy for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27 should be subjected to a high-level Equality Impact Assessment. Whilst it is recognised that the policies that will most greatly impact our Section 75 and associated obligations will flow out of the implementation of our Strategy, we feel it is important to use this opportunity to assess and restate how we plan to meet our obligations and commitments to delivering in this area. This report presents the draft findings of that assessment.

## INVEST NI BUSINESS STRATEGY (2024–2027)

### Summary

As the economic development agency for Northern Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland plays a key role in driving economic growth through supporting local businesses to grow through investing in jobs, exports and innovation and by helping attract new export-focused inward investors. Our work is directly aligned to the policy priorities and objectives of the Economy Minister, Department for the Economy and the Northern Ireland Executive, relating to both economic prosperity and social inclusion.

The NI economy has grown steadily since 2017. Our previous Business Strategy, for the period 2017-2021, centred on helping to support businesses, to scale and to standout. Over the 4 year period of the Strategy, we exceeded expectations and targets, delivering the following results for the Northern Ireland economy:

Invest NI Strategic Target	2019 Outturn	2020 Outturn	2021 Outturn	2022 Outturn	2023 Outturn	Cumulative Outturn
Additional Jobs	8,865	7,485	9,582	11,342	8,307	45,581
Business Expenditure on Research & Development	Not Available	23.3	34.0	4.7	90.6	152.6
Sales	1.3	-0.3	1.4	4.0	2.2	8.5
External Sales	1.0	-0.3	1.1	3.2	1.6	6.5
Exports	0.4	-0.9	0.2	1.4	0.8	2.0

Whilst total employment is at record highs and unemployment at record lows, economic structural challenges remain relating to Economic Inactivity, youth unemployment, gender balance, areas of deprivation and educational attainment. Northern Ireland, like the wider UK, also continues to suffer from constrained Productivity performance, the key driver of higher living standards over the longer term. Real earnings for many people in NI have stagnated over the last decade<sup>2</sup> (with median gross real weekly earnings growing by less than £50 a week between 2013 and 2023). Whilst the economy is forecast to continue to grow in the next few years, growth is expected at lower levels than historical comparisons due to a number of macro-economic factors which have transformed our current and future operating environment.

The likely continuation of public spending restraint reinforces (i) the importance of building a bigger and more competitive private sector and (ii) the need for us to ensure value for money for every pound we spend. We will continue to monitor, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of our interventions and seek to reduce our contribution levels, thereby maximising the return on our investment. And to

<sup>2</sup> [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/annual-survey-of-hours-and-earnings).



ensure that the economic benefits of our activities better reach all of society, we will assess how the businesses and projects we support can positively impact society, for example, through their recruitment and training policies, corporate responsibility, supply chain development, etc.

Another key focus will be assisting the transition of businesses to deal with the threats, and exploit the opportunities posed, by climate change. As a society, we need to decouple economic growth from carbon emissions. This will require a significant sustainable reset, that not only requires embracing net zero and adopting green technologies but also a revolution in operational approaches and how we use materials, including promoting the circular economy to eliminate waste and increasing the use of sustainable, eco-friendly materials.

In a period of ongoing public sector reform and in an increasingly competitive environment, be it for funding, talent or contracts, we will be seeking the private sector, other public bodies and stakeholders, to partner with us in a much more strategic and collaborative way to help achieve a more regionally balanced, sustainable, productive and prosperous economy.

A bigger and more competitive business base, however, will not be sufficient on its own to deliver true, long term economic success. Recent research has shown that economic, sustainable and social priorities are inextricably linked, and success requires that all parts of Northern Ireland are able to maximise their potential. Our new Business Strategy will look to build on our success to date and enhance our contribution to the Economy Minister’s Vision of a more balanced, sustainable and productive economy providing good jobs for our citizens. To do this, we have selected Six Strategic Priorities that will provide a framework for our response over the long term:



Business will be at the heart of our future success. It is the businesses we work with, from the smallest micro business to the largest multi nationals, that will ultimately deliver the economic benefits that are needed to realise our vision. It is our job to partner, work with, and enable businesses, through our solutions, to accelerate their growth for the benefit of all our people.

Put simply, in collaboration with entrepreneurs, businesses, investors and partners, we will seek to create more business start-ups, attract more FDI and spark increased productive, sustainable and regionally balanced business investment across Northern Ireland. Indeed, ensuring we deliver for all our citizens, across all regions of NI will be intrinsic within our 'Promoting Places and Partnerships' Priority. Key to our success will be embedding Productivity, Innovation and Exporting within our businesses' growth models to maximise their potential for future growth and success.

## ***Equality and Good Relations Considerations:***

### ***Business Strategy 2024-2027***

Whilst we have worked hard to deliver against our equality obligations since our formation, our aim across this new Business Strategy period will be to enhance this further. Section 75 will continue to be mainstreamed within our core business planning and operational processes. What does this mean? Section 75 considerations, impacts and obligations will permeate and influence all aspects, and all stages, of our work. It will not be a step to complete as we finalise plans but will be a guiding principle that will inform our delivery decisions.

The importance that we place on our Section 75 and associated obligations will be managed and driven through prominent corporate-level. These will be formally reviewed annually and updated to ensure they are delivering against our obligations in line with best practice.

### ***Equality Action Plan***

In conjunction with our Revised Equality Scheme 2022/25, we have produced a comprehensive Equality Action Plan following an audit of inequalities. Our intention is to strengthen this corporate document to drive through our equality obligations for the period covered by the new Business Strategy. The measures outlined in the Action Plan aim to further our overarching equality goals and give an indication of timescales. It will ensure our obligations are reflected in all core business of Invest NI.

This Action Plan is predicated on research and historic EQIA's conducted by Invest NI, (most recently the Business Development Solutions EQIA, Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011 EQIA, and Communications and Access EQIA). Each of these EQIA's is available to view on our website page: [Publications and Reports](#)

Whilst the Equality Action Plan is informed and influenced by our Business Strategy, it is designed to operate as a stand-alone vehicle to demonstrate Invest NI's ongoing commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity, providing a firm foundation for our work. By its very nature, it should not stand still. Instead, it will evolve as we evolve, through annual review as part of our standard business planning process, to ensure it is targeted at, and delivers against, our obligations.

### ***Good Relations Plan***

Invest NI has outlined its key actions with regards to the second statutory Section 75 duty, the promotion of good relations, through its Good Relations Plan, which can be accessed via the following link: [Invest NI Good Relations Strategy](#)

### ***Disability Action Plan***

In line with Section 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995), Invest NI operates a Disability Action Plan to demonstrate how we plan to (i) promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and, (ii) encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties'):

[Invest NI Disability Action Plan 2023-26](#)

### ***Environmental Society and Governance (ESG) Strategy***

Invest NI has a major role to play in making a positive impact on the lives of our citizens through our interventions and project work. Whilst not a statutory requirement, our ESG Strategy is designed to outline how we, and the companies and ecosystems we support, can make that positive contribution by looking at how we operate, the services we offer, and the policies we follow, through a social and environmental lens. As such, we have designed our ESG Strategy and associated actions to align with and make a significant contribution to help Invest NI deliver against our Section 75 and associated obligations. Further information is available through the following link:

<https://www.investni.com/about-us/environmental-and-social-governance-strategy>.

## CONSIDERATION OF AVAILABLE DATA AND RESEARCH

The Northern Ireland economy continues to present a unique profile within both the UK and across the island of Ireland. In particular the dominance of the public sector is still noteworthy. The following data summarises key issues relating to the Northern Ireland labour market with reference to Section 75 considerations.

### External Data Sources

Alongside various sources of in-house data relating to the Corporate Plan, the EQIA has also been informed by relevant statistics relating to the Northern Ireland economy as derived from numerous sources and including:

- [Monitoring Report No. 32: A Profile of the Northern Ireland Workforce. Equality Commission for Northern Ireland 2023.](#)
- [NISRA Labour Market and Social Welfare - Labour Market Overview.](#)
- [NISRA Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey.](#)

### Internal Data Sources

The following tables profile Invest NI assistance by District Council Area (DCA) between 2019/20 and 2023/24. (The latest 5 years for which figures are available).

**Table 1: Invest NI Offer Activity by DCA 2019/20 to 2023/24**

District Council Area	Latest 5 Year Period - 2019/20 to 2023/24					
	No of Offers	Total Assistance Offered £m	Assistance per Head £	Total Investment £m	Investment per Head £	Jobs to be Created
Antrim and Newtownabbey	478	28.54	243.9	268.77	2,297.2	848
Ards and North Down	515	17.78	132.1	88.09	654.7	636
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	1,244	51.72	301.3	286.66	1,669.9	1,758
Belfast	2,900	165.70	588.4	1,048.48	3,723.1	9,298
Causeway Coast and Glens	615	14.63	128.6	82.70	726.7	649
Derry City and Strabane	658	22.82	192.0	134.09	1,128.2	1,221
Fermanagh and Omagh	573	13.75	149.1	63.64	690.4	570
Lisburn and Castlereagh	916	33.26	278.2	157.08	1,313.9	986
Mid and East Antrim	497	16.15	142.4	88.81	783.1	394
Mid Ulster	1,443	40.53	348.6	226.55	1,948.9	1,389
Newry, Mourne and Down	1,014	28.30	199.0	156.50	1,100.5	1,179
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,853</b>	<b>433.18</b>	-	<b>2,601.39</b>	-	<b>18,927</b>
Not Yet Determined / Multi-Location	34	9.81	-	79.24	-	1,321
EDO / UNI (Excl Local Councils)	146	31.43	-	40.54	-	11

**Table 2: Invest NI Assistance Offered by DCA (2019/20, 2020/21)**

District Council Area	2019-20				2020-21			
	No of Offers	Total Assistance Offered £m	Total Investment £m	Jobs to be Created	No of Offers	Total Assistance Offered £m	Total Investment £m	Jobs to be Created
Antrim and Newtownabbey	106	4.39	28.38	386	115	4.73	21.91	91
Ards and North Down	129	2.00	10.83	111	139	6.23	37.52	323
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	314	15.14	62.58	372	321	12.47	62.53	203
Belfast	831	42.49	247.21	2,725	756	34.15	203.77	1,247
Causeway Coast and Glens	106	4.35	24.11	286	181	3.38	15.50	117
Derry City and Strabane	181	5.15	23.80	214	168	6.36	32.74	208
Fermanagh and Omagh	140	3.47	16.14	202	136	3.73	18.26	201
Lisburn and Castlereagh	241	7.48	42.61	205	235	6.84	29.54	194
Mid and East Antrim	118	3.15	20.80	74	109	3.27	13.32	37
Mid Ulster	377	11.08	107.94	632	339	6.09	26.14	236
Newry, Mourne and Down	229	5.82	29.18	215	253	6.94	46.55	364
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,772</b>	<b>104.52</b>	<b>613.58</b>	<b>5,422</b>	<b>2,752</b>	<b>94.18</b>	<b>507.78</b>	<b>3,220</b>
Not Yet Determined / Multi-Location	3	0.93	11.59	300	8	1.20	18.46	186
EDO / UNI (Excl Local Councils)	38	8.96	10.69	0	35	1.36	1.76	0

**Table 3: Invest NI Assistance Offered by DCA (2021/22, 2022/23)**

District Council Area	2021-22				2022-23			
	No of Offers	Total Assistance Offered £m	Total Investment £m	Jobs to be Created	No of Offers	Total Assistance Offered £m	Total Investment £m	Jobs to be Created
Antrim and Newtownabbey	103	13.43	187.97	273	82	3.83	19.23	45
Ards and North Down	128	2.25	8.30	23	62	1.73	6.32	51
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	271	6.14	20.92	124	160	12.32	109.98	822
Belfast	549	31.90	176.44	1,713	414	27.63	179.19	1,191
Causeway Coast and Glens	149	2.95	15.71	69	91	1.41	7.98	101
Derry City and Strabane	133	2.94	11.41	66	98	5.19	46.09	452
Fermanagh and Omagh	152	3.39	14.66	80	73	1.53	7.88	32
Lisburn and Castlereagh	190	6.80	18.05	91	129	5.18	29.92	393
Mid and East Antrim	124	2.85	10.38	53	66	2.40	14.54	123
Mid Ulster	309	10.43	38.49	183	207	5.80	25.61	156
Newry, Mourne and Down	233	5.57	27.40	219	148	4.53	20.41	173
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,341</b>	<b>88.65</b>	<b>529.73</b>	<b>2,894</b>	<b>1,530</b>	<b>71.56</b>	<b>467.14</b>	<b>3,539</b>
Not Yet Determined / Multi-Location	13	6.69	29.90	605	8	0.58	8.68	120
EDO / UNI (Excl Local Councils)	36	2.27	2.86	8	15	0.41	0.49	0

**Table 4: Invest NI Assistance Offered by DCA (2023/24 & Totals)**

District Council Area	2023-24				Total			
	No of Offers	Total Assistance Offered £m	Total Investment £m	Jobs to be Created	No of Offers	Total Assistance Offered £m	Total Investment £m	Jobs to be Created
Antrim and Newtownabbey	72	2.16	11.29	53	478	28.54	268.77	848
Ards and North Down	57	5.58	25.12	128	515	17.78	88.09	636
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	178	5.66	30.66	237	1,244	51.72	286.66	1,758
Belfast	350	29.53	241.88	2,422	2,900	165.70	1,048.48	9,298
Causeway Coast and Glens	88	2.54	19.39	76	615	14.63	82.70	649
Derry City and Strabane	78	3.17	20.06	281	658	22.82	134.09	1,221
Fermanagh and Omagh	72	1.62	6.70	55	573	13.75	63.64	570
Lisburn and Castlereagh	121	6.96	36.96	103	916	33.26	157.08	986
Mid and East Antrim	80	4.48	29.77	107	497	16.15	88.81	394
Mid Ulster	211	7.13	28.38	182	1,443	40.53	226.55	1,389
Newry, Mourne and Down	151	5.44	32.96	208	1,014	28.30	156.50	1,179
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,458</b>	<b>74.28</b>	<b>483.17</b>	<b>3,852</b>	<b>10,853</b>	<b>433.18</b>	<b>2,601.39</b>	<b>18,927</b>
Not Yet Determined / Multi-Location	2	0.41	10.60	110	34	9.81	79.24	1,321
EDO / UNI (Excl Local Councils)	22	18.43	24.73	3	146	31.43	40.54	11

**Monitoring Data**

At the present time, Invest NI has in place a comprehensive Section 75 monitoring system to profile both individuals and companies that are offered support. A summary of key statistics is presented below.

### **Profiling Invest NI Staff**

Looking within Invest NI itself by Section 75 grounds, breakdowns of Invest NI's 615 staff as of April 2024, by grade (SOC: Standard Occupational Classification) and gender, religion and age are presented below.

**Table 6: Gender by Soc Code**

Soc Code	Male	Female	Total
9 - Other	0	1	1
8 - Manual	1	0	1
4 - Administrative and Clerical	72	151	223
1 - Managers and Directors	215	175	390
<b>Total</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>615</b>

**Table 7: Religion by Soc Code**

SOC Code	P	RC	ND	Total
9 - Other	1	0	0	1
8 - Manual	1	0	0	1
4 - Administrative and Clerical	114	108	1	223
1 - Managers and Directors	205	180	5	390
<b>Total</b>	<b>52.2%</b>	<b>46.8%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>615</b>

**Table 8: Age by Soc Code**

Soc Code	20 - 30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-65	Total
9 - Other	0	0	0	0	1	1
8 - Manual	0	0	0	1	0	1
4 - Administrative and Clerical	51	96	48	27	1	223
1 - Managers and Directors	8	125	149	91	17	390
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>615</b>

## CONSIDERATION OF ADVERSE IMPACT

The labour market continues to be segregated in many ways, including those associated with Section 75 grounds. Whilst many of these economic inequalities lie outside the direct scope of Invest NI's work, we aim to implement our new Strategy to further equality of opportunity across the Northern Ireland labour market. Through our statutory Equality Action Plan and Good Relations Plan, we will ensure our Business Strategy and associated policies recognise our duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and that we take the requisite steps to consider and advance these duties in the development of any further related policies. A brief commentary on key inequalities attaching to the Northern Ireland labour market by Section 75 grounds is presented below.

### *Religious Belief / Political Opinion*

It is generally acknowledged that the fair employment legislation has been effective in helping to reduce religious discrimination within the labour market (Osborne, R. & Shuttleworth, I. [2004]. *Fair Employment in NI: A Generation On*. Belfast: Blackstaff Press). For example, according to recent statistics from the Equality Commission's Fair Employment Monitoring Report No.32<sup>3</sup>, the composition of the monitored workforce had moved to 50% Protestant, 50% Catholic (excluding others; from 65% / 35% in 1990).

This is not to deny that there are still community differentials in specific sectors, locations and occupations' that require closer examination (*ECNI Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland, October 2007*) and broader indices of deprivation do vary considerably across Northern Ireland.

According to the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures 2017 Report<sup>4</sup>, the ten most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) by multiple deprivation measure are located in Belfast and Derry City and Strabane Local Government Districts (LGDs), with some notable pockets of deprivation in Newry, Mourne & Down and Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon LGDs. A small cluster is also evident in Coleraine in Causeway Coast & Glens. The most employment deprived area in NI is within the New Lodge 2 SOA in the North of Belfast LGD.

In terms of Claimant Count in June 2024, the highest claimant count rates were in Derry City & Strabane (5.0%) and Belfast (4.1%), in comparison with around 3.2% for Northern Ireland as a whole. This claimant count rate is lower than the UK average rate (4.4%).

In the past, some commentators have raised concerns that inward investment may exaggerate existing inequalities across Northern Ireland. These claims

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<sup>3</sup> [Fair Employment Monitoring Report No.30 \(equalityni.org\)](https://equalityni.org/fair-employment-monitoring-report-no-30).

<sup>4</sup> [NIMDM17- with ns.pdf \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/nimdm17-with-ns.pdf).



would be contested by Invest NI which has produced two EQIAs on their programmes and schemes operating under the Accelerating Entrepreneurship Strategy (AES) and Business Development Solutions (BDS). These EQIA would indicate that the distribution of resources across Northern Ireland is fair and is proportionate. To quote from the BDS EQIA (July 2007, p.25),

‘While there have been considerable shifts in support by region over time, no single demographic index such as population size or community background can explain these findings. In the absence of contrary indicators it can be assumed that the levels of support that are applied (through offers) and gained (through assistance) must reflect a complex interplay between numerous social, economic and demographic factors, but that Section 75 considerations, including community background, do not appear to play a significant role.’

**Response:** *Whilst tailored religious belief / political opinion responses are not considered appropriate, when developing policies, Invest NI will be cognisant of the need to tailor provision to account for residents in areas of economic deprivation and marginalised communities across Northern Ireland. This will include consideration of specific targeted marketing or interventions where appropriate.*

## Gender

The labour market continues to be segregated by gender in Northern Ireland. For example, according to the Equality Commission’s 32<sup>nd</sup> Fair Employment Monitoring Report<sup>5</sup>, women make up 52.4% of the monitored NI workforce. However, 69% of all part-time employees are women. This suggests there remains significant provision to improve the level of female full time employment in NI. Indeed, the Equality Commission’s Statement on Key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland (May 2018)<sup>6</sup> lists ‘Women, lone parents with dependents, and carers who provide less than 49 hours of care, are more likely to be in part-time employment’ as a key inequality.

Vertically, there are notable differences in the distribution of male and female employees across broad sectors of the economy. According to May 2018 Statement mentioned above, ‘Women experience industrial segregation in employment’. Indeed, the statement goes on to say that ‘Women are under-represented in industries associated with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) such as Manufacturing, Transport and Communication, Energy and Water

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.equalityni.org/Footer-Links/News/Delivering-Equality/32nd-Fair-Employment-Monitoring-Report-published>.

<sup>6</sup> [Equality Commission - Statement on Key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland \(May 2018\)](#).

and Construction. Stereotyping and bias within our culture and particularly within male dominated engineering and technology sectors, has been cited as one factor presenting barriers for women within these industries’.

Horizontally, the labour market also continues to be stratified by gender.

**Response:** *When developing policies, Invest NI will be specifically cognisant of the need to foster and account for better gender balance. This should include consideration of specific gender based interventions or targeted marketing where appropriate.*

### **Marital Status / Dependency**

Affordable, quality childcare remains problematic in Northern Ireland, with formal provision still very low in comparison with the rest of the UK. For example, NI has 3% of the UK’s children but only 1% of the UK’s Day Nurseries<sup>7</sup>.

Furthermore, as the population continues to age there is a growing need to recognise caring responsibilities for elderly relatives among employees.

**Response:** Whilst the provision of childcare is outside of the remit of Invest NI, we would nonetheless be supportive of any initiative that strips away barriers to entry to the labour market.

### **Race / Ethnic Origin**

The ethnic breakdown of Northern Ireland has changed dramatically over recent years, including a large rise in the numbers of migrant workers from other countries. In Northern Ireland, censuses show the proportion born outside the UK rose from 4.1 per cent in 2001 to 6.5 per cent in 2011, and 8.6 per cent in 2021.

Generally speaking, migrants in Northern Ireland are more likely to be in employment compared to their UK-born counterparts (with 80 per cent of migrants in employment compared to 74 per cent of non-migrants)<sup>8</sup>. In 2016, the non UK born element of the Working age population was estimated at 101,000 out of a total of 815,000 (or 12%, including people born in the Republic of Ireland)<sup>9</sup>. However, in the Equality Commission’s Statement on key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland, the Commission identified the following specific migrant related inequalities:

- Migrant workers, particularly those from Eastern European countries, are

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<sup>7</sup> [Family and Childcare Trust - 2016 Election Factsheet.](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Comparing Migrant Grant Integration in Ireland and Northern Ireland.](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Northern Ireland Migration Labour and Skills Final - Analytical Services Research - DfE](#) March 2018.

- subject to industrial and occupational segregation.
- Migrant workers and refugees face multiple barriers to employment in Northern Ireland.
- Migrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation.

Housing and welfare provision among migrant workers is widely recognised as poor, with multi-occupancy dwellings often hosting migrant workers associated with poor living conditions.

**Response:** *When developing policies, Invest NI will be specifically cognisant of the need to foster awareness of, and account for, an increasingly mixed racial, ethnic origin and migrant balance within NI's economy and workforce. This should include consideration of specific targeted interventions and marketing where appropriate.*

### Age

NISRA 2021 population estimates suggest c700,000 of NI's population are 50 years or older (or 37%). It is predicted that this figure will rise by a further c208,000 by 2070<sup>10</sup>. According to the Equality Commission's Statement on key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland, 'Those aged 50-64 years old are less likely to be in employment and more likely to be economically inactive than those aged 25-49 years old'.

The NI Labour Force Survey<sup>11</sup> estimated there were 14,000 young people aged 16 to 24 years in Northern Ireland who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in January to March 2024. This was equivalent to 7.1% of all those aged 16 to 24 years in NI, the lowest-ever rate in the time series. Whilst very encouraging, we need to remain vigilante to any potential unintended age related impacts through policy decisions and delivery.

**Response:** *When developing policies Invest NI will be specifically cognisant of assisting and retaining skilled workers into the workforce. This should include specific targeted interventions and marketing tailored to the changing dynamics of an ageing workforce.*

### Disability

Successive labour force surveys show the employment rate within the working age population among those with a disability remains low, at around one half of that for those without a disability<sup>12</sup>. The Equality Commission's Statement on key

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<sup>10</sup> [DfE Research - Older People Inequalities in Northern Ireland - Skills System](#).

<sup>11</sup> [Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey – Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training \(NEET\) | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#).

<sup>12</sup> [NISRA Labour Force Survey Annual Tables 2023](#).

Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland identifies ‘...a persistent employment gap between people with and without Disabilities’. The Statement goes on to say that ‘People with a disability are more likely to be not working and not actively looking for work (economically inactive) than people without disabilities; consequently, they are much less likely to be in employment than people without disabilities. In addition, the gap in the employment rate between people with and without disabilities is persistent, having shown little change between 2006 and 2016’.

**Response:** *When developing policies and through the delivery of our Disability Action Plan<sup>13</sup>, Invest NI will specifically consider scope to include targeted interventions and marketing designed to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.*

### Sexual Orientation

Of various attitudinal and structural issues faced by those from the lesbian, gay and bisexual community in Northern Ireland, homophobic harassment at work features significantly. This has been a long standing issue as revealed by a number of historic high profile tribunal cases along with research findings (Jarman, N. & Tennant, A. (2003). *An Unacceptable Prejudice: Homophobic Violence and Harassment in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Institute of Conflict research)).

The Equality Commission’s Statement on key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland identifies the following as a key inequality: ‘Prejudicial attitudes both within and outside the workplace are experienced by people with disabilities, women, Trans people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, people from minority ethnic groups, migrant workers and those of different religious beliefs’. The statement goes on to say ‘Ignorance of Trans issues from employers and work colleagues is a key issue in Trans people participating in and sustaining employment...Prejudicial attitudes may impact on the ability of lesbian, gay and bisexual people to participate in employment, sustain employment and progress in employment’.

**Response:** *When developing policies, Invest NI will be specifically cognisant of the need to tailor provision to account for marginalised groups across Northern Ireland. This should include consideration of specific targeted marketing or interventions where appropriate.*

### Summary

In line with the Equality Commission’s own research and the EQIAs we have conducted to date, we acknowledge the relative inequalities experienced by the

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<sup>13</sup> [Invest NI Disability Action Plan 2020-25](#).

above groups within the labour market.

Reflecting on the available data relating to Invest NI's activities to date, and projecting this forward, there is no data to suggest significant adverse impacts attached to the new Business Strategy. Indeed, when considered in conjunction with Invest NI's existing corporate and statutory measures to promote equality of opportunity, disability and good relations, and working in partnership with our clients and other government agencies and departments, we consider the implementation of our new Business Strategy has potential to improve equality of opportunity and good relations within the Northern Ireland labour market.

## MEASURES TO MITIGATE / ALTERNATIVE POLICIES

### (Preliminary Recommendations)

Invest NI remains committed to ensuring that through all aspects of its business, equality of opportunity and good relations will be promoted. We view the implementation of our new Business Strategy as a means for advancing and consolidating many of the positive initiatives we have already put in place. We will use our statutory and corporate equality, disability, good relations and ESG action plans and strategies to drive through and deliver against our obligations.

Previous EQIAs have demonstrated the steps already taken, and the positive action measures put in place to promote equality of opportunity. We will annually review and update our corporate actions and measures to ensure they stay relevant and deliver intended benefits.

Invest NI remains fully committed to making a contribution to stimulate economic growth in all parts of Northern Ireland, including areas of relative deprivation, so as to help narrow the gap on key indicators including economic inactivity. Indeed, this is a specific objective of the Economy Minister's new Economic Vision. There are many deep-rooted social and economic issues that continue to conspire to create and sustain inequalities. Remedying these inequalities will require a co-ordinated effort across all parts of government in collaboration with the private sector and Invest NI is fully committed to playing a key role in this partnership.

Working with the Department for the Economy, Invest NI will continue to monitor labour market and employment trends closely. This commitment is reflected in the considerable investment made in completing Section 75 monitoring and EQIA's. Invest NI's EQIA's and screening documents are available to view on our website page at [Equality commitment](#).

We believe that these documents demonstrate Invest NI's commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity to date and provide a firm foundation for our work going forward.

We will also work with DfE, other departments and the private, voluntary and community sectors, to contribute towards addressing any existing and emerging inequalities in the Northern Ireland labour market.

Since our formation, Invest NI has developed and introduced a number of initiatives to address longstanding inequalities. We will continue to use available data and research, to build on our corporate Equality related Action Plans and strategies to strengthen and enhance the contribution we can make. Across the period of our new Business Strategy we will take the following steps:

1. Invest NI will continue to work in partnership with other government agencies and departments, including DfE, and the private sector in a

- responsive manner to contribute towards addressing existing and emerging inequalities in the Northern Ireland labour market.
2. Working in conjunction with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Invest NI will develop and launch its Section 75 Equality Action Plan 2024-27.
  3. Having established an appropriate methodology for monitoring its clients and support services, Invest NI will continue to monitor its services by appropriate Section 75 grounds and will keep its methodology under review.
  4. Invest NI will remain responsive to emerging equality of opportunity issues associated with the labour market and in particular among its private sector clients.
  5. Invest NI will implement its Good Relations Plan in full and awaits further Executive Office guidance relating to 'Together – Building a United Community'.
  6. Ongoing training of all staff in relation to equality of opportunity and Section 75 responsibilities will remain a corporate priority. Where external agents or consultants work alongside Invest NI then their contractual responsibilities to meet our obligations under Section 75 will also be made clear.
  7. The selection criteria that will continue to apply to any support, scheme or programme operated by Invest NI will continue to encourage equality of opportunity. Where additional criteria are introduced, for example to target an industrial sector or geographical area, then these will be clearly defined and set out, and any potential adverse impacts associated with these criteria will be considered.
  8. Each programme will make explicit, in all documentation, that materials can be made available in alternative formats where necessary and on request for those who are not able to access written English.
  9. Building on our Disability Action Plan and subsequent consultations / feedback, we will continue to take forward the Plan through informed interventions.

These measures, when implemented, should further the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations generally, in compliance with Invest NI's obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

## FORMAL CONSULTATION

As we move to embark on a new long term Business Strategy, Invest NI wishes to consult as widely as possible on the findings included in this EQIA, together with the preliminary recommendations offered above. This will enable us to adopt consultation feedback within the implementation of our Business Strategy. The following actions are proposed:

- This report will be issued to all consultees listed in our Equality Scheme.
- A copy of the EQIA will be posted on Invest NI's website and on our internal intranet and publicity material will be made available via these media to encourage staff and the public to comment on the report as appropriate.
- Individual consultation meetings will be facilitated with staff, public individuals and with representatives of particular interest groups on request.
- The report will be made available on request in alternative formats.

The arrangements for consultation are being co-ordinated by the Equality Unit to whom all enquiries should be made. The closing date for responses is 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

## DECISION BY THE PUBLIC AUTHORITY

Following the formal consultation period and consideration of the findings from the consultation, Invest NI will reach a decision in terms of the EQIA process and will ensure that such decisions are implemented through the new Business Strategy.

## PUBLICATION OF RESULTS OF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The outcomes of this EQIA will be published via Invest NI's website. It will be made available in different formats on request where appropriate.

## MONITORING FOR ADVERSE IMPACT IN THE FUTURE AND PUBLICATION OF THE RESULTS OF SUCH MONITORING

Invest NI will establish a system to annually monitor the impact of the policy in the future on relevant groups. This will be reviewed on an annual basis. The results of the monitoring will be widely and openly reviewed. If this monitoring / evaluation shows that the revised policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, Invest NI will ensure the policy is revised.



## APPENDIX 1

## Examples of Section 75 Groups

### ***'Age'***

For most purposes, the main categories are: those under 18; people aged between 18 and 65; and people over 65. However, the definition of age groups will need to be sensitive to the policy under consideration.

For example, (i) in relation to employment policies the middle aged are often a vulnerable group, pensionable age is different for men and women and legal ages for working and voting vary; (ii) in relation to policies concerning young people then narrower age bands are likely to be more appropriate.

### ***'Marital status'***

Married people; unmarried people; divorced or separated people; widowed people.

### ***'Men and women generally'***

Men (including boys); women (including girls); transgender people; transsexual people.

### ***'Persons with a disability'***

Persons with a disability as defined in Sections 1 and 2 and Schedules 1 and 2 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

### ***'Persons with dependents'***

Persons with primary responsibility for the care of a child; persons with personal responsibility for the care of a person with a disability; persons with primary responsibility for the care of a dependent elderly person.

### ***'Political opinion'***

Unionists generally; Nationalists generally; members/supporters of any political party; other.

### ***'Racial group'***

Chinese; Irish Traveller; Indian; Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Black African; Black Caribbean; White; mixed ethnic group; any other ethnic group; nationality.

### ***'Religious belief'***

Protestant; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Islam / Muslim; Sikh; Buddhist; other religion; people of no religious belief.

### ***'Sexual orientation'***

Gay; lesbian; bisexual; heterosexual.

(This list is not exclusive but may be amended or added to as appropriate.)

## APPENDIX 2

## Draft Invest NI Business Strategy Draft EQIA Action Plan

Overarching Goals	Key Indicators	Measures	Timescales
<b>Embed equality and diversity within Invest NI's Core Business</b>	Raise awareness of equality obligations within Invest NI.	Induction training for all new staff when they join the organisation to include Section 75 and associated obligations.	Staff to complete induction training within 3 months of commencing employment.
		100% of Invest NI staff trained in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.	Mandatory refresher training every three years for existing staff.
	Fully embed and integrate Section 75 and associated obligations (such as Rural Proofing) within Invest NI's business planning process.	Formally review Invest NI's Business Strategy EQIA on an annual basis as part of our business planning process.	Annual business planning process.
		Equality obligations to be addressed within business strategy and business plan.	Annual business planning process.
		Review and refresh all Section 75 and associated policies to reflect on new Business Strategy.	Completed over course of new Strategy period.
<b>Within Invest NI's remit, contribute to addressing Inequalities within NI's Labour Market:</b>	Enhance and improve Invest NI's capability to impact Gender imbalance within NI's Labour Market.	Review Invest NI's current offering of gender specific initiatives and identify opportunities for new initiatives and / or enhancements.	Complete by 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2025.
		Through our communications team, promote female participants within case studies and testimonials to provide the role models for future generations.	Continuous promotion through our regular communication channels.
<b>(2) People with disabilities</b>	In line with our Disability Action Plan, work with clients, customers, partners, and stakeholders, to deliver initiatives to further employment opportunities for the disabled.	Review Invest NI's current offering of disabled specific initiatives and identify opportunities for new initiatives and / or enhancements.	Complete by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025.
		In line with our Disability Action Plan, host a regular event, bringing together key partners and stakeholders to help contribute to reducing employment inequalities faced by disabled people.	Annual Event, rotated across Invest NI's Regional offices.
<b>(3) Other Marginalised Groups &amp; Minority Communities</b>	Implement positive steps and take action to reduce social inclusion of marginalised groups and communities.	Review Invest NI's current specific initiatives targeted at marginalised groups and minority communities and identify opportunities for new initiatives and / or enhancements.	Complete by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025.
		Widen the reach of our Regional Offices in order to drive improved economic opportunities for our most deprived communities	Host annual networking and information events across our Regional Office areas, using a range of community and partner hubs, to promote Invest NI and its services.
		Implement a new Alternative Talent Pathways approach,	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025

Overarching Goals	Key Indicators	Measures	Timescales
		placing collaboration with partners at the centre, to streamline pathways to sustainable employment for marginalised groups and minority communities.	
		In line with our ESG Action Plan, cultivate and foster better relationships with our partners to enhance engagement and interaction with representative bodies and organisations in line with our Good Relations Strategy.	Improve consultation and engagement with key representative groups across the year.

**From:** Service, Catherine <[Catherine.Service@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Catherine.Service@education-ni.gov.uk)>

**Sent:** Thursday, October 3, 2024 12:01 PM

**Subject:** Department of Education Section 75 Screening Report July - September 2024

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

Dear consultee,

Details of policies equality screened and published by the Department of Education from July – September 2024 can be found here:

[Equality Screenings | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

As you may already be aware, The Executive Office recently launched a consultation on the draft Programme for Government 2024-2027. To take part in the consultation please visit [Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' | Northern Ireland Executive](#)

This email has been sent to you because your details are contained within the Department of Education's Section 75 Consultee list. If you wish to be removed from the list, please email [DE.Equality@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:DE.Equality@education-ni.gov.uk) to update.

Thanks,

Catherine

Catherine Service

DE Equality Unit

Department of Education

Rathgael House, Bangor

Tel No: 02891 279496 Ext: 59496



*"Every child and young person is  
happy, learning, and succeeding."*

